

Business Education and the Entrepreneurship Education Agenda: A Synergy for Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria

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Abstract

Unemployment or the search for paid employment in Nigeria has become endemic. This is support by the claims that Nigerian education system is bookish and academic oriented and lacked vocational and entrepreneurial values. Hence, the need to refocus education towards programmes that will inculcate knowledge and skills that prepare citizens for employment and self-reliance, economic diversification and sustainable development. The paper examines the business education programme and the entrepreneurship Education Agenda as a Synergy for the reduction of unemployment in Nigeria. The paper concludes that unemployment in Nigeria requires a combination therapy as the synergy will bring about a new pedagogy in which students are prepared with knowledge and practical skills but more especially creativity, spirit of initiative, responsibility, capacity for confronting risk and the boldness to start small scale business on graduation. This will reduce unemployment or the thinking for paid employment.

Keywords: *Business Education, Entrepreneurship Education, Synergy, Unemployment, Self Employment.*

Introduction

The prevalence of unemployment in Nigeria remains a great challenge confronting the government and the people today. This call for scholars of various disciplines of learning to brainstorm on how best our educational system and methodology can begin to yield result in curbing this menace. Business Education has been carefully designed to meet basic skills, knowledge and capabilities to function either as a business teacher or business executive. According to Ubulon and Ukwuije (2000), Business Education is an aspect of educational programme ... which prepares students for careers in business. It is education needed to teach people business, education needed to handle personal affairs and education needed about business in order to be good citizens of a society.

Indeed the gains and good scorecard of Business Education, youths have continued to grapple with unemployment in Nigeria. Ewuzie (2012) asserts that the harsh economic realities in the country today, notwithstanding upcoming generations of graduates when given proper orientation and entrepreneurial education can become successful here in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship Education is the programme designed to inculcate the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to conceive and start your own business.

As part of the on-going effort to find lasting solution to the high level of unemployment in Nigeria and to move the country towards self-reliance, economic growth and sustainable development; this paper deals on "Business Education and the Entrepreneurship Education Agenda: A Synergy for Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria."

Business Education: An Overview

The term Business Education has been viewed differently by scholars. A generally acceptable definition has been difficult to arrive at because research and theoretical formulations have continued to grapple with the problem, providing as many definitions as there are experts. Some schools of thought believe that business education is a programme of study to produce teachers for secondary and post-secondary schools. Hence they view Business Education as education for business teachers – a specialized and professional arm of the technical and science education focused at preparing and equipping those to impart business skills and competences to students and other business trainees.

Another school of thought views the concept of Business Education as education for business. Supporting this view, Ubulom and Ukwijie (2000) assert that business education is an aspect of educational programme... which prepares students for careers in business. It is education needed to teach people business, education needed to handle personal affairs and education needed about business in order to be good citizens of society. Even Osuala (1981) supports this view when he opined that Business Education is a programme of Instruction which consists of two major parts: whereas one part consist of office and vocational education for office career through refresher and upgrading education; the other part consists of a programme to provide students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs or using the services of the business world.

However from the foregoing, this paper shares the same view with the centre point position advocated by Otamiri (2008). He viewed Business Education as a fusion of pedagogical and entrepreneurial preparation. He maintained that Business Education therefore involves the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills (including teachings skills), attitudes, understanding and knowledge related to occupation in various sectors of the economy and social life.

Goals of Business Education

Business Education has been carefully designed to meet basic skills, knowledge and capabilities to function either as a business teacher or business executive.

Ubulom (1999) speaking about the objectives of Business Education outlined the goals of Business Education to include:

- a) To make available to all students the opportunities to explore and learn about the world of business and the possible interests and potential careers it has to offer.
- b) To help develop in all students, the ability to choose wisely the goods and services that business has to offer.
- c) To assist in developing an intelligent understanding on the part of all students of the various occupation to be found in the world of business.
- d) To development in practical ways an understanding and an appreciation of the actual function of our economic system.
- e) To enable students acquire business knowledge and skills that may be needed for personal use.
- f) To prepare students to enter into and follow business as a career.
- g) To prepare students to perform business activities common to many professional areas.
- h) To prepare students for more effective study in the field of business.

- i) To prepare students to be business teachers.

Furthermore Aina (2002) also listed the goals of Business Education to include:

- i. To apply the various business concepts acquired in class to real life situations
- ii. To acquire skills and the competencies required for the performance of basic business jobs i.e. take simple administrative decisions and deal with correspondences.
- iii. To keep simple records of financial and other transactions in the office and operate and carter for office machines and equipment
- iv. To identify and discriminate among alternatives available to them in the market given limited resources.

Obi and Otamiri (2010) summarized the actual and operative goals of Business Education as enunciated in the departmental handbooks of various departments of Business Education to include:

1. To produce efficient and effective management, secretarial, accounting and marketing managers.
2. To produce lecturers who will handle business and related courses in our universities and colleges.
3. To propagate the development of the business thought and philosophy in business and management.
4. To prepare people for self-employment in situations where there is no available paid employment
5. To expose the students via the available courses to the limitless horizon of the business world and prepare them for roles as qualified administrators and managers in business organization.
6. To develop in the student's requisite skills and expertise in management of both private and public enterprise and arm them with the analytical, ability needed to meet the growing challenges of present and future Nigerian and international environment.
7. To prepare and equip those who pass through the programme to be able to establish and run their own private business venture as self-employed citizens of the society.

The Meaning of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education as defined by the consortium for entrepreneurship education (CCE, USA) is a form of education that seeks to prepare people especially youths to be responsible enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. It is not based on a textbook course, rather students are immersed in real life learning experiences where one have an opportunity to take risk, manage the results and learn from the outcomes.

Entrepreneurship is the act, the skill and dexterity of the entrepreneur in doing business. According to Uwaneje and Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2006) entrepreneur Education is the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to create jobs by conceiving and starting a new business. In broad terms, entrepreneurship has to do with the ingenuity to create business ideas, develop the business, manage it, make profit and reap possible risk involve.

Adiele (2010) defined entrepreneurship education as that form of education which inculcates into the individual learner concepts, skills and knowledge on how to start a new business, create jobs, create business ideas, develop the business, manage it and make profit.

The Entrepreneurship Education Agenda

Entrepreneurship Education entails entrepreneurship courses, training and certification for educators, economic developers, business counselors and entrepreneurs. Moris and Jones (1993) opine that entrepreneurship education programme should include efforts aimed at ensuring that the training offered at all levels of education inculcates in the students' knowledge and skills that will enable them on graduation to:

- a) Identify and evaluate opportunities
- b) Identify a business concept
- c) Identify the needed resources
- d) Acquire the necessary resources and
- e) Implement, operate and harvest the venture.

Adiele (2010) also noted that "the curriculum content should be such that will expose the learners to the business options that are relevant to the economy and which will offer them career opportunities they present". He maintained that in the long run the education offered in schools should be able to inculcate in learners creativity, spirit of initiative, responsibility, capacity for confronting risks and independence.

In line with perceived objectives of entrepreneurship education, its content or agenda should focus on the following:

- i. **Innovation Thinking:** The students should be coached on how to recognize opportunities that others have overlooked. How to develop new ideas, new technology, new goods, new methods and imaginative skills for re-organizing an enterprise for good.
- ii. **How to start Business of your own:** Entrepreneurship Education should provide the students with the right mindset, and boldness on how to breakthrough the chins of starting business of one's own after graduation. It should afford students the opportunity to be informed of different types of business and what it requires to venture into them. It should also expose the student on sources of raising finance that could be exploited.
- iii. **Inculcation of management skills:** Entrepreneurship education should be designed to practically equip students with organizational skills, time management, interpersonal skills and financial management skills.
- iv. **Inculcation of problem solving skills:** Entrepreneurship education should inculcate in students requisite problem solving skills and decision making abilities. This will help to enhance their social-psychological development e.g. self-esteem, ego and self efficacy.
- v. **Growing your business and creating employment:** Entrepreneurship Education should prepare the students on how to grow their own business after graduation and create jobs i.e. by becoming employer of labour and not job seeker or mere employee.

Entrepreneurship Education Methodology

Entrepreneurship Education if it must be a catalyst education programme as it is designed should be practical and plausible. In line with this Umameiye and Aduwa (2006) advocated that apart from classroom instructional delivery, the entrepreneurship educators should include approaches such as seminars, visitation, internship and practice firm as options to enhance quality delivery in entrepreneurial education.

Adiele (2010) discussed these approaches as follows:

- a) **Seminars:** Seminars and workshop should be made part of the school curriculum. Successful entrepreneurs should be invited to present papers on the nature of their business and the career opportunities it offers. Seminars programmes will help to further stimulate students' interest in diverse business areas.
- b) **Visitations:** Excursion should be regularly organized to firms, industries and commercial ventures to expose students to the rudiments of entrepreneurial practice. This will bring them close to management tasks as well as create opportunity for them to have direct contact with various business enterprises.
- c) **Internship:** Internship is a period of attachment to firms, business centres and offices etc. who are involved in small and medium scale business enterprise. Here opportunity will be provided for the students to blend theory with practice. During the Internship period, students will be exposed to diverse experiences and gain the requisite entrepreneurial awareness as well as gain knowledge in business plan development.
- d) **Practice firm:** Practice firm is the practical aspects of the entrepreneurship training where students are expected to demonstrate in practical terms the operations and preconditions of managing a successful enterprise. During the period, students should be made to set up mini business enterprise and run them as real business is done. They will be expected to assume various roles such as managing director, manager (sales and marketing) and as accounts officers etc. these roles should be rotated amongst the students to expose them to the various positions in a firm.

Unemployment Situation In Nigeria

The prevalence of unemployment, underemployment, high competition in the labour market and the frustration of job seekers cannot be overemphasized. According to Ewuzie (2012), "in Nigeria and indeed other parts of the world, youths represents over 70 percent of the population and it has been observed that one of the greatest challenges bedeviling developing countries is the issue of unemployment among the most productive sections of the population".

Merriam Webster's collegiate dictionary defines unemployment as the state of not being engaged in a gainful occupation". This can be measured by the proportion of labour force who were available for work but did not work.

Over the last one decade, unemployment in Nigeria has been on the tremendous increase and this causing many social vices such as youth restiveness, kidnapping and Boko Harm etc. Olayinka (2010) quoting the then minister of labour and productivity Adelokunbo Kayode, "the greatest challenge confronting government today remains massive unemployment, which has served as a breeding ground for anti-social vices...".

Dike (2009) also noted that "the Federal government of Nigeria recently acknowledge that about 80% of Nigerian youth are unemployed and about 10% underemployed. Even Oluba (2010) observed that "this national problem has made the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to be at a loss on what to do about the burgeoning unemployment size". He maintained that the sources of this massive unemployment, is a widespread liking for white collar job as well as the unemployability of school graduates.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in March 2009 estimated that national unemployment rate was 19.7%. Mirroring unemployment from the global scene, the UN agency in its annual report on youth unemployment trends as reported by O' Conner (2012) forecast the global youth unemployment rate would reach 12.7 percent this year and stay at this level for at least the

following four years". It is based on this Dr. Ekkeherd Ernst, head of the ILO's employment trends unit advised that countries with the most acute problems must try to stimulate their economies, for instance through infrastructure programmes.

The recent effort by the national economic team in Nigeria to intervene in job creation is very commendable. Equally laudable is the call for inputs from the public on workable job creation strategy for various sectors and for the country as a whole.

The Fusion Of Business Education And Entrepreneurship Education: Its Synergistic Effect In Unemployment Reduction

Business Education and entrepreneurship education is two different field of study but from foregoing discussions, the line dividing business education and entrepreneurship education may be tiny, as such difficult to identify. This is because they seem to work towards addressing the hydro-headed syndrome of unemployment, and the economic self-reliance and diversification of Nigerian economy.

The basic tools of the both area of study include:

1. Teaching, mentoring, training and coaching
2. The use of vocational education curriculum/techniques
3. And creating job/or opportunity for graduates to become self employed.

This view is supported by earlier work of Otamiri (2008) when he posited that Business Education is a fusion of pedagogical entrepreneurial preparation. Also the centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED, Canada) described Entrepreneurship Education as a vehicle for teaching or inculcating necessary entrepreneurial skills to the citizenry to enable them pilot their various project successfully thereby promoting the growth of small and medium enterprises in the country. This is the mission of entrepreneurship education in the vocational education curriculum.

In Nigeria and indeed other parts of the world, youths represent over 70 percent of the population and it has been observed that one of the greatest challenge bedeviling developing countries is the issue of unemployment among the most productive section of the population. While the situation may appear to have intensified in recent time, especially in Nigeria, there has been a serious clamour for a workable integration of entrepreneurship into the curriculum of the various of fields of study, be it Engineering, Science, Medicine, Social Science and especially Business Education to stem the tide of unemployment among youths in the country. Quoting Mrs. Edith Nweke the state coordinator of NYSC in Calabar, Akpan (2010) noted "as a mother it is disturbing me to see young graduates roam the streets in search of jobs, whereas they can create jobs themselves".

With the wide spread nature of unemployment in the Nigeria, like the medical practitioner would recommend the use of ACTs (Artermisinin – Based combination therapy) in treatment for malaria especially for endemic area so the fusion of Business Education and entrepreneurship education is expected to create the required synergy to fight unemployment head long.

This fusion is much relevant in tertiary education curriculum as it provides students with skills and knowledge to successfully launch and operate their own business venture, provide them with the opportunity to develop practical skills and perspectives that are vital to entrepreneurial success and as a result reduce unemployment by creating jobs, productivity increase and diversify the economy. After a careful study of the expected synergistic effect of this integration, Momoh (2010) is moved to say "I have a dream of a new Nigeria: A dream of a nation that will be dominated by

self-employed youths, where students in our tertiary institutions will not think paid employment but run their own businesses. He further maintained that so when you now see Nigeria students thinking of being self-employed, don't be surprised, it is a wind that is blowing across the globe. Tertiary institutions have also caught the bug with the introduction of entrepreneurship programme into their curricula.

Conclusion

The paper examines the business education programme and the entrepreneurship education agenda and how the integration of both area of study can create a synergy for dealing with the issue of unemployment. Unemployment in Nigeria has become endemic and therefore requires a combination therapy. This will bring about a new pedagogy in which students are prepared with knowledge and practical skills but more especially creativity, spirit of initiative, responsibility, capacity for confronting risks and the boldness to start small scale business on graduation. This will reduce unemployment and or the thinking for paid employment.

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