
CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE DRIVEN ECONOMY: THE OPTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Creative entrepreneurship education is the key to sustainable national development in the new knowledge driven economy, because of its importance in the development of entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and capacity needed in the economic transformation of nations, as experienced in many developed countries like United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (U.K), South Korea, Japan and a host of others. Therefore, to promote the spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurship culture in Nigeria, government must put in place a proper economic policy framework to drive entrepreneurship growth in the economy. The paper discussed the concept of entrepreneurship education, imperatives of creative entrepreneurship education to sustainable national development, the challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, and suggested options for creative entrepreneurship development in the new knowledge-driven economy for Nigeria, which includes massive investment in creative and functional entrepreneurship education, provision of business support programmes to help the growth of (SMES), change in attitude and orientation of Nigerians both home and abroad, fostering a new spirit of transparency and openness in all aspects of Nigerian life, collaboration between government, private sector, and education sector in building entrepreneurship culture, among others.*

Keywords: *Creative Entrepreneurship Education, Knowledge-driven economy, sustainable national development, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

The existing trend all over the world shows that knowledge is fast becoming a strategic asset for socio-economic development, and societal transformation. There is constant advancement in technology, and globalization is gathering much momentum. Information and communication technology is expanding tremendously. Many nations are tapping seriously into the new ideas, innovations, and technologies to improve their respective economies and create abundant wealth and opportunities for their people. Therefore, to catch up with the developmental marathon race going on all over the world, and to be able to compete favourably in the fast moving world economy, Nigeria has to radically reform her educational system. Most of Nigeria's wealth comes from the control of physical assets such as land, oil, iron and steel, coal etc, though largely untapped. But this should not continue in this 21st century. The major source of value and competitive advantage in the new economy is relevant human and intellectual capital, which is grossly inadequate in many sectors of the Nigerian economy. Knowledge has come to play a very important role in the creation of wealth in the new economy. With a population of 120 million people, Nigeria, in theory has the capacity to make a successful transition into a truly knowledge driven economy, (Ariyo, 2012). Creative entrepreneurship education will play a major role in this desired transition. The paper posits that educational reform with emphasis on creative entrepreneurship education development will enhance sustainable national development.

The Concept of Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, and Creative Entrepreneurship Education

An entrepreneur is a person who sets up businesses, and takes all the risks with the hope of making profits. He or she possesses veritable innovative ideas capable of developing a business, and changes unfriendly business environment to a favourable one, (Nwaeke, 2019). He recognizes, identifies, and evaluates business opportunities. He or she takes advantage of available necessary resources and use appropriate actions to achieve success in business. He searches for change, responds and exploits it for his benefits. He manages the business environment and the resources available for the good of all. His possibilities of survival in business depend on his ability, intellect, wisdom, and knowledge. He creates employments and employment opportunities, thereby making the economy viable. He conceives business ideas in the midst of economic uncertainty, and takes social, environmental and financial risks, and harnesses available resources to create goods for consumption. He carefully manages his business to avoid failures.

Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something with value by devoting the necessary time and efforts, and receiving the resultant rewards of money and personal satisfaction (Hisrich, 2000). It is the process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision to life. The vision may be an innovative idea, opportunity or a better way of doing things. It results creation of new venture under conditions of risks and uncertainty. It involves crating something new with skills and ideas, such things must have value, which leads to more wealth creation and human satisfaction. It is also the perception to change combination of initiatives, innovations, risky adventures and wealth creation, through business dreams, visions, and ideas to transform a dynamic process into an economic viable entity (Nwaeke, 2019).

Entrepreneurship education therefore is the education that provides training, experience and skills that prepare people with entrepreneurship knowledge, competence, and skills needed to be self-reliant, (Meziobi, 2013). It creates in the individual the ability and skills to be self-reliant and overcome dynamic challenges posed by harsh economy. This programme of education involves human capital development input aimed at increasing the supply of adequately trained entrepreneurs to motivate business success in the economy. It embraces all formal and informal training processes aimed at creating enabling environment to promote the development of relevant entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, orientations, experiences, and values for successful business, economic growth, and over all socio-political, scientific and cultural development of man and society at large.

Knowledge Driven Economy

This is used to describe an economy in which generation and the exploitation, of knowledge has come to play the predominant part in the creation of wealth and improvement in the living standard. It is all about the more effective use of all types of knowledge and creativity in all manners of economic activities, (Ariyo, 2012). Countries that are knowledge-driven have made substantial progress in the socio-economic growth and development. Typical example of such countries are United States of America (US) and United Kingdom (UK). The progress made in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in these countries has made it possible for information to be more easily available, faster, and cheaper. Creative entrepreneurship education if well harnessed will promote faster growth and sustainable national development.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories have been advocated by scholars to explain the field of entrepreneurship education. Those theories have their roots in economics, psychology, sociology, and management (Nwaeke, 2019). The multi-disciplinary nature of entrepreneurship is obviously ignored in this paper. However, the theoretical framework of this paper is based on the human capital theory developed by Edward Denison 1962, and Gary Becker 1975.

The human capital theorists emphasize education and experience as the major factors of growth and development of societies, (Denison, 1962; Becker, 1975). The knowledge gained from education,

represents a resource that is heterogeneously distributed across individuals, and in effect central to understanding differences in opportunities, identification and exploitation of business environments.

Education is a tool for improving human capital, stimulating labour productivity, boosting the levels of technology across the world, and enhances sustainable development in most countries of the world. Human capital theory encourages spending on nation's work force because expenditure on training and development is a productive investment. Human capital improvement through quality education is a critical factor that propels economic growth and development in most countries of the world, notably Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, and Belgium etc. This prescribes knowledge and technical progress as main drivers of economic growth in any society. This, knowledge put to productive use, propels development. This implies that creative entrepreneurship education is a sine-qua-non for knowledge acquisition and technical progress in the society, (Sunday, 2016; Nwaeke, 2017). However, the importance of training sound human capital required for sustainable national growth and development is not a new idea.

Entrepreneurship Education and Nation Building

Most degrees and certificates have become unmarketable in the Nigerian labour markets these days; thereby leading to thousands of Nigerian youths, especially university graduates roaming urban streets in search of jobs without success, hence the increase in crime rates. In order to arrest these ugly challenges, many countries such as Germany, Japan, Australia and India have introduced creative skill acquisitions that run side by side with other school curricular, especially at the university level. This is done to give students additional skills and trades that could afford them self-employment and create employment for others, (Agina-Obu, 2018).

There is a growing awareness of entrepreneurship education worldwide to produce young people that have potentials and abilities to create jobs and employment opportunities for self-reliance and sustainable national development hence the recent calls for educators and curriculum specialists in Nigeria to integrate the spirit of entrepreneurship in all educational programmes in the country. The transformation of Nigeria into industrial class can only begin when Nigerian education system is revamped with realistic creative entrepreneurship education as a core issue in our school curriculum. Entrepreneurship education plays vital role in the development of attitudes, abilities and related skills for job creation and self-reliance. This means that any country with vibrant and creative entrepreneurship education programme with innovative activities that promote creativity will likely have a sustainable strong economic growth and development (Nwaeke, 2019). It is in the light of this, that the National Policy on Education emphasizes on developing intellectual capacity and values for the individual survival that will provide enabling environment to acquire physical and intellectual skills for sustainable national development and self-reliance (FRN, 2014), cited in Nwaeke, (2019). Equipping students with appropriate skills for decision making, critical thinking, and self-reliance shall continue to play a major role in their job creation and stability in the economy, (Adamu, 2010). No wonder learners find entrepreneurship education more appealing, because it offers them a vibrant vision of how they may fulfill their highest potentials in life upon their graduation.

Imperative of Creative Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable National Development

Training in specific skills has been the hall mark in the development of great societies globally. Entrepreneurship education is a response to the increasing demand by industries for technical and vocational skills, due to the fact that graduate turn-out these days does not possess necessary general skills, but also specific skills for employment, (Nwaeke, 2019). It is an indisputable fact that creative entrepreneurship education makes the youths self-reliant, and contributes immensely to national development. It is a potential for wealth creation, poverty alleviation, and unemployment reduction. It leads to creation of new technology, increases productivity, enhances effective market by encouraging

domestic resource utilization and employment generation, as small farmers, artisans, craftsmen etc have contributed greatly to economic development of many countries. Nwaeke, Wosu, & Memoye (2013), highlights the imperatives of creative entrepreneurship education to national development as follows:-

- i. It offers opportunity for self-reliance and greater opportunity to be self-creative.
- ii. It provides adequate training required to identify innovative businesses.
- iii. It is a catalyst for economic growth and development of many nations.
- iv. It exposes one to risk management techniques
- v. Reduces poverty rate
- vi. Enhances employment and income generation
- vii. Controls rural-urban migration
- viii. Leads to establishment of career and modern business empires, with high level of perseverance.

For example, South Korea became an independent nation in 1945, and immediately restructured her school curriculum with emphasis on science, technical, and entrepreneurial/vocational education, today, the combination of aggressive educational policies, visionary leadership, and disciplined labour force has revolutionized South Korea, and propelled her to economic greatness, such that the former poor country that was dependent on the United States of America for food aid, has almost turned a self-reliant nation, with unquestionable technological powers, which is globally evident even in Africa. This is a lesson for Nigeria in this 21st century.

Challenges of Creative Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

Nigeria is naturally endowed with entrepreneurial opportunities, but the realization of full potential of these opportunities for national development has been hampered by the adoption of inappropriate industrialization policies and other inhibiting factors which this paper addresses; some of these are:-

- i. **Curriculum Content:** The first and foremost challenge confronting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is poor curriculum implementation across school institutions. Nwaeke (2017), rightly observed that the style of teaching entrepreneurship across tertiary institutions in Nigeria has been flawed, this has really impacted negatively on the actualization of entrepreneurship goals among the Nigerian youths (Sunday, 2016). Entrepreneurship education is better imparted through industrial tours, professional talks from successful businesses and execution of business projects while in school, instead of talk-and-learn approach going on in our schools without practicality, (Nwaeke, 2019). Again, the curriculum content is not structured to acquire entrepreneurial skills that will enhance the learners ability of being self-reliant and self employed after school. It is only concerned with the teaching of theoretical aspect of knowledge, which implies that the learner will be handicapped of any skill after graduation, (Obilo & Opara, 2018).
- ii. **Teaching personnel:** The competencies of teachers to handle effective and efficient entrepreneurship education in Nigeria are very poor. This is because the qualified trained teachers to teach entrepreneurship education in schools are grossly in adequate hence most of the teachers show unfavorable attitudes to entrepreneurship education, there by discouraging the learners. Some of the teachers have negative perceptions that those who tend towards skills acquisitions are the non-intelligent learners, thereby killing the desire and drive for the programmes.
- iii. **Lack of Fund:** This is a major challenge to entrepreneurship education. Adequate funds are needed for the successful implementation of curriculum on entrepreneurial education; this is attested by the National Universities Commission (NUC). Lack of fund automatically dwindles the fate of would

be entrepreneur, making him or her dependent rather than been independent and self-reliant. It equally robs the intending entrepreneur of his confidence, and heightens his fear of failure in the future.

iv. **Instructional Strategies:** Most times, teachers of entrepreneurship education do not employ the right methodology for teaching entrepreneurship education in schools, they employ talk and chalk method approach as earlier stated, forgetting that entrepreneurship education should be taught with the best practical strategy, method, technique and approach to help the learner imbibe the lesson and practice it.

v. **Instructional Materials:** The right and relevant instructional materials are not been employed in teaching entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, as to convey the real message. Instructional materials are powerful vehicles of teaching a practically-oriented or creative lesson. They facilitate teaching, stimulate attention and ensure better understanding of idea and concepts. Teachers usually do not employ correct and right instructional materials in teaching entrepreneurship education for clarity of concepts. This poses great challenge to entrepreneurship in the 21st century Nigeria. From the forgoing, Amadioha & Akor (2018), have summarized the factors that deter the advancement of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria thus:

- i. Inadequate planning
- ii. Negative attitudes toward entrepreneurship education/skills acquisition
- iii. Unqualified and incompetent teachers
- iv. Inadequate fund
- v. Corruption
- vi. Ungraded and unrestrained importation of goods and services
- vii. Inability to make entrepreneurial transition away from theories
- viii. Lack of management know-how
- ix. Inadequate guidance for entrepreneurship education programmes
- x. Inadequate instructional materials
- xi. Youths/young people's laxity

The above assertions lend credence to our discussion on the challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship Development Options for Nigeria in a Knowledge Economy

Nigeria can become a successful rich economy via entrepreneurship knowledge development or education. This can happen when government is committed to making it a reality. Government has a role in establishing the right environment that can encourage cultural changes that will stimulate a knowledge driven economy via entrepreneurship education development. It demands a complete change of culture and attitude and a new wave of collaboration and joint-working between different agencies and sectors of the economy to make it a reality. There must be a cohesive and coherent long-term strategy to help make the idea a reality. These strategies are:-

Fostering the Spirit of Enterprise: The private sector is the major driver of the economy all Over the world, in terms of wealth creation and employment generation, for example, in Nigeria presently, about 97% of all employment is generated by small and medium scale businesses, and hence they are Nigeria's main wealth creator and job generator. If properly harnessed, small businesses will form the bedrock of a knowledge – driven economy in Nigeria.

Government however, has to ensure the right macro-economic conditions to make them prosper, not the current practice where government tries to do everything in the economy which has not helped matters, because of its negative effects in entrepreneurship development and innovation. This has equally stifled the growth of knowledge, hence welfares government is no longer fashionable world-wide, especially in this new era of knowledge driven economy. Government therefore should

foster the spirit of enterprise and creativity among the people by encouraging business start-ups and growth; this will encourage good ideas into successful business ventures through the provision of good business support and enabling macro-economic conditions. Government can do this by setting-up a small Business Office (SBO), which will have responsibility for the nation-wide provision of business support activities for small and medium scale enterprises (SMES), as it is done in other countries like US and UK. SBOs should have offices in all the states and local government areas where businesses can have direct access to the help and support they need (Ariyo, 2012). SBOs should provide the following advice for business startups, such as exporting, use of ICT for business growth, business research and development, information on government's regulations, training for business managers, organizing conferences and other fora to help collaboration and create awareness among small businesses. They should equally help small businesses or business startups to pursue and develop forms of funding such as venture capitals, business angels, corporate venturing and higher purchase and leasing. This will facilitate the role of private sector in a knowledge economy and help businesses grow, instead of government doing everything. Government should as well reevaluate the role of banks to fit into the new agenda of promoting entrepreneurship by seriously considering how to help small businesses in Nigeria take part in the global market, and make best use of e-commerce to boost their sales, by the introduction of business or credit cards, and similar finance products acceptable in other countries, the introduction of economic instruments like tax breaks, for new registered businesses can encourage business start-ups grow to a conglomerate. They can even be exempted from paying tax for more than five years of existence. This will encourage business expansion and make more people go into businesses to promote entrepreneurship. Government can equally discourage importation of products that can be adequately produced locally through high taxation.

Encouraging Educational Growth & Development: Skilled workforce drives economic growth and development of most societies. Workers contribute more to production when they are more highly educated, knowledgeable, and creatively embodied. In this regard, government should ensure that the right education policy to enhance good and quality entrepreneurs should be put in place, not the lip-service as it is the case in Nigeria. Such education policy must be practically and creatively oriented, and must be pervasive at all levels of education in Nigeria. A complete overhaul of the education system and a serious injection of resources are necessary to ensure that Nigerian universities can produce high quality and well trained entrepreneurship graduates (entrepreneurs) who can compete with their counterparts in other parts of the world. Such top quality graduates should be knowledgeable, highly skilled, IT literate, innovative and entrepreneurial, they should be able to raise their sights, to collaborate, compete, solve complex problems, generate ideas and take risks, (Ariyo et al, 2012). Such graduates should be in charge of the small businesses and public administration system of the future, since they can move the nation forward. Government therefore must ensure further collaboration between business and education especially in the universities. Business should have more direct roles to play in education because bulk of their work force needs necessary skills and knowledge to make businesses more competitive and prosperous. Exposing young people to the world of business early enough, will foster and develop enterprise culture, and make more young people go into businesses. Government provision for right support, enabling macro-economic environment, and good quality entrepreneurship will enhance potential for success.

Encouraging the growth of Science and ICT: Knowledgeable workforce, with well supported business, well developed basic science and technology, together with enhanced ICT infrastructure expand economic growth and development. Therefore, government must as a matter of necessity expand the local technology clusters in this country, by financially empowering them in order to foster growth and development of enterprise culture. Universities must be adequately encouraged and financed to encourage research and development, like other universities in the world especially in the area of

entrepreneurship education and research. The competitiveness of the country in today's information rich world depends on its ability to access and exchange information both locally and globally. Telecommunication networks can be designed, regulated and privately funded or internationally funded through government efforts, to suit the needs of the country.

Government should ensure that access to a working telephone and fax lines for the average Nigerian and business is seen as a necessity. Currently, Nigeria is the most expensive place on earth to make phone calls, (Ariyo et al, 2012). Access to communication in an entrepreneurship driven economy should be made a great necessity. The growth of the internet is gathering pace globally, Nigeria should take advantage of this to enhance entrepreneurship development and over all national economy. Nigeria should seize the opportunity to lunch herself into the world of producers of high technology not just end-user country, as this will enhance the development of industries. There is need for further expansion of other physical and social infrastructures. The provision of constant electricity, good transport system, good network of roads, a functional, efficient and effective railway system, well developed and trustworthy air transport services should be vigorously pursued for better entrepreneurship culture.

Transparency Spirit: The most important change that is very necessary for Nigeria to partake in the new knowledge driven global economy with respect to entrepreneurship development, is the cultivation of the spirit of openness and transparency. Corruption is now pervasive in all aspects of Nigerian life, hence Nigeria sits top of the scale as the most corrupt country in the world, according to transparency international. No country, no matter the amount of knowledge embodied in its people can prosper in an atmosphere of excessive corruption as it is the case in Nigeria.

However, Amadioha & Akor (2018), Amoke & Nwafor (2018), Sunday (2016), and Nwaeke (2017) outlined some of the options of improving entrepreneurial skill development as follows:-

Administrative improvement, adequate funding of the programmes, manpower development and consumer education, gender equality in education, development of entrepreneurship culture in the youths, improving technical and vocational education, government role and involvement, higher institutions involvement, information and communication technology (ICT) development, micro enterprise development, creation of state entrepreneurship education innovation fund, youth entrepreneurs yearly award, National entrepreneurship week, and global entrepreneurship week, supportive community environment etc. Any of these measures can be utilized to enhance entrepreneurship development in the economy. It is worthy of note that the options outlined by these researchers, have already been discussed extensively in this paper under four major headings, namely developing entrepreneurial spirit, educational development, development of science and technology, and lastly development of spirit of transparency. These are reliable blue prints for creative entrepreneurship education for national development in a knowledge driven economy.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship education holds the key for the rapid, economic growth and development of Nigeria in the modern knowledge economy. To promote the spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurship culture in Nigeria, the government must put in place a proper economic and policy framework to drive entrepreneurship growth in the economy. This essentially requires massive investment in the area of creative functional entrepreneurial education to improve the wealth of knowledge of about 120 million Nigerians. Government must as a matter of necessity encourage enterprise culture in the spirit of most Nigerians, especially the young people, and ensure private sector involvement, innovation and creativity in the economy. The economy business support programmes must be put in place to help the growth of small and medium scale businesses in the economy. The development of both physical and social infrastructures to support business growth must also be the priority of the government. Promoting

entrepreneurship education as a way of improving the economy of Nigeria in this 21st century, involves change of culture and attitude of the people, and in particular, fostering a new spirit of transparency and openness in all aspects of Nigeria life. It equally involves collaboration between the government and the private sector, the education sector and the Nigerian populace as a whole, both those at home, and those abroad.

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