

HIGHER EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Higher education and entrepreneurship are highly required for sustainable national development. They are becoming increasingly important at all levels of development due to the uncertainty and complexity in the society. It is an undisputable fact that no country in the world can develop in all ramifications without a functional higher education and entrepreneurship. Thus, higher education and entrepreneurship helped to reduce the problems of unemployment and poverty among the youths and graduates in Nigeria. This paper focused on higher education and entrepreneurship for sustainable national development. It highlighted the concept of higher education, entrepreneurship and sustainable national development. The paper also discussed the roles of higher education and entrepreneurship for sustainable national development. The paper concluded that higher education and entrepreneurship skills are crucial to political, socio-cultural and economic development in Nigeria because they are needed for human resources that will promote small enterprises, productivity as well as for overall development of the country. Recommendations were made which include among others that entrepreneurship culture should be built into Nigeria educational system in order to instill entrepreneurship spirit in our graduates; and government should try her possible best to address some of the problems such as poor funding, over-crowded lecture hall, acute shortage of infrastructure and facilities, incessant strike action by the Academic staff Union of Universities that affecting realization of higher education goals in Nigeria.

Keyword: Higher Education, Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, Sustainable National Development

Introduction

Higher education and entrepreneurship are vital investments for sustainable development. The issue of sustainability and change remain perpetual and it is up to the society to determine its pace and direction that would sustained development. Rapidly, social changes are creating uncertainty and complexity in the society. To prepare the children and youth to cope with the present situation needs to develop analytical and critical thinking, skill and attitude that would make them more flexible and innovative to deal with uncertainty and crises at national and global levels (Oblechina, 2017). Therefore, higher education and entrepreneurship are useful tools for achievement of this great milestone for sustainable technological, social economic and political development.

Higher institutions of learning are agents of social change, nation building and development, which serve as role models of innovation and change processes. Likewise, entrepreneurship helps to bring self-fulfillment to individuals and checks rural to urban drift, alleviates and eradicates poverty. From all indications, higher education and entrepreneurship are powerful means for manpower training, skills acquisition and development. Thus, higher education and entrepreneurship enable the citizens to acquire specific skills and competences required in specialized areas that will enable such individuals participate actively in socio-economic activities of the society where he/she lives.

The goals and objectives of higher education include contributing to national development through higher level manpower training, providing accessible and affordable quality lifelong learning opportunities and informal educational programmes which inculcate into students the requisite skills for self-reliance in the world of work. Higher education therefore produces skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) 2013). However, achievement of the goals of higher education that will sustain development can only be realized in teaching and learning if functional educations are highly promoted in the institutions of higher learning by members of the academic staff who are one of the major stakeholders in the teaching and learning processes in higher education institutions. Entrepreneurship serves as a medium through which entrepreneurship skills are inculcated to the students to sustain development. This is because, entrepreneurship education develops the students to take more responsibility for themselves and their learning, aids them to try to achieve their goals, be creative, discover existing opportunities and in general cope in the complex society. Hence, the rationale for entrepreneurship education is for the students to take the position of becoming employment generations, rather than excellent job seekers, thereby creating trust and capabilities for a positive change and impact in the society.

From foregoing, it can be argued that, higher education and entrepreneurship have capability of making graduates employable in their various field of specialization after graduation from a course of study. But surprisingly, graduates continue to search for white collar job after their national Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as results of unemployment in the land. Hence, the reasons for sustainability of national development through higher education and entrepreneurship that will help the citizens to be creative and self-relevant. This will invariably reduce the problem of unemployment through the establishment of new enterprise of taking over of existing one. By this, entrepreneurship with good qualities would be produced to utilize those competences, skills and knowledge they have acquired like time management, customer relationship, management skills etc for the benefits graduates as individuals and the society in general.

Concept of Higher Education

Higher education is an institution that grants academic degrees in various disciplines and courses. It can be described as educational institutions attended after secondary education in pursuance of higher degrees. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) higher or tertiary education is given after post basic education in institutions such as the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Mono-Technics and other specialized institutions. These institutions offer undergraduates and post graduates programmes at certificate levels and award degrees to undergraduates and post graduates students. They train

highly qualifies specialist, scientific and pedagogical personnel for various branches of the economy such as sciences education, engineering, medicines, social sciences, humanities, management sciences and cultural subjects. They conduct theoretical and applied scientific researches, which form the basic for training specialists; as well provide refresher courses for teachers in higher and secondary specialized schools including specialist employed in diverse branches of industry, agriculture and culture. The university is a community of scholars and students engages in a complex task of learning, to which humanity looks up for overall human progress (Robert – Okah and Worlu, 2013).

Higher education occupies essential and revered positions in the nation. According to Okolie (2003) higher education, like other levels of education is a liberating force from operation and marginalization. It has played a leading role in Africa's transformation towards sustainable and equitable development. Therefore, the importance of higher education to social, economic, industrial and technological development of any given society is very paramount for global competitiveness. Higher institutions of learning are viewed as the concrete movers of economic knowledge driven global economy. Higher education exists to accomplish specific individuals and national objectives as stipulated in Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), which promulgates the objectives of higher education to include: the contribution to national development through relevant manpower training, the acquisition, development and inculcation of proper values for the development of intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate the local and external environments. Hence, these institutions are expected to achieve these objectives through teaching, administration, research, dissemination of existing and new information and service to the community

Therefore, the extent to which all these can be achieved depend largely on the efficiency of higher education to produce graduates (manpower) that can use the skills and knowledge acquired in various institutions of learning to perform the act of exhibiting the skills in starting a business with a view of making profit and also perceives opportunities where others do not by searching for change and responding to it through the exploration of available opportunities. In other words, national development can be sustained through higher education that produce graduates oriented in entrepreneurship, possess and the traits of entrepreneur such as self-confidence, communication ability, building for the future profit, oriented, hand working, goals oriented, demonstrates initiatives, willing to listen, set own standard, persistence copes with failure, copes with uncertainty, commitment, reliable, integrity etc. However, higher education is facing some challenges in terms of sustainability of national development. According to Ojerinde (2011) access to higher education is inhibited by gender issue, quota system, federal character and socio-cultural beliefs and practices, among others. Other challenges affecting higher education include: rising insecurity, shortage of infrastructure and facilities, incessant strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), poor funding, over-crowded lecture halls etc.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change and creation. It requires and application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Essential ingredients in entrepreneurship include the willingness to take calculated risk in terms of time, equity or career; the ability to formulate and effective venture team; the creative skill to marshal needed resources; and fundamental skills of building solid

business plan; and the vision to recognize opportunity where other see chaos, contradiction and confusion (Emeruwa, 2005). According to Zimmerer and Scarborough, (2006) entrepreneurship is commonly defined as the process of creating a business. An entrepreneur is therefore a person who is driven to establish a business to take advantage of the economic opportunities and personal fulfillment offered by pursuing their own dreams and shaping their own destinies in Local, national and global economics. Similarly, Suleiman cited in Unachukwu (2009) viewed entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and to run an enterprise successfully.

In addition, Hisrich, Peter and Shepherd (2008) described entrepreneurship as the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying financial psychic and social risk, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction. In the same vein, Omolayo (2006) sees entrepreneurship as the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coupling these with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and create wealth. In the last century many writers have identified entrepreneurship with function of uncertainty and risk bearing and others with the coordination of productive resources, the introduction of innovation and the provision of technical know-how (Hoselitz cited in Burnett, 2000). Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Entrepreneurship indicator programme (2009) defined entrepreneurship as an enterprising human activity in pursuit of the generation of value through the creation or expansion of economic activity by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets. From the foregoing, entrepreneurship is summarized to refer to an individual ability to turn ideas into action. This action includes creativity, innovation, taking calculated risk, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

However, entrepreneurship cannot be discussed in isolation of entrepreneurship education. This is because it is the education and training that allow learner to develop and use their creativity and to take initiatives, responsibility and risks. Entrepreneurship education is the process of providing individual with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them many researchers and public analysts believe that the quality of training packages and delivery through training experts were good but their impact were minimal because of the various problems associated with funding and the weak institutional framework and linkage to ensure their sustainability. Besides, an important objective of creating an enterprise culture and the enabling environment by sustain the culture were not achieved (Nebo, 2015).

Concept of Sustainable National Development

The word sustainable is often used interchangeably with sustainability. It means a long term human and material maintenance. According to Ojokheta (2018) sustainability means to maintain, keep in existence, and keep going; prolonged or lasting. The concept of sustainability consists of three dimensions: the protection of the national environment, the maintenance of economic vitality and observance of specific social considerations. The term sustainable development became noticeable after the Rio Earth summit in 1992 which prioritized global environmental discussions and also advocated the role of education in preventing ecological degradation.

Today, sustainability has become generally a formal requirement for most of the development planning documents around the world; however, its practical implementation is difficult because of the need to acquire new knowledge and to transform attitudes and behavior with regard to sustainability (Klavin, 2010).

Sustainable development is generally thought to have three components which are environment, society and economy. For example, a healthy society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water and clean air for its citizens (Holla, 2009). Traditionally, sustainable National development is conceptually considered in terms of three main pillars. First, the environmental sustainability which refers to the ability of the environment of a nation to continue to function properly indefinitely and to minimize environmental degradation. Secondly, economic sustainability refers to the way to achieving economic growth as well as making use of the globe resources in a sustainable way. Thirdly, social sustainability refers to the actions and the effort to promote development that does not lessen the stock of social and human resources as well as maintain harmonious communities (Ramzy, 2012). In the views of Kanbar (2012) education for sustainable national development (ESND) is based on the principles and values that underlie sustainable development, and it deals with the four dimensions of sustainability which are environment, society, culture and economy.

National development can be viewed as an overall improvement on political, cultural, religious, socio-economic, infrastructural and human development in a nation. It encompasses social and political development which is the attainment of a number of ideas of modernization such as a rise in productivity, social and economic equity, improved institutions and values (Nworgu, 2009). Similarly, Fawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) described National development as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation.

Sustainable national development therefore is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs (Brundland Commission, 1987). However, the issue of national development sustainability revolves around the ability of any nation to be able to guarantee the smooth continuation of events or projects long after their establishment. Thus, higher education and entrepreneurship are considered as viable weapons for sustainable national development for instance, higher education equips students with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to create a sustainable future. It also helps students to develop a habit of critical and creative thinking skill and a value system that emphasizes responsibility to one self, others and the planet. In addition, entrepreneurship is considered as bedrock of development the world over. It enhances economic development, creates job opportunities, transforms traditional/existing industries and stimulates investment and increases per capita income and output. In line with the above submissions, Goolam (2015) reiterated that the quality of knowledge which is generated in institutions of higher learning are critical to national competitiveness and countries can achieve sustainable development by improving through training at higher levels the skills of other human capital.

Higher Education and Sustainable National Development

Education generally is seen as a lifelong process and is widely accepted as a fundamental prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development. The rapid social changes are creating uncertainty and complexity in world, and this calls for urgent attention to ensure that a country like Nigeria cope with the situation, there is need for development of analytical and critical thinking, skill and attitude in the minds of individuals in the society that would make them more flexible, creative and innovative to deal with uncertainty and crises at national and global level. This can be achieved through the educational system such as the higher education. Higher education is a sinequanon to any nation development. According to Ajayi and Afolabi (2009) education is the greatest force that can be used to bring about change and investment that a nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political social and human resources. Similarly UNESCO (2005) opined that education for sustainable development empowers people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future. In line with the above assertion, Muhammad and Sani (2016) stated that an education that seeks to balance human and economic wellbeing with culture, and respect for earth's natural resources should be the focus of tertiary institutions for developing the required behavior towards sustainability.

More importantly, higher education re-orientate the educational system at all levels to help people think and behave in ways that foster a more sustainable planet. Manpower training and development is a good strategy for sustainable national development. This is because it increases the productivity of employees, improves their quality and mates for personal growth and development. Higher education therefore is expected to create the needed manpower resources with enhanced skills which can lead to technological innovation and productivity and growth within the economy. According to Edame (2004) higher education is aimed at producing men and women who possess both culture and expert knowledge in all dimensions.

Therefore, to sustain national development through higher education the curriculum of higher education must reflect the basic needs of the society and fulfill educational objectives in terms of contents. Relating the curriculum with the needs, problems and aspiration of the nation is a route to functional, qualitative and relevant education. Moreso, to promote scholarship, higher institution of learning should build capacity for research and teaching activities at an international standard in identified areas that are crucial for national sustainability. However Palmer (2013) while considering the roles and functions of the tertiary institutions to promote sustainable national development stated that the following should be addressed:

- Increasing the relevance of teaching and research for the societal process leading to more sustainable development and discovering unsustainable patterns.
- Improving the quality and efficiency of teaching and research.
- Bridging the gap between science and education and traditional knowledge and education.
- Strengthening interactions with actors outside the institutions, in particular local communities and business, and
- Introducing decentralizing and flexible management concepts.

In additions, Lennard and Bo (2018) identified the following as the goals of sustainable development goals of Higher education: ending poverty, hunger, encouraging good health and wellbeing; providing quality education; providing gender equality; providing clean water and sanitation; providing affordable and clean energy; providing decent work and economic growth; addressing issues relating to our industries; innovation and infrastructure; reducing inequalities; developing sustainable cities and communities; encouraging responsible consumption and production; taking action on climate changes; promotion life on land; working towards peace; justice and strong institutions; and creating partnership to achieving sustainable development goals.

Entrepreneurship and Sustainable National Development

Entrepreneurship constitutes a vital engine for economic, social, technological and all round development of any nation. It has been recognized nationally and globally as a tool for a sustainable virile and stable economy. This is more reasons successive governments in Nigeria attempted to strengthen relevant agencies in order to achieve this position. In recognizing the importance of entrepreneurship in the area of sustainable development Dollingex (2008) established that no country can as a matter of truth, move forward technologically, industrially and economically without developing strong private partner initiative in the creation of wealth, poverty reduction and employment generation, with required skills. These skills include managerial, comparative, communication, technical, human and special skills to cope with the challenges of the future.

Entrepreneurship is vital to the sustainable of national development in various ways. Some of these areas are discussed below:

Entrepreneurship serves as learning and training carters for the translation of dreams ad ideas into successful business ventures, it facilitates the identification, creation and utilization of non-existent saving.

It creates employment for the unemployed youths. Through entrepreneurial education, unemployment among the Nigeria teeming population can be reduced. According to Dollingex (2008) 70% of the entire work force is employed by entrepreneurial ventures; leads to technological advancement, creates more jobs per unit of invested capital and per unit of energy consumed, mobilizes resources that ordinarily would have remained idle in the hands of people and employ them productively and by doing so, capital formulations encouraged; strengthens locally produced products for perfect competition; links up the various sectors of the economy and constitute the market for agricultural extractive and industrial output as well as providing source of material and labour input for big industries; builds skills such as managerial, human, technical, conceptual skills in the individuals by teaching and allowing them to start businesses with little or no money themselves; reduces poverty and idleness; attracts foreign direct investment (FDI) investors will flood the economy, which will move the nation towards industrialization.

In addition, incorporation of entrepreneurship into formal education promotes self-employment and makes Nigerian graduates from various institutions of higher learning more venturesome. Entrepreneurship education is an employment strategy deliberately designed to provide career information to students, to enable them relate interests, needs and abilities to occupational opportunities (Offor, 2011). Thus, entrepreneurship produces graduates who will provide jobs, create wealth, enlarge and fast-track the economy to attain the status of one

of the twenty most developed economies of the world in the nearest future. Also, entrepreneurship serves as a key driver to economic development. It creates freedom for people to develop economically. Therefore, entrepreneurship activities and the resultant financial gains always be of benefit to a nation and its citizens.

Conclusion

Education and entrepreneurship are vital to development of any nation. Education programmes are believed to afford the students the rights skills, knowledge and competences needed for them to take their positions as useful members of society. Thus, the aim of Nigeria education at all levels especially higher education level should be to produce graduates who have the skills to use their heads and hands to provide job for themselves, employ others and also creates wealth. Hence, to achieve this, there is the need to fortify all the higher institutions of learning to expose the students to various entrepreneurial skills that will help them to be self-employed; to acquired skills for daily creativeliving, reduce unemployment by generating employment through self-sufficiency; reduce poverty, illness and promote health, develop the private sector, produce steady supply of qualitative manpower. Higher education and entrepreneurship are two such extra-ordinary opportunities that are inter connected and engaged in the impartation of competencies required for sustainable national development.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions above, the following recommendations were made:

1. Entrepreneurship culcure should be built into Nigerian educational system in order to instill entrepreneurship spirit in our graduates.
2. Government should laid a strong foundation for reducing general unemployment and its associated social problems by promoting private sector driven economy, increasing productivity and enlarging the market based on the economy.
3. Government should develop entrepreneurship programmes by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programme. This will improve the nation economy.
4. Government should create friendly environment that is conducive for economic development by reducing taxes paid by small scale businesses.
5. Government should make loans accessible to any graduates that set up small scale business through the reduction of interest rate and the issue of collaterials.
6. Government should try her possible best to address some of the problems such as poor funding, overcrowded lecture hall, acute shortage of infrastructure and facilities, incessant strike action by the academic staff Union of universities etc that affecting the realization of higher educational goals in Nigeria.

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