



THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN ENSURING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper is specifically prepared to examine the roles of Entrepreneurship Education in ensuring economic empowerment and development, leading to national development. The conceptual framework developed by Shapero and Sokol in 1982 was used in illustrating the series of stages and processes that eventually give birth to the formation of a business venture; and three (3) stages were identified in the model. The concept of Entrepreneurship Education was briefly examined in relation to economic development and job creation. Economic development was described as the positive quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy. The authors briefly examined the concept of Entrepreneurship Education including its goals and objectives. A section was devoted to examining the roles of Entrepreneurship Education in ensuring economic empowerment and development in Nigeria. Vocational and Technical Education was used as an example of disciplines associated with Entrepreneurship Education. One of the major recommendations advanced in this paper was that government should make accessible loans available for graduates of the Entrepreneurship Education, so as to start up their businesses.

KEYWORDS: *Entrepreneurship Education, Vocational and Technical Education, Empowerment, Economic Development, Job Creation and National Development.*



INTRODUCTION

Education remains a pivot upon which the wheels of the society revolve. Farrant (1964) defined education as the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of the society. From this definition, it is obvious that the essence of education is functionality. Section 1 paragraph 7b of the National Policy on Education emphasized that the national educational goals are the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (FRN, 2004). This section of the National Policy on Education is also in harmony with the position of Farrant. The essence of any educational programme is to ensure that the products of the system are equipped with the relevant knowledge, skills and attitude needed to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation.

The inability of the graduates of the educational system to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation by being self-employed was what informed the introduction of Entrepreneurship Education in schools. The call for the introduction of Entrepreneurship Education in schools is an indication of its importance in economic empowerment and job creation in particular. This education has become necessary as Nigeria continues to churn out graduates that are hardly self-reliant but solely dependent on white-collar jobs.

According to Idada, Okosun, Anolu, Atagana and Aiwansedo (2011), Entrepreneurship Education is the kind of education given to people with a view to developing entrepreneurship qualities properly followed up with support services for smooth take off and successful running of business. In a similar vein, Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011) stressed that Entrepreneurship Education seeks to provide students (especially those in tertiary schools) with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of settings. From these assertions, it is obvious that a well implemented Entrepreneurship Education will climax in economic empowerment, job creation and national development. The essence of Entrepreneurship Education is to build in the students entrepreneurship spirit and culture (Akpomi, 2009; Adejimiola & Olufunmilayo, 2009).

Vocational and Technical Education, which constitutes a greater part of Entrepreneurship Education, refers in a limited extent to subjects such as Agricultural Education, Business Education, Fine and Applied Arts, Home Economics and Technical

Education, whose sole aim is to equip the recipients not only with the knowledge to teach, processes of carrying out projects and tasks but with the adequate skills required to be functional contributors to economic and national development. According to Zirke (2017), Vocational and Technical Education has historically been known as 'education for work'. It has focused on providing learners with the skills and knowledge needed to successfully transit to the workplace. Here, this paper will focus on Fine and Applied Arts as an aspect of Vocational and Technical Education; and specifically, painting, as one of the areas of Fine and Applied Arts, will be used to illustrate how it can be used as an entrepreneurial discipline. It is thus the position of this paper that training alone (i.e. the acquisition of needed knowledge and skills for a particular vocation on its own) is not enough motivation or force that propels one into a business enterprise. There must be, after training, certain forces or motivation that are required to break the human inertia, and thereby turning one's thinking towards a productive venture and sustaining it. Such forces as Shapero & Sokol (1982) describe as negative displacement, between things and a positive pull are the necessary life-path changes that lead to launching into a business enterprise. They will be discussed in details subsequently in this paper.

The term empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender, or economic strength of individuals and communities. It is perceived that a well-planned and implemented Entrepreneurship Education is capable of creating more jobs in the country and redirecting the focus of the unemployed graduates. Economic empowerment involves empowering of previously disadvantaged sections of the population. It is this that translates to economic growth. The above conceptual framework is built on the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) introduced by Shapero and Sokol in 1982. When the model was introduced by the authors, they did not propose it as an intention model, but it was quickly seen and used as such in the literature (Kermit, 2008). The aim of the model was to explain the series of processes, stages and activities that lead to launching a business enterprise (Kollmann & Kuckertz, 2006). This model identified three (3) main stages that lead to business formation. The model assumes that inertia guides human behavior, until some event 'displaces' that inertia and unlocks previously undesired behavior; individuals may not want to start up business enterprise. For example, a displacement such as the death of spouse (that is a 'bread winner') might alter the



perception of the desirability to become self-employed by the widow. Shapero and Sokol (as cited in Ediagbonya, 2013) classify these life-path changes into three and they include: negative displacement, between-things and positive pull.

The term negative displacement in this context refers to such as getting divorced or becoming widowed, loss of job and being insulted. Displacement is not always negative, but it can be negative, while distance can never be negative, but always positive. So, first of all, we have to understand the basic difference between distance and displacement. The distance between two points is basically how far one point is located from another point (or how much path you have covered). But it doesn't have any direction. For example, we have to find the distance between your home and your school. Hence the negative displacement means it has same magnitude, but its direction is opposite. Basically it depends upon the origin and reference. If we will take positive reference or direction toward a particular direction from origin, then to represent its opposite direction we have to use the negative one.

The second is being between-things such as graduating from high school, university, finishing military duty or being released from jail and yet to find something doing. The second category is of great importance to stakeholders of organizations/institutions and it is potentially interesting for Entrepreneurship education programmes since students often have no clear idea of what they want to do after graduation. It is upon this premise that Entrepreneurship Education was introduced by the Federal Government in 2006 to be taught as a compulsory course across the tiers of tertiary institutions in the country. This programme was perceived as a sure way of remedying the current unemployment challenge due to the government's inability to absorb all the graduates from the nation's tertiary institutions (Ediagbonya, 2013).

The third category is called positive pulls. Just as the name implies, it is positive in nature and refers to positive supports/encouragement from partners, mentors, investors that propel the individual to start-up a business. This first stage leads to the other two stages – perceptions of desirability and feasibility.

Perceived desirability refers strongly to values and how they will ultimately impact the individual's perception of what is attractive or desirable and what is not. In this context, a person's standards and self-discipline set, based on the common sense and wisdom of knowing what the proper moral rules and disciplines are, and the amount of willingness to see them and

others and abide by them. Shapero and Sokol (as cited in Ediagbonya, 2013) identify culture, family, peers, colleagues, mentors and previous work experience as factors that strongly influence personal values and perception of desirability.

Perceived feasibility indicates to which degree someone feels personally capable of, for example, starting a business. This concept is similar to Bandura's self-efficacy, which is often used as a measure of perceived feasibility (Krueger & Reilly, 2000). The propensity to act is the personal disposition to act on one's decision (Krueger, 1993). Shapero and Sokol (1982) suggested an internal locus of control as a measure of the propensity to act.

CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic development through creation of utilities and generation of employment within a short period (Onyemah, 2011). It is the act and art of being an entrepreneur or one who undertakes innovations or introducing new things, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods. This may result in new organizations or may be part of revitalizing mature organizations in response to a perceived opportunity (en.wikipedia.org/wiki). Nwafor (2007) defines entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment, and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities. In this definition, the following words – willingness, ability and investment opportunities are integral to the understanding of entrepreneurship. In other words, the entrepreneur must have the ability/technical know-how in addition to being willing to establish an enterprise. This definition further reveals that not all opportunities that appear are worth investing in (Journal of Business Administration and Education 40). So, the responsibility now falls on the individual or would-be entrepreneur to seek for investment opportunities. Stallworth (1989) as cited in Nwafor (2007) describes an entrepreneurship as the creation of a new economic entity centered on a novel product or service or at the very least, one which differs significantly from products or services offered elsewhere in the market. Ugiagbe (2007) as cited in Owenvbiugie and Iyamu (2011) stressed that entrepreneurship is the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coping with management and organizational skills in order to



combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need, thereby creating wealth.

There are various forms of entrepreneurship and the most obvious form is starting new businesses popularly referred to as Start-up Company. A start-up business has numerous advantages. There is joy and satisfaction of creating one's own kind of business of his/her dreams. He/she is able to choose a business name, a location and site, a product or service, a target market, technology, employees and operating procedures. The main disadvantage of a start-up business is the mountain of unforeseen/unexpected problems generally associated with business formation and often encountered in the process of building a business (Inegbenebor, 2006). These problems may take the form of negative attitude of the consumers towards the product or service, inadequate capital to finance operations and unexpected hitches in the performance of some of the fixed assets in the business.

The need for education in the developmental effort of any nation cannot be underestimated. The development of education sector is a sine-qua non for the development of all other sectors. According to the European Union Commission (2010) as cited in Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011), Entrepreneurship Education seeks to provide students (especially those in tertiary schools) with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of settings. The commission emphasizes that different aspects of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling. In a similar vein, the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2004) maintained that it is a lifelong learning process, starting from elementary level to other levels of education and spanning to adult education. Akpomi (2009) also holds the view that Entrepreneurship education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for the pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes in widely different contexts. According to Alain (2009), Entrepreneurship education refers to all activities aimed at fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, attitudes and skills as well as covering a range of aspects such as idea generation, start-up, growth and innovation. Akudolu (2010) sees Entrepreneurship education as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude to enable the learner apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realize new trends and opportunities for meeting those challenges in all aspects of human life.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

The overall objective of Entrepreneurship education is to continuously foster entrepreneurship culture amongst students and faculty with a view to, not only educating them, but to also supporting graduates of the system towards establishing and also maintaining sustainable business ventures, including but not limited to those arising from researches (www.thenigerianvoice.com). Oborah (2006) outlined the objectives of Entrepreneurship education as:

- To provide meaningful education for the youths, which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit and be self-dependent;
 - To provide small and medium sized companies with the opportunities to receive qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to the management of the small business centers;
 - To provide graduates with training in skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society;
 - To provide graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size businesses;
 - To provide graduates with enough training in risk management in order to make uncertainty almost possible and easy;
 - To provide graduates with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities; and
 - To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
- Garavan and O'Conneide (1994) as cited in Chigbuson (2011) gave the following as the goals of Entrepreneurship education:
- To foster entrepreneurial mindsets, skills and behaviours among the recipients;
 - To empower students with the competencies and skills necessary to prepare them to respond to their life needs, including running their own business, so that they become productive citizens;
 - To develop innovation in youths and develop their skills to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, community business and work opportunities;
 - To increase the awareness and understanding of the process involved in initiating and managing a new venture as well as to enhance the public's perception of



learners of small business ownership as serious career option; and

- To identify and stimulate entrepreneurial drive, talent and skills to undo the risk-averse bias of several analytical techniques and to devise attitudes towards change.

ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

The introduction of Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions is actually a direct response to the changing socio-economic and political conditions in the world and Nigeria in particular. According to Ewubare (2010), Entrepreneurship education programme can equip students with entrepreneurial skills that will enable them create and develop enterprises in various areas. The emphasis here is that the programmes have a way of shifting the focus of students from paid employment to self-employment. During the colonial era, people were trained to work for the colonial masters and as such, their education was patterned towards such. Immediately after independence the emphasis of our education system was after paid employment (Akpomi, 2009). Another role of Entrepreneurship education is that it has the tendency of equipping and making students experts in the production of certain items. The curriculum framework of this programme has been designed such that individuals will be able to channel their creative abilities and skills to an area or areas of interest. The interest area may be barbing, soap making, farming and so on (Agoha, 2011).

The knowledge of Entrepreneurship education helps the students to gain information that will help to boost teaching and learning (Agoha, 2011). Entrepreneurship education builds the spirit of being entrepreneurs in the minds of the students. Thus, Entrepreneurship education has a way of discouraging laziness and idleness among our teeming youth population. Most people that are idle today or probably lazy are those that seem to know little or nothing about entrepreneurship. That is, what it takes to develop business plans, start and manage businesses.

Entrepreneurship education can greatly help in addressing the level of poverty in the country. The issue of poverty eradication has been a top priority of many governments and institutions, especially in developing countries where extreme poverty is conspicuous and has become pandemic (Akpomi, 2009; Kalirajan, 2009). The incidence of poverty in Nigeria is on the high side,

where about 70% of the total population has been classified as poor (Ewhrudjakpor, 2008). This state may be seen as a direct consequence of the absence of entrepreneurial spirit and culture which Entrepreneurship education is supposed to foster. In other words, the relevance of Entrepreneurship education is felt more in the area of checking or reducing poverty.

Entrepreneurship education equally helps in checking high dependency ratios; that is, the ratio of dependent population to working population in the country. Once the working population is adequately equipped with these entrepreneurial skills thereby leading to self-employment, burden arising from dependent population will be reduced.

THE PLACE OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Vocational and Technical Education covers so wide a range of disciplines and activities that this paper may not possibly contain them. However, citing some disciplines as examples may suffice for aspects of Vocational and Technical Education and its place in Entrepreneurship Education. As earlier on mentioned, Vocational and Technical Education has historically been known as 'education for work' (Zirke, 2017). Its focus has been and still is to equip recipients with the needed knowledge and skills in order to transit to workplace. Therefore, it may not be an overstatement to assert here that any discussion on the role of entrepreneurship education without mentioning vocational and technical education is not complete, in that justice may not have been done to the understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship education.

Okafor (2011), on the role of vocational and technical education in manpower development and job creation in Nigeria, opined that technical education, as entrenched in the National Policy on Education, is concerned with qualitative technological human resource development directed towards a national pool of skilled and self-reliant craftsmen, technicians and technologists in technical and vocational fields. According to him, this type of education places emphasis on two main areas: competency-based skill acquisition and sound scientific knowledge. It may then suffice to state here that a recipient that is armed with these two areas of training is more than ready for any labour market. Take for an example, a graduate painter from any department of Fine and Applied Arts in any institution of higher learning in Nigeria, he is not only



equipped with the skill of painting but with adequate scientific knowledge of colour characteristics and application. He may be well ready to launch into an enterprise of painting except for other factors which may stand in his way to success such as lack of initial motivation and take-off mobilization grant, which either his parents/guardians, mentors or government are supposed to provide. He may be able to roll out some few works from his meager upkeep money, but he may not be able to sustain it until an intervention comes from anywhere. Moreover, he may be faced with societal apathy and misconception of his kind of trade.

Today society, particularly Northern Nigeria, does not place any value on his art, which most people refer to as luxury or in extreme cases as anti-religion. But this was not the case with the art of painting as far back as in the prehistoric times. According to Gombrich (1995), the painters in ancient cave and rock paintings were highly regarded personalities; in fact, they were the high priests, vested with the ability and magical powers to capture the spirit of the animals they hunted on the often dark walls of their caves by drawing or painting. Once the image (the spirit) of such an animal was painted, they believed they have captured it; and by a ritual of singing and dancing and throwing stone spears at the painting, they believed they had overcome it. When they go out to hunt, psychologically they are already equipped with the confidence and boldness of an overcomer, no matter how strong and fierce the animal may be. Then, pictures were real things and the art of painting was not merely decorative as it is today regarded. The point we are stressing here is that since the beginning of man's civilization, painting was a serious business, and with its attachment to religion, it was a highly respected and an honourable enterprise, even when its reward was not often in cash but in kind. But it was enough to sustain the painter and his profession.

Today, the graduate painter who sets out to paint as an enterprise will have to combine signboard printing, calligraphy, wall painting and a host of other artworks with his picture paintings to be able to make it. Turning out only pictorial works may take him nowhere. Even those painters who reside in big towns in Nigeria will also testify that depending on making only pictorial works does not pay due to the societal perception of what art stands for. This paper wishes to posit that unless a redirection of the concept and societal perception of the arts generally is made, the art entrepreneur does not stand a chance of making it big in terms of a successful business in Nigeria. The perception of art by the society can be altered through

education and public awareness that the artists are not only persons who can be contracted to produce portraits, or story-tellers through their various media or artisans, but highly trained professionals who are not only custodians of their nation's arts and culture but people who can also be very useful in film industries, television houses, printing houses, museums and national galleries.

CONCLUSION

This paper has successfully x-rayed the concept of empowerment in relation with Entrepreneurship education and Economic development. The term empowerment was examined in relation with enhancing the productivity of the country and this in turn leads to the development of the nation. The authors examined the concept of Entrepreneurship education including its goals and objectives. The roles of Entrepreneurship education in empowering the citizen and bringing about economic development in Nigeria was examined also. The paper also concludes that Vocational and Technical Education, if well managed in line with the aims and objectives of entrepreneurship education will form the springboard for many business ventures by graduates in Nigeria.

Recommendations

It is obvious that economic empowerment and development cannot take place if there is no proper implementation of Entrepreneurship education programme. Based on this, the following recommendations are therefore necessary in ensuring economic empowerment and development:

1. There should be adequate funding and financing of the programme in order for the objectives and goals of the programme to be realized;
2. People should be encouraged to embrace Entrepreneurship education or training in order for them to become self-reliant and wealth creators;
3. Students of Vocational and technical Education should count themselves lucky, being involved already in a self-reliant programme and so, should take the aims and objectives of entrepreneurship education more seriously;
4. The government, through its various educational and public awareness agencies and institutions of higher learning, should make attempts to redirect the conception and perception of art in Nigeria;



5. The government should make accessible loans available for graduates of the programme so as to start up their businesses;
6. There should be uniformity in the curriculum offerings in the various institutions that are saddled with the teaching and learning of this education. There should be adequate provision of necessary resources (that is, human and material) needed to fully run the programme.

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