

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A VEHICLE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The function of entrepreneurship education in the development of both human and material resources cannot be overemphasised. Entrepreneurship education is one of the veritable tools that liberate an individual from his unskilful disposition to a skilful individual and to become self-reliant and to contribute to the growth and development of the nation's economy. This article critically examined entrepreneurship education as a veritable vehicle that boosts the nation's economy and nation's development. The justifications, roles, programmes, techniques and strategies on establishment and effective operations of entrepreneurship education for the eradication of poverty, and the enhancement of self-reliant citizens and nation's development are discussed. Conclusions and recommendations are made for the full operationalization of entrepreneurship education geared towards national development.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship Education, Education, National Development, Programmes, Strategies, Roles, Justifications, etc.

Education is a veritable tool that facilitates the enhancement of nation's economic growth and national

development generally. It is seen as the cornerstone of development because it provides literacy, skills acquisition,

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technological advancement, knowledge acquisition and ability to harness the natural resources of the environment. The National Policy on Education (2008: Section 1;3), stipulated that, (a) "Education is an instrument for National Development and Social Change", (b) "It is vital for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria", (c) "Education maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfilment and general development of the society", (d) Education is a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges; (e) Education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society.

Based on the above highlighted philosophy of Nigerian educational system, it therefore means, acquisition of education is not only limited to ability to read and write with certification alone, it is the type of education that should equip her citizens with the education of the 3Hs; that is, the head, the heart and the hand. Simply put, a functional type of education that trains the individual to become self-reliant, useful to himself and the society, thus, contribute positively to the development of the nation. Adeogun (2003), considered education to be a major instrument for tackling unemployment, poverty and ignorance. Anam (2009), in a similar view, affirmed that education creates better citizens and helps to upgrade the general standards of living in the society. The above positions equally implied that education must be tailored

towards preparing the Nigerian citizens to create wealth for themselves and to become independent citizens.

Citizens' participation in economic development depends largely on the type, quality and depth of education provided by the nation. Ocho (2005), maintained that education apart from inculcating values, it also provides a platform for inculcating knowledge, understanding and creating skills which can make an individual live fully and contribute maximally to the development of the society. Based on the meaning and philosophy of Nigeria Education System X-rayed above, it is therefore very apt and imperative for the integration of entrepreneurship education into the Nigeria National Curriculum of Education at all levels.

Entrepreneurship Education is the Educational Process geared towards equipping the learners with creative and innovative ideas that will enhance self-reliant, self-employment and creation of jobs. Entrepreneurship Education inculcates in individuals entrepreneurial skills that enable them confront situations in creative and innovative ways (Chiaha & Agu, 2013). Offorman, (2000), defined Entrepreneurship Education as a formal structured instruction that conveys entrepreneurship knowledge and develops in students, focused awareness relating to opportunity, recognition and the creation of new ventures. Entrepreneurship Education is aimed at inculcating in the individual the ability to seek information and advice; make decision; plan one's time and energy; carry through an agreed

responsibility; communicate and negotiate; deal with people in power and authority; solve problems, resolve conflicts; evaluate performance and use feedback to improve and cope with stress and tension; and achieve self confidence. According to Jones (2004), entrepreneurship education includes instruction in opportunity recognition, commercializing a concept, marshalling resources in the face of risk, and initiating a business venture. It also includes instruction in traditional business disciplines such as management, marketing, information system and finance. Ebele (2008), described entrepreneurship education as the acquisition of knowledge and a skill that enables the students to plan, start and run their own business. In the view of Swarland (2008), entrepreneurship education aims at stimulating creativity in students, enable them to identify opportunities for innovation and motivate them to transform the ideas into practical and targeted activities whether in a social, cultural or economic context. Ogundele, Akingbade & Akinlabi (2012), summarized that entrepreneurship education entails philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment, promoting new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges.

Justification for Entrepreneurship Education

The major objective of entrepreneurship education is to develop enterprising people and inculcate in

students an attitude of self-reliance using appropriate learning process. Some other specific objectives include; (a) the acquisition of key skills; that relate to literacy, numeracy, communication, ICT and problem solving. They represent the fundamental requirements for operating effectively in a work environment, for career planning and process of identifying and accessing appropriate work opportunities; (b) the development of personal and social skills; a whole raft of skill area or personal attributes may be subsumed within this category, including; team work, self confidence, self-awareness, risk-taking, problem solving, creativity and the desire to innovate; and skills relating to business start-up or financial literacy: such as drafting business plans, marketing, financial management, sales and human resource management (Centre for Entrepreneurship and Development Research, UNN, 2006).

Ossai and Nwalado (2012), outlined the following objectives as structured by Entrepreneurship Education:

- To offer functional education to the youth that will enable them to be well employed and self-reliant.
 - Provide the young graduates training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
 - To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
 - Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain learning feasible.
 - To reduce high rate of poverty.
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- Create employment opportunities.
 - Reduction in rural-urban migration.
 - Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses (sms).
 - To incubate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark upon.
 - Create smooth transition from traditional to modern industrial economy.
- It cannot be over emphasized here that if all the objectives listed above are achieved, the nation will naturally and definitely be developed in relation to reduction of poverty, provision of employment, inculcation of self-reliance values, industrialization of the nation's economy amongst other positive indices of development.

Roles of Entrepreneurship Education in National Development

The inculcation of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian youths and students is a potent instrument for the sustainability of life-long education in individuals. The under enunciated roles of this programme are considered very imperative.

- Entrepreneurship Education can positively impact a learner at all levels on a wide number of contexts. This may explain why there are such wide entrepreneurship education programmes, all of which can provide important outcomes at various stages of a learner's life.

- Entrepreneurship education is a key driver to the economy, wealth and a high majority of jobs are created by small businesses started by entrepreneurially minded individuals. Thus, it would make learners to be relevant in today's economy.

- Entrepreneurship education equips people with traits of creativity, innovation, independence and foresight for promoting local technology. E.g. school on wheel programme by National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Industrial Development Centres (IDC), etc.

- Entrepreneurship education activities are real-life vehicles for developing academic skills. Thus, trained entrepreneurs are always empowered to tap from local resources in their immediate environment.

- Entrepreneurship education enables employees to be more successful as a result of understanding the operations of a small business.

- Entrepreneurship education inculcates in the learners the mentality to hard work, to overcome poverty and open doors for productivity.

- Entrepreneurship education provides a guide to empower the youth based on the belief that young people are themselves the best resources for promoting their own development in meeting the challenges and solving the problems faced in today's world and in the 21st century.

- Entrepreneurship education develops good support skills including commenting, decision making, interpersonal abilities, economic

understanding, digital skills, marketing, managerial and financial skills.

- Entrepreneurship education equally provides individual with adequate training that will enable creativity and innovative relevance to skill acquisition which encourages self-employment, self-reliance and life-long education.

Techniques of Acquiring Entrepreneurship Education

a) Teaching methods:

Fayolle (2009) and Lonappan & Devaraj (2011) classify the teaching methods into the following categories: case study, group discussion, individual presentation, individual written report, group project, formal lectures, guest speakers, action learning, seminars, web-based learning and video recorded. Teaching methods are effective in terms of sending the relevant information to a broader population in a relative short time period.

b) Industrial training exercise:

Skills do not depend solely upon a person's fundamental innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience, if the objective of entrepreneurship education is to equip individuals with entrepreneurship skills which are applicable directly to work, then the best technique is industrial training exercise which would provide education and training that will enable individuals to involve directly in the entrepreneurship process.

c) Practical or experimental technique:

One of the objectives of entrepreneurship education is to prepare individuals to act as entrepreneurs, and some of the most effective efforts are ways/techniques to facilitate experiments by trying entrepreneurship out in a controlled environment, for instance, through business simulation or role playing.

d) Excursion technique:

Excursion technique will facilitate first hand information on a particular field of study. This will enable young entrepreneurs have opportunity to acquaint themselves with the various skills needed for the accomplishment of their dreams and aspirations as future entrepreneurs.

e) Co-operation or group learning technique:

This is a process of organizing young entrepreneurs into small groups so that they can work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Team work is a contemporary form of collaboration. This technique will prompt a sense of mutual responsibility among the entrepreneurs, boost their self-esteem, improve social skills and offer greater comprehension of the subject matter.

Entrepreneurship Education Programmes

Based on the uniqueness and imperativeness of entrepreneurship education for the development of a nation or for a life-long education, the following

programmes can help to achieve this goal. Some programmes are suggested here;

- a) Entrepreneurship orientation and awareness programmes which focus on general information about entrepreneurship and encourage participants to think in terms of entrepreneurship as a career.
- b) New enterprise creation programmes designed to develop competences, which lead to self-employment, economic self-sufficiency or employment generation.
- c) Programmes with a focus on small business survival and growth. The emphasis in these programmes is on learning about entrepreneurship and how to manage a small business.
- d) Entrepreneurship education programmes should be introduced at all levels of education for the actualization of self-reliance of the Nation's citizens.

Effective Entrepreneurship Education Strategies

Entrepreneurship Education is a very worth-while programme for the development of a nation, provision of life-long skills for development, provision of employment, preparing citizens to become self-reliant among other factors. Based on the facts articulated above, the following strategies can serve as a tool for effective operationalization of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

- a) Nigeria Education curricular should be reviewed for the inclusion of Entrepreneurship Education skills at all levels of education.

- b) Entrepreneurship Education acquisition centres should be established in all schools at all levels, so that the nation's education will be tailored towards the provision of education of the "Head", the "heart" and the "hand".

- c) Government should establish small business schools where interested students and community members can participate. This will make students self-reliant.

- d) Government at all levels should develop entrepreneur internship programme by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly stated education programmes.

- e) There should be establishment of an enterprise College aimed at fostering the specific skills required for entrepreneurship. This will serve as skill-acquisition centre for the young ones.

- f) There should be adequate incentives for students of vocational and technical schools who are currently undertaking entrepreneurship education training in Colleges of Education and Universities. This will motivate them to start business after school and engage other persons, etc.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education as a programme is one of the instruments in combating poverty, hunger, unemployment, restiveness and enhancing both economic and national development.

Effective establishment and implementation of entrepreneurship education prepares the Nation's citizens to become self-reliant, becoming

independent, self-employed, starting up small businesses and opportunities for the development of both human and material resources.

This paper specifically focused on the conception of entrepreneurship education and its relevance to both human and national development, its justification, roles, programmes, techniques and strategies on operationalization and effective entrepreneurship education targeted at eradicating of poverty and the enhancement of self-reliant citizens and the general national development.

Recommendations

The importance of Entrepreneurship Education has been apparently articulated in this position paper. Based on this, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of the programme geared towards the development of the nation.

- 1) Entrepreneurship Education should be integrated into the National Educational curricular at all levels of education.
- 2) Government at all levels should assiduously fund entrepreneurship education in order to equip her citizens to become self-reliant and to boost the economy of the nation.
- 3) Entrepreneurship education should be inculcated into the school's curriculum to promote human empowerment and development through entrepreneurial skills acquisition. It will serve as a means of eradicating or reducing poverty, unemployment, etc, since it is a skill oriented and employment

motivated education. That all school programmes should be geared towards providing entrepreneurship skills.

4) Nigerian citizens, youths specifically should shun the habit of criminality and idleness and imbibe the culture of entrepreneurial spirit and acquisition of relevant skills that will launch them into enterprise greatness and economic independence.

5) Entrepreneurship education centres should be established to afford those out of school to engage themselves in acquiring one form of skill or the other.

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