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ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria seeks to provide youths with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of ventures. This paper focused onentrepreneurship education for youth empowerment in Nigeria. It highlighted entrepreneurship skills development strategies, combining affective, cognitive and psychomotor learning and goal-oriented entrepreneurship education for youth empowermentRecommendations were made which include that: Government should ensure that entrepreneurship education programmes at all levels should have a fine blend of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective behaviours and should ensure that a full department of entrepreneurial education is established in all institutions of learning to run full-time, part-time and refresher programmes on entrepreneurial education.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, education, youth, empowerment.

Introduction

Today, Nigeria faces a high rate of unemployment which makes her one of the countries with the highest number of unemployed graduates.Oyesiku (2008) opined that these percentages of youths are not employed because they are ill-educated or illiterates and good number of them have no technical employable skills. He further stressed that because of our poor curriculum implementation, the 'do-it-yourself approach'that is obtained amongst graduates in the developed societies is not obtainable among our graduates as a third party is always called to do even minor maintenance like changing of motor oil, replacement of electric bulbs in our houses, fixing of furniture, to mention but a few. According to him, many pass through the institutions without allowing the institutions pass through them, they pass examinations because they want to graduate and do not make use of what is available.

The productivity acumen is enhanced through the entrepreneurship education provided in the curriculum since no society can rise above the level of its educational system. Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria amongst otherthings seeks to provide students at all level of education with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of ventures (Ezeobata, 2007). Variations of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling in Nigeria, primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions.Countries that have embraced indigenous educational system or technology are in the threshold of technological advancement while those who have relegated it have remained stagnant. Earlier, on the same issue Nwangwu (2007) pointed out that there is a mismatch between what the Nigerian economy requires and what students study in schools. According to her, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in a study in 2004 on the labour market expectations of Nigerian graduates found that university education in the country does not adequately prepare graduates for work.

The study further revealed that this is manifested in the number of deficiencies the graduates exhibit in the work place which include lack of entrepreneurial and problem solving and decision-making skills, inadequate technical skills as exhibited by their inability to appropriately apply acquired knowledge to the workplace, ignorance in the use of instruments/equipment due to inadequate practical experiences, minimal comprehension of problems and low solution proffer ability. Again,

Asuru (2004) stressed that most Nigerian graduates are not attitudinally prepared to face the challenges of their environment because our schools do not emphasize the affective components of education enunciated in the Nation Policy on Education.

The school therefore prepares its graduates to be job seekers instead of job creators. This has led to the existence of an army of unemployed and in most cases unemployable graduates. Commenting on the negative effects of unemployment, Okala (2004) opined that, work or any other income generating engagement is closely tied with the psychological and social development of man and therefore is the fundamental condition of human existence. According to him unemployment leads to psychological imbalance and associated social problems such as prostitution, armed robbery, militancy and other criminal activities as means of survival and gaining recognition in society. This explains why many of our youths have taken to crime and criminality as a means of survival. Today, criminal acts like kidnapping, armed robbery, vandalization of oil, electrical, telecommunication and other allied installations have taken the centre stage in our society (Asuru, 2008). This constitutes a serious indictment on our educational system especially tertiary education.

However, most of our science and engineering graduates have the dual problem of being deficient in both knowledge and skills on the one hand and non-cognitive disposition necessary for- self-employment on the other hand. It is in the light of this that Asuru, (2008), stressed that the problem of unemployment in Nigeria and indeed in Niger Delta for instance is not so much of unavailability of paid jobs or lack of opportunities for engagement in self-employment but more of not being able to take advantage of the challenges posed by their environment.Cocodia (2008) in his study titled 'Stagnating human resources development in a changing Delta' showed that most of the youths do not engage in self-employment because for them learning a trade is tedious and time consuming as it does not bring them easy and quick money. They therefore lack the time honoured virtues of patience, perseverance, resilience and respect for dignity of labour.

The Entrepreneurship Skills Development Strategies

On realizing the inadequacies of the literary ingrained education system, inherited from Britain and its consequences on self-employment,

Nigeria introduced the 6-3-3-4 system of education in 1977 as seen in the National Policy of Education (FRN, 2013). The system divided the secondary school level into two tiers of junior and senior secondary school with general emphasis on the acquisition of practical skills (Nwangwu, 2007): To be specific, the first three years concentrated on the teaching and learning of pre-vocational subjects in addition to academic subjects. The pre-vocational skills were taught as introductory technology with series of technological and practical skills, while the senior secondary emphasized academic subjects and vocational electives. The aim of these according to FRN (2013) are to: offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles, provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades, inspire students with a desire for self-employment and achievement of excellence; raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the dignity of labour, provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural,
industrial, commercial and economic development.

In realization of the urgent need to create employment in the country, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) document, (National Planning Commission, 2005) stipulated that NEEDS will create seven (7) million jobs by making it easier for private enterprises to thrive by training people in skills relevant for the world of works, provide courses that build vocational and entrepreneurial skills. This effort is to be replicated at the State and Local Governments through State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS). Meanwhile, to further entrench technological and entrepreneurial skills development and thereby reduce unemployment, the federal government in 1987 had set up the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). According to Nwangwu (2007) the mandates of the NDE include:To reduce employment among youths and university graduates in the country by creating employment opportunities, provide enabling atmosphere for self-reliance,foster entrepreneurship and encourage the culture of maintenance and repair.

Furthermore, worried by the alarming rate of unemployment in the country, especially of graduates,' the emphasis by most tertiary institutions in

recent times has been on providing entrepreneurial skills development scheme for its students as equipment for self-employment and relevance in society (Oyesiku, 2008). In almost all tertiary institutions in Nigeria today, entrepreneurship education and related courses are taken as compulsory General Studies courses. Unfortunately, these measures have not made any significant change or difference in the state of the set and/or desired goals. Unemployment among school leavers is still on the increase. This is feasible on the face and against the above mentioned strategies because most of the entrepreneurial skills development programmes focus more on mere training of the youths in skills acquisition and cognitive processes (skills and knowledge respectively) with little or no emphasis on attitudinal change and other worthwhile values like value re-orientation, perseverance, resilience, interest and dignity of labour.

Combining Affective, Cognitive and Psychomotor Learning

Nigeria educational system in every aspect has over the years placed undue emphasis on the cognitive component of learning (knowledge) and to some extent on psychomotor (skills training) to the utter neglect of affective component (attitude). The cognitive component of learning is the taught aspect of learning while the psychomotor deals with manipulative or motor skills. On the other hand, the affective components are those personality and behavioural characteristics which have potential relevance to educational practices (Asuru, 2007). They are the various attributes of personality, attitudes, values, coping strategies, leadership, self-confidence, integrity, resourcefulness, perseverance, resilience, interest, mood, etc (Asuru, 2007).The need for the integration of the three domains of learning is predicated on the premise that there is an organic link among the cognitive, psychomotor and affective behaviours. Learning is expected to bring about not only the cognitive and psychomotor but also affective changes in the learner as cognitive and psychomotor objectives have some affective components in them (Asuru,2007).

For entrepreneurial education to yield the desired results there must be a fine combination of all the three domains "of learning, a blend to prepare the individual wholly to face the challenges of his environment. The affective disposition of the learner for instance has direct relevance to his interest in learning a particular

skill/vocation and his attitude to it. It is also noteworthy that if a person has interest in a particular vocation or skill, he devotes the totality of his personality to acquiring the skill and ensures that he ultimately puts it into practice. The same goes for values. Values are related life choices, attitudes and preferences. They are the indications of what the individual cherishes and holds dear and thus wants to work towards (Asuru, 2008). They form the pattern of his behaviours and relationships and ultimately his attitude. These provide the requisite motivation for learning, skills development/acquisition and eventual practice of the skill or vocation.The above explains why most of our youths still prefer paid employment even when they have the requisite knowledge and skill to start their own small scaleenterprises. It is worthy of note that our value system is one that is built upon the erroneous impression that education, especially higher education prepares one for paid employment, hence the need to queue up waiting for non-existing jobs.

Goal-Oriented Entrepreneurship Education for Youth Empowerment

For our entrepreneurship skill education programme to achieve the desired result, there must be a departure from the current system where we merely emphasize on knowledge and skill, to a more proactive and result-oriented method where emphasis will be placed on knowledge, skill and attitude. There is therefore the need for a fine blend of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective behaviours to produce the total personality who possesses the requisite skills, knowledge and attitude to be an entrepreneur. This combination provides the impetus for the student to be wholesome and be found worthy both in character and in learning. The need for this mix is predicated on the fact that entrepreneurial education focuses on developing, understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes in widely different contexts (Akpomi, 2008), because as noted by Gibb (1995), entrepreneurs are action-oriented and their learning is experientially based. Putting it in perspective, Akhuemenkhan(2005), said that entrepreneurial philosophy is built on the fact that: Individuals' drive power or motivations from their own action and not from the actions of other and success results from persistent efforts. However, success depends on ones willingness to work hard and accept responsibilities for one's problems and position in life, thus, failure and mistakes are part of learning experiences which should be seen as challenges rather than discouragement.

These clearly indicate that what makes one an entrepreneur is not only the content of cognitive and motor skills one has acquired but an interface of these with the attitudinal component (affective) which acts as the driving force, energizer, motivator and push (Asuru, 2008). It is pertinent to state that a graduate may have acquired the knowledge and skills of baking bread and other confectionaries, but may not have the drive, initiative, risk taking ability and attitudinal disposition to start a confectionary outfit and therefore remain unemployed. Also, a student may be trained in the skill of operating a cab, assisted to acquire a cab through loan scheme but may not have been systematically desensitized from the erroneous impression that a graduate is one whose education has prepared for a white collar job. He may not also have been attitudinally prepared to withstand sarcasm from friends and relatives who may see his education as a wasted venture. Thus, he has not had the value re-orientation that there is dignity in labour and that the whole essence of education is to prepare one to fit in and contribute positively to the development of the society and also face and surmount the challenges posed by his environment. Our students therefore require a full dose of drive, passion, creativity, vision, courage, ability to assume reasonable risks, patience, perseverance, resilience, ingenuity, tolerance, self-esteem, resistance, integrity, etc. to be able to function effectively as entrepreneurs and thus be both self-employed and employers of labour (Cocodia, 2008).

This is one of the major reasons why most of the "National Directorate of Employment (NDE) graduates and graduates of most skills acquisition programmes cannot sustain their businesses. Those who are university graduates see it as demeaning for them to be consigned to the trades/skills they acquired vide the NDE and/or skills acquisition programmes. They have not had adequate doses of value re-orientation to enable them continue to perform with the time honoured virtue that there is dignity in labour and furthermore that with some little perseverance and resilience their businesses would blossom and make them employers of labour. It is instructive to emphasize that the Managing Director of *Tantalizers Plc*, a leading fast food company in Nigeria is a graduate of Language Arts who started business as a one out let restaurant. Today, the outfit is quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange and has branches in all parts of the country (Asuru, 2008). There are many other

instances of established entrepreneurs that had such a humble beginning. It is therefore apt that in the course of their training, the would-be entrepreneurs should be made to read about such role models and if possible be talked to by such role models. This will have a salutary effect on their psyche and constantly ignite them to forge ahead even when the future seems bleak. This way our entrepreneurial and skills development programmes will yield the desired result.

Conclusion

The Nigerian society today more than ever needs an integrated and articulate entrepreneurial education programme to put our youths out of the streets in search of non-existent jobs but rather make them self-employed and employers of labour. It therefore requires the collective efforts of all stake holders to realize this laudable vision. Most importantlydesigners and implementers of our entrepreneurial education programme must realize the importance of an interface of cognitive and psychomotor learning with affective learning.

Recommendations

1. Government should ensure that entrepreneurship education programmes at all levels should have a fine blend of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective behaviours.
2. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE), institutions of learning and other agencies involved in entrepreneurship education should adopt an integrated scheme that emphasizes what to teach, how to teach and evaluation techniques.
3. Curriculum experts, subject-matter specialists, evaluators and guidance counselors should be involved in fashioning an integrated curriculum for the programme.
4. Successful entrepreneurs, especially those who started small should be made to give motivational talks to the trainee- entrepreneurs.
5. Government should ensure that a full department of entrepreneurial education is established in all institutions of learning to run full-time, part-time and refresher programmes on entrepreneurial education.

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