



Fostering Quality Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract. It is now widely accepted that entrepreneurship education has an important role in national development. This paper focuses on the importance of entrepreneurship education towards enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria. The strategies that can enhance sustainable entrepreneurship education are also discussed. Lastly, The paper recommended that educational programmes at all levels of education should be designed to provide the needed entrepreneurial skills for Nigerian Youth.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Sustainable, Development, and Quality

1. Introduction

The state of unemployment in Nigerian economy is a big challenge both to the government and the masses. Gone are the days that university education guarantees one for any type of job. This calls for the introduction of entrepreneurship education in order to alleviate the problem and to encourage Nigerian graduate to become job creators instead of job seekers. This calls for the adoption of entrepreneurship studies as a general course for all university students so as to encourage educational institutions to develop entrepreneurial intention and to address the issue of graduate unemployment (Fungai Roseline, Rumbidzai, Njanike, Silas and Fungai, 2011). The importance of entrepreneurship in a Nations' development gave birth to the introduction of entrepreneurial education programme throughout the world. This programme is designed to promote preference for self-employment as a sustainable career option (Low & MacMillan, 1988; Henry, Hill, & Leitch, 2005; Souitaris, Zerbinati, & Al-Laham, 2007 in Banjo, Rhowenna and Rowenna (2008). The goal for introducing entrepreneurial education in schools

especially in tertiary institutions in Nigeria was to train individuals to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will propel them to establish their own business. Despite the introduction of this programme in Nigerian school, the issue of 710,000 applicants, who applied for a 3,000 job vacancy in the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) at various centres across the federation calls for quick intervention in the kind of entrepreneurship education programme given in our schools (The Punch Newspaper – 16th March, 2014).

2. Concept of Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship has been seen as a force in any country's economic development. According to Gree and Thurnik (2003) entrepreneurship has been recognized as one of the tools that drive the economy of a country while Turker and Selcuk (2009) describes it as an incubator of technological innovation and a provider of employment opportunities.

Kirzner's (1979) definition of entrepreneurship as behaviours that '*drive the market process*' distinguishes the role of entrepreneurship in society based on outcomes, while in the scholarly domain behaviours related to decision making and action are of interest irrespective of whether they produce outcomes or not. According to Fatoki (2010) Entrepreneurship is the capacity and willingness to undertake conception, organisation, and management of a productive venture with all attendant risks, while seeking profit as a reward. Entrepreneurship involves innovative individuals and the presence of profitable opportunities in a dynamic market.

According to Jack and Anderson (1999) as cited by Oghojafor, Kuye, Sulaimon and Okonji (2009), governments expect entrepreneurial education to contribute to job creation, economic growth, skill enhancement and the development of an entrepreneurial culture; business expects entrepreneurship education to create an understanding of basic business issues, creative work attitude and an entrepreneurial approach among learners; and learners expect entrepreneurship education to assist them in their quest to start their own businesses and to develop skills that will enable them find work in large firms as well. Entrepreneurial education is expected to focus on delivering the skills and knowledge imperative for business entry (Gartner, Shaver, Gatewood & Katz, 1994 in Oghojafor, Kuye, Sulaimon and Okonji (2009).

Entrepreneurial programmes and modules offer students the tools to think creatively, be an effective problem solver, analyse a business idea objectively, and communicate, network, lead, and evaluate any given project. Students feel more confident about setting up their own business as they can now test their own business ideas in an educational, supportive environment. However, the benefits of entrepreneurship education are not limited to boosting start-ups, innovative ventures and new jobs. Entrepreneurship is a competence for all, helping young people to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake (European Commission, 2008).

In the words of Wu, Chang and Chen (2008), Entrepreneurial knowledge is seen as a major manifestation of human capital necessary for entrepreneurial success and sustainability. Jack and Anderson (1999) even describes entrepreneurship education as “the concepts, skills, and mentality which entrepreneurs use or should use”.

3. Concept of Sustainable National Development

According to the world commission on environment and development (WCED) (1987), sustainable development is the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development of a nation denote ability to maintain certain level of development especially in the areas of social, economic, political, educational, cultural and technological development (Akintayo, 2006). However, sustainability of such all embracing and all encompassing development at the national, state and local levels of economy require industrial growth and fostered development which can only be achieved through effective entrepreneurship education training;

According to Adisa (2006) there is a growing consensus that sustainable development means achieving a quality, that can be maintained for many generations because it is socially desirable- fulfilling peoples cultural, material and spiritual needs in equitable ways, economically viable-pays for itself, with costs not exceeding income and economically sustainable-maintaining the long-term viability of supporting ecosystems.

Sustenance of socio-economic development of a nation is a function of economic viability of entrepreneurial development and practice (Alebiosu and Akintayo, 2006). The National development goals of Nigeria set the foundation upon which the national policy on education was developed in order for education to serve as an instrument for national transformation. Entrepreneurship education has been perceived as an economic stimulator, since it tends to foster small scale business which could influence sustainable development especially in a developing nation like Nigeria, through proper training techniques, society can create entrepreneurs that will develop small businesses and maximize the economic potential of an area. Smith (1997) reported that two-third of the public and students indicated that entrepreneurial education programmes had significantly influenced rural and urban sustainable socio-economic development at all levels of economy.

Chan and Swatman (2001) as cited by Alebiosu and Akintayo (2006) contend that entrepreneurship is a key driver of economy. Wealth and a high majority of jobs are created by small businesses started by entrepreneurial- minded individuals, many of who go on to create big businesses. People exposed to entrepreneurship frequently express that they have more opportunity to exercise creative freedoms, higher self-esteem and an overall greater sense of control over their own lives. As a result, may experienced business people, economists and educators believe that fostering a robust entrepreneurial culture will maximize individual and collective economic and social success on a local, national and global scale (Alebiosu and Akintayo, 2006).

Sustainable development is achieved when individual member of the nation acquire basic skills, attitudes and knowledge that enable them adapt to changes in the environment as well as be able to contribute to the manpower need of the society. This is because a well educated and informed society is more likely to be aware of its vision and take proper course of action in order to achieve its planned development (Ogunsanwo & Owodunni, 2006).

4. The expected role of Entrepreneurship Education in Sustainable National Development

Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people, especially youth, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. Entrepreneurship education is not just about teaching someone to run a business. It is also about encouraging creative thinking and promoting a strong sense of self-worth and accountability. Through entrepreneurship education, students learn how to create a business, but they also learn a lot more. The core knowledge created via entrepreneurship education includes:

- The ability to recognize opportunities in one's life.
- The ability to pursue such opportunities by generating new ideas and marshaling needed resources.
- The ability to create and operate a new venture.
- The ability to think in a creative and critical manner. (Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, 2000).

According to Alberta and Libecap (2000) Entrepreneurship education contributes to the growth of firms and it also promotes the transfer of technology, especially small firms. Entrepreneurship Education inspires and motivates students to achieve while in school and use their knowledge in a real world setting. Entrepreneurship Education improves school performance and can help achieve No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goals.

5. Strategies for enhancing Sustainable Entrepreneurship Education Integration of entrepreneurial studies into the curriculum

There is need for the government to integrate entrepreneurship education into the curriculum at every levels of education, that is, at basic, senior secondary and tertiary levels. In tertiary institutions inter-disciplinary approach can be used in order to make entrepreneurship education accessible to all students, and where appropriate, creating teams for the development and exploitation of business ideas, mixing students from other faculties/colleges because of their different backgrounds.

Experience-based teaching methods: For entrepreneurship education to be integrated across school curriculum, the use of action-oriented pedagogies should

be favoured in all disciplines. This kind of methodology is labour intensive and costly, and requires specific training.

Experienced Business Educators: Entrepreneurial initiatives should be part of the conditions for teaching entrepreneurial skills. Education authorities should lay emphasis on the training of entrepreneurs that should not lack a global dimension, seminars, workshops and conferences should be organised periodically to improve their competencies

Involvement of real entrepreneurs: There is need for every institution to involve entrepreneurs in the training of quality entrepreneurship education. This will give room for a strong practical component that needs to accompany the theoretical aspect. It is important for training to be provided by someone who is well versed in both their specific field of study and in entrepreneurship.

Establishment of Functional Centre for Entrepreneurship Education: There should be an Entrepreneurship centre that is accessible and functional. It must have the powers to liaise with all other departments and faculties within the institution. It should essentially have two roles:

- 1) Offer entrepreneurship training in the form of single credits, modules and entire courses, if necessary in collaboration with the institution;
- 2) Work together with all departments and faculties (both students and academics) to help them realise and exploit any entrepreneurial potential their programmes may offer. Typical services might include: helping researchers to explore the commercial options of their research; working with staff and students on developing their ideas, projects, etc.; identifying, protecting and exploiting intellectual property; providing incubation space; getting actively involved in campus company development; developing SME linkages with the university; giving access to networks and matching ideas and inventions with experienced entrepreneurs (European Commission Project, 2008).

Involvement of Enterprises and Business associations: Enterprises and Business associations can encourage their members to get involved in teaching entrepreneurship in schools, as well as participating in organising business plans, competitions and in providing support for getting the winning ideas off the ground. This could encourage the students to contribute meaningfully to enterprises' success, in terms of theoretical knowledge and also through the involvement of students in innovation ideas. There should be an improved working relationship between tertiary institutions and industries, which should enhance students' skill acquisition. When students are sent out on industrial attachment, their training institutions should give them the necessary orientation needed to have a good rapport with the industry.

Financial Support: Entrepreneurship Education Innovation Fund that provides small grants to innovative educational programs should be developed. This fund would provide grants to entrepreneur trainers who want to develop, disseminate, and promote the best new ideas in entrepreneurship education. Among the efforts that could be backed via the fund are items like entrepreneur trainers' scholarships to attend professional development meetings and training, seed funds to initiate creative projects, and connections to entrepreneurs who would serve as mentors to

enhance the entrepreneur trainers' experiences. A competitive grant fund would supplement the limited funds provided to educators to add new courses.

Internal Quality Assurance: To ensure internal control and quality assurance, Supervisory and Monitoring Committee should be inaugurated to supervise the effectiveness of the teachers and students response to the knowledge received. Through constant monitoring and evaluation of system activities in terms of effective control by the different heads of units or departments and constant feedback to management and good utilization of reports, the standard in the system would be raised and sustained. These roles can indeed contribute to the quality and sustainability of Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education had immense importance for the production of the manpower need in Nigeria labour market. It is needed for development, technological emancipation, industrial expansion and it will also assist in career choice, job placement and gainful employment. Entrepreneurship Education provides a transformative and sustainable entrepreneurship education that can assume strategic position in our drive towards national development.

It is recommended that our educational programmes at all levels of education should be designed to provide the needed entrepreneurial skills for Nigerian Youth. It is also recommended that adequate attention should be given to entrepreneurial development by the government through the provision of good economic programmes.

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