

# Developing Entrepreneurial Skills through Business Education Programme to Curb Youth Restiveness for Sustainable Niger Delta Development

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## Abstract

For some time now, youth restiveness has become a problem that has taken its toll in the social, economic and political development of Nigeria and Niger Delta region in particular. This has become an issue of serious concern and challenge to all Nigerians and even the multinational companies operating in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. The need for Niger Delta youths to be encouraged to offer business education as a programme of study to enable them acquire the necessary entrepreneurial skills in order to fit into the Nigerian economic sector is necessary. This is assist to curb youth restiveness in Niger Delta Region. Having recognised these facts, this paper examines the need for the development of entrepreneurial skills through business education for the youths to acquire the needed knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills in order to be practically enterprising and self-reliant and to curb youth restiveness. These skills, the paper argues, can basically be developed through well designed business education programme and curriculum, which devoted professional business educators are expected to efficiently implement.

**Key Words:** Youth restiveness, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, unemployment, sustainable development.

## 1. Introduction

Over the years, youth restiveness has taken its toll in the social, economic, political and sustainable development of Nigeria and Niger Delta region in particular. It has become part of the life pattern of the people. Alamiyesegeha (2000) identified unemployment and marginalization as the root causes of youth restiveness in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. According to him, youths were protesting for long period of neglect and deprivation the people of Niger Delta suffered in spite of their huge contributions to the nation's economy. Niger Delta region has been recognised as the oil producing area in Nigeria.

Diverse economic, social and political problems at different magnitudes facing nations of the world exist and the third world countries are not excluded. It is possible that these diverse economic, social and political problems might have adversely affected the sustainable development of these countries and Niger Delta of Nigeria is not exonerated. One of such problems is the issue of unemployment.

Unemployment is a global problem that governments the world over are contending with. It is a basic feature of any developing economy (Olaoye, 2003) and a common phenomenon, which every nation strives to eradicate (Isyaku, 2003). In Niger Delta region of Nigeria, experience has shown that unemployment problem is so common that most youths seem to be unemployed after leaving schools. In his study, Okala (2003) discovered that over 80% of Niger Delta youths are unemployed. This is one of the causes of youth restiveness in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria (Ubulom, 2008). Hence, the need for entrepreneurship education in a country, which bedevilled by high rate of unemployment of graduates school leavers (Isyaku, 2003) cannot be over-emphasized.

In America, a study of Latino and Lethal violence by Martinez (1996) showed a link between economic condition and homicide. His findings on violent behaviour proved that increased poverty generates high rate of homicide because deprivation encouraged hostilities that escalate into violence. This probably might have made Alamieyesegha (2000) to reveal that the people marched to the streets because poverty is almost at its highest level in those oil-producing states where the wealth of Nigeria is produced.

In Nigeria, at the senior secondary school level of education, school leavers are required to have adequate knowledge and skills in communication, mathematics and science to emerge as academically educated individuals. But, knowledge of these three subjects is not enough to have a self-reliant person (Nyanabo & Ahukannah, 2002) for sustainable development of Niger Delta region. This implies that the fourth skill may be needed for the individuals to become self-employed for sustainable development. The skills are vocational business skills (Okala, 2003), entrepreneurial skills (Ubulom, 2003) and technical skills.

Ihiegbulum (1992) posited that entrepreneurial and vocational skills are basic and instrumental to technological advancement of any nation. Such skills include those in accountancy, secretarial studies, business education, art, etc (Fafunwa, 2004; Taiwo, 1980 and Yoloye, 1983). In order to develop these skills, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004; 1998) boldly reported that efforts were being intensified by both the Federal and State governments to ensure that Nigerians acquire the much-needed technical (practical) skills. Having acquired these entrepreneurial and vocational skills, the individual can be said to have qualified to be self-employed. Entrepreneurship skills could also be found useful for the youths. That being so therefore, there is the need for the entrepreneurship skills to be developed through business education programme in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the youths in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Now that business education as a programme of study in Nigeria is being threatened by the recent trends, topical issues as well as serious challenges existing within the Nigerian turbulent work environments.

## **2. Youth Restiveness in Niger Delta Region**

Youth restiveness manifests through confrontation, vandalization of oil pipelines, oil bunkering, oil mafia, oil piracy, work stoppages, kidnapping of company staffs for ransom, extortion e.g. illegal levies from oil company workers etc. In recent time, Niger Delta as the major oil producing region of Nigeria has been globally known for oil bunkering, youth restiveness, kidnapping etc. According to Komonibo (2004), this could be as a result of intra and inter community strife,

poverty, protracted property disputes e.g. farm land, religious and ethnic divide, economic marginalization, political marginalization and high handedness of office/political office holders, destruction of traditional values, dissatisfaction with government policies, drug abuse.

Fubara (1996) identified collapse of the educational system, the economy, socio-political instability due to frequent and violent change of government, easy access to all kinds of deadly as well as absence of acquisition of employable and entrepreneurial skills by the youths, lack of employment opportunities for the youths and social uprising in Nigeria as being responsible for youth restiveness in Niger Delta Region. He also identified missiles, rocks, firearms of all descriptions, crude guns, military artillery, dynamites, improvised explosive devices (IED) machetes, axes, and high powered engine boats etc., as the weapons at the disposal of the restive youths.

Odili (2004) viewed violent restiveness as human acts that have different courses and motives, which are infinite. He went further to identify some of the causes of restiveness in Niger Delta as follows:

1. Paranoid personal disorder and damaged self-concept. This makes people to blame others or the perceived "enemy".
2. Personal prevention: This is to meet the wishes of the institution and through processes of culturisation they see victims as less human.
3. Personal gain: This is simply promotion, pay rises or as a means of attracting one's or group goal.
4. Felt-needs to protect a culture threatened at its root particularly in the face of disillusionment with established legal process.

5. Emergency of new majority and new minority groups, new tyranny, new suspension, new disenchantment and anxiety, new ethnic problems and new classification of people into “indigenes and non-indigenes (Settlers or Strangers) or relocation of new Local Government headquarters.
6. Mineral deposits and location of oil well, wrongly or rightly.
7. Sudden separation of ethnic groups that have lived together and peacefully in one province.

### **3. The Meaning and Objectives of Business Education**

Despite that Obaro (2002) claimed that business education has come a long way in Nigeria; adding that its major milestones included the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1925, which examined and advised on the educational policies of the colonial masters, it is noteworthy that it is still a relatively new development in the educational delivery system of our country. Confirming this, Nzerem (1992) therefore revealed that until this moment, it has not been fully developed. In the same line, Aina (1990) earlier noticed that many people are ignorant of business education and its teacher. And because of their ignorance, Nzerem (1992) posited that many people still see it as an advanced form of the commercial institute.

Although the concept “business education” is frequently used in the recent time, it is still in semantic flux. This has made it impossible for a generally acceptable meaning of the term to be difficult to arrive at. Business education is education for and about business (Anyaduba, 1986) and

education for business teachers. It is a set of instructions, which prepares students for jobs in business world (Nzerem, 1992) and emphasises office skills in areas such as accounting, shorthand, typewriting, secretarial duties, business methods, etc. (Igwe, 1992). In most cases, business education is wrongly interchangeably used to mean the same thing with such terms like business administration, business management and business studies. It is entirely different from these concepts. It is simply an educational programme in one part. On the other hand, Business education is an aspect of educational process, which provides an individual with the pedagogical and business competences necessary for the teaching and practicing of business concepts, knowledge; attitudes and skills for personal use, for entry into business world as employer or employee and for participation as a business teacher.

Business education is a sub-set of vocational education, which has a major role to play in the total development of the country (Nzerem, 1992). Vocational education was defined by the New Standard Encyclopaedia, according to Nzerem, as the training of persons for specific occupations. It includes the learning of any kind of profitable and useful work. This implies that vocational education aimed at training the youths and unemployed persons for jobs and helps workers upgrade or extend their jobs skills. A critical examination of these definitions of the terms “business education” and “vocational education” provides that the meanings of the concepts are in line with two of the Nigerian educational aims and objectives as contained in the National Policy on Education, according to FRN (1998) as follows:

1. The inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society
2. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical, as equipment for individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society

It is worthy of note that one of the objectives of vocational and technical (business education not excluded) according to FRN (2004) is to give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant. Unfortunately, youths of Niger Delta origin like their counterparts in other states in Nigeria queue up searching for paid employment in the civil service, public corporations and private business enterprises (Okala, 2003). One of the reasons for this situation may be that the educational and training policies adopted in Nigeria had not been properly geared towards the needs of the people as well as the economic growth of the nation (Oladebo, 1990). Hence emphasis is not placed on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian educational curriculum (Inyamah, 2002; Ohaegbulem, 2002). From the foregoing, it is glaring that every youth should acquire entrepreneurship skills through business education programmes in all levels of our educational system to enable the beneficiaries be self-employed. That being so therefore, the need for the development of entrepreneurship skills through business education is absolutely necessary. This will assist the youths to be able to function effectively and be self-employed thereby curbing youth restiveness.

#### 4. The Concept of Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Skills

The concept of entrepreneurship is derived from the French word “entrepreneur,” meaning the one who undertakes task. He takes risk by introducing both new products and new ways of making old

products. Entrepreneurship is the ability to set a business enterprise as different from being employed (Nwaokolo, 1997). This ability or skill could be acquired and should differ in some aspects from the abilities acquired to enable a person obtain paid employment (Inyamah, 2002). The entrepreneurship is a business unit owned, organised, financed and managed by one person (Ohaegbulem, 2002). It occurs when an individual develops a new venture, a new approach to old business or idea or a unique way of giving the market place a product or service by using resources under new conditions of risk (Inyamah, 2002). Though there may be other employees, but ownership, organisation, financing and management of entrepreneurship is exclusively for the owner.

Employability in the large-scale modern establishments at the public as well as the private sectors of the Nigerian economy has grown tremendously over the last three decades. This has made the manpower production to be of far, in excess of demand. To this end, employers are faced with too many job applicants for very few job opportunities. Having faced with such problem, it is now difficult for these employers despite that some of the applicants possess the prescribed educational qualifications to determine the choice of the right candidate to fill a particular vacancy. In order to take this decision is to consider, apart from the vocational skills assumed to have been acquired by the applicants, the needed entrepreneurship skills. These skills, as Lankard (1987) puts it, enable an individual to acquire and keep a job. Adidu (1991) stated that business education graduates could work in any sector of the economy and that they could also go into teaching, which is one of the most commonly known professions. But the issue in question is if youths in Niger Delta region chose business education as a career and on graduation could be able to acquire the right and needed entrepreneurship skills through business education programme to enable them function effectively in the Nigerian work environments.

Lankard (1987) identified seven categories of entrepreneurship skills as present and positive image, positive work attitudes, practise ethical behaviour, effective communication, responsibility acceptance and cooperation with others skills. For Osuala (1995), entrepreneurship skills are group as follows:

1. Individual Competence, Communication skills, comprehension, computation and culture.
2. Personal reliability skills: personal management, ethics, and vocational maturity.
3. Economic adaptability skills: Problem solving, learning, employability and career development.
4. Group and organisational effectiveness skills: Interpersonal skills, organisational skills, skills in negotiation, creativity and leadership.

Ohaegbulem (2002) classified entrepreneurship into four categories. They are basic production, processing, distribution and services.

1. **Basic Production:** This includes farming, poultry, fishery, forestry, animal husbandry, etc. A veterinary medical doctor can set up a piggery or goatry. A botanist can go for tree plantation and agriculturist can go for yam, cassava, wheat, beans growing, etc.
2. **Processing:** This includes manufacturing, construction, food processing, publishing and printing, etc. The home economist can manufacture soap; bake different kinds of food from flour, knit sweater and cardigan. The educationist can open a model private commercial school.
3. **Distribution:** This includes wholesale and retail trading, advertising, transportation and some forms of communication businesses. Youths in Niger Delta can go into selling one commodity or the other, open supermarkets, business centres, etc.
4. **Services:** This includes finance, insurance, professional services such as secretarial and other reprographic functions.

From the foregoing therefore, it could be concluded that various entrepreneurial skills exist. To this end, for any youth to function efficiently, there is need for him or her to acquire the needed entrepreneurial skills through the programme of study.

## 5. The Need to Develop Entrepreneurship Skill to Curb Youth Restiveness and Unemployment Problem in Niger Delta

The increasing complexity of competition in the Nigerian work environment in regards to lack of job opportunities calls for constant youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region (Okala, 2003). For over two decades now experience has shown that unemployment problem has become order of the day in the Niger Delta region of the Nigeria. Therefore, the youths are expected to function independently and effectively as entrepreneur in their various roles. Due to the new world of computer, technology and automation, the need for rigorous supervision of the workforce at the entry-level is drastically reduced.

Despite good educational qualifications, Nyanabo & Ahukannah (2002) emphasised that employers need creative, flexible and visionary skills. Also, workers are required to process a broad range of interpersonal and managerial skills to be able to cope efficiently at work environment. Such skills, according to Gainer (1988) would include personal image, attitudes, habits and behaviour, techniques of communication, problem solving and decision-making, management and organised process.

Employers of labour require their employees to have certain qualities and characteristics. The United States of America, as Back & Barrick (1987) rightly quoted, emphasises on three points, which were the concerns of employers for entry-level positions in work places. The points as enlisted are as follows:

1. For entry-level positions, employers are looking for young people who demonstrate a sense of responsibility, self-discipline, pride, teamwork and enthusiasm.
2. Employers strongly value employee's ability to learn and to solve problems.
3. Employers assume that schools are doing a poor job of development the much-needed attitudes and skills. Employer's consultative committee requires schools to develop employability skills relevant to the job and career anticipated by their students on graduation.

Entrepreneurial skills can be developed to curb youth restiveness in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria through business education programme. In order to develop the entrepreneurial skills through business education programme, it is necessary to integrate entrepreneurial skills development into the business education curriculum at all levels of education in Nigeria. Osuala (1989) outlined the objectives of business education curriculum as related to entrepreneurship skills development as follows:

1. **Exploratory:** To afford all students pertinent information to enable them to explore and learn about the world of work and the relevant interest and career areas of their choice.
2. **Consumer Education:** To help every student become an intelligent consumer of goods and services.
3. **Occupational Knowledge:** To provide the students with the necessary occupational information to enable them to understand the various occupations found in the world of work.
4. **Economic Understanding:** To provide training that will result in developing individuals who are well adjusted in the sense that they are capable of coping with the world in which they live and by providing the understanding and appreciation of the actual functioning of the economic system.
5. **Personal Use:** To enable students to acquire saleable skills in the fields of their choice.
6. **Vocation:** To help students prepare for, choose, enter into and progress in occupations of their choice.
7. **Semi-vocation:** To train students for various business activities common to many professional, industrial, agricultural, distributive and home management occupations.
8. **University Preparation:** To enable the students to realise the advantages of business courses within their university preparatory programmes.

This will assist the beneficiaries of business education programmes acquire the necessary knowledge, understanding, concepts, attitudes and skills required of them so as to meet the needs and aspirations of the society. Nwaokolo (1992) however proposed the need to incorporate entrepreneurship in the business teacher education curriculum such that a

graduate of the discipline can be self-employed if he remains unemployed. This is stressing the need to offer the appropriate training to the business education graduates for the purpose of securing employment in the Nigerian labour market. Also, business education programme should be able to equip the beneficiaries through its instructions, with the self-reliant skills (that is, skills for self-employment) so that if jobs are not readily available, they will be able to set up their own businesses.

Entrepreneurial skills are simply vocational business skills, which an individual acquires to enable him function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur of a self-employed or a self-reliant (Ubulom, 2003). These skills include the ability to:

1. Plan, organise and manage small-scale or medium scale business.
2. Source for fund for the running of a small-scale business.
3. Develop skill of keeping the accounting records of small-scale business.
4. Develop human and public relations skills.
5. Develop the skills for the maintaining of law relating to the registration and running of small-scale business and co-ordination of both human and material resources.
6. Acquire the skills for effective supervision and coordinating of both human and material resources.
7. Develop the skills for effective utilization of the profit for the growth and development of the firm.
8. Apply integrating business skills.
9. Ability to acquire proprietorship and high productivity skills.
10. Develop the broad base investment planning and implementation skills.

It is necessary to develop entrepreneurship skills through business education. The following are also the entrepreneurial skills which can be developed through business education; the ability to:

1. Initiate strict guidelines for tardiness, business exploration and discipline.
2. Express work value through entrepreneurship activities.
3. Encourage self-esteem in the customers
4. Promote and require timeliness, effort, responsibility and other values.
5. Use the available tools to illustrate the importance of entrepreneurship skills development.

Youths should be able to develop creative, flexible and visionary skills. They should possess broad range of interpersonal and managerial skills such as personal image, attitudes, habits and behaviour, have certain qualities and characteristics, techniques of communication, problem-solving and decision-making, management and organisational process to be able to cope efficiently with entrepreneurial activities.

## **6. Conclusion**

The Nigerian economy is such that little or no effort is made by government to encourage investment that can help to create employment opportunities for the youths and job-seekers by establishing corporations, enterprises and companies or even revitalize the existing ones, Since this is the case, there is problem of serious problem of unemployment in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, which resulted to youth restiveness. In order to curb this problem of youth restiveness, there is the need for the youths and job-seekers to be assisted to acquire the necessary entrepreneurship skills through business education programmes. In essence, for the youths to be useful for themselves, they should be well-equipped with the entrepreneurship skills. Emphasis in our educational programmes curriculum at all levels of education should be placed on the development of entrepreneurship skills. Efforts should be intensified by government, business education practitioners, and management of educational institutions as well as captains of business and industrial sectors to jointly develop vibrant and worthy business education programmes that will help in reducing the problem of unemployment and youth restiveness through entrepreneurship education.

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