

The Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Job Creation for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Abdullahi Magaji

Business Education Department
School Of Undergraduate Studies,
Aminu Saleh College of Education,
P.M.B. 044, Azare, Bauchi State
Nigeria
abdullahmg18@yahoo.com

Abstract

Entrepreneurship education plays a significant role in changing students' view towards becoming self-employed. This is because entrepreneurship education is meant to train students upon graduation to become self-reliant and employers of labour through creative and innovative thinking in identifying new business opportunities. This paper examined the concept of entrepreneurship education, sustainable development, role of entrepreneurs in sustainable development, challenges militating against entrepreneurial skills acquisition in Nigerian tertiary institutions and strategies for effective entrepreneurial skills acquisition for sustainable national development. The paper argued that effective implementation of entrepreneurship education in training institutions has the potentials of equipping the graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant. This will go a long way in job creation, reducing joblessness among the teeming youth and promoting economic growth and sustainable development in the country.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship Education, Job Creation, Self-Reliant, Sustainable Development*

1. Introduction

Nigerian economy now depends mostly on revenue from the oil sector. However, Nigerian economy before the discovery of oil in commercial quantity has multiple agricultural exports cash crops such as cocoa, cotton, groundnut, hides and skin etc, as its major source of revenue but now depends solely on the price of oil in the international market as its major source of revenue. Therefore, a fall in the price of oil will ultimately result to a fall in the revenue generation of the Nigerian economy with attendant consequences: high level of unemployment, poverty, insecurity etc. Equally important, the gradual collapse of the private sector added more pressure to the public sector in terms of employment opportunities. However, it is evidently clear now that the Nigerian economy is too weak to absorb the large number of graduates turned out every year from the institutions of higher learning.

Magaji (2013) argued that the gradual and rapid expansion of the Nigerian educational system coupled with the growing demand for higher education leads to increase in the supply of educated manpower in the country. Therefore, the number of Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Secondary Schools at federal, states and privately owned has increased and there has been the problem of absorbing the number of these graduates produced by those institutions in every year into the economy.

It is against this background that the federal government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Education introduced entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions aimed at equipping students with entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and competencies in order to become

self-employed, job providers (employers of labour) not just job seekers after graduation. Entrepreneurship education therefore, is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip them with the skills and knowledge to enable them start and manage a business of their choice.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is derived from a French word meaning to “Undertake”. Several scholars came up with the definitions that suit them, among which are the following:

According to Usman, Mahmood, Aminu & Usman (2006), entrepreneurship is defined as “the willingness and ability of an individual or group of persons to search for investment opportunities, to establish and run a business unit successfully.

However, to Omolayo (2006), entrepreneurship is the act of starting a company, arranging business deals and taking risks in order to make profit through the education and skills acquired.

Entrepreneurship therefore, is the process through which individuals identify opportunities, allocate resources, and create value which involves risk taking with the aim of making a profit. Therefore, entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run business enterprise successfully based on the knowledge and skills acquired.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education

According to Danko (2006), in the not too distant past, anybody who had gone to School, College, Polytechnic and or University was almost sure of getting one form of paid employment. In Nigeria today, this is no longer the case because of unhealthy situation of the economy.

Bukola (2011) opined that the need for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria started emerging in the mid 1980s. This is because before this period, unemployment and poverty were not a national concern as it is currently. However, political instability and inconsistencies in the socio-economic policies of successive governments led to the emergence of high level unemployment in Nigeria. In the mid 80s, the Nigeria economic collapsed while youth and graduate unemployment hit the roof. There was large-scale layoff of workers and early retirements as a result of structural adjustment policies and bad economic trends in the country. In the face of this situation, entrepreneurship, which would have salvaged the situation, was not encouraged.

According to Idris and Baba (2016), the federal government of Nigeria apparently worried by the soaring unemployment rate, declining per capita income, youth’s restiveness in various part of the country, directed all higher institutions in the country to run entrepreneurship studies programme as a compulsory course for all students irrespective of their disciplines with effect from 2007/2008 academic session. By making entrepreneurship education compulsory, government is aiming at producing opportunity or knowledge-based entrepreneurs who are expected to be critical growth drivers of our economy.

Entrepreneurship Education seeks to provide students especially those in tertiary institutions with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial activities in a variety of settings. However, Emeraton (2008) described entrepreneurship education as that which deals with those attitudes and skills that are necessary for the individual to respond to his environment in the process of conserving, starting and managing a business enterprise. To Oduwaiye (2005), entrepreneurship education prepares the individual to be properly

equipped to acquire saleable skills which could be used to manage his own business or that of other persons.

Entrepreneurship Education is therefore that education which assists students to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self-reliance, rather than depending on the government for employment. This will in-turn produce graduates with self-confidence and capacities for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic development (Emeraton, 2008). According to Agu (2006), entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip them with the skills and knowledge to enable them start and manage a business.

Entrepreneurship education according to Isaac, Visser, Friedrick & Brijlal (2007) is the purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learner to survive in the world of business. It has as its focus an action orientation primarily embodied in teaching students how to develop a business plan (Ronstadt, 1985). Entrepreneurship education develops and stimulates entrepreneurial process, providing all tools necessary for starting up new ventures (Postigo and Tomborini, 2002). It is commonly believed that entrepreneurship education is an imperative that would make a positive contribution to improving the entrepreneurship orientation of people, leading to the acquisition of skills, creativity, confidence, drive and courage, in order to create employment for self and others. Entrepreneurship education has come to denote all forms of knowledge delivery that seek to empower the individual to create real wealth in the economic sector, thereby advancing the cause of development of the nation as a whole.

2.3 Entrepreneurship Education and Job Creation

Entrepreneurship education according to Paul (2005) is structured to achieve the following objectives.

1. To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
2. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
3. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
4. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management to make uncertainty possible and easy.
5. To reduce high rate of poverty.
6. Create employment generation.
7. Reduction in rural-urban migration.
8. Provide the graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in Small and Medium sized businesses.
9. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
10. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

As such, entrepreneurship education will enable students after graduation to create businesses, manage, market and sustain them into the future. In line with this, Mauchil et al, (2011) asserted that entrepreneurship education is the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act on them. According to Basse and Archibong (2005), the goal of entrepreneurship education is intended to empower our graduates irrespective of their areas of specialization with skills that

will enable them to engage in income yielding venture, if they are unable to secure jobs in the public sector. It is a reorientation from job seekers to job creators.

Entrepreneurship education provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized business ventures such as bread bakery, table water packaging, waste disposal and refusal collection agency, editorial work and printing press, computer repairs; maintenance and programming, car washing stand, restaurant and catering services, home laundry services, potting and decorative ceramics works, soap making, furniture production, aluminium fittings and installation, etc. This will go a long way in creating millions of jobs among the teeming graduates thereby stimulating economic growth and development in the country.

Cotton, O’Gorman and Stampfi (2000) in Abiodun & Oyejoke (2017) stated that the rationale for the inclusion of entrepreneurship curricula in universities is to help graduates to acquire increased understanding of entrepreneurship, equip them with entrepreneurial approach to the world of work and prepare them to act as entrepreneurs and managers of new businesses. The objectives of entrepreneurship education succinctly presented by the European Union (2002) include: “raising students’ awareness of self-employment as a career option, promoting the development of personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship, such as creativity, risk taking and responsibility; and providing the technical and business skills that are needed in order to start a new venture”.

2.4 Sustainable Development

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) defined sustainable development as “development that meet the need of the present generation without compromising the need of future generation.” However, Jhinghan (2005) holds that development should specifically consider the quality of life of the people. As such, sustainable development aims at the creation of sustainable improvement in the quality of life for all people as the principal goal of development policy.

Bukola (2011) holds that the concept of sustainable development requires balancing environmental, societal and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. Sustainability includes intergenerational equity, gender equity, just and peaceful societies, social tolerance, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation and natural resource conservation. The major essential tool for achieving sustainable development include the following areas, they were:

1. Improve the quality of basic education;
2. Reorient existing education programmes to address sustainable development;
3. Develop public awareness and understanding; and
4. Provide training for all sectors of private and civil society.

2.5 The Role of Entrepreneur in Sustainable Development

An entrepreneur is a risk taker who identifies business opportunities and puts scarce resources efficiently to maximize advantage of the situation. An entrepreneur is a person who combines factors of production (land, labour and capital) to produce goods and or services for public consumption with the aim of making a profit. In fact, this the force that drives entrepreneurs to commit their scarce resources into identified business ventures. Nwachukwu (2005), defined entrepreneur as a person who has the ability to evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and initiate appropriate actions to ensure success.

Timmons (1994) identifies six key qualities of entrepreneurs:-

Leadership:- All entrepreneurs have leadership behavior e.g ability to get along well with others and ability to respond to suggestions and criticisms.

Self - Confidence:- Entrepreneurs believed that they can make it. It is this self confidence that motivate them to go into business and a driving force that make them to become achievers.

Hardworking:- An entrepreneur appears to be a compulsive workers, who works without distinction between office hours and private time; he is mentally attached to the job. Entrepreneur likes to prove, achieve and challenge himself and these qualities account for his desire to work hard.

Goal Setting:- Entrepreneurs set goals for themselves; they have a mission, a large and a desire to reach the target. It is the goal setting strategies that make the entrepreneurs achieved the greatest advantage.

Accountability:- Entrepreneurs keep a careful record of their achievement as a result of which they are able to tell stories of their humble beginnings.

Innovative:- All successful entrepreneurs are innovators; they introduce new ideas into economy, new goals, new method of production, and new method of distribution.

According to Usman et al (2006), an entrepreneur performed the following roles in an economy:

Identification of investment opportunities:- he looks at the unsatisfied needs and wants of the consumers and tries to satisfy their needs.

Selection of opportunities:- after opportunities are identified, an entrepreneur will make a wise attempt to select the best among the available opportunities.

Combination of factors of production:- entrepreneur performs the role of assembling and combining the factors of production (land, labour and capital) in coordinated manner to produce a given product or provide a required service.

Mobilization and Utilization of Resources:- Entrepreneur utilizes and mobilizes resources inform of human, financial, materials, machines, methods and time available to proper function.

Creativity:- Creativity in this case involves developing new marketing strategies or techniques in order to be efficient towards having an advantage over competitors.

Enterprises Management:- this is concern with the whole process of establishing and managing enterprises. It involves all managerial functions and marketing the enterprise activities.

However, exposing university students to entrepreneurship education will steam-up entrepreneurial drive in students and if properly implemented, can be an effective tool in reducing the pressing problem of unemployment among the teeming graduate. In fact, by becoming self-employed and employers of labour of the idle but active labour force, students in higher institutions of learning becoming entrepreneurs could help greatly in contributing meaningfully to national economic growth and sustainable development by reducing unemployment problem in the country.

2.6 Challenges Militating against Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition

Several factors militate against effective entrepreneurial skills acquisition among students in the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. These challenges according to Idris and Baba (2016) include, but not limited to the following:

1. Lack of Adequate and Skilled Manpower- Nigerian tertiary institutions do not have adequate and high level manpower for effective teaching of entrepreneurship education. The

available manpower was drafted from the existing faculties/schools/departments and has not acquired additional skills to cope with the demand of the new curriculum.

2. Poor State of Infrastructure-The poor state of infrastructure in our tertiary institutions is worrisome as the new entrepreneurship education programme requires functional training facilities. Therefore, inadequacy or lack of functional training facilities hinders student's exposure to practical skills thereby undermining effective learning of the much needed entrepreneurial skills.

3. Faulty Foundation- Entrepreneurship education should have commenced at the lower levels before moving to the tertiary level, so that their products' skills and experiences should form the fulcrum of the university entrepreneurship education. Thus, introducing the programme in the tertiary institutions without due consideration to primary and secondary levels suggest that the new curriculum lacks the necessary foundation.

4. Hasty Preparations- Adequate and careful preparations before the commencement of the program in the tertiary institutions were not done. As such, there should have been provisions for a pilot scheme in some selected faculties/schools/departments of some selected institutions before full scale implementation across the institutions. The introduction of the programme was similar to that of UPE/UBE by the Obasanjo regime with its attendant consequences.

5. Inadequate or outright lack of Funding- No special funds have been made available or set aside to the training institutions in the country by the government in lieu of the new responsibilities. Huge capital investment is required for the procurement and installations of training facilities for the success of the new programme.

The afore mentioned problems if left unchecked could serve as stumbling block in the effective acquisition of the entrepreneurial skills by the graduates thereby undermining their potentialities of becoming entrepreneurs after graduation.

2.7 Strategies for Effective Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition

Effective entrepreneurial skills acquisition in the tertiary institutions of learning in the country could be enhanced through but not limited to the following strategies:

1. Training and Retraining of Manpower. The quality level of training and retraining of manpower involved in the teaching of entrepreneurship education towards the acquisition of the requisite knowledge and skills for effective service delivery will determine its success or otherwise. Therefore, drafting manpower from the existing faculties or departments to teach entrepreneurship education without acquiring new knowledge, skills and experience require to handle such courses should be avoided otherwise the end of the programme would be a fruitless exercise as students may not acquire the entrepreneurial skills necessary for venture creation.

2. Provision of Adequate Training Facilities. Adequate training facilities and equipment are vital for effective teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education. Therefore, well equipped lecture theatres, workshops, laboratories, cottage business for practical's, business model offices, etc, will facilitate teaching and learning of entrepreneurial skills.

3. Adequate Funding- No any programme can be successfully implemented without adequate funding. Therefore, adequate funding is a must in the teaching of entrepreneurship education for the procurement and installations of training facilities/equipment.

4. Appropriate Teaching Methods. Learning in entrepreneurship education is a skill based and it is practical oriented which requires appropriate teaching and training methods. This is because training students to acquire entrepreneurial skills should focus on 'hand-on' and creating environment in which students learn through experience. Equally important, teaching entrepreneurship education should involve teaching methods outside the traditional lecture method.

3. Methods

The paper is essentially theoretical in nature. Therefore, data for this paper were obtained from secondary sources which comprise government documents, newspapers and magazines, journal articles as well as analysis of distinguished scholars and authors related to the topic under discussion.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

It is a fact that Nigeria is blessed with adequate human and material resources, market size and large population which are positive indicators for entrepreneurship and venture creation. Therefore, entrepreneurship education is an important means of addressing contemporary socio-economic and political problems especially that of graduates' unemployment. As such, this paper argued that effective implementation of entrepreneurship education has the potentials of changing the mindset of teeming graduates towards becoming self-reliant and employers of labour instead of looking for 'white-collar jobs' which are no longer easy to get nowadays.

4.2 Recommendations

For entrepreneurship education to produce the desired results, the following recommendations are made.

1. Students should be motivated to start and manage business after graduation by making start-up capital available and accessible to them.
2. There should be easy access to micro-credit for young graduates who are interested in starting a business.
3. Government should ensure that educational programmes at all levels of education are made relevant to provide the students with needed entrepreneurial skills.
4. More skill training and vocational schools should be established and adequately funded by the government to train graduates on how to become small business owners and employers of labour.
5. Government should equally create an enabling environment conducive for business growth and development.

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