

FACTORS AFFECTING ACQUISITION OF COMPETENT ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship was introduced into the Nigerian school curriculum as a means of solving unemployment problem facing young school graduates and to inculcate enterprise culture on the citizenry to realize the vision and objectives of a private sector driven economy for economic global transcending. These young school graduates seem not be able to effectively match entrepreneurial skills acquired with industrial expectations (business management). Against this backdrop, this paper examined the factors that hinder the acquisition of competent entrepreneurial skill required for effective business management. This could be traceable to poor innovative and creative teaching techniques, poor students' personal characteristics and lack of practical training among others. Strategies such as refocusing Business Education programme, human capital development, and technological improvement among others could be used to realize the objective. Therefore, it was recommended that Business Education should be accorded priority place in the Nigeria school curriculum. Teachers should be vigorous in their teaching techniques and use modern teaching system to be innovative and creative to ensure that students acquire competent entrepreneurial skills for effective business management prior to graduation.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is vital for individual and national survival since it's regarded as a facilitator for job creation and economic growth empowerment. Entrepreneurship Education teaches individuals and groups the practical skills necessary to start and run a business. Entrepreneurship involves bringing something novel to the business world which is quite a difficult task because of its risk of uncertainty e.g. internet business was quite novel before it gained wide acceptance in the world. Therefore, entrepreneurship is the creative and innovative ability of a person to pull resources and opportunities in his environment together in a new way using personal quality to accomplish marketing objectives. Mavis (1972) defines, "entrepreneurship as a practical creativeness which combines resources and opportunities in new ways. It involves the application of personal qualities, finance and other resources within the environment for the attainment of business success". Oni and Olaleye (2004) asserted that "entrepreneurship is concerned with creating opportunities, meeting the needs of individuals and is a process of identifying gaps in ones environment, community and society at large and bringing together resources in an innovative and profitable way to fill these gaps".

The Federal Government of Nigeria in its acknowledgement of entrepreneurship to solve unemployment problem amongst young school graduates and to achieve the goal of a private sector driven economy in Nigeria established Centre for Entrepreneurship Development virtually in all universities. However, it has been observed that most of these young school graduates cannot match school training with industrial expectation and as a result they still remain perpetual job seekers instead of job inventors. This could be traceable to incompetent entrepreneurial skills acquired prior to graduation due to poor innovative and creative teaching techniques, poor students' personal characteristics, lack of practical training, poor curriculum design, acute shortage of manpower, and incompetent personnel. Other factors which are external to the school environment include; lack of take-off grants/sponsorship, lack of enabling environment, fear of uncertainty among others. Researchers have revealed that many undergraduate did not aspire to be self employed but the few who have the aspiration do not possess the entrepreneurial skills. Akpomi (2008), asserted that many graduates-to-be in entrepreneurship education in their defense not to aspire to be self-employed maintained that:

- no take-off funds/sponsorship
- inadequate preparation to face the demands of running business
- poor attitudes of Nigerians towards purchasing made-in-Nigeria goods.

Therefore, it become imperative to proffer solutions to these inadequacies for better capacity building and national economic empowerment.

Business Education equips its recipients with entrepreneurial skills such as managerial competencies, marketing skills, inventive skills, accounting skills, risk taking skills, among others. Ademiluyi (2007) identified management skills, marketing skills, communication skills, financial skills and computing skills to be basic for effective entrepreneurship amongst fresh graduates. Omeje (2005) in Oriazowanlan and Clark (2010) posited that “through Business Education Programme, youths can develop and acquire entrepreneurial skills, which enable them to establish small business ventures”.

Therefore, in a bid to realize the objective; creative and innovative teaching techniques are required in Business Education Programmes to adequately equip recipients with the needed skills to thrive in the business world. Moreso, government should accord Business Education priority place in the school curriculum to achieve the vision and objective of self-employment related economy and to realize the objective of a private sector driven economy for economic growth and transformation.

THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEUR IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship training usually results in establishing a micro, small and medium scale enterprise which consists mainly of manufacturing and distributive service or trade. But it has been observed that more investment and participation tends to be shifted to the distributive services because of its easy formation, management and profit oriented nature. The major objective of entrepreneurship training is to strengthen and refocus youths entrepreneurial innate tendencies for employment generation and stimulate economic growth and development. Ogbojafor, Kuye, Suleiman and Ronji (2009), posited that, “the unacceptable rate of youth unemployment in the country, the low standard of living and the hope of technological transfer which is tending towards a mirage have led to a renewed interest in entrepreneurship development”.

Entrepreneurship is derived from the French word ‘entreprendre’ meaning to ‘undertake’. Entrepreneur is a person who undertakes to organize and combine other factors of production to create utility for man’s satisfaction and make profit. Oriazowanlan & Jimoh-Kadiri (2010), asserted that: “an entrepreneur is a charismatic leader who despite the threat of failure, makes things happen without him the other factors of production would be impotently idle”. Entrepreneurship development aids economic transformation, generates employment opportunities, create wealth, stem rural urban drifts, develop local technologies, re-orient value, alleviate poverty, make individuals and nations to be self-reliant, among others. According to Sule, (1986) and Word Bank (1995) in Ogbojafor, et al. (2009), Entrepreneurship development has been taunted as a means of stimulating economic growth through the generation of greater employment of foreign exchange earnings of national government.

Competent entrepreneurs are needed in Nigeria to combine business objectives with social concerns because of the ardent need of entrepreneurship for economic growth and transformation through private sector and such entrepreneurs are regarded as social entrepreneur. They are expected to function as policy, programme and business entrepreneurs to bring about effective initiations and innovations to grassroot change and development in Nigeria. Policy entrepreneurs make policies and help to expand successful local programmes into large-scale national programmes at the global, national and local level. They are required in our today dynamic and contemporary society to ensure successful entrepreneurship programmes for economic advancement. The programme entrepreneurs are instrumental in designing and implementing innovative entrepreneurship programmes to alleviate poverty and hunger as enunciated by Millennium Development Goals. They have the entrepreneurial skills to address local problems with global ideas. Business entrepreneurs use business principles to implement social innovation and they include business leaders, consumer/profit oriented business men/women and those who are struggling to leverage themselves from below poverty line usually found in college business/industries.

Esene (2007) posited that, “the society became more and more dependent on the business institution as employer, innovator, neighbour and catalyst for social change and advancement of culture.

Thus, business became a social institution, interrelating with other elements of the social environment, that is, religion, economic, politics, legal and culture". So entrepreneurs are needed to transform other sectors of the social environment.

Entrepreneurial skills alone cannot yield competent business function rather the potential entrepreneur must possess readiness skill. NCSEE (2004) developed major standard of entrepreneurship education in three major section for effective business management thus:

Table 1: Entrepreneurial Skills and Ready Skills as Business Functions

Entrepreneurial skill	Ready Skills	Business Functions
- Entrepreneurial Processes: Discovery, concept development, resources, Actualization, Harvesting. - Entrepreneurial Traits/ Behaviour: Leadership, Personal Assessment and Management	Business Foundation: Business Concepts and Business activities Communications and Interpersonal Skills Digital Skills Economics: Basic Concepts, Cost-profit Relationships, Economic Indicators/Trends, Economic Systems. International Concepts. Financial Literacy: Money Basics, Financial Services, Personal Money Management. Professional Development: Career Planning, Job-Seeking Skills	- Financial Management - Human Resources Management - Information Management - Marketing Management - Operations Management - Risk Management - Strategic Management

Source: NCSEE, 2004

Entrepreneurs help to contribute meaningfully to national economic growth.

They facilitate global market competitiveness and geared the economy towards the private sector driven in Nigeria. They serve the nation in dual capacity; they become self employed and employers of labour by providing solution to the unemployment problem in Nigeria. They bring about social technological changes in their business environment. They enhance the growth of local industries and encourage the consumption of locally produce goods in Nigeria.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS ACQUIRED AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Oborah (2005), posits, that, "Business Education prepares and bequeaths to the recipients necessary skills and knowledge needed to take active part in entrepreneurial ventures. It makes people to be job producers rather than job seekers". Through Business Education, youths are expected to acquire entrepreneurial skills to enable them establish and manage business effectively. In the view of Esene (2007), "Business organizations are closely and generally identified as economic institutions, a collection of human and material resources for the purpose of economic production at a profit". Therefore, such an institution aims at emancipating man from poverty and hunger and as well enhances economic growth. It has been observed that most graduates cannot participate effectively in the business world to achieve these goals, because they lack basic entrepreneurial functional skills, such as managerial competency, inventive skills, accounting skills, risk taking skills, human resources skill, information management skill, communication skills, marketing skills among others. Some of the factors traceable to the inadequacies include: poor innovative and creative teaching techniques, lack of practical training, poor curriculum design and acute shortage of manpower and incompetent personnel. Other factors which are external to the school environment include take-off grant/sponsorship, lack of enabling environment, fear of uncertainty in risk taking, and poor attitude of Nigerians patronizing locally made goods.

1. Poor innovative and creative teaching techniques: Business Educators need to be vigorous in the teaching and learning process. Paris and Windgrad (1990), posits that, "as teachers are pressed to extend their craft to prepare more diverse students for the challenge of work and life beyond school, they are

challenge to provide more authentic instructional contexts and activities than traditional knowledge based curricula". They should use modern teaching and learning systems which entails creative and innovative techniques. Imogie (2007) posits that, "modern learning system has to involve basic innovation in both contents (materials) and methodology, especially through the application of a systematic approach to instructional planning, development, implementation and evaluation". Business Educators are expected to be motivational in their teaching strategies. Unfortunately, many of them fail in this direction especially in the challenge of managing students high population explosion in Business Education Programmes. Some are still conservative and adhered strictly to ancient rules without resorting to the dynamics of social technological changes in the society hence, the constancy and permanency of the 'almighty' Short and in the school curriculum which students dread.

They do not conduct research to be abreast with current trends in teaching pedagogy. Most of them still constantly and continuously use the conventional lecture method of teaching and learning. Hence, the poor acquisition of entrepreneurial skills amongst graduates for effective business management.

2. Lack of Practical training: As the Nigeria economic quest for diverse entrepreneurs who will be self reliant and can transform the economy to enviable state, entrepreneurial competencies is required to achieve this dream. Unfortunately, the Federal Government efforts to build a better economy through entrepreneurship training for youth empowerment has not yielded the needed results because they lack practical training. Though, the students are sent out for industrial training, the period is relatively too short to bridge the gap between classroom theory training and industrial expectations. Practical training makes learning more real than being abstracts. Bruner (1961) argued that students who actively engage with material are more likely to recall information. Exposure to practical training enhance better skill acquisition and make recipients to become lifelong learners. NPE (2004) emphasized the acquisition of practical skill in Vocational and Technical Education, an off-shoot of Business education. Therefore, practical is essential for student to acquire competent entrepreneurial skills for effective business management but unfortunately it's lacking.

3. Incompetent Personnel: Nigeria lack competent policy and programme entrepreneurs. Previous entrepreneurship policies and programmes in Nigeria failed because of this basic fact. The focus on entrepreneurship for economic transformation in Nigeria are left in the hands of business entrepreneur which ought to have started from good policy making. The teachers whose roles are crucial in the implementation process of teaching and learning in entrepreneurship lack the required competent skills to impact adequate knowledge. Most of them are not trained in the field, they teach the subject base on their residual knowledge. The Federal Government failed in her bit to train special teachers specifically for the programme before the commencement. All these hinder the acquisition of competent entrepreneurial skills for effective business management. Aigbomian & Iyamu (2001), posits that "No one can afford to gloss over the role of the teacher in the implementation process"

4. Poor Students' Personal Characteristics: Due to personal and external factors most students do not acquire competent entrepreneurial skills for effective business management prior to graduation. Most of them engage themselves in moral laxity and while some develop laiz affair attitude to work aiming at passing the exams without mastery the necessary knowledge and skills required for effective business management. They engage in rote learning to pass their exams and rote learning involves memorization without indepth understanding of the concept. Brunner (1961) defined rote learning as a learning technique which avoids understanding of a subject and instead focuses on memorization. In addition, most of the female students are distracted towards social goal attainment. All these hinder competent entrepreneurial skill acquisition for effective business management.

5. Acute Shortage of manpower: Business education aim at equipping recipients with entrepreneurial attitudes and skills as well as to create a business. More also, it has been highly acknowledge by the federal government for socio-economic and technological transformation. But due to explosion of students population in the tertiary institution, the available manpower are in short supply to teach the students. The explosion of students enrolment in Business Education programmes need a corresponding increase in manpower supply. Unfortunately, there is acute shortage of competent manpower to handle entrepreneurship in Business Education.

The Federal Government failed in her own bid to train and develop special manpower before embarking on the programme. Therefore, manpower is grossly in short supply in entrepreneurship education. Most of the teachers who teach the subjects use residual knowledge from other disciplines which hinder effective learning.

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR COMPETENT ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILL ACQUISITION IN A GLOBALIZED ECONOMY

Business Education as an off-shoot of entrepreneurship education aims at capacity building with a view to promoting a private sector driven economy in Nigeria. It serves as a good platform for rejuvenating the economy; empowering youths, raising standard of living and hope of technological advancement relevant for economic transformation. Therefore, it is imperative to enhance it through the following strategies: human capital development, technological improvement, refocusing business education programme, provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities and equipments and adequate funding among others.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Human capital development is vital in business education to optimize and harness educational resources to bring about qualitative manpower production required for socio-economic and technological transformation in a globalized economy. Human capital development in Business Education will enhance productivity both in public and private sector because of human creative nature. Obadan (2008) quoting Fafunwa (1998) posits that, "the significance of human factors becomes prominent when it is realized that machine can only work, but they cannot think like human beings or solve the problem of organization and production". In the same vein, Oriazowanlan and Iyemekpolor (2010) quoting Nwanchukwu (1988) opined that, "the missing factor for employees productivity in many cases is the lack of adequate skills and knowledge which are acquired through training and development". Therefore, human capital should be developed through training programmes in conference, workshops, seminars, symposia, in-service training to enhance manpower production in entrepreneurship for effective business management.

TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT:

Technological improvement is vital for the promotion of qualitative business education to meet the yearnings and aspirations of a globalized economy. Good technology is a facilitator of any investment whether education, economy, transportation, telecommunication etc. Obadan (2008) posits that, "one of the notable driving forces of globalization is cumulative developments and improvement in information, transport and telecommunication technology". Maugcy quoting Namer (1999) posits that, "it is necessary to guard against being swept off our feet by the new cult of technology". Therefore, technological improvement is necessary to enhance business education programme for better entrepreneurial skills acquisition. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and media utilization are required to enhance teaching and learning. Films, slides, projectors, public address system will assist the teacher to achieve his lesson objective. Modern technological infrastructure, facilities and equipments necessary to enhance teaching and learning will aid entrepreneurial skills acquisition for effective business management.

REFOCUSING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME:

The programme should be reinforced and refocused using Information and Communication Technology (ICT), curricular reform, research development, media utilization, distance learning and Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). Research development brings new ideas and curricular reform remodels the child's personality towards societal change.

Refocusing business education will change the status quo to enhance entrepreneurial skill acquisition for effective business management for economic transformation. Oriazowanlan and Clark (2010), posits that "it is imperative to nourish an innate entrepreneurship tendency in Nigerian youths through business education to prepare them to cope with life challenges beyond school and to provide panacea to the economic crisis especially that of Global Economic Melt Down". Therefore, refocusing business education will help to nourish innate entrepreneurship tendency in the Nigerian youths for self-employment and economic transformation.

PROVISION OF ADEQUATE TEACHING AND LEARNING FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENTS

Adequate facilities and equipments are vital for effective teaching and learning process. Well equipped laboratories, workshops, lecture theatres, equipments (typewriters, computers, tape, recorders), and cottage business for practicals will facilitate teaching and learning. Due to the relevance of facilities and equipments to teaching and learning, the Federal Government supplied N218 million worth of introductory technology equipments to school during the inception of the Junior Secondary School phase of the 6-3-3-4 school system as reported by Ekpenyong (1999). Many researches have revealed that facilities and equipments, facilitate effective teaching and learning process and makes learning to become real and lifelong.

ADEQUATE FUNDING:

No venture can be successfully implemented without adequate funding, government should provide enough fund to acquire facilities and equipments for effective teaching and learning. The vocationalization of secondary education in the 1970's was as a result of the oil boom as reported by experts. When lecture theatres are provided, it will help to solve the problem of population explosion. The teachers can be train and re-train to update their knowledge to be abreast with the current issues and trends in entrepreneurship development when fund is available.

CONCLUSION

The role of entrepreneurship development for job creation and economic transformation has been highly acknowledge in Nigeria. But the corresponding acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for effective business management seems to be lacking amongst business education graduates to meet this yearning and aspiration of job creation and economic transformation. This is traceable to poor innovative and creative teaching techniques, lack of practical training, poor students' personal characteristics, acute shortage of manpower and incompetent personnels. Therefore, it becomes imperative to enhance business education to equip recipients with competent entrepreneurial skills prior to graduation for effective business management through improvement in technology, human capital development, refocusing the programme, provision of adequate teaching and learning materials as well as adequate funding of the programme for better capacity building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Government should accord business education priority place in the school curriculum and train special teachers for the programme.
- ii. Teachers should be vigorous in their teaching techniques and use modern teaching system as to be innovative and creative. They should attend conferences, seminars, workshop, in-service training programmes to update and upgrade their knowledge.
- iii. Government should provide adequate fund to acquire teaching/learning and equipments as well as set up cottage business for practical training.
- iv. Government should encourage graduate with take-off grants to set up cottage, small and medium scale business.
- v. Business education programme should be refocused through curriculum reform, research development, media utilization and the use of modern educational information and communication technology to enhance learning

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