

Entrepreneurial Education: Solution to Unemployment and Under Employment

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Abstract

To curb the menace of unemployment among youths especially graduates of higher institutions due largely to over dependence on white collar job as the only means of employment, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the entrepreneurialship education as a compulsory course which if effectively taught and learnt, will make them find jobs easily but most importantly, to enable them create it themselves and become employers of labour. This paper examines the concepts of entrepreneurial education as well as employment. It proceeds to discuss some of the implications of entrepreneurial education on employment. The study utilized the secondary source of data generation to source data for the paper and relied extensively on previous study coupled with observations by the authors. This paper concludes with some of the changes that entrepreneurial education could bring for the improvement of the economy and the general wellbeing of the individual and made suggestions on how to effectively achieve the aims and objectives of the programme. Among the suggestions was that the Centre for Entrepreneurial education have a guidance/counseling unit where students identified with the passion to follow through with what they have learnt should be encouraged, guided and linked with sources for financial and other help to establish them with a follow up mechanism after graduation. It was also suggested that such 'success' stories of the Centre should be brought in at intervals to speak and market their product in the institutions so as to serve as a challenge and encouragement not only to the students but also to the lecturers knowing that their labours are not in vain and that they are among the people building the economy of the nation.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Education, Unemployment, Economy, Higher Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The need to change the orientation of the Nigerian child/student about the general perception of education as the only tool to get a job for sustenance and survival to that of education for self-employment /sustenance and even as a job creator (employer of labour), is seen in the government introduction of certain subjects into the curriculum of the Nigerian educational system at all levels. The National Education Research & Development Council boss Obioma said the nation's curriculum was reviewed to offer pupils and students a well-rounded education in terms of knowledge, skills, techniques and values needed to produce self-reliant individuals who can compete favourably anywhere in the world (Adesulu, 2012). At the primary level, vocational education comprising of various subjects is now taken by pupils while at the secondary level Business Studies, Introductory Technology and Computer Studies are three of some compulsory subjects the students must take. All these is an attempt by the government to embed the entrepreneurship spirit into the child at an early age and as a bridge and link between all levels of education as the students come to 'meet' entrepreneurial education proper in the tertiary institutions as a compulsory course at all departmental levels.

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Education is the sum total of what is taught and learnt by an individual either in a formal or an informal setting. It is aimed at not only developing character but also to prepare the individual for survival and ability to contribute meaningfully to the society where he/she is found. It is defined in a broad sense as a process by which an individual acquires the many physical and social capabilities demanded by the society in which he/she is born into to function (Uwadai Orobosa, 2010).

Educational Institutions are generally perceived as centres where individuals are groomed or trained for quality life style hence the formal education is viewed as an agent of change. The tertiary institutions in particular are expected to build and prepare the learner **to fit into and improve the society** (Bikomo, 2013).

In an ideal sense, education is an ultimate value and hence, through the provision of social service, it is an agent of change. It is to a nation what the mind is to the body, just as a diseased mind is handicapped in the coordination and direction of the bodily activities so also a nation with a diseased educational system. Therefore, the single most significant complex of social – control tools for national development is found in the educational system be it formal or informal.

Entrepreneurship education delivered on a foundation of 21st century skills both within educational institutions and as a key element of lifelong learning, is necessary to drive innovations and therefore the economic health of any region.

In ancient Greece, the cradle of Western scholarship, education was a highly functional search-light beamed on society, it transcended reading and writing. While the Nigerian state were still under colonization modern education has already taken place and developed in advanced countries this brought successful engendered industrial revolution and breath-taking development.

Development on the other hand, is a progressive unfolding of the potentialities of a given reality. As it applies to human, it is the integration of the various givings, natural, physical, acquired and human of a people towards the full working out, permanently and cumulatively of their being, as persons of their nation and their real productivity.

It is in the bid to achieve the above, meet the challenge posed by globalization, deal with the problem of graduates and youth without jobs in the country and to increase the rate of economic growth of the Nation which has been known to be possible by the duo roles of government and entrepreneurs that Entrepreneurial Education was introduced to Nigeria Higher Institutions of learning in 2006 as a directive by the Presidency as a compulsory course to be taken by all students regardless of their chosen course that would lead to a career path because around the world, higher education is under pressure to change; it is growing fast and its contribution to economic success is seen as vital (CIMWeb, 2013). To show government's seriousness, it was said that with effect from 2012 no institution of higher learning would be accredited without a Centre for Entrepreneurship Development. This was made known by the Executive Secretary, National Board for Technical Education, (NBTE) Dr. M.A Kazaure at a two-day workshop held at Yaba College of Technology (YABATECH) in a paper titled "Vibrant Entrepreneurship Development Centre: A Mandatory Requirement for Accreditation of National Diploma and Higher National Diploma Programmes in Polytechnics and Similar Institutions" presented by Mr. Joseph Aboi on his behalf.

This move by government is directed majorly at curbing the menace of unemployment and under-employment of youths and graduates from our higher institutions of learning which according to Kolawole and Omolayo (2006) is caused by the fact that, many individuals have difficulties in translating their business ideas to realities and creating new business ventures because of lack of necessary information and skills needed to achieve their targets. To him, the

University curriculum was in the past oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white-collar jobs. This underscores why millions of our youths and a lot of university graduates roam about the streets of the major cities and towns in search of white-collar jobs. The major cause of the menace is the undue dependence on salary paid jobs which are not enough to go round the number of graduates that the Nation's institutions turn out yearly despite the fact that not all those that apply for admission on yearly basis get admitted.

CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

The essence of education whether formal or informal is to produce a person who will be a useful member of a society. According to Jane F. Dogle, it must engender in the individual a disposition of personal autonomy, responsibility and relevant forms of life thought and action. The word relevant as used by her is the matter of cultivating individual interest and potentialities while autonomy stands for a person who is able to judge, act and think accurately as well as rationally (Uwadai, 2010.)

Entrepreneurship education has become imperative in the nation's higher institutions of learning in preparing learners to be job creators instead of being job seekers. The concept of Entrepreneurship Education seen in a broad sense is opening up a person's potentials and providing opportunities to acquire the appropriate skills and competences needed for him to explore, sustain and expand his or her own business or businesses. This entails creativity, innovation, showing initiatives and risk-taking as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. Falkang and Alberti (2000) define entrepreneurship education as the process of developing entrepreneurial spirit through the development and application of relevant and entrepreneur-based educational curriculum. More importantly, it involves giving the recipient of education the understanding and capacity or the unique orientation, behaviour, skills and attribute to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people, especially youths, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainable communities (Jimah, & Unuigbokhai, 2011). Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. The teaching of Entrepreneurial Education would not be complete and effective if who the entrepreneur is, is not known.

WHO IS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

A common and well known definition of an entrepreneur is a person that starts a business most at times with little financial capital and may grow it and even divert to other business venture(s).

The Coleman Foundation's definition of Entrepreneurship as coined by John E. Hughes is "Self-employment through business ownership which has significant elements of risk, control and reward." A person who makes money by starting or running a business (businesses) especially when this involves taking financial risks.

The Entrepreneur is involved in Entrepreneurship, according to Omolayo (2006) defined it as the act of starting a company, arranging business, deals and taking risks in order to make a profit through the education skills acquired. Another view of entrepreneurship education is the term given to someone who has innovative ideas and transforms them to profitable activities. To him, entrepreneurship can be described as “the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coupling these with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and create wealth. In the same vein, Nwangwu (2007) opined that entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together the factors of production, which include land, labour and capital so as to provide a product or service for public consumption. However, the operational definition of entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of a person or persons to acquire educational skills to explore and exploit investment opportunities, establish and manage a successful business enterprise.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people, especially youths, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. Entrepreneurship education refers to a specialised knowledge that inculcates in learners the traits of risk-taking, innovation, arbitrage and co-ordination of factors of production for the purpose of creating new products or services for new and existing users within human communities (Acs and Storey 2004, Minniti and Lévesque 2008, Naudé 2007, Kanothi, 2009).

Entrepreneurship Education is not just about teaching someone to run a business. It is all about encouraging creative thinking and promoting a strong sense of self-work and accountability. Through entrepreneurship education, students learn how to create a business, but they also learn a lot more. When we apply entrepreneurship to school and learners, then, according to John Locke, entrepreneurship education that takes place in school means that each learner has the chance to become an entrepreneur and that everyone is the architect of one’s own fortune.

Talking about fortune, this implies that everyone has the potential to make a living through self employment and or paid employment. If this is the case, why is the un-employment and under-employment of youth and graduate on the increase? Before answering this question, the concept of un-employment and under-employment would be looked into.

CONCEPT OF UN-EMPLOYMENT AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT

Un-employment is a state where a person is not contributing financially to his/her up-keep. A state of dependence on others for every financial need, while under-employment is a situation where a person is earning a living but not in the best capacity for which he/she is trained or qualified for.

The graduate unemployment in Nigeria is attributable to the fact that employees’ education and skills acquired are inadequate to meet the demands of modern day jobs.

Fajana (2000), and Standing(1983) opined that unemployment can be describe as the state of worklessness experienced by persons who are members of the labour force who perceived themselves and are perceived by others as capable of work. Unemployed people can be categorized into those who have never worked after graduation from the university and those who have lost their jobs thereby seeking re-entry into labour market.

Entrepreneurial Education is Education for Sustainable Development focused or projected to equip people towards creating a sustainable future for themselves and on the nation at large .

PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

- It is however observed that the students do not take this course serious majorly because they feel that they would be considered as local, looked down on and not valued.
- The wrong mind set of the nation that is undue emphasis on certificate rather than on experience through practicals.
- The curriculum used by the Centre for Entrepreneur Development. From observations and findings through interviews, it was discovered that it is theory based and white-washed with group practicals – only end products are delivered to the Centre, the knowledge of the processes are ignored. As such, students capitalize on it and just pay money to the group leader to get the product done, submit their names and get their scores.
- For students who are interested, there is the fear of start-up capital. It was discovered that what is taught is starting a business and not the spirit of entrepreneurship which is innovations based on identified needs in our immediate environment!

The above observation is contrary to the submissions of Akhuemonkhan, I. A., Raimi, L. and Sofoluwe, A. O. {2013} when they said *Entrepreneurship education has also been described as a formal or informal structured learning that inculcates in students/trainees the ability to identify, screen and seize available opportunities in the environment in addition to skill acquisition (Sexton and Smilor, 1997; Jones and English (2004)). In the words of Shane and Venkataraman (2000:218) the thrust of entrepreneurship training entails identifying “the sources*

of opportunities, the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate and exploit them.” The deliverables of entrepreneurship education when properly imbibed by students and learners are: ability to identify something happening in the environment (resources); and (b) ability to impart something new to trainees, so that their creativity, innovative abilities, beliefs and recombination skills would be enhanced (Sofoluwe, 2007; Fuduric, 2008). When the definition of OECD Entrepreneurship Indicator Programme is reshaped to fit into the present discourse, then entrepreneurship education can be described as a training that stimulates learners to better their lives by generating value through the creation or expansion of economic activity, identification and exploiting new products, processes or markets (OECD Entrepreneurship Indicator Programme, 2009). Anything that can be taught is education. Since entrepreneurship can be taught, entrepreneurship education refer to pragmatic and meaningful interaction between learner and instructor for and instructor for the purpose of developing the ability of the learners to identify, evaluate and generate ideas and solving business problems in a unique way (Towobola and Raimi, 2011)

CONCLUSION

For Entrepreneurial Education to meet its purpose and objectives of majorly dealing with unemployment and under-employment, the above and other problem should be dealt with.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are made;

- ❖ The Centre for Entrepreneurial education have a guidance/counseling unit where students identified with the passion to follow through with what they have learnt should be encouraged, guided and linked with sources for financial and other help to establish them with a follow up mechanism after graduation.
- ❖ It is also suggested that such 'success' stories of the Centre should be brought in at intervals to speak and market their product in the institutions so as to serve as a challenge and encouragement not only to the students but also to the lecturers knowing that their labours are not in vain and that they are among the people building the economy of the nation.
- ❖ The teaching of the course should not be theory based, practicals that involve the lecturers and students should be inculcated into the lesson.
- ❖ Vocational oriented lecturers should be recruited into the department.
- ❖ Where possible, 'real' entrepreneurs should be brought in to teach by their lives and products.
- ❖ The gap and disparity between certificates from theory based institutions (Universities) and practical based institutions (Polytechnics and related institutions) should be done away with if not, the students would not be interested and encouraged to learn skills from the entrepreneurial education they received.
- ❖ There should be a collaborative work between industries and the Centre for Entrepreneur.

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