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ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION – A POSITIVE RE-DIRECTION FOR NIGERIA'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

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Abstract

This paper has discussed the issue of “Entrepreneurship Education as a positive re-direction for Nigeria's national development”. It has diagnosed the subject matter under the general overview of education and national development; explained the concepts of entrepreneur, enterprise, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. It has also covered the justifications for entrepreneurship education for Nigeria; the roles of entrepreneurship education in national development; strategic issues for achieving entrepreneurship education for Nigeria as well as the implications of entrepreneurship education for Nigeria's national development.

Protocols

May I commend the organizers of this First conference of the Association for the Promotion of Educational innovations in Nigeria (APEIN), firstly for honouring me by inviting me as a lead paper presenter; and {or opting for such an apt-theme – “Entrepreneurship Education for National Development”: and also for the all-embracing sub-themes which stretch to cover the scope and objectives, Nigerian society, Nigerian secondary education, teacher education, vocational technical education and the Nigerian higher education systems.

May I also acknowledge the distinguished participants in this conference for committing their time, resources and efforts to

be present and participate in the dialogue on the issues of Entrepreneurship Education for National development which hopefully would result in articulated proposals and blueprint for a sustainable entrepreneurship education for Nigeria.

Most formally, may I appreciate the authority of the Federal College of Education, Obudu for hosting the First National Conference of the great academic association - APEIN.

The Subject Matter

I have attempted a comprehensive but synoptic pattern of discourse of the title of my lead paper – “Entrepreneurship Education - A Positive_Re-direction for Nigeria’s National Development”. The discourse is under the following headings:

- General Overview of Education and National Development.
- Concept Explanations
 - Who is an entrepreneur?
 - What is an enterprise?
 - Entrepreneurship
 - What is Entrepreneurship Education?
- Justifications for entrepreneurship education for Nigeria.
- The roles of entrepreneurship education in national development.
- Strategic issues for achieving entrepreneurship education for Nigeria's development.
- Implications of entrepreneurship education for Nigeria's national development.

General Overview of Education and National Development

"Education Predisposes National Development"

Education is essentially an instrument par excellence for Nigeria's national development. It has witnessed intensive and committed participation by stakeholders such as the three tiers of government, individuals, communities, religious organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and all and sundry in a

bid to contribute their quota to actualize the five main national goals as documented in the National Policy on Education (2004 revised) as follows:

1. a free and democratic society
2. a just and egalitarian society
3. a united, strong and self reliant nation
4. a great and dynamic economy
5. a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

The five main national goals in all sincerity are and will continue to be endorsed as the “Building Blocks” for the provision of education to develop the citizens and the nation. Note has been taken of various government intervention strategies through policy formulation, various programme development, funding for implementations, encouragement of public-private sector initiative, partnership and participation, setting of standards, analysis of societal and individual needs for provision of sustainable education.

The pertinent question in these series of participation by stakeholders is what type, forms and levels of education are provided to provide succour to the contemporary individual and societal needs in line with the realities of the Nigeria's desire to match with the global trend of development?

Permit me to recall the general dissatisfaction in the foundational Nigerian education of the late 1960's which became irrelevant to the national needs, goals, and aspirations. The situation gingered the convention of the National Curriculum Conference in 1969 to discuss issues and problems underlying the determination of an appropriate curriculum for the education system. Sequel to the outcome of the conference, an assemblage of experts in a seminar forum in 1973 came up. The proceedings emanated the maiden national policy on education for Nigeria first published in 1977. It was with the hope that educational provisions then would catapult the transformation of the Nigerian nation overtime.

The issue is - What has been the experience of Nigeria developmentally in relation to the global economy? The sincere answer or answers is/are left for all of us.

In all honesty, the country is metamorphosing in all the sectors education inclusive. Every positive development goes with change and change is a dynamic process.

This conference is another conscious convention of scholars to dialogue on the type of education that would provide succour to the prominent Nigerian problems - unemployment, poverty, inadequate skills for survival by the bulk of its citizens, youths restiveness, etc. In the wisdom of APEIN, the identified education is the Entrepreneurship Education. It is hoped that at the end of this conference a proposal with clear blueprint for implementation would be endorsed and presented to the Federal government for consideration.

Concepts Explanations

A. Who is an Entrepreneur?

An entrepreneur described by Buoro (2007) is someone who is creating value, funding the venture, as well as managing the venture.

In his idea Akanbi (2002) saw an entrepreneur in respect of the functions performed by the individual in relation to the attributes associated with it. It is therefore a function of identity. A person who has the ability to identify and evaluate business opportunities in the environment; gather the relevant resources to take advantage of the business opportunities as well as initiating appropriate action to ensure success is an entrepreneur according to Akhuemonkhan (2005).

In the context of this paper, an entrepreneur that would be relevant to Nigeria is a person who has;

- creative ideas
- is business-like
- take initiative with self confidence,

- the will of being independently focused towards set goal,
- the courage to accept challengers as motivating elements
- good interpersonal relationship skills as success in business is based on good relationship
- good analytical ability for situational analysis.

From these quality perspectives, an entrepreneurs, is a consciously responsible, business-like person who searches for investment opportunities, devices measures of succeeding in such opportunities, maximizing profit with minimum cost implications.

An entrepreneur is a business founder who manages the outfit successfully utilizing the resources at his or her disposal. He or she creates jobs, creates wealth to themselves and others, adding value to the societal standards.

Qualifications for an Entrepreneur Status

The qualifications of an entrepreneurship are functions - related such as:

- Being a good initiator of benefiting business ideas.
- Being a good business manager performing managerial functions of planning, supervising and coordinating
- Always ready for taking risks involving financial and human resources towards set aims.
- Have the ability of combining options
- Being a business researcher always seeking for information
- Being a business information converter into new opportunities for exploiting
- Being a good provider of motivating elements in the business outfit
- Providing direction for the business staff
- Providing business resource requirements
- Being able to take stock of successes and failures of a business for improvement
- Having the relevant knowledge and skills through appropriate entrepreneurship training.

B. What is an Enterprise?

An enterprise is a venture that a person undertakes or puts one's hand into in the expectation of a beneficial outcome. From the economic angle an enterprise is a major production factor in addition to land, labour and capital which manipulates all the factor inputs for production and profit.

It could precisely be explained as the cumulative involvement of an individual in the search for businesses of viable nature, establishing and managing same for success. For actualization, there must be willingness and the capability for capital investment either in large or small-scale.

Technically Adkuemonkhan (2005) defines an enterprise;

as a set of personal competencies that include creativity, independence self-awareness, initiative taking, achievement - motivation, analytical ability, inter-personal skills etc (p.5).

Nigeria's national development hinges in part on the issue of enterprise culture based on an economic policy that places emphasis on commercial involvement, development of imaginative blueprints, having the belief that commitment to an enterprise ensures achievement and self-fulfillment based on enterprise culture. The enterprise cultures is specified by Adkuemonkhan (2005)

as a set of values, beliefs and attitudes that reinforce belief in the virtue of independent effort as a means to success and self-fulfillment (p.5)

Kudos is therefore given to the Federal Government of Nigeria under President Yar' Adua for giving approval for the private sector driven type of education programme - The Innovation Enterprise Institute (IEI) to produce Nigerians who can

compete globally. The country is therefore on course and the APEIN conference is to provide inputs for re-direction towards total development of the nation through sustained Entrepreneurship Education, the Innovation Enterprise Institute forming an integral part C.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is ability linked-involving the calculated action taken, the prowess exhibited, the influence, management tactics, conduct and so on of the affairs of a chosen enterprise by an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship covers the series of enterprise dexterity, proficiency, competence, adaptability, prowess of creativity, taking and bearing risks of an enterprise, managing, innovating and manipulating conditionalities to derive sustained benefits. Akhuemonkhon summarizes entrepreneurship as the personal quality that assist people to start a new business or vigorously and innovatively expanding and existing one, thereby maintaining and vitalizing the growth of an economy. Supporting the pivot role of entrepreneurship in National development, Ibru (2007) in a lecture on the importance of entrepreneurs on Wealth Creation, emphasized that it was only entrepreneurs that could move Nigeria into an economic superpower.

Entrepreneurship functionally involve risk bearing, property rights and responsibility and freedom which is the power of independent decision making by an entrepreneur or groups of, without external interference. It also covers the possession of relevant skills and competencies for wealth creation, resource production and utilization and/or reinforcing the potentiality of available resource inputs for wealth creation. Entrepreneurship therefore operates on clearly defined principle.

Principle of Entrepreneurship

The general principle operate on the premise that human resource inputs is persistent and offer practical guidelines that puts developmental ethics into action. It is a three-prong principle of;

1. **Conservation** - This ensures the preservation and protection of the natural resources to stem extinction and guarantee continuity.
2. **Re-cycling** - The transformation of products or by-products to some other utilizable forms.
3. **Restoration** - Refurbishing and putting back to use the resource that have broken down through turn around maintenance.

The implication of the principle is the extent of providing the basis for fashioning out vocational awareness in all facets of human endeavours through entrepreneurship education.

D) What is Entrepreneurship Education?

Entrepreneurship Education conceptually is an integration of human/material resources development and sustainable development. Human development focuses on developments at the service of people's well being (Akpan, 2006), concerned with the building of human capital while sustainable development ensures the harmonious interaction of changes due to utilization of resources, direction of investment, technology orientation as well as institutional changes. The interaction will enhance human, material and future potentials toward meeting the human needs and aspirations. Education is the microcosm of the socio-cultural macrocosm and operates on the fundamental understanding that it will lead to changes in people in the aspects of attitude, skills, competencies, beliefs and perspectives.

Entrepreneurship education is simply the education provided to develop the individual in the skills, attitudes, competencies, beliefs and the perspective of conceiving, planning, starting and managing an enterprise for sustained benefits.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) described entrepreneurship education as an area of study that includes those attitudes and skills essential for responding to one's environment when conceiving, starting and managing a business enterprise.

The skills are to cover:

- The development of skills of entrepreneurial spirits in terms of characteristics and personality.
- The enterprise skills in the building of large and small business capacities.
- The development of competencies in technology and other professional aspects to ensure productivity.
- The development of entrepreneurship capabilities to manage the business successfully.

Justification for Entrepreneurship Education for Nigeria's Development

1. Records indicate that shortage of well-trained and skilled personnel in the series of entrepreneurial and vocational aspects (Hadded 2000; Chisholm (2003); UNESCO (2004).
2. The skill survey of employees by Odebode and Ladede (2003) showed that employers had difficulties in recruiting skilled manpower simply because they could not find people with the right skills.
3. Williams (2005) observed, particularly among the youths, inadequate skills and also among existing workforce in services resulting in low task performance.
4. Earlier methodologically Ekong (2001) had observed that institutions of learning in Nigeria have concentrated more on theoretical and abstract instructional deliveries, focusing on cognitive development rather than psycho-productive and therefore entrepreneurially non-skilled graduates.
5. There is a general over production of graduates in non-skills oriented programmes and attempts to truncate them into existing jobs where they have no skills.

6. There is unusual rural-urban drift of individuals developed in the rural settings with no structural reforms with low skill education in specific occupations yet wants to compete in the city for available skilled jobs.
7. Trends of re-trenched and retired staff of public service on the basis of not having the relevant skills though training. This group floods the society with practically nothing to fall back to as a means of survival.
8. There is the desire for options of jobs to accommodate the teeming population of Nigerians from public and private institutions and which government cannot provide. The problem of the way forward now faces government.
9. The forces of transformation such as the need for food production efficiency, technological efficiency through skill acquisition, poverty alleviation, solving unemployment and underemployment problems etc.
10. Ensuring the relevance of education and training to the needs of the society.
11. There is the current trend of global changes in the external systems of knowledge and skills which demands review in the Nigerian education system.

Generally the justification is based on the need to change from the hangover effects of the theoretical liberal academic education focused on cognitive development to the entrepreneurship education with the focus on practical occupational skills for self employment, self reliance and sustainable development. Fong and Isaacs (2005) stressed that it would take innovative economic system built on the entrepreneurship foundation to keep an edge in the new knowledge-based global market competition.

The Roles of Entrepreneurship Education in National Development

Entrepreneurship education could contribute to national development in the following ways:

- Capacity building of beneficiaries mentally, physically and intellectually placing them on the advantage of acquiring, handling, interpreting extrapolating information and consequently apply such capacities in building self and the nation.
- It will provide the needed solutions to the complex developmental problems of the nation such as resource wastage, hunger, diseases control, etc.
- Opportunities for individual and collective development of latent potentialities for self fulfillment and actualization.
- General avoidable ignorance and poverty will be reduced if not totally eliminated among Nigerians.
- It would lead to instructions and learning in the processes of resource conservation through materials re-cycling, reducing wastages and encouraging restoration and remediation.
- It will lead to the creation of awareness and understanding about Nigeria's social, economic and environmental situations for sustainable national development.
- It will ensure stable national growth in the provision of employment options for Nigerians.

Strategic Issues for Achieving Entrepreneurship Education for Nigeria's Development

A number of strategic issues that could go a long way to assist in the realization of the roles of entrepreneurship education for Nigeria are worthy of consideration by this conference. They include:

- Identification of appropriate enterprises for development based on the diverse localities in Nigeria.
- Identification of suitable clientele with passion for chosen

enterprises.

- Clearly defined policies on entrepreneurship education backed up by relevant laws.
- Appropriate entrepreneurship manpower recruitment and training.
- Entrepreneurship curriculum for the various levels of education in Nigeria.
- Support systems to ensure success of the entrepreneurship programmes.
- Start-up assistance structure and practices for the entrepreneurs.
- Follow-up guidance services to the trainees in the entrepreneurship training and after.
- Open and competitive social system to ensure favourable atmosphere for entrepreneurship development.
- Good and stable governance supported by all Nigerians that would subscribe to ensuring sustainable entrepreneurship development policies, implementation and practices.
- Specialization in entrepreneurship programmes to make for general exposure to vocationalization in entrepreneurship.
- Versatility in trainee clienteles based on dynamic world of work.
- Gender biases in the provision of entrepreneurship programme.
- The management and utilization of resources for the entrepreneurship programme.
- Structures for monitoring, assessment and evaluation for sustainability and steady improvement of the entrepreneurship education programmes.
- Public-private sector partnership and participation in entrepreneurship education.
- Complementing general education with entrepreneurship education for sustainable national development.
- Community entrepreneurship education centre options for integrated entrepreneurship programmes.

Implications of Entrepreneurship Education for Nigeria's National Development

The implications of entrepreneurship education for Nigeria's national development is to the extent of creating formal and non-formal capacity building and re-direction of educational provisions towards the world of business, producing skilled citizens for self-sustenance and independence.

If entrepreneurship education forms an integral component of the general education then a total vocationalization of education will be achieved. Vocationalization is explained by Ekong (1998) as the introduction of skills development into school programmes based on identified occupational areas with a view to making the recipients of the training self employed (entrepreneurs) and self sustained.

The introduction of entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian education system running through the primary, secondary and tertiary levels will enable particularly the youths to become enterprising, innovative and creative. They will be job creators rather than job seekers. in the economy.

Entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian education will naturally consolidate developed partnerships that will promote the possibility of harnessing diverse ideas, knowledge, expertise, experiences and skills for national development. The resultant effect will be effective and efficient resources management, sustained economic development as well as scientific and technological breakthroughs.

It will lead to a viable economy with more employers rather than employees thereby having cream of capable men and women who will positively influence the national and states economy and who could participate in the development processes. The national environment will become a business economy, rationalizing social inequalities in pursuant of the human-centred socio-economic development and reforms.

Entrepreneurship development will also have implication on

youths transformation reducing restiveness, robbery, political thuggery, school drop-outs etc. The problem of resource wastage, wastage of human capital and corruption will be a thing of the past. The tendency of greed will be eliminated, as this form of business-like education would ensure transparency in financial management among entrepreneurs and subsequent transfer to the public life. Transparency would of course become a living principle which will consequently become a culture in the wider sector of the economy. National development will become an assured project.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education for a positive re-direction of human and material resources towards the development of Nigerian nation is an imperative in this 21st century. This paper has given inputs on this form of education, supporting its integration into the education system as a panacea to national development.

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