

Quality Entrepreneurial Education: Opportunities for Youth Development, Unemployment and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

Obi, Franca

Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo

ladyfranca75@gmail.com

Abstract

The implementation of entrepreneurial education in Nigeria is seriously threatened by quality and quantity dilemmas thereby putting African countries in the divide of underdeveloped nations distance from countries like Japan, U.S.A., Great Britain, among others that are described as developed nations. This paper discussed quality and quantity entrepreneurial education, unemployment and poverty. It also looked at quality and access entrepreneurial education as effective strategy for reducing poverty and foster development in Nigeria. The paper concluded that Nigeria should direct resources towards promotion of inclusive growth, which will enable Nigeria's young entrepreneurs to contribute and at same time benefit from economic growth and development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Education, Development, Poverty Reduction, Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Nigeria is lagging behind in terms of development and economic growth as seen in many developed and industrialized nations like U.S.A, France, United Kingdom etc. Development here can be viewed with certain economic indicators such as the Gross National Product (GNP) with the use of GNP as economic indicator, nations have been driven into developed and underdeveloped- thus, countries which have high GNP per Capita are seen as more developed, while those with low per Capita incomes are less developed. Other indices such as level of poverty, inequality and unemployment, political decay and economic crisis among others also help to widen the boundaries between developed and underdeveloped nations.

Nigeria, having adopted education as an instrument per excellence for effecting national development is continually reviewing her educational policies and programmes in line with global best practices and to actually effect development in order to enhance self reliance in a view to curbing the menace of poverty already described as chronic by many scholars, entrepreneurial education has assumed prominence in global economic need, hence its inclusion in curricula of schools from basic to tertiary levels. However, this lofty programme is threatened by the desire to enhance access (quantity) due to phenomenal increase in school enrolment with minimal attempt on quality improvement through such indicators and quality facilities, staff motivation, quality of instruction, etc. thus, creating a dilemma of quality Entrepreneurial education programme. This paper further looked at the following concepts; Youth Development, Unemployment and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria, Inclusive Growth, National Economic Empowerment

and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Entrepreneurial Education and Quality Dilemmas with a view to establishing facts on which the findings shall be discussed

Unemployment and Poverty Reduction

Unemployment in Nigeria is uncontrolled and intensifying. Large concentration of these unemployed youths trained and untrained, educated and uneducated are visibly 'idle' because they either lack saleable skills that could make them attractive to employers of labour or be self-employed. Many of these youths are without hope of securing occupation even at minimal level needed to survive or to be self-sustained economically. Okoro (1994) stated that youth unemployment is undoubtedly one of the major problems facing Nigeria. The rate of unemployment is on the increase because large number of young women leaves secondary schools or tertiary institutions and joins the labour market with little or no relevant skills for jobs. Consequently, many of these youths depend on their parents, friends and relatives for food, clothing and shelter. Others take to street trading, hawking, crime and other anti – social activities such as political turggery, drug trafficking, prostitution, armed robbery and area boys to mention but a few (Chigunta; 2000). According to miller (2005), the resultant effect of this situation is their involvement in criminal activities such as street gang, armed robbery, car snatching, to mention but a few.

Nigeria has played down on human resources and is faced with the problems of unemployment and underemployment with associated social ills such as poverty, drug trafficking, advance fee fraud, 419 and corruption. Other problems created as a result of poor performance of the economy according to Ukit (2005), are inflation, rising cost of living and how standard of living. These problems are facing both the adult and the youth populations. However, the youths are the more seriously affected by unemployment and uncertainties of their future than the adult Nigerians. Bringing the resultant effects of unemployment on the youths and society together, it therefore become imperative that government at all levels give more attention to technical /vocational and business education for self – reliance, employment and saleable skills, which must be very practical, low cost, efficient and well funded. This form of education if given the priority, it deserves according to Borges, Adubra, Medupin, and Okunola (2003) will empower or equip young people with relevant skills for jobs, job creation and above all guarantee their economic and social sustenance. One should blame youth unemployment on the kind of educational system in the country, which has little or no emphasis on production of skilled manpower and entrepreneurship development (Okoro, 1993). Olukosi (2003), emphasized that the application of required business, entrepreneurial and vocational skills for self and paid employment should be the target of our educational system and practice.

Poverty reduction on the other hand is a phrase that explained encouragement of economic growth that will permanently raise as many people as possible over a poverty line. poverty is the state of human beings living with little or no material means of surviving – little or no food, water shelter, energy, clothes, healthcare, education, and other physical means of living that improves one's life. Poor people are considered as those without jobs, who cannot help themselves or cater for their families, who have no money, farm or business (Elumilade, Asaolu and Adereti, 2006). They are sometimes described as those who are undernourished and ageing fast, those without self confidence, looks dirty and lives in filthy environments. Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity (Oseni and Ehikioya, 2011). Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, poor access to energy, inadequate physical and food security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life.

Table 1. Nigerian Poverty Rates

Table 1: Nigerian Urban vs Rural poverty Rates (% of Population)2009 – 14.		
	2013 – 2014	2009 - 2010
Per capita		
Poverty rate	64.2	62.6
Urban Poverty	52.2	51.2
Rural Poverty	73.4	69
Adult equivalent		
Poverty rate	48.3	46.1
Urban Poverty	36.8	34.3
Rural Poverty	57.4	52.9

Source: World Bank Calculations on NBS figures (2013 NER) page 9.

NEEDS

Okon (2012) reported that the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is Nigeria’s home-grown strategy for economic empowerment and development. It is meant to make Nigeria a prosperous nation. NEEDS focuses on four key areas namely; value re-orientation, poverty reduction, wealth creation and employment generation. Hence, Okon (2012) noted that NEEDS is strongly connected with Education and in effect entrepreneurship education. NEEDS, will ensure that more funds are spent on providing courses that build vocational and entrepreneurial skills; building technical and vocational schools and provide equipment for practical work. At the moment, schools curricula have been reviewed to include entrepreneurial courses at all levels of education in Nigeria in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

Education is about human development and human development in turn creates affluence for nations. Therefore, a nation with sufficient skilled and competent man-power is capable of remaining relevant in the global economy which is very competitive. On the other hand, a country which cannot generate skilled and competent man-power will remain poor and underdeveloped. Entrepreneurial education places emphasis on education for work, innovation, creative thinking and self reliance. To enhance practical skills, Egbule (2002) observed that the need to maintain a high degree of cooperation between institutions and industries has been widely embraced. The Nigerian educational policy accords importance to development since it is widely held that no nation can develop more that the quality of her educational system. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) education is an instrument “par excellence” for effecting national development. The national goal states inter-alia, “the building of a great and dynamic economy, among others. From this, Nigeria’s philosophy of education generated. In actualizing all these, emphasis are being on access (educational opportunities) and quality (functional entrepreneurial education), which supports inclusive growth and jobs creation.

Inclusive Growth

Inclusive growth as the factual connotation of the compound vocabulary refers to both the swiftness and the prototype of the financial growth in a country. The writings on the subject draw well dissimilarity between undeviating proceeds redistribution or shared increase and inclusive growth. The inclusive growth approach takes a longer term viewpoint as the focal point is on productive employment rather than on direct income redistribution, as a means of growing incomes for barred groups. Inclusive growth is, therefore, supposed to be intrinsically sustainable as separate from income distribution schemes which can in the short run reduce the disparities, between the poorest and the rest, which may have arisen on

account of policies intended to jumpstart growth. While income sharing schemes allows citizens, to profit from financial expansion in the short run, inclusive growth allows populace to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. Growth is inclusive if it supports high levels of employment and increasing income. For Nigeria, this means acquiring competitiveness in new sectors and technologies.

Quality Entrepreneurial Education, which is capable of preparing individuals to be productive citizens can assist Nigeria promote inclusive growth. When the youths are self-employed as a result of entrepreneurial skills acquired in school, they'll become responsible citizens capable of contributing and at same time benefiting from the economic growth and development. They'll also become part of the economic growth and development process. Growth is inclusive when it creates fiscal opportunities down with ensuring equivalent right of entry to them. Aside addressing the concern of disparity, the inclusive growth may perhaps make the poverty reduction hard work extra effectual by clearly creating prolific economic opportunities for the deprived and susceptible sections of the society. The emphasis here is to stress the relationship existing between inclusive growth and quality entrepreneurial education in terms of economic development and growth. The inclusive growth through quality entrepreneurial education can bring in several other benefits as well to Nigerian economy.

Entrepreneurial Education

Many Nigerians thought that it is degrading for an intelligent or educated man to work with his hands; for this, school graduates now depends on Government's white-collar jobs, which are not readily available to absorb or employ them; they are visibly idle. Corbeff (2006) in his assertion noted that when people do not have work, they do not make money; thus, high unemployment leads to high level of poverty. Entrepreneurial education is explained by first considering the terms entrepreneurship and education. Entrepreneurship is viewed as a process of organizing, managing and assuming the risk of an enterprise (Okon, 2011). It is the act of identifying business opportunities and gathering the necessary resources to initiate a successful business activity (Illesanmi, 2000). Entrepreneurship also involves initiative, innovation, assuming risks in order to make a profit. It involves the organization of factors of production to transform a business idea into profitable reality. It is about value generation.

Odueyungbo (2006) noted that a successful entrepreneurship demands a good acquisition and use of knowledge of a particular business or venture by the entrepreneur. An entrepreneur is one who perceives business opportunity and takes advantage of it. An entrepreneur is seen as one who directs, supervises, controls and take risks, is innovative; have the ability to develop new products and services as well as new methods of production; be able to identify new markets, discover new source of supply and develop new organizational forms.

Education on the other hand, has been described as an instrument for effecting national development. Education is an activity which goes on in the society, whose aims and methods depend on the nature of the society in which it takes place (NTI, 2000). It also involves the transmission of worthwhile attributes to those who participate in it. Attributes regards a worthwhile include desirable skills, knowledge, attitude, team spirit, problem solving skills and other abilities which could promote occupational functionality and self-reliance.

Entrepreneurship education therefore is the acquisition of skills in a formal education setting to develop entrepreneurial orientation and mindset as a necessary preparation for the business, vocational and professional lives on graduation. This form of education is the training of students despite their areas of specialization in the art of identifying business opportunities for self reliance. With entrepreneurship education, students will be provided with skills to enable them engage in economic activities at the local;

make wise and informed decision on when, how, and where to undertake any economic activity; get an insight of work environment, work attitudes and ethics.

Entrepreneurship education has been structured into the annals of Nigerian educational institutions at all levels and curricula of schools in Nigeria. Nigerian Educational Research Development Council (NERDC) (2008a) posited that entrepreneurial skills, creative and critical thinking are relevant elements of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) that are infused into the relevant contents of the 9-year basic education curricula. Similarly, NERDC (2008b) held that to further consolidate the gains of the new basic education programme as well as Government's 7-Point Agenda for national development, especially in the area of human capital development, NERDC developed a new curriculum structure for senior secondary schools in Nigeria, which has been approved by the National Council in Education (NCE). It further posits that the high points of the new curriculum structure are among others, the inclusion of trade/entrepreneurship, computer studies/ICT and Civic Education as compulsory cross culturing subjects. Recently, National University Commission and other regulatory bodies of higher education in Nigeria made it compulsory for all students at tertiary level irrespective of area of specialization to offer entrepreneurship. Government of Nigeria is determined to impact development through Entrepreneurship education in order to reduce unemployment, poverty and economic crises.

Quality and Quantity Dilemmas

Quality education is a set of standard upon which the value or worth of education or a desired level of skills acquisition of an individual is measured. It includes quality assurance which is the measure of attaining desirable levels of accountability in schools. Quality assurance could be measured with certain indices such as quality and content of instruction and curriculum; quality of students as inputs; availability and quality of recommended textbooks; quality and quantity of instructional facilities such as classrooms, library and laboratories; class size and the application of modern teaching techniques; students teacher-ratio and workload; use of modern management and administrative techniques; quality of monitoring supervision, evaluation and zero wastage failure.

Quality in education is concerned with access and equal educational opportunities in the society. This may be in terms of gender equality; equality of access among socio-economic backgrounds; among ethnic groups, among people of different age brackets, etc. quality and quantity education in Nigerian context portray imbalance among the groups highlighted above. Thus, it has become a dilemma; in an attempt to enhance quality there may be need to reduce quantity. Similarly, to increase quantity (access), quality may be affected.

Quantity according to Omoregie (2011) refers to number (how many). For instance, how many teachers? How many students? How many of a particular facility are available? How often do educational inspectors visit schools? Outstanding among the indices of quantity are students enrolment and the corresponding teacher ratio as well as the facilities to cope with students enrolment. Omoregie (2004) carried out a study which revealed that for both private and public schools, the teacher-student ratio is okay. However, the findings of the study further revealed low quality of teachers in private schools than public schools. In a related study conducted by Omoregie (2005) comparing quantity and quality of teachers and facilities in public and private schools in two Local Government Areas in Edo state of Nigeria, the study found out that public primary and secondary schools have higher quantity and quality of teachers than private schools. In terms of facilities, public schools are equally on top.

What the researchers mainly concerned with in this study is to agree on the significant difference existing between quality, quantity entrepreneurial education and development in Nigeria. We first drew encircling

concise task of quality education as the principally exhilarating machine for imparting the entrepreneurial development skills in the higher education students. Subsequently, we briefly looked at the following concepts: Inclusive Growth, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Entrepreneurial Education and Quality and Quantity Dilemmas with an outlook to establishing evidence on which the findings shall be discussed. So the study suggested that quality entrepreneurship education in Nigerian educational system should be encouraged instead of quantity. We also projected entrepreneurship education as that form of training that prepares young people to be accountable and innovative persons who become entrepreneurs' thinkers and contribute to development and sustainable communities. It provides opportunities for youths to be experienced, acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes including opportunity recognition, idea creation and marshalling resources in face of risk to chase opportunities, venture creation and operation, creativity and critical thinking (Okolie et al, 2014). The future of entrepreneurship education must be seen as an instrument for transforming Nigeria's resources into completed goods and services that will endorse higher standard of living.

The Challenges

It has been observed that in an attempt for Nigeria to expand educational programmes and get people to have more access to quality entrepreneurial education is tampered with. Yalokwu (2005) noted that quality of higher education in Nigeria has been on the decline especially as regards to entrepreneurship. The author further noted that this is due to input, process, external examination and output imbalance. Yalokwu (2005) looked at expansion of access and assurance of quality and relevance and then noted that one way of looking at these would be as if access and quality were either not interrelated or are mutually exclusive. Against this background, this study further examines the relationship between quality, quantity entrepreneurship education and development in Nigeria. According to Okojie (2003) Nigerian youths have obtained more formal education over the years. However educational systems in Africa have witnessed declines in quality, both in curricula and infrastructures at all level in the last two decades. They are geared toward providing basic literacy skills that could empower individuals towards self-employment. Ogundele (2005) refers to this situation as a mismatch between university curriculum and labour market. It is of importance to note that Africa's educational systems are yet to adjust effectively to the changing demands for knowledge, skills and attitudes, required in the labour market. Because of this, those who have received formal education but lack the skills required in the labour market, become unattractive to employers of labour who prefer skilled and experienced work workers (Okojie, 2003).

Providing quality Entrepreneurial Education for sustainable Development

For quality entrepreneurial education, the following should be adopted;

- Entrepreneurship Education should be enriched in school curricula from post primary to tertiary institutions.
- Vocational Training Centres should be created within the rural villages and semi-urban areas to be able to train rural villagers on entrepreneurship development. This will enable the youths and women who are not able to secure means of livelihood, to have one; and this training must be at low cost and be delivered using the life skills-based method and easiest communication means. The various tiers of government should be able to fund such training.
- Entrepreneurship Education should be included in Education policy of many countries in Africa, to serve as a link between Technology/Technical and the industries and those who want to establish on their own.

- Government should strengthen its National Youth Development Policies to focus on empowering the youths at the grassroots level by providing entrepreneurship education through Vocational Education Training.
- Encourage the young people to take entrepreneurial development courses in tertiary institutions, since it's the only education which gives its graduates the saleable skills to be self-reliant and be employer of labour.
- Government should provide adequate fund for each young entrepreneur for take-off of his/her own small-scale enterprise.
- Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) should be adequately funded and properly coordinated to get students used to the industrial sector.
- Free Tuition should be offered to students who wish to study entrepreneurial education Programme to encourage them.
- Entrepreneurs should be encouraged to invest towards their resettlement after graduation.
- Nigerian governments should establish new basic technical and vocational resources centers nationwide; involve local craft people in the delivery of technical and vocation and training nationwide.
- Provide adult and youth vocational centers nationwide with materials and equipment for functional literacy and acquisition of occupational skills and so on.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that quality and access in entrepreneurial education will reduce the incidence of unemployment, poverty and shower the needed development in Nigeria and other developing worlds. Also, it is concluded that with much investment in entrepreneurial education, Nigeria can achieve Millennium Development Goals and promote inclusive growth. Inclusive Growth aims at developing a more inclusive society. Therefore, there is need to allow individuals better access to quality education, continue education reforms to broaden the pathways to success as well as to ensure that the education system produces graduates relevant to the needs of businesses. In addition, with the growing development of aging population in a number of countries, it is necessary to encourage this group of people to work longer, stay healthier and have better social security. It is also necessary to provide better healthcare and affordable housing for not only the elderly but also other susceptible groups such as children, the youth, women and those with disabilities. It is also significant to stay up social mobility in each generation and to avert a permanent underclass from forming in each society.

References

- Elumilade, D. O., Asaolu, T. O. and Adereti, S. A. (2006). Appraising the institutional framework for poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. *International Research Journal of Finance and Economics*. 2.(4) 78.
- Chigunta, F. (2000). Youth entrepreneurship: meeting the key policy Challenges. *Vanguard, April 12*.
- Corbeff, T. J. (2006). *Poverty, Microsoft 2006 (CD)*. Redmond W. A., Microsoft Corporation.
- Egbule, P. E. (2002). *Fundamentals and Practice of Agricultural Education*. Owerri: TOTAN Publishers Ltd.
- FRN (2004). *National policy of Education*. Abuja. NERDC Press.
- NERDC (2008a). *The 9-year Basic Education Curricula at a Glance*. Abuja. NERDC Press.
- Illesanmi, A. O. (2000). *Entrepreneurial Development*. Illorin. Lola Success Publishers.

- NERDC (2008b). *The new Senior Secondary School Curriculum Structure at a Glance*. Abuja. NERDC Press.
- Miller, I. O. (2005). Technology Education: A Necessity for Youth Empowerment against Unemployment in Nigeria. *A paper presented* at 18th Annual National Conference at Rivers State, Nigeria.
- N.T.I (2000). *Education Cycle 1*. Kaduna. N.T.I Press.
- Ogundele, J. A. (2005). Towards solving unemployment problems in Nigeria: The Japanese experience. *COESU Journal of contemporary Issues. 2 (1), 167.*
- Oseni, A. I., Ehikioya, J. O. and Ali-Momoh, B. (2011). Technical and Vocational Education: Key to Poverty Alleviation in the Third World with Particular Reference to Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice. 2 (6). 66.*
- Oko, E.E (2012). Business Education and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS): Tool for Economic Recovery. A paper presented at the 10th Annual National conference of AAVEN, 18th – 22nd September, 2012. Bori. River State.
- Okojie, C. E. E. (2003) Employment creation for youth in Africa: the gender dimension. *Retrieved on August 26, 2008. from www. Un. Org/csa/socdev/ poverty/paper/youth Okojie. Pdf.*
- Okolie, U. C., Elom, E. N., Ituma, A., Opara, P. N., Nworie, U. J., Inyiagu, E., E., and Ndem, J. (2014). Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Students Attaining Business Development Awareness and Skills Acquisition in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education. 4 (3) 37- 44.*
- Okon, E. E. (2011). Entrepreneurship Education in the UBE Curriculum in Nigeria: Myths or Reality. *International Journal of Educational Development. 13 (2) 116-133*
- Omorie, E. O. (2005). A Comparative Study of Quantity and Quality of Teachers and facilities in Public and Private Schools in Essan West L.G.A of Edo State. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Administration and Planning. 5 (2). 201-209.*
- Okoro, M. O. (1994). The role of Vocational Education in the war against youth unemployment in Nigeria. In Anyahoha, E. U. and Osuala, E. C. Vocational Technical Education and Technological Growth. *Nigerian Vocational Association. NVA Publications UNN. 39 – 45.*
- Okoro, O.M. (1993). *Principles and methods in vocational and technical education*. Nsukka university trust publishers.
- Oseni, A. I., Ehikioya, J. O. and Ali-Momoh, B. (2011). Technical and Vocational Education: Key to Poverty Alleviation in the Third World with Particular Reference to Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice. 2 (6). 66.*
- Uka (1974) in Ochiagha, C.L. (1995). *Theory and practice of career development*. Enugu. Snaap .Press Ltd.
- Yalokwu, P.O. (2005). Public Private Partnership in University Education Provision in Nigeria: Issues, challenges and Strategies. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Administration and Planning. 5 (2). 10-24.*
- The World Bank (2013). *Nigeria Economic report*.