CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: TOWARDS REPOSITIONING FOR BETTER IMPACT

SULAIMON, ABDUL-HAMEED ADEOLA

Department of Business Administration, University of Lagos, Akoka asulaimon@unilag.edu.ng: 08023551028

Abstract

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education in Nigeria is laced with a number of challenges that are peculiar, and dissimilar in some respect to experiences in other parts of the globe. This paper conducts a qualitative review of some of these challenges using a theoretical framework and the framework for entrepreneurship education developed by the National University Commission (NUC). The review x-rayed some of the challenges and conclude that entrepreneurship education in Nigeria should extend beyond classroom teaching as currently practiced in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In view of the changing nature of the Nigeria's labor market, there is need for a paradigm shift in entrepreneurship education from the traditional white collar job-seekers with no specialized skills or professional talents orientation to one that foster, energize and engage in experimental and experiential learning, as well as exploit business opportunities and accomplish profitable investment. Appropriate policy and practical recommendations are suggested.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, curriculum.

1. Background to the study

Education in whatever form, be it formal or informal has played a major role in fostering the standard of living of people across the world and it has contributed immensely to all aspects of socio-economic development. As a result, both developed and developing countries have recognized education as a tool for functional national development. Ostensibly worried by the rising unemployment rate, poverty, declining per capita income, youths' restiveness in major parts of the country, the Federal government of Nigeria in 2006, mandated all higher educational institutions to run entrepreneurship programme as a mandatory course for all students, irrespective of their disciplines effective from 2007/2008 academic session (Okojie, 2009). To this effect, the National University Commission (NUC) organized a two-day workshop (May 21 and 22, 2008) for all the Vice Chancellors of tertiary institutions in Nigeria to educate and acquaint them on this prominent issue.

To make the delivery of entrepreneurship education effective, the NUC recommended the following ten domain in the Benchmark Minimum

Academic Standard (BEMAS) structure for teaching entrepreneurship education in Nigerian Universities: 1) overview to entrepreneurship 2) entrepreneurship in theory and practice 3) forms of business, staffing and marketing activities 4) capital obligation and funding 5) financial development and management 6) feasibility studies and reports 7) innovations 8) legal aspects of business 9) insurance and environmental concern, and 10) likely business opportunities in Nigeria.

In undertaking the full implementation of entrepreneurship education curriculum, most of tertiary institution created entrepreneurship centres to support students' training in entrepreneurship. The mandatory inclusion of entrepreneurship education into the Nigeria university is an enabling mechanism to promote self-employment, self-reliance and effort to reduce poverty. This is founded on the belief that with acquisition of relevant skills, competence, mindset and knowledge complemented with suitable practical knowledge/exposure, students, upon graduation are more likely to become self- employed and employers of labor (Okah & Odelola, 2009). Entrepreneurship education was promoted at tertiary institutions of higher learning for the purpose of making students acquire basic knowledge and develop competences in the area of business development (Agbonlahor, 2016). In most higher educational institutions, entrepreneurship education is introduced at 200 and 300 levels as (GST) General Studies courses.

The notion of entrepreneurship is used in connection with the motivation and drive to innovate and create genuine ideas towards the creation of goods and services to generate profits. Entrepreneurship is most often adopted to describe the functions of an entrepreneur as an individual or group of individuals who sense business opportunities and take advantage of it to exploit scarce, coordinate and direct both human and material resources to produce goods and services (Akinbode, 2009). Entrepreneurship refers to the capability to harness the right quantity, quality and integration of resources that are consistent with profit making objectives considering risks and uncertainty connected to the business motives. Essien (2014) viewed entrepreneurship as the totality of self-asserting features that allow a person to recognize covert business opportunities, together with capability to organize the require resources both human and materials with which to profitably take advantage to exploit such opportunities taking into consideration risks and uncertainty.

Compared to entrepreneurship education, business education has been in existence in Nigeria for many decades. It was promoted as a key step towards graduates' self-employment through small business development with a view of boosting the industrial base of Nigeria. According to Charlie (2013), entrepreneurship education is a relatively new issue in Nigerian Universities.

Beside the knowledge and competences in business, entrepreneurship education is mostly about the development of relevant beliefs, values and attitudes towards business orientation, with the primary goal of getting students to develop motivation and zeal towards entrepreneurship as a solid, eye-catching and effective option to paid employment or unemployment syndrome that is ravaging most developing nations (Akinbami, 2011). Promoting entrepreneurship education according to Ocho (2005) and Ojeifo (2013) is the process through which individuals are made active partners or members of the productive cluster of the society. It allows people to develop capability and skills in the society and to contribute significantly towards socio- economic development (Unachukwu, 2009; Nwachukwu & Nwamuo, 2010).

In a practical way, entrepreneurship education focuses on developing knowledge and capability for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, abilities and talents in widely diverse context that will contribute meaningfully to their personal and societal wellbeing. The tendency to behave or act entrepreneurially is not exclusive to certain individuals, because diverse individuals will have a dissimilar mix of talents for demonstrating and gaining entrepreneurial behaviours, abilities and attributes. These behavioral tendencies can be practiced, established and learned; therefore, it is vital to expose students to entrepreneurship education (Ayatse, 2013). It is a welcome development and heart-warming Nigeria government at Federal, State and Local level have made entrepreneurship studies obligatory in our tertiary institutions, but it worrisome to note that our universities are not fully ready to commence its full implementation.

As remarked by Akinbami (2011) it is not clear whether a reasonable level of financial commitment and manpower training is committed for the implementation of entrepreneurship curricula by the government. Charlie (2013) holds the view and claimed that though many Nigerian tertiary institutions welcome the idea of entrepreneurship education and embraced its ideology, there is yet any significant change in the mode of teaching and learning procedure of this significant subject matter. Against the aforementioned background, the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education requires urgent attention and repositioning to achieve its intended goals.

2. Relevant Theories of Entrepreneurship

There are a number of theories connected to entrepreneurship. Joseph Schumpeter Innovative Theory of Entrepreneurship is one of the notable theories connected to entrepreneurship. Schumpeter promoted that entrepreneurship employs the "Gale of Creative Destruction" to substitute in whole or in part poorer/low-grade innovation across markets and industries

and concurrently promoting innovative products, services and new business models (Anyaogu, 2009). Schumpeter remarked that those who are enthusiastic and able to transform these ideas or innovation into successful business opportunities are called entrepreneurs and that "Creative destruction" is accountable for dynamism of industries and overall economic society. The second theory that underpin this paper is Structural functionalism theory. The thrust of the theory is that in every political system there are framework that perform some functions for the survival and stability of the system. Thus, the structures, irrespective of their nature still oversee some notable functions. Structural functionalism theory is founded on evaluating (individually and collectively) the support/constituents or elements on which a system functions and which ensures that the procedure of ascertaining gaps in a system that can impact its functioning. According to Almond (1965), these functions are political socialization and orientation, interest articulation and aggregation and political communication, which was refers to as input functions. Others functions consist of rulemaking, adoption of rule and rule adjudication, which fall under the purview of output functions. In this context, government and universities perform a number of functions within the domain of educational system.

Another notable theory relevant to this paper is Human capital theory which offers a framework for exploring the influence of acquired factors such as education, learning and experience on career consequences and it was further promoted on the supposition that education can serve as a factor of decision choice and offering drive/benefits towards specific business ventures (Ojeifo, 2013). Based on this recognition, Adejimola and Olufunmilaya (2009) maintained that education should be structured to develop and foster the supply of entrepreneurial competences and initiative. Another important theory connected to the study and practice of entrepreneurship is Need for Achievement Theory (NAT). This theory is a psychological theory propounded by David McClelland (1965) which depicts the functionality of strong association between need for achievement and economic development, owing to the drive of entrepreneurship to fulfil some personal needs, this theory is germane to entrepreneurship. The advocates of the need theory explicate that there would be a comparatively superior level of entrepreneurial activities in the society, when the average level of need attainment is relatively high.

3. Entrepreneur: Definition and Meaning

The word entrepreneur originated from a French parlance which refers to a person who is enthusiastic to venture into a new enterprise and accept complete responsibility for the outcome. According to Alumode and Nwite (2009) entrepreneur is an individual who organizes, oversees and undertakes the risk of a business with the primary aim of maximizing profit. In the

opinion of Schumpter (1942), entrepreneur is viewed as a process of seeking out opportunities in the market place and organizing resources needed to exploit these opportunities. Ojeifo (2013) conceptualized entrepreneur as the owner or manager of business concern who through risks and creativity, seeks profit.

An entrepreneur seeks opportunity in the face of unpredictability, confusion, lack and wants to produce goods or services for profit motive. An entrepreneur can equally be viewed as a person that has some relative advantage in the decision making procedure either because he or she possess superior and valuable information or diverse perception of happenings or opportunities. Entrepreneurs holds some unique qualities that differentiate them from mere business owner-owners who merely imitate. An entrepreneur as a risk lover always hopeful, futuristic, hardworking, inquisitive, attentive, watchful, well-mannered, and exhibit self-control among others. Scholars have highlighted a number of attributes of entrepreneur consisting of: selfassurance, risk taker, result oriented, high determination, leadership oriented, ingenuity, high level of initiatives, fierceness, truthful, supportive, highly organized, and a good strategic planner. In the opinion of Adegbite (2010), some of the aforementioned attributes are integrated and interconnected of the individual, but not essentially interchangeable. Entrepreneurial skill is another important attributes of entrepreneur. A skill consists of asset possessed by individual which contribute his/her competence, knowledge, wealth, expertise and level of intelligence for a sustainable business performance. Skills refer to the economic ingredients with which entrepreneurs resolve societal problems. According to the industrial Training of Nigeria (ITF), entrepreneurial skills consist of a combination of knowledge and capabilities. The entrepreneurial skills can be classified into: personal skills, technical skills and professional skills.

4. Entrepreneurship: An Overview

There is no generic definition and meaning of entrepreneurship as academics and business practitioners have attempted to define it in numerous ways. In general term, entrepreneurship is broadly adopted in connection with innovative and imaginative contemporary industrial business ways of exploiting business opportunities. According to Akinbode (2009), it is often viewed as the functions of spotting business opportunities and taking maximum advantage of the scarce resources to seek profit. Akinbami (2011) conceptualized entrepreneurship as a way of seeking business opportunity. Owoseni (2009) defined entrepreneurship as a source of innovation and change, and as such offshoots progressiveness in productivity and foster economic competitiveness. Entrepreneurship exemplifies distinct knowledge and abilities that seek innovative and creative business ideas that is profitable and rewarding.

According to Nwangwu (2006), entrepreneurship is the inclination and the capacity of an individual or a firm or a corporate organization to recognize an environmental change and exploit opportunity presented by it to produce goods and services for profit. Odjegba (2005) viewed entrepreneurship as a way of building vision, creating focus and determination to exploit business opportunities. Baba (2013) defined entrepreneurship as the act of commencing a business, organizing business deals and assuming risks to generate profit. Aruwa (2004) viewed entrepreneurship as the capability to assume risk and integrate resources both human and material to produce goods and services for profit.

5. Entrepreneurship Education

Education refers to the procedures consisting of both formal and informal means of acquiring knowledge, distinct abilities and experiences by an individual to effectively conquer and adapt to his/her immediate environment. Traditional pattern of education falls short in their capability to connect the knowledge and notions taught in the classrooms to the talents and practice of entrepreneurship. Consequently, it has been documented to be insufficient in numerous ways to promote entrepreneurship (Ojeifo, 2013). Entrepreneurship education attempts to offer students with the indept knowledge, abilities and inspiration to foster entrepreneurial success in numerous contexts. Diverse forms of entrepreneurial education are provided at all levels of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate university programs. Entrepreneurship education comprises of three elements: inventiveness, Innovation and skills (Anyakoha, 2006). In the opinion of Fayolle, Gailly and Lassas-Clerc (2006) the overriding purpose of entrepreneurship education is to teach students abilities and knowledge on how to embark and succeed in Bechard and Toulouse (1998) conceptualized entrepreneurship education as the gathering of formalized teachings that notifies, enlightens, trains and educates people in the areas of business creation and development.

Ojeifo (2013) stated that entrepreneurship education is a form of education given to people to be able to inculcate in them the practices, ideas, abilities and knowledge necessary to venture into business. Entrepreneurship education, according to Anyakoha (2006) is a specialized form of training and knowledge building to students of vocational and technical education to obtain the abilities, knowledge and the managerial talents to be self-employed instead of seeking job. Essentially, entrepreneurship education is focused towards four approaches for practical outcomes: Regular entrepreneurship, which is mostly well-known and appropriate for venturing into a new business; Corporate entrepreneurship, which is proper for endorsing innovation or presenting new products or services; Social entrepreneurship or social venturing, which encompasses fashioning charitable establishments; and public sector entrepreneurship, which is promoted to enhance innovation

and service delivery.

6. Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

The Nigerian educational system is characterized with colonial heritage and does not have much reflection on the contextual need of the country entrepreneurship drive. Notably, the colonial education was structured to assist colonial masters and much emphasis was centered on creating clerical and administrative officers, educators, priesthood and other copious arts graduates who would smoothing the westernization process of the country. So at independence, the post-independence governments did not struggle enough to restructure our education curriculum to address the aforementioned inadequacies. Akinyemi (1987) remarked that Nigeria educational institutions as they are, remained a factory for producing white collar job seekers with no specialized skills or professional talents to engage in entrepreneurship.

Akinbode (2009) alluded that in numerous ways, the educational system currently offer to students is not suitable to foster energize and engage in experimental learning required for aspiring entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is a comparatively new academic domain. The curriculum of entrepreneurship extends beyond textbooks teachings and encompasses a wide domain of life ideas/innovation drawing largely from life experiences. Entrepreneurship education is tailored and oriented towards diverse means of exploiting profitable investment and accomplishing business opportunities. In the opinion of (Ojeifo, 2013), entrepreneurship education is structured to accomplish the under-listed goals:

- i. provide functional education for the youth that will allow them to be self-employed and self-sufficiency.
- ii. offer the youth graduates with satisfactory training that will permit them to be imaginative and inventive.
- iii. act as a catalyst for socio-economic growth and development.
- iv. provide graduates tertiary institutions with requisite training in risk management so as to develop adept skills in managing unbearable events.
- v. to lessen poverty.
- vi. to create employment for teeming youth.
- vii. to lessen rural urban migration.
- viii. to offer the teeming young graduates with appropriate training and support that will allow them to create a career in small business management.
- ix. to indoctrinate the spirit of determination and doggedness in the youths so as to enable them persist in any business they venture into.
- x. to ensure convenient and easier transition from traditional to a contemporary industrial economy.
- 7. Benefits and Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

The study and process of entrepreneurial education also offer a number of benefits to all the stakeholders consisting of the students, government and society as a whole. Some of the notable benefits of entrepreneurship education include but not limited to the following:

- i. Improving of Students Academic Performance
- ii. Increasing Performance and quality of Schools
- iii. Foster the Realisation of Goals of Education
- iv. Improve Nations Economic Competitiveness
- v. Introduction of New Programme of Study
- vi. Poverty Alleviation
- vii. Enhance country Economic Growth
- viii. Development of New curriculum and Programme of Study

Nigeria as a developing country is not exempted from a number of complications in connection to her economy and by extension educational system. Nigerian educational system was until now structured to produce a pool of graduates who relied on the government for employment. This ideology contradicts a system that strives to equip its beneficiaries with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that will make them self-sustenance and employers of labour. Consequently, the faulty educational structure failed to take cognizance of the changing aspects of labour market. Thus, notwithstanding the thoughtful benefits of entrepreneurship education, it is yet to record substantial success in Nigeria. Some of the challenges confronting entrepreneurship education include:

- i. Incessant change in government policies regarding entrepreneurship curriculum
- ii. Infrastructural deficit
- iii. In adequate manpower in the area of entrepreneurship education
- iv. Hasty preparations and poor implementation of policy
- v. Faulty Foundation of entrepreneurship education
- vi. Poor or outright lack of funding to implement entrepreneurship curriculum
- vii. Insufficient Equipment and Technology
- viii. Pressure from parents for students to seek blue collar job
- ix. Entrepreneurial poor attitude towards entrepreneurship education
- x. Poor data collection and management on entrepreneurship
- xi. Cultural issues
- xii. Poor linkage between research and entrepreneurship development
- xiii. Deficiency of curricular capacity to support the training
- xiv. Overemphasis on theory delivery
- xv. Insufficient relevant study guide such as text book, directory etc
- xvi. Poor competence of entrepreneurship education instructors
- xvii. Weak Curriculum capacity to support manpower training on entrepreneurship

8. Conclusion

The significance and relevance of entrepreneurship education has prompted the attention at Federal, State and Local government levels to introduced entrepreneurships into educational curriculum at all levels of education to inculcate self-sufficiency unto the teeming youth to catch them young. Oviawe (2010) noted that the introduction of entrepreneurship education at an early stage will assist in developing sustainable society. Entrepreneurship education is not only pertinent to prepare youths for a productive future career but equally applicable to prepare adults for a more productive life during work life and after retirement. For instance, Njoku and Nwosu (2011) viewed entrepreneurship education as a way of preparing the semi-retirees for a productive life to cope with life after retirement. Entrepreneurship education serves as a panacea to the failure rate of enterprises in Nigeria via extended programmes for current and prospective entrepreneurs in Nigeria promoted not only through formal education but other platforms such as seminars, workshops, symposia among others.

Akpomi (2009) remarked that entrepreneurship education is an avenue to lessen poverty challenges in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education requires more than just the conventional lecture technique which is theory-based because of its distinctiveness to ameliorate the prevalent unemployment experience facing graduates in Nigeria. While entrepreneurship education is a welcome agenda in Nigerian educational system, however, the government directive for its commencement in all the tertiary institutions in the country will experience swoop without adequate preparation which will semblance of the old-age tradition of poor funding, dysfunctionality and poor intellectualism. No doubt, in the absence of a functional educational system, the exhibition of entrepreneurship abilities in individuals may be challenging.

In conclusion, without a shadow of doubt, education is the obvious path to individual opportunity and societal development, and entrepreneurship education is particularly relevant to fostering a more robust global economy. Entrepreneurship education, nonetheless, is not only about chasing economic ends; it also assist students or learners to develop entrepreneurial or problemsolving abilities they could use in resolving personal and social challenges. Therefore, it is vital that effective teaching approaches should be adopted for its effective delivery. Effective entrepreneurship education requires creative teaching methods that will focus on students' inventiveness, innovation, capacity building which is a herculean task and the role of the teacher and his teaching methods are equally vital.

9. Recommendations

For effective implementation and development of entrepreneurship education

in Nigeria, the following strategies should be adopted to reposition the entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian Universities:

- i. There is urgent need to revisit and improvised the entrepreneurship curriculum with a view for its effective adaptation to our peculiar environment. The current curriculum has heavy linkage to Western educational system.
- ii. Entrepreneurship education should be introduced at both primary, secondary and technical schools so that a preliminary solid foundation would be laid at a lower level before students get to university level, this will make the subject matter or discourse more appealing and fascinating.
- iii. There is need for training and retraining of instructors/lecturers involved in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education. The existing ad-hoc lecturers for entrepreneurship education in our universities may not produce the desired results.
- iv. Government should make provision of contemporary, pertinent and sufficient facilities for entrepreneurship training to ensure effective delivery and knowledge building.
- v. Government should ensure sufficient funding of the programme, which is currently obviously underfunded.
- vi. Government at the Federal and state levels should invest sufficiently in the universities so that the present entrepreneurship education will not end up reflecting the existing conventional dysfunctional programme.
- vii. Government should also create platform for students to seek funding to encourage business start-up.
- viii. There is need to encourage financial institutions through policy framework to allocate reasonable zero interest loanable funding specifically package youth entrepreneurship at developmental interest rate that will hinder the growth of start-up businesses.
- ix. Part of the entrepreneurship education should accommodate how youths should be exposed to training in the area of information and communication technology (more especially innovative new discoveries) from time to time. This will no doubt keep them abreast in tune with the contemporary trends of the technological world.
- x. The entrepreneurship education should equally reinforce and orient youths to imbibe the notion of risk taking and doggedness in the process in the pursuit of entrepreneurial orientation. Not in a negative sense such as engaging in crimes and criminalities but honest, decent and genuine struggle in a business sense to survive.
- xi. Entrepreneurial education teachings and practice must extend beyond the traditional classroom teachings to encompass practical knowledge and competence building. This could be accomplished through internships and excursion programme so as to produce industry job-fit

- graduates. This synergy between the classroom and the industry must be extended to all disciplines.
- xii. Effective policy measure should be put in place by government to provide an enabling environment for entrepreneurship development. The entrepreneurship education will not be meaningful and impactful in the absence of weak institutional environment to support and create the right environment for entrepreneurship development to strive.
- xiii. There should be more exposure for both trainers and trainees to the development of current trends in entrepreneurship of other countries particularly developed nations to see the trend of entrepreneurship teaching and practice. The goal is not to engage in copycat practices but to modify such practices in line with our local content and peculiarity.
- xiv. Management of University system should establish a well-structured follow-up service programme which is tailored towards fast-tracking record of students and encourage feedback system to monitor deviation and improvement.
- xv. University authorities should also institute regular internal monitoring and assessment of the course delivering mode in order to offer immediate rescuing and control measures on deficiencies to enhance entrepreneurship learning and practices.
- xvi. Effort should be put in place to ensure and equip lecturers on how to make teaching/learning more practically oriented by ensuring significant knowledge and skills improvement when and where desirable.

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Further Readings

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