ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR A SUSTAINABLE PEACE CULTURE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The paper ex-rayed the origin and evolution of entrepreneurship as a concept. Entrepreneurship was defined as the process of generating ideas and venturing into business risks treated by dynamic environment and making the best of opportunities for profit purposes. The paper also explained who an entrepreneur is and the characteristics that define an entrepreneur. Education and entrepreneurship education were then given lucid explanation and then the importance of entrepreneurship education. The paper concludes by maintaining that sustainable peace culture in our country Nigeria could only be achieve through qualitative entrepreneurship education which ensures that our school leavers are job creators and not job seekers. This certainly takes care of large scale unemployment which is a major challenge towards a sustainable peace culture. An idle mind is of course the devil’s workshop.

Today’s world is fast changing and technologically-driven. Survival has become increasingly challenging. The individual is a bonafide and contributing member of society. His well being becomes even more critical in a society that is heavily infested
with unemployment; where very few white collar jobs are on offer for the large army of school leavers. Creativity, innovation, critical thinking and employment generation rather than wait to be employed becomes therefore the available survival tool for today’s youths. Entrepreneurship education therefore becomes indispensable for self reliance in today’s society. The cliché that the idle mind is the devil’s workshop holds true. It is also true that enduring peace is an important necessity for societal progress.

**Historical Background**

Entrepreneurship has a long history all over the world. It predated the advent of cash as a medium for business transactions. In those days, people produced surplus goods than they actually needed. These surpluses were exchanged with other people surplus products. For instance, excess yams were exchanged with excess millet etc. Producers, with this arrangement, realized that they can concentrate in their area of production to produce more and more in order to subsequently exchange with what they needed (Wushishi and Igwe, 2013). It was through this exchange of products that entrepreneurship started. This exchange which was in place before the advent of any form money was called trade by barter (Piwuna and Osasebor 2009).

In modern Nigeria, entrepreneurship evolved from the colonial period. The colonial masters came into Nigeria with their wares and made Nigerians their middlemen to market their wares. As more Nigerians were being educated and government could no longer employ all the teeming school leavers and graduates, coupled with the economic downturn which ushered in the Structural Adjustmet Programme (SAP), people were encouraged by government to go into private business in order to be self reliant. Programmes such as the open apprenticeship scheme, school on wheels graduate employment programme etc. were introduced. All these were geared towards making Nigerians self-reliant and consequently, entrepreneurs (Wushishi and Igwe, 2013).

**Conceptual Framework**

Entrepreneurship as a concept which is of French origin is the direct willingness and ability to seek out investment opportunities and to run it as an enterprise for profit making. Entrepreneurship could also be defined variously as, the process of bringing together the factors of production which include; land, labour and capital so as to produce a product or service for public consumption. It involves the willingness and ability of a person or persons to explore and exploit investment opportunities, establish and manage a successful business enterprise. Inegbenebor in Nwangwu (2006), asserts that the concept of entrepreneurship is associated with a lot of activities geared towards the establishment and operation of a business enterprise. Such activities include:

- Identification of business opportunities
- Decision-making about the opportunities to exploit and promote,
- Aggregation of the scare resources required for production and diversification.
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- Organization and management of human and material resources for the attainment of objectives of the enterprise.
- Risk bearing and innovation.

The effective and efficient coordination of the aforementioned activities is of paramount importance to the successful survival and growth of a business organization. According to Anugwom (2007), entrepreneurship is the process of generating ideas and venturing into business risks treated by dynamic environment and making the best of opportunities for profit purposes. It is a creative and innovative response to the environment which could take place in any area of human endeavour such as science, industry, social work and services of all types or the formation of small scale business units within the economy. These business units have high potential for creating new jobs, increasing output and improving the general living standard of the people (Omenkeukwu, 2000). Ezeudu (2008), refers to entrepreneurship as the process of organizing, managing and assuming risk of a business. Ibrahim, Mandara and Soba (2008), stated that entrepreneurship is the quality and characteristics normally expected from a successful entrepreneur. This includes the perception of new economic opportunities, taking initiative, creativity and innovation, the ability to turn given resources and situation to practical account and the acknowledgement that failure is possible.

According to Udochukwu in Nwangwu (2006:15), entrepreneurship connotes the attempt to create value by an individual or individuals;
- through the recognition of significant (generally innovative) business opportunity;
- through the desire to manage risk-taking appropriate to that project;
- through the exercise of communicative and management skills necessary to mobilize rapidly the human, material and financial resources that will bring the project to fruition.

Dangote in Nwangwu (2006), avers that entrepreneurship is built on vision, focus and determination. It is built on standards, management practices, enabling environment, access to funds, legal/regulatory framework, security and judiciary system and contractors. Entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual or individuals or a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity by using the factors of production to produce goods and services for public consumption (Nwangwu, 2006).

Entrepreneurship is the imaginative capacity of an individual to create wealth through a skillful combination of the factors of production. It involves the ability to create value through innovation and creativity, thereby turning any available opportunity to both individual and group advantage.
Who is an Entrepreneur?

Whoever is involved in the process of entrepreneurship is an entrepreneur. In the words of Schumpeter (1984), an entrepreneur is someone who undertakes the responsibility of making innovations in the economy, that is, either by introducing new goods, new methods of production or of distribution, opening and developing new markets, developing a new source of supply of raw materials or carries out a new organization or enterprises of any industry. According to Nwachukwu (1990 quoted in Onyia, 2011:51),

An entrepreneur is one who has the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and initiate appropriate action to ensure success. He is a risk taker that braves uncertainty, strikes out on his or her own, and through native wit, devotion to duty and singleness of purpose, somehow creates a business and industrial activity.

Amaele (1997), opined that entrepreneurs have the ability to spark new ideas and new products that create business, which in turn create the need for new jobs. The United Nations (1988), posit that entrepreneurs are people that bear risks of launching a new venture, developing a new product, commercializing an invention, adapting a technology and developing a new market place. He is a person who has chosen to assume risks, identifying business opportunities, gather resources to initiate action and establish organizations to meet market opportunities (Nelson and Leach in Onyia, 2011).

An entrepreneur is a creative person and risk taker who can:
- recognize a business opportunity;
- critically analyze such opportunity;
- take a decision to act upon the analysis;
- assemble the required human and material resources;
- execute a programme resulting to new business enterprise and profits (Meredith in Nwangwu, 2006:18).

The entrepreneur is that skillful, innovative and imaginative individual who is always ready not only to take risks, but also ready to venture into probably unexplored business opportunities. The entrepreneur is a risk taker and bearer, he is creative and is constantly driven by the pursuit of success and profit maximization.
Characteristics of an Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur has some distinguishing characteristics that sets him/her apart from the crowd. Scarborough 1992 quoted in Nwangwu (2006:19), highlights the following characteristics exhibited by entrepreneurs. They tend to:

- take moderate risks;
- have a desire for responsibility;
- be confident in their ability to succeed;
- want immediate feedback;
- have high amounts of energy;
- press onward inspite of setbacks;
- set goals and commit themselves to reach them;
- work well with other people;
- have a future orientation;
- be skilled in organizing;
- tolerate rejection, frustration and stress;
- make decisions and carry them out;
- be motivated by a sense of achievement not by money

Roles of an Entrepreneur

Ohaegbunam and Paul in Nwangwu (2006:21) Identified the following specific roles of an entrepreneur:

1. Production of goods and services that are very vital to the well being, comfort and happiness of members of the society.
2. Creation of self employment. This reduces the problem of unemployment and other social vices.
3. The entrepreneurs are in most cases motivated not only by the desire to make profit but also by the need to make material contributions to the communities.
4. Through entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur’s standard of living and that of the entire society are enhanced.
5. The entrepreneur knows and determines the specific wants of the people and the nature of goods and services that will satisfy these wants most comfortably.
6. The entrepreneur makes certainty possible.
7. Entrepreneurship helps to develop a pool of potential entrepreneurs who are well equipped with skills and technical know-how to operate small and medium scale industries.
8. Entrepreneurs through entrepreneurship stimulate rural, economic and industrial development. They contribute to the development of rural and less developed areas.
9. Other roles of an entrepreneur include decision making managerial roles etc.

The above list is in no way exhaustive. It has however revealed the strategic and indispensable position the entrepreneur occupies in any economy.
Apart from the above qualities, the entrepreneur must be and must be seen to be:

Innovative and hardworking, one who is self confident and resourceful, one who must be honest, truthful and accountable and one who has a penchant for risk bearing as well as insatiable desire for success in business setting. These attributes of an entrepreneur are the distinguishing qualities that make an entrepreneur to persist and succeed where others have failed (Onyia, 2011:52).

Nwachukwu in Onyia (1990:52), highlighted the risks that the entrepreneur is exposed to on daily basis to include:
- family risks; the entrepreneur risks the smoothness of the day to day running of the family and parental unity of the children,
- financial risks; the entrepreneur risks the hard earned capital which he got through austere savings,
- emotional risks; that is having stressful feelings when the enterprise is going through a trial period,
- some entrepreneurs who are career civil servants, risk their jobs in order to keep afloat with the entrepreneurial activities.

It is clear that to succeed, the entrepreneur must be strong both physically, emotionally and psychologically. He must be innovative and diligent. Most importantly, the entrepreneur must not be afraid of making mistakes and/or failure.

The Concept of Education

Education is the process through which desirable values, norms, attitudes and society’s culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. As a socializing agent, education is a vehicle for the sustenance and perpetuation of a peoples’ culture, values, norms, tradition and ethos through the ages. Chukwu (2010) and Onyebuchi (2014), agree that education is the most potent instrument for positive change within any society. They observed that it remains the most potent weapon for fighting ignorance, morbidity, poverty and underdevelopment in any society. Recognizing the importance of education, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004), maintains that education is an instrument per excellence for effecting national development.
Education is the sum total of all the processes in which a child develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society. It remains the bedrock of all development and that is why governments all over the world try to pay serious attention to it (Obunadike, 2013). Education is light while ignorance cum illiteracy are darkness. It is education that makes all the difference between the developed countries of the West (USA, Canada, Germany, Britain, Japan, Australia etc) and the developing and underdeveloped countries mostly in Africa and Asia, including Nigeria and others.

Education remains the greatest and most potent instrument for the transformation and empowerment of individuals, societies and nation states. It develops the individual’s skills, enlightens him/her and ensures that the individual is a useful and contributing member of society. Education develops and impacts positively on all sectors of a nation’s economy (health, agriculture, commerce, defence etc) thereby ensuring a better living standard for the citizenry.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a carefully planned process that leads to acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies, skills, aptitudes, knowledge and capacity for self employment, job-creation and self reliance. It equips the learner with skills on decision-making, acquisition of new ideas, methods of raising and establishing business relationships (Ikeme, 2006). Contributing, Adamu (2005) relates entrepreneurship education to what he refers to as the four pillars of education which include: Learning to know; learning to do; learning to live together and learning to be.

Education is the only reform agent that can change persons and their character, their attitude and behavior. It inculcates the right values that build newness in citizens to think and act right. In this light, entrepreneurship education becomes a very important tool for nation building. Entrepreneurship education is important because of the following reasons:

1. Entrepreneurship education turns its beneficiaries into industrial leaders in the world of work, equipping them with skills and enabling them to become job creators, employment generators and enhance their capacity for wealth creation.
2. It enables the beneficiaries to create quality goods, services, materials and money thereby, contributing to individual and societal well-being.
3. Entrepreneurship education is a conscious effort directed at inculcating transformative skills in those who become committed to it and who would utilize the knowledge gained to create new powerful strategies.
4. Entrepreneurship education is a crucial transformative tool that will stir the citizenry into wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and indigenous cum global value reorientation (Onyene, 2014).
5. It is necessary for establishing highly and sustainable competitive macro economic playing ground.
Entrepreneurship education creates varied opportunities that will stimulate economic growth.

Entrepreneurship education trains, educates and produces graduates who will not only possess specific knowledge in their various disciplines, but possess the mentality to initiate, start and grow successful businesses with reduced risks and/or failures (Onyene, 2014).

It arms the beneficiaries with problem-solving existential cum life skills.

Entrepreneurship education is a veritable instrument for achieving not just the national goals, but the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It increases enterprise growth and profitability, thereby impacting positively on both individual and group wellbeing.

Entrepreneurship education empowers beneficiaries to align with the world of business, create labour and employment, build skills and boost innovative drive with inherent production of goods and services for both economic and industrial growth.

It is a veritable vehicle for industrial development and market factor growth, capacity building and resource redistribution.

Entrepreneurship education not only exposes learners to the original course content, it also introduces them to experimental essence that links the classroom to the market, connect learners to traders and at the same time, establishes synergy between their tools and operational fields.

**Conclusion**

Education is the most reliable vehicle necessary for both individual and societal growth and transformation. In today’s society, functional cum entrepreneurial education becomes the key for the fight against unemployment which is a major cankerworm in today’s Nigeria and elsewhere. Entrepreneurship education is even more important in an era of Boko Haram, endemic poverty and preponderance of other social ills; includes armed robbery, kidnapping, child trafficking and all forms of violence. Nigeria needs a sustainable peace culture and not the aforementioned social ills.

The government, private sector and all stakeholders in education should ensure that all schools from the basic education level to tertiary are well equipped for vocational cum entrepreneurial education. This will ensure that graduates are not job seekers but job providers. This and only this is a sure route to a sustainable peace culture in country.
References


