

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE NATION'S YOUTHS UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGH FUNCTIONAL AND VIABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR NATIONAL BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

A nation's building, economic development and in fact overall developmental processes in any country is anchored on her youths potentials. Youths unemployment and unemployability in a volatile country like Nigeria has positive correlational impact on the nation's building and economic growth and development. Youths restiveness, crime, violence, fraud, assassination armed robbery, kidnapping and other negative behavioural tendencies equally have negative effects on the overall nation's building. This paper is articulated to showcase that youths unemployment and unemployability in Nigeria could be drastically reduced through functional and viable entrepreneurship education. This also, on the other hand will boost national building and economic growth and development. The paper highlights the challenges facing entrepreneurial manager and small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs). The paper likewise provides strategical framework that if adopted will enhance entrepreneurship education and national building in Nigeria. It concludes by offering solutions that will tackle the problems in order to actualize national building, economic growth and development via functional and viable entrepreneurship education.

Keywords: National Building, Entrepreneurship Education, Youths Unemployment, Economic Development

The concept of entrepreneurship is critical to the socio-economic development, national building and development and growth of any nation. This is

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because of the peculiar characteristics and qualities of entrepreneurs that make them the investors, innovators, the creators of new products and services and the special class of people in society who see opportunities for job creation and wealth generation, when other people are blind (Egwu, 2011).

Agbede (2015) perceived entrepreneurship education as a vital key for enhancing national economic growth and sustainable development in any nation and such growth and development highly depends on the quality of education received by her citizens. Therefore a nation must structure her entrepreneurship education in such a way that it can inculcate the right values, knowledge and skills to students in the tertiary institutions. In other words, a functional and viable entrepreneurship education is one that encompasses all it takes to make people especially the youths employers of labour not seekers of job (Osolor, 2013).

Kumar (2011) asserted that the entrepreneurial manager acts as a trigger head to give spark to national growth and economic development by his entrepreneurial decisions.

The youths having acquired the necessary and required skills, values and knowledge to run their small and medium scale enterprises can play pivotal roles not only in the national building but in the development of farms and service sectors (Blurtit, 2011). These opportunities are not realized by common men but the entrepreneurial managers sense the opportunities faster than others do.

Egwu (2011) observed that Nigeria with a population of over 200,000 million people only about 78 million people are officially employed in the civil and public services, from the federal through 36 states to the 774 local government levels. The Nigerian Labour Market is saturated, graduates are turned out in thousands every year and no jobs or employments for them. This is why the Federal Government integrated entrepreneurship education in the tertiary institution as essential new platforms that will guarantee all graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions the knowledge of appropriate skills, competences and dispositions that will make them globally competitive and capable of contributing meaningfully to Nigeria's nation building and socio-economic development. This is exactly the vision and mission surrounding entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and even in other developed and developing countries of the world.

Meaning of entrepreneurship

There are many other words often used as substitutes for entrepreneurship, which includes enterprise, innovation, small business, growth companies, and so on. The concept of entrepreneurship has a wide range of meaning. There are two extreme meanings of the concept of entrepreneur. Egbenta (2014) submitted that an entrepreneur is a person of very high aptitude who pioneers change, possessing characteristics found in only a very small fraction of the population. These kind of people are referred to as inventors, innovators and genius. In order works entrepreneurship is about innovation, new solution, creative approaches and new ways of operating. On the other extreme it is a person who wants to work for himself or herself. In the business cycle it means to start business. Ossai Nwalado (2012) observed that entrepreneurship is about solving problems and not making money. By solving problems, according to him may lead to making lots of money. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2005) defined entrepreneurship as "someone who starts a new business or arranges business deals in order to make money, often,

in a way that involves financial risk. Stevenson and Jarillo (2011) defined entrepreneurship as the pursuit of opportunity beyond the resources you currently control. That is, entrepreneurship is a process that results in creativity, innovation and growth.

Innovative entrepreneurs come in all shapes and forms; the benefits are not limited to start-up innovative ventures or new jobs. Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action and it is therefore a key competence for all, helping young people to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake (UNDP, 2011).

To fully capture and understand the entrepreneurship phenomenon, there is need to take a broad and inclusive view in order not to miss important components and trends in this rapidly growing global economic transformations (OECD 2004). Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity innovation and taking calculated risks, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society; makes employees more aware of the context of their work able to seize opportunities and provide a foundation for entrepreneurs to establishing a social or commercial activity. (UNDP, 2011).

Simply put entrepreneurship is the process of starting and managing own business. That is an individual becomes aware of business ownership as an option to a viable alternative. The greatest advantage of entrepreneurship is personal freedom, personal satisfaction, increased income and self esteem. However, the disadvantages are risk of loss of income, long and regular working hours, and personal discipline should be noted however that an entrepreneur is different from a capital provider, a financier or a venture capitalist because he the entrepreneur has the following unique characteristics:

- i. He takes unusual risks
- ii. He creates wealth and value for others and self
- iii. He maximizes opportunities
- iv. He is an innovator, an inventor
- v. He makes profit from creating things.

The entrepreneur is bold, courageous, venturesome, risk taking and a dower. He is a non-conformist, not conservative and anti-routine in life style. An entrepreneur is a rational thinker and performer, unassuming simple and humble and shuns officialdom

Entrepreneurship Education

During the colonial era, development of entrepreneurship was stalled by the colonial masters because they refused to encourage individuals to be self-dependent and self-reliant. The colonial masters did not encourage the locals to acquire the necessary skills that will make them to be self-reliant and to set up small scale enterprises where they could employ others. They placed more emphasis on civil service and company jobs with little motivation for self-employment.

Prior to 1960, most of the enterprises were owned by foreigners and this caused service problems on the foreign exchange of the country. In the light of these the Federal Government Promulgated the indiginization Decree of 1977. This decree ushered in the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The significance of education in every human and modern society remains robustly indispensable.

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Ebong (2000) stated that manpower development is necessary in order to resuscitate a nation's economy from its depressed state. Egbenta (2014) stressed that the education of the colonial masters introduced in Nigeria had catastrophic impacts on the productivity of the youths and their innovational ability and general technological and scientifically functionability.

However, entrepreneurship education is not all that new in Nigeria. The National Directorate for Employment (NDE) was established to cushion the effects of youths unemployment in 1986. The entrepreneurship education simply means the type of education that helps a person to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to start a new business with the ultimate aim to generate income in the society. The knowledge and skills acquired must be very relevant enough to the economic environment of the areas concerned. Egbenta (2014) reasoned that entrepreneurship education must be a purposeful intervention by a teacher in the class of students to impact entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the students survive in the world of business. Entrepreneurship education prepares students to become contributive members of the society who are capable of making astute personal and economic decision. A concise definition of entrepreneurship was given by UNESCO (2008) as:

- Entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. It goes beyond business creation. It is about increasing students' ability to anticipate and response to societal changes.
- Entrepreneurship education and training which allows students to develop and use their creativity and take initial responsibility and risk.
- It should be called entrepreneurship education (not enterprise education) so that it does not sound as if it is focusing on business.

Entrepreneurship Education therefore seeks to provide students with knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage succession in a variety of settings. From the foregoing, entrepreneurship education involves; skills and abilities; helping an individual to develop self-confidence; and developing in an individual creativity. Others include making an individual intellectually productive irrespective of the area of specialization, which can be best achieved if what is taught is related to what is obtainable in the society; making an individual self-reliant, independent, and inculcating in the learner the right attitude and values that will make him or her perform excellently in the business world as a producer and employer of labour. In essence, entrepreneurship Education is not only teaching someone to run a business, it also involves encouraging creative thinking and promoting a strong sense of self-worth and accountability. In other words, entrepreneurship education includes;

- The ability to recognize opportunities in one's life
- The ability to create and operate a new venture and
- The ability to think in a creative and critical manner.

Functional and Viable Entrepreneurship Education and National Growth and Development

It is generally viewed from all ramifications that functional and viable entrepreneurship education can trigger off the nation's growth and development.

The Global Economic Monitor (2018), an annual research programme funded by the Ewing Marian Kauffman Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership and other agencies and based in the Babson College in the United State of America has established

through annual research programmes that there is a strong link between the level of entrepreneurship in a country and national growth and economic development. The agency's research shows a correlation between the prevalence of new firm and projected Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the correlation between the Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) and Projected GDP.

The findings of this annual survey are confirmed by the developments in East Asia, eight countries in East Asia described as High performing Asian Economies (HPAES) have been severally studied since their "miraculous" economic growth feats from the 1960s. These countries - the "4 tigers", Hong Kon, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea along with Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand – have demonstrated similar characters ties in their economic growth characteristics.

The World Bank (2001)

Note:

"In large measures, the HPAEs achieved high growth by getting the basics right. Private domestic investment and rapidly growing human capital were the principal engines of growth there is little that is |Miraculous" about the HPAEs record of growth. It is large due to record of mounting and putting in place functional and viable entrepreneurial education which changed the attitude of the youths and gave them innovative and creative ideas, skills and knowledge for overall national growth and development."

However, as it were, private domestic investment refers to private entrepreneurial activities while human capital development refers to functional and viable education given to students or youths that is capable of enhancing the ability to be economically productive and in this context, business education scientifically and technologically based education that enhance the capacity to manage business investment. Therefore, it becomes imperative that developing countries vis-à-vis Nigeria should emphasize entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education.

Meanwhile Chigunta (2001) noted that the Government of the world owner are coming to terms with the fact that "the once feasible ways of doing business are no longer guarantees for future economic success" hence stagnation of the nation's growth and so are "rethinking the way the young are educated by infusing and inculcating creative thinking and innovation in their nation's curriculum" and "putting much emphasis on the need to train future entrepreneurs through infusing entrepreneurship components within the educational system" starting from the elementary schools level.

In this direction, functional and viable entrepreneurship education means education that allows the infusion and inculcation of skills, right values, and knowledge in the youths for them to be able to establish their own small enterprises or businesses and run them effectively (Onyeneho, 2018).

Why Small and medium Enterprises and Business Fail in Nigeria

Indeed, there are many known and established causes of business failure in Nigeria. When an enterprise cannot or no longer supply its goods and services to its own customers on demand, then, there must be a death cat on the line, in other words, business failure has set in.

Egwu (2011) highlighted some of these factors that can bring about enterprise or business failures. Some of which include:

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- Personal problem of Chief Executives and Board members
- Lack of application of managerial ground norms and principles
- Prematurity, frustration and lack of experience
- Lack of transparent and financial understanding
- Lack of planning, critical strategic and operation
- Lack of management succession failure to obey the law of legacy
- Poor credit management
- Fraud and corruption
- Shrinking market share and declining sales
- Lack of business expansion
- Declining profit turnover
- Declining working capital
- Business and economic depression
- High debt ratio
- Poor leadership and management practices and philosophies
- Poor location of industry
- Lack of competitiveness of company in the industry
- Receivable difficulties
- Absentee and neglecting management
- Excessive fixed assets and low liquidity base.

In the same manner, Deakins and Freel (2003) suggested that the following steps should be taken to curb with failure of business enterprises:

- a. Avoidance of inappropriate methods and technologies
- b. Entrenchment of clear visions where there is no vision and appropriate knowledge, people and organization perish.
- c. Avoidance of inappropriate empowerment and motivation such as payment of wages that are not tied to performance and productivity.
- d. Avoidance of ineffective team both employee and management
- e. The destruction of bureaucratic, bureaumania and bureau pathology
- f. Avoidance of unnecessary legalism and rationalization of actions.
- g. Avoidance of one reliance on ICT, to the neglect of the welfare of human resources who possess the key knowledge needed by the organization.
- h. Avoidance of rigid demarcation of organizational boundaries, successful organizations have seamless interfaces and networks for internal quality controls and assurance.

Avoidance of failure of understanding or organizational purpose and their implications counting success and seeking it whenever it may be found. This can be achieved by doing the following;

- Creating a bold and sweeping vision
- Using appropriate methodology as a rule.
- Working with knowledgeable and experienced teams.

Barriers to Entrepreneurial Education in Nigeria

They are many challenges, that impede the development of functional and viable education in Nigeria. Emmanuel (2010) highlighted some of the problems affecting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria as follows:

1. Entrepreneurship education programme is not immune to the problem of educational system in Nigeria, notably are inadequate funding and insufficient facilities.

2. Non-availability of entrepreneurship centres which should serve as laboratories where students should have hands on, and mind on practical exercise in most institutions

3. Entrepreneurship education is mostly implemented largely as theoretical discourse devoid of real thing.

4. Policy trust regarding to the implementation of the programme is not clear-cut because it adds more tasks to the teachers in most cases. Should the existing teachers teach the fundamental principles, and should entrepreneurial teachers be employed to teach entrepreneurially, is a question to stakeholders because shops/business offices meant for the entrepreneur teachers may not be there.

5. Since entrepreneurs learn by doing, it is not certain whether the teachers will be employed to handle the practical classes in entrepreneurship courses on part time bases, as stipulated in the policy.

6. Lack of interest by the students who have poor social rating for entrepreneurship they look at it as a going into trading which they feel is not fit for a university graduate.

7. Poverty and education: Poverty here have various manifestations including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition, ill health or lack of success to education, and other basic services, increase morbidity and mortality from illness, handles and inadequate housing, unsafe environment and social decision crimination and education. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision making in civil, social and cultural rite. It is the inability to attain a minimal standard living.

8. The greatest worry of the country is the way education will be utilized to develop people's ability to manage and induce change in order to improve the standard of living of her citizenry and effect national development.

9. There is no marriage between the traditional goals of education and the goals of modern science, technical and vocational education in developing entrepreneurship for national development.

10. Need for curriculum enrichment: Components of entrepreneurship are not in line with the current labour market.

In actual practice, Egwu (2011) articulated what should be barriers confronting. The Nigerian entrepreneurs which include:

- Lack of family support or mentor
- Financial constraints
- Leadership and managerial incompetence
- Poor infrastructure in society
- Lack of roads, electricity, security etc.
- Political instability
- Cultural and religious barriers, epically for female aspirants and potential entrepreneurs
- Lack of managerial support, especially for potential intrapreneurs in existing organization
- Unfavorable government policies, stringent tax regime, confused macro and micro economic and financial policies

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- Aggressive competitive from foreign manufacturers of more superior products, especially in countries like Nigeria.
- Low threshold base in education, training and development
- Poor corporate or entrepreneurial cultures for nurturing creativity, imagination innovativeness and self actualization.
- Poor and negative ethics; prevalence of corruption and amorality.
- Poor environmental impact assessment data.

Conclusion

The purpose of functional and viable entrepreneurship education is to equip the youths with skills, right values and knowledge that will enable them establish their own small enterprises and run them effectively.

Wikipedia (2011), opined that entrepreneurship and education are two such extra-ordinary opportunities that are interconnected and engaged in the impartation of competencies required for human development. Functional and viable entrepreneurship education seeks to provide the skills and motivation that encourages entrepreneurial success in a variety ways. It tends to build in the young undergraduates (youths) situations and projects that could be translated to wealth, due to the present economic situations in the country, as well as allowing young minds to be creative and innovative instead of one dependent in the paid public service empowerment. When youths generate wealth instead of waiting for paid jobs, when youths are employers of labour instead of being employees, this scenery fast tracks the nation's building and economic growth and development. This is infact the vision and mission of functional and viable entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and of course the world over.

Recommendations

- Actualization of pre-vocational training programmes by the Federal Government aimed at re-energizing functional and viable entrepreneurship education.
- Entrepreneurship Education should be made to pay more attention on acquisition of business skills and also making entrepreneurship education practical oriented in nature.
- There should be a mental re-orientation of Nigerians and youths. This has brought dicotomy between University and Polytechnic graduates. This must be addressed and stopped.
- Life-long learning should be encouraged by articulating programmes for lifelong education for graduates of UBE who may not have the opportunity for higher education after JSS III.
- Follow-up should be mounted on those who run ownership operated businesses as to ascertain if such people need possible assistance. Financial assistance should be made available for them.
- The Federal government evolve a national culture of entrepreneurship by supporting and rewarding self-reliant graduates across the tertiary levels in Nigeria. In order to enrich the curriculum of entrepreneurship education, there should be periodic field trips, industrial tours to industrial nations, mentorship programmes, workshops etc. for students of entrepreneurship education. This approach will help them imbibe entrepreneurship traits.

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- The entrepreneurship curriculum should be pragmatic in order to inculcate in the undergraduates practical enterprise building skills which should be turned into viable business opportunities during and after graduation.
- Our tertiary institutions should be actively involved in the creation of Technology Business incubation Centre (TBIC) for better and effective promotion of entrepreneurship education. This is the model in Brazil, Australia, USA and other countries.
- The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme should be refocused as a period for acquisition of entrepreneurship skills and implementation of those skills during the service year.
- The Federal Government should refocus Education Trust Fund (ETF), Petroleum Development Trust Fund (PTDF) and Federal Ministry of Education (FME) to set aside reasonable funds for the provision of infrastructural development and academic programmes etc.
- The authorities of Nigerian higher institutions should explore the prospect of securing assistance and advisory services from government's support agencies for their graduates who may want to start their own enterprises.
- The various governmental support agencies such as Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi (FIIRO), National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), Raw Materials, Research and Development Council (RMRDC) etc should align their statutory mandates with promotion of entrepreneurship education in the Nigeria higher institutions.
- The various Micro-finance banks should be able to provide start-up capital to our young graduates who want to venture into various businesses or enterprises.

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