

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A VEHICLE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

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Abstract

This paper addresses entrepreneurship education a vehicle for employment and employment generation in Nigeria. Low level of economic activities of a nation leads to low level of job creation. Sourcing an alternative way of improving economic activities and human resources development will improve the level of employment generation in the country. In Nigeria, economic activities are strangled which leads to low employment opportunities. There is the need therefore, to find alternative means of improving economic activities for human resources development and employment generation. The state of the economy does not favour or guarantee job creation and reduction of unemployment, especially in a situation where the country's economy is based on government budgetary allocations. The paper explains the concept of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, benefits and the objectives of entrepreneurship education. It also lays emphasis how entrepreneurship education could help in employment generation in Nigeria. The paper recommends that Government should adopt a policy that will allow graduates of entrepreneurship education programme to have access to soft loans from financial institutions with little or no interest at all, so that they can establish their business enterprises with ease.

Introduction

Education is an essential tool for national development. The reason is that it reveals the economic potentials of the people, inspires and equips individuals in the society to participate in and benefit from their national economy. Entrepreneurship procreates growth because it serves as a medium for innovation, change, and a conduit for knowledge spillovers. The early 1980's heralds the need for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Prior to this period, unemployment and poverty were not a serious national concern as it is today. Ojeifo (2013) opines that political instability and inconsistencies in the social-economic policies of successive government led to the emergence of unprecedented high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. Government efforts toward salvaging the situation gave birth to entrepreneurship education policies which directed the addition of entrepreneurship education in the syllabus of all higher institutions of learning with a magnificent idea to ensure that graduates cease to be job seekers but job and wealth creators (Anyadike, Emeh and Ukah, 2012).

Thus, in a regime of increased globalization, the comparative advantages of modern economies are shifting towards knowledge based economic activities. Not only does entrepreneurship plays an important role here, it is recommended for economic growth (Onyebuchi, Anidiobu & Ezinwa 2016). Entrepreneurship education involves the willingness of

persons to persistently pursue opportunities to create wealth. This is done through innovative creation of products or services that will meet customers' needs, using scarce resources judiciously in a way that results in the growth of enterprises which satisfy the expectations of stakeholders. Gibson (2001) views entrepreneurship as the process of using one's private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with great potential. Owenvbiugie and Iyamu (2011) defines entrepreneurship education as the kind of education given to individuals with a view to developing entrepreneurship qualities properly followed up with support services for smooth take off and successful running of businesses. In a similar vein, Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011) stressed that entrepreneurship education provides student (especially those in tertiary institutions) with the skill, knowledge and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of settings. From these assertions, it is understood that a well implemented entrepreneurship education programme will climax in economic empowerment and development. In addition, Akpomi, Adejimola and Olufunmilayo (2009) opined that the reason for entrepreneurship education is to build in the individual's entrepreneurship spirit and culture.

The term empowerment refers to a set of measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own autonomy (<http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment>). It is believed that a well-planned and implemented entrepreneurship education programme is capable of creating more employment opportunities in the country. Therefore, Education in Nigeria should lay emphasis on entrepreneurship consciousness for it to be relevant in achieving the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the citizens. Having been successfully equipped with entrepreneurial skills through requisite education, one is ready to contribute positively in reducing unemployment by being self-employed. Employment is defined as what one do as a paying job (Abdulkarim, 2012). Therefore one can either be self-reliant or employed. Self-employment or self-reliance on the other hand refers to a situation where an individual generates, begins and takes control of business decision rather than working as an employee. In the view of Abdulkarim (2012) self-employment is the act of working for oneself. Also in the view of Nwachukwu (2012), self-employment is the act of generating one's income directly from customers, clients or other organizations as opposed to being an employee of a business or person. When an individual is self-employed, it means one is carrying on one's own business rather than working for an employer (Citizens Information, 2014). This insinuates that self-employment is a situation whereby an individual works for himself rather than working for an employer that pays salaries or wages.

Furthermore, through the knowledge gained from entrepreneurship education one can be self-reliant, entrepreneurship education stands out to be an antidote to unemployment having worked in line with today's educational policies that highlight self-reliance, self-employment, gainful employment and also consistent with the global awareness. Hence, there is need to incorporate and fully integrate entrepreneurial education in schools to ameliorate persistent socio-economic problems of graduates unemployment. It is against this background that the study was carried to examine entrepreneurship education as a vehicle for empowerment and employment generation in Nigeria.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Onuoha (2007) describes entrepreneurship as the practice of starting new organizations or revitalizing mature organizations, particularly new businesses generally in response to identified opportunities. Consequently, Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (2007) defines entrepreneurship as the process of creating new things with value by devoting the necessary time

and effort assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary, personal satisfaction and independence. The National Universities Commission (NUC) (2004) in its contribution to emerging definitions of entrepreneurship in Oviawe (2010) defines entrepreneurship as the art of recognizing a business opportunity, mobilizing resources and persisting to exploit that opportunity. Also in the view of Agbionu (2008), entrepreneurship involves a process aimed at creating wealth for the purpose of growth, development of the environment and eradication of unemployment for national sustainability. Oviawe (2010) also defines entrepreneurship as the ability to seek investment opportunities and establish an enterprise based on identified opportunities.

Definition of Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs are essentially people who own or control businesses through which income is gained. Entrepreneurs are enterprising individual who builds capital through risk and for initiative. Also Entrepreneurs are individuals who are willing to launch a new venture or enterprise and accept full responsibility for the outcomes. Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (2007) in the middle-ages, the term “entrepreneur” were used to describe both an actor and a person who managed large production projects. Recent definitions therefore have recognized the creation of something new, assuming risks and reward. The word “entrepreneur” means to pursue opportunities, or to fulfill needs and wants through innovation or the establishment of a business (Abiola, 2012).

Characteristics of an Entrepreneur

An entrepreneur possesses a complex personality, certain personality characteristics that makes him quite different and most of these entrepreneurial traits can be further developed in an individual if they are present in him to some extent in latent form by well-structured training and development programmes. The following are important attributable characteristics of successful entrepreneurs:

6. **Self-confidence:** Confidence, independence, individuality and optimism. They tend to believe strongly in themselves and their ability to achieve goals
7. **Task-Result oriented:** Need for achievement, profit oriented, persistence, determination, hard work, drive and initiative
8. **Risk Taker:** Risk taking, likes challenges
9. **Leadership:** Leadership behaviour, get along well with others, responsive to suggestions and criticisms
10. **Originality:** Innovative, creative, flexible, resourceful, versatile and knowledgeable.
11. Future oriented foresight and perceptive (Ajani and Ayelokan, 2010).

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

The concept of entrepreneurship education in the view of Anho (2011) is associated with various activities herein stated but not limited to the following: Innovation, creativity, risk taking, initiative, visionary, focus, determination, team spirit, resourcefulness, financial control, self-confidence, dynamic thinking, versatility, knowledgeable, originality, optimum disposition, people oriented, flexible in decision, responses to suggestions and criticism, need achievement driven, profit oriented, persistent and persevering, energy for hard work, future looking and adjustment to challenges.

Owenvbiugie and Iyamu (2011) defines entrepreneurship education as the type of education given to individuals with a view to developing entrepreneurship qualities properly followed up with support services for smooth take off and successful running of businesses. Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011) stressed that entrepreneurship education seeks to

provide students (especially those in tertiary institutions) with the skills, knowledge and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of settings. From these assertions, it is obvious that a well implemented entrepreneurship education programme will climax in economic empowerment, development and reduce unemployment. Entrepreneurship education as part of the total educational system is the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for job creation. Olannye (2010) views entrepreneurship education as a specialized type of training given to students to acquire skills, ideas, managerial abilities and capabilities needed for self-employment rather than being an employee.

Thus, entrepreneurial education enables recipients live a meaningful and fulfilling life and contribute to national development (Gibb (2002), Agweda and Abumere, 2008). Entrepreneurship education aids the acquisition of team-building skills critical for both small-scale business and large scale business. Entrepreneurship education is useful for unemployment situation in Nigeria by creating career opportunities as identified by Okekeancited by Akiri (2011), Anho (2013): Agriculture crop production, Barbing, Animal husbandry, Business centers, Beauty care, Coal production and sales, Clothes dyeing and tire, Driving career (cars, keke & okada), steel and Iron production, Money collection (daily/monthly usu), Paper and pulp, Petroleum/petrochemical production, Poultry, Tobacco production, Soap and detergent production, Wood treatment, Car wash, Sewing and fashion design, Petty trading, Waste Management Technology, Information Management Technology.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

The objectives of entrepreneurship education are spelt out by Osuala (2010) which clearly shows that it is concerned with the development and survival of both the individual and society. The following are the objectives;

1. To provide meaningful education for youth which could make them self-reliance and subsequently encourage them to drive profit and be self-independent
2. To provide graduate with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business.
3. To provide graduates with training skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
4. To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.
5. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed area.
6. To provide small and medium sized companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to management of the business centre.

From the above objectives, it is evident that this type of education if it is given all it deserves and properly implemented will produce quality graduates that will foster job creation and reduce or eliminate poverty in Nigeria. This could be actualized when the graduates are self-employed by establishing their own business enterprises. Job creation is one of the cardinal objectives of Millennium Development Goals. When ample job opportunities are created it will invariably help to reduce poverty and enhance better standard of living of individuals in Nigeria. Job creation is an act of making jobs available to the citizenry. That is creating an enabling environment for ample employment opportunities in the society. This is done by establishing cottage, small/medium scale enterprises in Nigeria.

Benefits of Entrepreneurship

In the view of Ile cited by Onyebuchi, Ezinwa and Anidiobi (2016) a person who gets entrepreneurship education right will enjoy the following as benefits:

1. Creativity: Entrepreneurship encourages creativity. Creativity denotes generation of new technology, new ideas and innovations as the translation of new ideas into a new company, new technology, and new products, or new service. The consequences of the association between entrepreneurship and environmental change are the role that entrepreneurs play in promoting innovative technologies, products and services.

2. Changes and rejuvenate market competition: Entrepreneurs stir up the waters of competition in the local and international market place. Entrepreneurs see environmental change as an opportunity and use the factors of production to produce new goods and services; they are called agents of change in a market economy. Entrepreneurship education makes people to think about the competitiveness of their business.

3. Increase in productivity: Productivity refers to the ability to produce more goods and services with less labour and other inputs. It is a measure of how well an operations system functions as an indicator of the efficiency and competitiveness of a single firm or department. One reason for the greater interest in entrepreneurship has been the growing recognition of its role in raising productivity. Higher productivity is chiefly a matter of improving production techniques and this task is the entrepreneurial function par excellence. Two elements to productivity are research and development (R&D) and investment in new plant and machinery.

How Entrepreneurship Education Could Help in Employment Generation

Entrepreneurship Education plays a vital role in the social, political and economic development of any Nation. This is possible when jobs are created for the citizenry by establishing a lot of businesses that will accommodate the unemployed youth in Nigeria. A qualified graduate of entrepreneurship education would have acquired enough skills relevant to management of small business centre (Maina 2013).

1. Creation of self-employment: An entrepreneur provides job for himself by establishing small business centre. This, according to Aiyeduso in Olorunmolu (2008) helps to reduce the problem of unemployment and other social vices in Nigeria. The entrepreneur does not only provide jobs/employment for himself alone, but provides for others too. This in turn helps the individual to increase per capital income hence improve standard living.

2. The Entrepreneur identifies the specific wants of the people and the type of goods and services that will fulfill those wants comfortably. Emeruwa (2005) asserted that the entrepreneur does not only identifies the needs of the people but mobilizes and organizes the resources to tap the opportunities by assisting men, materials, money and machines to explore the opportunity.

3. Production of goods and services that is important to the well-being, comfort and happiness of individuals in the society at large.

4. Entrepreneurship stimulates rural, economic and industrial development. They contribute to the development of rural areas. They do this by establishing their small/medium scale enterprise in such areas by discouraging rural migration.

5. They provide ample job opportunities to the rural dwellers. They also provide goods and services, which could be found in an urban area and sometimes provide infrastructural facilities.

6. The entrepreneurs are usually motivated in their activities not only by the need for material contributions to the welfare of the communities but also desire to make profit. This uplifts the dignity of labour.

7. Through entrepreneurship education, utilization of local resources is made possible. The graduates of this specialized education set up their small/medium scale business, which will enable them to utilize the local resources available in their vicinity. The uses of local raw

materials are discarded by products of large firms as primary input in their production processes. Owualah in Olorunmolu (2008) asserted that in terms of their economic benefits small firms can be said to be greater in local resources maximizes than their large counterparts. The provision of raw materials for the big firms help them to increase their production hence employ more personnel thereby creating jobs for unemployed youth in the country.

Based on the above stated merits, there is no doubt that entrepreneurship education serves as a means of employment generation by empowering the individual in the society to be self-reliant.

Conclusion

Since early 1980's, Nigeria has a history of economic stagnation that has led to decline in white collar jobs. The inclusion of entrepreneurship courses in all disciplines will to a great extent, assist in solving this problem of high unemployment and underemployment. In this paper it was concluded that entrepreneurship education contributes to the development and growth of the economy, ensures empowerment, and generation of employment opportunities for all, production of high quality goods and services, and the provision of the much needed skills for the management of business enterprises. Entrepreneurship education if vigorously pursued is capable of catalyzing productivity, empowerment and self-employment in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Stakeholders must encourage the proposed introduction of Entrepreneurship study across faculties and departments as general courses in the country. The federal government in collaboration with state governments should provide scholarships/bursaries/grants for performing students by way of encouragement.
2. Universities should commercialize their research findings instead of leaving them in the shelves.
3. Government should adopt a policy that will allow graduates of entrepreneurship education programme to have access to soft loans from financial institutions with little or no interest at all, so that they can establish their business enterprises with ease.

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