

Repackaging Entrepreneurship Education for Effective and Functional Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition: A Panacea for Unemployability of Nigerian Graduates

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Abstract

This paper examines how entrepreneurship education can be repackaged to facilitate effective and functional entrepreneurial skills acquisition in Nigerian. It takes a look at entrepreneurship education as a type of education that provides individuals with the theoretical and practical experiences to identify business opportunities, develop its plan, manage finances and run their own ventures successfully. The paper therefore, attempts to discuss the concepts of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial skills acquisition and how entrepreneurship education can be repackaged for skill acquisition which is aimed at minimizing unemployment and wiping out poverty and other related social and economic problem. The paper concluded by recommending that entrepreneurship education should be adequately given greater support from the government and educational institutions and an up-to-date curriculum be developed by appropriate curriculum planners and experts and be effectively implemented.

Keywords: *Repackaging, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills, Unemployability, Nigerian Graduates.*

Introduction

Our educational industry has been producing thousands of graduates each year but very few of them are absorbed leaving the rest of them wondering in the labour market without hope of securing any gainful employment. This could partly be attributed to our educational system which fails to produce critical thinking graduates with innovation, whether incremental, radical and or transformative due to low entrepreneurship education in our society. More so, the curricula of the tertiary institutions of learning lay more emphasis on training for white collar jobs which cannot absorb all of them.

Education which is a medium through which the society transmits skills, attitudes, knowledge and behaviour to its younger ones in order to provide a better life for the society and the nation at large are no longer performing its role. No wonder Azi and Drenkat (2021) argued that the educational

system across the Country keeps producing more and more graduates, but many of them remain unsuitable for the job market. This has brought about unprecedented unemployment rate among youths which accounted for most of the social crimes perpetrated by them in the society. It is therefore suggested that entrepreneurship education which facilitates the introduction of new products or processes, identifying new market or sources of supply or creating new organization of industry be encouraged and also training of students with the rightful skills which encompass the following features: ingenuity, innovativeness, resourcefulness and endurance. Okereke & Okoroafor (2011). It is only when our graduates are equipped with the necessary skills and competencies that can be gainfully employed and also become job creators that can solve the problems of unemployability of Nigerian graduates. Shane (2013) argued that in Nigeria, entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of wealth creation and reducing unemployment among youths thereby leading to increased creativity, innovation and gross total production of the nation.

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a multidimensional term that has continued to challenge scholars on its definition (Carree & Thurik, (2005) in Kamar, Terzungwe & Muhammad, (2021). Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new of value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks, and receiving the resulting reward of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence (Hisrich, Peters, 2005). Again, Timmons and Spinelli (2004) also view entrepreneurship as a way of thinking, reasoning and acting that is opportunity based, holistic in approach and leadership balanced.

Mazuyka and Birley (2002) viewed entrepreneurship as any novel activity which creates organizational change and economic value. They further explained that entrepreneurship is the process of:

- i. Identifying and developing an opportunity in the form of a vision;
- ii. Validating and Conceptualizing a business concept and strategy that help attain the vision;
- iii. Marshalling the required resources to implement the Concept;
- iv. Implementing the business concept or venture;
- v. Capturing the opportunity through the growth of the enterprises;
- vi. Extending the growth of the enterprise through sustained entrepreneurial activities; and
- vii. Capturing greater value in the market place.

It is the strong force that makes possible the creation of incremental wealth. Therefore it is the ability to be prepared to risk financial and material resources including personal energy risk to attain a successful result.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a kind of education that is imparted or given to a set of people to enable them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and motivation to function effectively in the changing business environment as an entrepreneur or a self-employed. Obinna (2014) defines entrepreneurship education as the process through which individuals acquire a brand set of competencies that can produce greater social and economic benefits to the individuals. According to Ejeka, Oshioyegwe and Sunday (2011) entrepreneurship education is an aspect of education geared towards developing in learners those skills, ideas, and managerial abilities necessary for self-reliance and other white collar jobs.

In the same vein, Ovie (2013) views entrepreneurship education as the education that provides training experiences and skills that are suitable for entrepreneurial endeavor. Aminu (2009) also defines entrepreneurship education as the process of imparting knowledge and teaching skills to potential entrepreneurs on how to venture into business that is relatively small in nature for future advancement of the business. Entrepreneurship education is aimed at minimizing unemployment and wiping out poverty and other related social and economic problems of any nation (Iredia, 2011).

According to Oborah (2006) the major objectives of entrepreneurship education are as follows:

- i. To provide meaningful education for the youths which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit and be self-dependent;
- ii. To provide small and medium sized companies with the opportunities to receive qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to the management of the small business centres;
- iii. To provide graduates with training in skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society;
- iv. To provide graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium business;
- v. To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty almost possible and easy;
- vi. To provide graduates with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities;
- vii. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas; and
- viii. To produce graduates of international standard with appropriate knowledge and skills in their field of study who will be highly employable and be able to employ themselves.

Others are to create employment generation, reduce high rate of poverty in the society, prepare the recipients for career success, and increase their capacity for future learning and also realization of participant's personal fulfilment. Inije (2011) posits that entrepreneurship education is an important tool for developing a pool of future entrepreneurs that will fast track the process of national economic development.

The Role of Entrepreneurship Education in National Development

The roles of entrepreneurship education in national development cannot be overemphasized. It plays a pivotal role in shaping contemporary business landscape. It is a catalyst for both innovation and economic growth.

Solomon, Alabduljader and Ramani (2019) Postulated that entrepreneurship education has taken a sharp shift from typical classroom lecture collection strategy to modern strategy that lay more emphasis or effort on nurturing competencies, improving expertise, abilities, attitudes that has a favourable effect on the advancement of core capacities. According to Qiang, Yeung and Matlay (2022) entrepreneurship education is crucial to restoring stagnated economics, promoting growth and lowering joblessness by offering new job opportunities.

Buttressing further, Ronstadt (2021) maintains that entrepreneurship education has been acknowledged as a pertinent aspect of the dynamics of all economics, and it is often regarded as the driving force in economic development and the creation of jobs. Turner and Gianiodis (2018) discovered that lucrative and lasting business creation is possible only via entrepreneurship education, which provides essential abilities, skills, motivation, and awareness. Corroborating this view, Acs, Szerb and Autio (2019) argued that entrepreneurship is the driver of national development and reduces poverty levels and the consequences of factors like culture, access to funds and modern technologies. Indeed, entrepreneurship education has also been discovered to be a factor that can spur the wanted economic transformation in various nations (Tok, 2020). Ejeka, Oshiogwe and Sunday (2011) expressly stated the role of entrepreneurship education as follows:

- i. Identify entrepreneurial traits of the students, motivate and develop them on how to manage their own small scale business;
- ii. Develop the interest and attitudes of the students towards self- reliance and self-employment;
- iii. Train potential entrepreneurs to establish small enterprises that will increase the supply of goods and services and bring about improved standard of living of the people;
- iv. Create necessary awareness and motivation in students for promoting self-employment as an alternative to wage employment;
- v. Promote entrepreneurship among students/graduates so as to enable them make effective Contribution to the economic development of the nation;
- vi. Identify the world of work, and make choices in consonance with their potentials and interest;
- vii. Identify the world of work and its prospect and challenges;
- viii. Choose an enterprise and a career;
- ix. Stimulate them to look for funds to go into business;
- x. Bring job satisfaction (economically, Psychologically, and socially);
- xi. Discourage girls from becoming prostitutes if what they need to survive is money;
- xii. Make the individual his/her own boss and be free from job rules, regulations, routine work, external annual assessments for promotion, worries about gratuity, working place politics and the likes and dislikes of bosses;

- xiii. By extension, to the parents, it will take away economic dependence on their children;
- xiv. It will put more at their disposal to improve their standard of living;
- xv. To the business community or society in general;
 - a. It reduces the level of unemployment, the number of dependent relative, encourages healthy competition among entrepreneurs and produces a variety of products and services.
 - b. It increases productivity and also reduces some social/society's vices such as kidnapping, banditry etc.

Others are:

- i. Provision of knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation to students for entrepreneurial success in any facet of human endeavours;
- ii. Equip individuals with ability to seek investment opportunities and maximize returns from those investment; and
- iii. It assists in wealth creation and decreasing unemployment, and also leads to creative thinking and new discoveries, and improves the overall production of a nation.
Through entrepreneurship education, people especially in higher institutions including those with disabilities learn organizational skills, including time management, leadership development and interpersonal skills all of which are highly transferable skills sought employers (Ubogu, 2011).

Concept of Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition

Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is one of the primary and critical aspect of using entrepreneurship opportunities for self-employment. According to Adeyemo (2009) entrepreneurial skills acquisition are the necessary set of skills required to be an entrepreneur. Skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to environment's demands, with human being and external situation together forming a functional system. He also view entrepreneurial skills as skills that help one establish and operate a venture successfully and these skills are acquired through entrepreneurial development programmes.

Agommuoh and Joseph- kalu (2020) look at entrepreneurial skills as skills needed by an individual to succeed in business. They are the basic skills necessary to enable a person start, develop, finance and succeed in any business enterprise. These skills include: business management skills, teamwork and leadership skills, communication and listening skills, customer service skills, analytical and problem,- solving skills, strategic thinking and planning skills, critical thinking skills and financial skills. Furthermore, Adeyeye (2002) identified four additional skills which include: economic business skills, behavioral skills, implementing skills and evaluative skills.

Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is when an individual acquires or discovers a particular skill or kind of behavior required for business through training or education to identity and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities for self-employment (Bulton, Selfert, Chow, David and Araujo, 2020) According to a

Agommuoh and Ogbonna (2013) an individual is said to possess entrepreneurial skills when he/she has self -belief, boldness, empathy, desire for immediate result and ability to recognize opportunities.

Olagunju (2014) elaborating more on entrepreneurial skill acquisition described it as the ability of a person to exploit idea and create an enterprise (small or big) not only for personal gain but also for social and development gain. Again Okereke and Okoroafor (2011) assert that entrepreneurial skill have been acknowledged worldwide as the patient and rewarding tools for job creation, self –employment and economic survival of any nation of the world. In the same vein; Kolawole and Omolayo (2006) in Kamar, Terzungwe & Muhammad (2021) advocate 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. Buttressing it further, they argued that the University Curriculum was in the past oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white collar jobs. It is necessary and possible to position Nigerian Universities to stimulate economic growth through a deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurial graduates.

According to Ubulom (2003) in Nkechi (2011) entrepreneurial skills includes:

1. Ability to plan, organize and manage small scale or medium business;
2. Ability to source for funds for the running of business;
3. Ability to develop skills of keeping the accounting record of small or medium business;
4. Developing human and public relation skills;
5. Developing skills for maintaining of law relating to the registration and running of small or medium scale business and co- ordination of both human and material resources;
6. Acquiring skills for effective supervision and coordinating of both human and material resources;
7. Developing skill for effective utilization of the profit for the growth and developing of the firm;
8. Ability to apply integrated business skill;
9. Ability to acquire proprietorship and productivity skills; and
10. Ability to develop broad base investment planning and implementation skills

Considering the relevance of entrepreneurship skill acquisition programme on national development of any nation, Matlay (2018) in Qiang, Yeung & Matlay (2022) suggested that comprehensive and collective strategies be utilized by the relevant authorities and stakeholders to make sure that learners appropriately obtain entrepreneurial skills in tertiary institution. It also recommended that skill acquisition centres be created in almost every institution of learning for the additional advancement of entrepreneurship skills to all learners which leads to individuals becoming fully employed via vocational training and skill acquisition.

According to Pleshetter (2009) there are four processes or stages of acquisition and development of entrepreneurial skills and these are:

1. To objectively analyse and identify the current and foreseeable skills needs to the business in terms of management, administrative and technical skills;
2. To identify the entrepreneur’s own personal goal and objectives and accurately analyse and evaluate his/her own skill and resources in relation to these;
3. To produce a realistic personal development plan for the potential entrepreneurs: and

4. To monitor the on-going performance of the entrepreneurs once the business has started and progress made towards developing the new skills that had been previously identified as necessary for the success of the business.

Repackaging Entrepreneurship Education for Effective Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition

Entrepreneurship education is an important programme designed to impart entrepreneurial skills to intending entrepreneurs. Acharya and Chandria (2019) advocate that many graduates that have a tendency to develop and be independent in their own little way usually fall short in the world of work which has been connected to their little understanding of what it requires of an entrepreneur, and additionally knowing that business training is expected to provide the young graduates appropriate training that will allow them to be creative and innovative in identifying excellent company opportunities.

According to Adebayo (2006) in Nkechi (2011) entrepreneurship education is the type of education given to a set of people to be able to instil in them the principles, skills and practices required to see and evaluate business opportunities, to gather necessary resources and the desire to take advantage of them as well as initiating appropriate action to ensure success in any chosen profession or occupation. No wonder Nkechi (2011) postulates that entrepreneurship education constitutes a formidable force in equipping the youths with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for production of goods and services which provide better quality life.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people particularly youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real life learning experiences where they can take risks, manage the results and learn from the outcomes (Ubogu (2011)

Entrepreneurship education according to Qiang, Yeung and Matlay (2022) provides essential abilities, skills, motivation and awareness to learners. In the same vein, Abiodun (2019) argued that entrepreneurship has the capability to equip any graduate with appropriate skills, knowledge and competence, which is necessary to incorporate unemployed youths to self-reliance and employment through small scale trading and the establishment of other businesses

Section one (1) of the Nigeria National policy of Education (FGN, 2004) states that for functional education to be relevant and practical, the individuals must acquire appropriate skills to live and contribute to the development of his/her society. According to Ubogu (2011) entrepreneurship education should be regarded as a critical component of our educational curriculum because of the obvious need to generate alternative sources of employment and that any nation that has entrepreneurship deficiency will find it difficult to industrialize and grow economically.

Positioning entrepreneurship education for functional skill acquisition, Ubogu (2011) argued that in order to accomplish the policy thrusts of the Federal government of Nigeria on directive to introduce entrepreneurship education in all tertiary institutions in the country, a presidential committee on introduction and implementation of entrepreneurship education was set up with the strategies of:

- i. Reviewing curriculum of entrepreneurship education;
- ii. Promoting the development and sustenance of entrepreneurship centres and centres of excellence;
- iii. promoting of science, technology and innovation by providing incentives for students and lecturers;
- iv. Sensitization, advocacy and mobilization of support for entrepreneurship education;
- v. Programme focus; and
- vi. Funding.

Hytti and Gorman (2003) suggested ways of achieving the objectives of developing a broad understanding of entrepreneurship and the specific role of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship role play in modern economies and society, learning to become entrepreneurial and how to be an entrepreneur by starting business include putting greater emphasis on integrating entrepreneurship education into other subjects in the curriculum and, introducing the entrepreneurship programme as an opportunity to integrate skills and knowledge acquired in the other courses and subjects studied by the students

Adejimola and Tayo- Olajubutu (2009) in Ubogu (2011) maintained that other specific activities that can be carried out to further create entrepreneurship culture in Nigerian Universities include:

- i. Establishment of Entrepreneurship Development Centres. The Federal Government in Collaboration with Nigerian University Commission (NUC) have directed all Nigerian Universities to establish Entrepreneurship Development and knowledge Transfer Centres of which most Universities have complied with the directive
- ii. Establishment of small and medium scale enterprisers resource centres well equipped with functional facilities for its proper functioning.
- iii. Establishment of small and medium enterprise clubs for students, potential retirees and other members of the institution Community
- iv. Organizing business plan competition between intra and interfaculty business plan.

Ubogu (2011) further suggested that the course objective of entrepreneurship education at the centres will enable the students to;

- i. explain the nature and responsibilities of an entrepreneur in starting and running an enterprise
- ii. identify and analyse business opportunities
- iii. develop a business plan
- iv. identify, secure and manage resources effectively.

Problems of Entrepreneurship Education

Despite the laudable objectives of entrepreneurship education towards reduction of the graduates' unemployability in Nigeria,

1. The dearth of instructional materials and facilities for the training of intending entrepreneurs are posing serious challenge. According to Inebenebor (2005) most of the materials suitable for teaching of entrepreneurship education are rare in most institutions of higher learning.
2. Lack of greater support from government (the 3 tiers) and educational institutions towards accessibility and adequate training for educators in entrepreneurship education
3. Poor funding of entrepreneurship education. The budget allocation for education in general has continued to decline significantly when compared with the UNESCO standard of 26% (Stella, 2021). Infact, there is no government intervention for entrepreneurship programmes in Federal Colleges of Education and Polytechnics in the Country.
4. Lack of relevant and up-to-date harmonized curriculum for entrepreneurship education. Olusesan & Lawal (2011) argued that curriculum in Nigeria does not respond to changes most especially in the area of technological advancement, this often brings a negative result of not equipping the graduates in tertiary institutions with skills needed to stand on their own
5. Most educational institutions do not have entrepreneurship Centres that facilitate easy teaching and learning of entrepreneurial skills.
6. Lack of research on entrepreneurship education in our educational institutions and this is creating a great challenge
7. Lack of conducive teaching and learning environment for entrepreneurship education to be carried out effectively.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education is a very important aspect of education that provides individuals with the necessary saleable skills, knowledge and practical experiences to identify business opportunities, develop business plan and manage finances effectively. It pervades nearly every aspect of economic development and also creates incremental improvements that over time exerts large cumulative effects.

With the unprecedented increase in the rate of unemployment in the Country, graduates in all fields of human endeavour are expected to be fully equipped with entrepreneurial skills that will help them to progress in their businesses thereby reducing the number of unemployable graduates in the society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to enhance entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme through entrepreneurship education.

- i. There should be adequate provision for instructional materials and facilities for the training of entrepreneurship education by the government and stakeholders in the education sector.
- ii. There should be greater support from the 3 tiers of government and educational institution to ensure accessibility and adequate training for educators of entrepreneurship education
- iii. The government should ensure proper and sustainable funding of entrepreneurial education and should include Colleges of Education and polytechnic in Tetfund entrepreneurship intervention.
- iv. Relevant and up-to-date modern entrepreneurship education curriculum be developed by appropriate curriculum planners and experts in the area of entrepreneurship education for effective implementation
- v. Entrepreneurship centres should be created and made functional in all tertiary institutions in the country.
- vi. An aggressive research programme on entrepreneurship should be carried out for more enlightenment.
- vii. The environment should be made conducive for the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education.

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