

Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education which is the type of education that equips its recipients with the necessary competencies with which to discover and exploit markets or ideas in order to become job creators, has been incorporated into the tertiary institutions in Nigeria following the upsurge of unemployment especially of the literates. The extent to which entrepreneurship education has achieved its objectives is not well known. Hence, the need to examine its roles and barriers to effective entrepreneurship activities and proffer some strategies that could enhance entrepreneurship education and its activities so that its objectives could be achieved.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Challenges, Prospects, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The high level of unemployment in Nigeria today has raised a lot of questions. The worrisome aspect of this phenomenon is that it is not limited to only the illiterates, it is equally well pronounced among the graduates of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. This makes one to wonder about the quality of education in Nigeria. Nigeria is a developing nation with several features such as low literacy rate, high rate of poverty, high rate of unemployment, low GDP, among others. A nation such as Nigeria, should always look for a way out. Nigerian government in an attempt to reduce some of the above mentioned problems especially unemployment, introduced entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions through its educational supervisory agencies like National University Commission (NUC), among others.

1.1 What is Entrepreneurship Education?

Entrepreneurship education is the type of education given to a person which helps him to acquire the cognitive knowledge, psychomotor and affective skills to explore and exploit an opportunity into a viable venture, establish and manage the venture successfully. In the same vein, Nwangwu (2006) defines entrepreneurship education as the type of education that equips the learner with the knowledge and skills to desire, seek, recognize and utilize available opportunity to do something new to create wealth for self and others and consequently contribute effectively to the society. Objectives of entrepreneurial education as stated in the NUC benchmark are as follows:

1. To nurture entrepreneurship knowledge among students with the hope of creating greater economic and social value to the society.
2. To provide students with the required skills to develop viable enterprises that are capable of competing in the global environment.
3. To provide students with training skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society, among others.

From all indications, it has shown that entrepreneurship education was incorporated into the tertiary education curriculum to empower students to be job creators and not job seekers but this seems not to be the situation currently. The situation would be attested to when students on graduation begin to assume the role of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are people who constantly discover new markets or ideas and exploit these markets or ideas to make profit. They are people that search for change, respond to change and exploit change by converting it into a profitable opportunity. According to Egboh (2009) an entrepreneur is a risk taker, an innovator who in spite of any odd uses focus, devotion and commitment to achieve his goal.

2. Barriers to Entrepreneurship Education

Majority of the tertiary institutions offer entrepreneurship education with different teaching methods and strategies. There is no consensus on which teaching method(s) is/are to be generally adopted considering the environment. So, different methods and strategies are used in different schools which entails that some might be effective while some might not be very effective. It is worthy to emphasize that ineffective teaching method(s) could cause poor students' performance (Eze, Ezenwafor & Obidile, 2016) even, in entrepreneurship education. Among other factors which could inhibit the desired performance of student in entrepreneurship education include;

2.1. Poor funding: The graduates have little or nothing on themselves. Accessing fund from external sources is also difficult due to demand for collaterals by these agencies (notably banks). This often denies the prospective

entrepreneur access to the fund required for entrepreneurial activities (Eze, Okoli & Orafu, 2016).

2.2. Inadequate equipment: Equipment and facilities provided for the entrepreneurial activities are grossly inadequate. Some of the facilities already provided are obsolete and need to be changed while some equipment needed are yet to be provided by the authority concerned.

2.3. Inadequate provision of entrepreneurship education teachers: Entrepreneurship education teachers are not adequately provided in schools. Some schools hire teachers who might not be qualified to teach entrepreneurship education while some schools make do with what they have by using any available teacher to teach entrepreneurship education forgetting that not every teacher could provide effective teaching on entrepreneurship education.

2.4. Too much reliance on foreign goods: Relying on foreign goods as being supreme to locally made goods has constituted an obstacle to entrepreneurial development. Goods made in Nigeria are sometimes believed to be inferior by some consumers and they prefer goods produced abroad which they believe are of high quality.

2.5. Laissez-faire attitude of the students towards the entrepreneurship education: some students see the entrepreneurial activities as tedious tasks, hence do not want to get involved with the activities, forgetting that hard work pays. To this kind of students they are influenced by get wealthy quick syndrome which has ruined some of our youths.

All these and more are obstacles to entrepreneurship education and should be eradicated for entrepreneurship education to maximally achieve its objectives.

3. Strategies that could be adopted to enhance entrepreneurship education

Some strategies which could enhance entrepreneurship education are proposed as follows:

3.1. Adopting effective teaching methods: Effective teaching methods should be used in the teaching of entrepreneurship education. Most often hands-on learning (experiential) should be employed (Nwaukwa, 2018). Also, adequate practice should be ensured to enhance mastery of skills.

3.2. Instituting Entrepreneurship Trust Fund: Here, both the government, non-governmental organizations, businesses entities and parents should be implored to support entrepreneurship education by contributing to the entrepreneurship trust fund which would be solely used for promoting entrepreneurship education and its programmes.

3.3. Annual lecture and exhibition of entrepreneurship products: Successful entrepreneurs should be invited annually to talk on their journey so far. This would encourage the young ones. Annual exhibition of entrepreneurship products should also be organized by the administrators of entrepreneurship programmes. This will also help to create awareness of the programmes' products.

3.4. Instituting entrepreneurship agencies: Entrepreneurship agencies should be instituted in each Local government Area. The number to be instituted should depend on the population of the people in that area. These agencies would be charged with keeping accurate record and data of entrepreneurs and prospective entrepreneurs. These data would help in proper planning, implementation and monitoring of entrepreneurial activities. These agencies should from time to time assemble entrepreneurs and identify their strengths and weaknesses and seek for solution to their constraints. In this way the information gathered would help the administrators and the agencies to strengthen the prospective entrepreneurs so that their predecessors' mistakes might not be repeated.

3.5. Providing conducive environment for entrepreneurial activities to thrive: Conducive environment should be provided to enhance entrepreneurial activities. Adequate and improved equipment and facilities (constant power, water and good road network) should be provided for entrepreneurial activities to thrive. Power and alternative sources of power should be made available to entrepreneurs. They should be supported with adequate finance to start up their business opportunities. Newly established entrepreneurs should not be allowed to pay tax for two years or more depending on the adequacy and level of establishment. Entrepreneurs who are to begin to pay tax, should pay tax at a reduced rate. This would enable them to have a firm ground to successful entrepreneurship ventures.

3.6. Adequate market for entrepreneurship products: Production without adequate market leads to waste. Entrepreneurs should be encouraged by adequate patronage. Their products should have effective channel of

distribution where the entrepreneurship agencies should be the last channel to absorb the remains that consumers could not buy. Entrepreneurship products that are very expensive could be subsidized by the government to enable the consumers buy those products.

Following the above discussion, we therefore conclude that there must be a change in our organizational culture which should create a stronger appreciation for entrepreneurial behavior and products so that our youths will willingly opt for entrepreneurial skills, successfully partake in the programme and make their ends meet. We recommend that stakeholders in entrepreneurship programme should join hands to make the programme a worthwhile venture by providing the necessary tools and equipment needed for the programme to achieve its objectives.

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