

**Entrepreneurial Skills as Panacea for Curbing Unemployment among NCE Graduates
in Zaria Metropolis: Roles of Primary Educators**

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Abstract

This paper dwelt into entrepreneurial skills as panacea for curbing unemployment among NCE graduates in Zaria Metropolis: Roles of Primary Educators. Teaching as it is known is the largest employer of labour anywhere, as such no other profession can match in this regard. Though, the pay is low in most schools but a strong guarantee for one to get easily at least as a starter and one to keep body and soul together. For many inhabitants of Zaria metropolis, NCE admission is easy to secure and not just only that but primary education studies as a course of study. The course no doubt will help to acquire entrepreneurial skills in the different subjects offered at this level to curb incidences of unemployment. Without doubt, the major challenge ravaging NCE graduates of today is unemployment and this is because majority do not want to teach due to what they called pastry salary being paid to teachers. This paper examined the concepts of unemployment, causes of unemployment, the place of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian schools, entrepreneurial skills: A panacea to Youths Unemployment in Zaria Metropolis, and challenges to the provision of entrepreneurship education to Zaria Youths. Few of the challenges listed include poor quality lesson delivery, absence of curricula syllabus, inadequate facilities for teaching and learning practical related aspect of entrepreneurial education, inadequate funding and lack of proper planning. Among others, it was recommended that competent manpower be employed, adequate funding be provided for the acquisition of facilities and other essential needs as well as provision of curricula as blueprint for the training. In conclusion, entrepreneurship education equips people with the knowledge and skills with which they can establish and run their businesses or ventures effectively and efficiently thereby creating employment and reducing poverty. However, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is faced with a lot of challenges that if not addressed, it will spell doom for its planners.

Key words: Entrepreneurial skills, Panacea, Primary Educators, Unemployment

Introduction

Education is an essential key to national development as it unlocks the economic potentials of the people. It further empowered and equipped individuals in different societies

to participate in and benefit from their national economy. No doubt, the present global economic crises suggest that the entire world including Nigeria is struggling for qualitative education in terms of entrepreneurial education (Aluwong, 2010). The document of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS, 2004) lends credence to the place of education by clearly explaining its role in self - reliance and development. Agi and Yellowe (2013) further asserted that the goals of wealth creation or generation, poverty reduction and value re - orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient education system which impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values.

Before embracing the colonial government in Nigeria unemployment was a rare phenomenon because people were highly entrepreneurial and productivity engaged. In pre and post independent in Nigeria, the Igbo ethnic groups were recognized internationally for its culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise development (Dana, 1995). The Yorubas and Hausas were not left out too. Nigeria like most developing nations of the world is faced with myriad of problems and realities which include poverty, unemployment, conflicts and diseases. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individual in most developing nations thereby, calling for the training of educated youths, men and women who can function effectively in the society in which they live in.

Successive administrations in Nigeria introduced formal education which enabled people to have the opportunity of being employed in the civil service after graduation. As such, the system destroyed self - reliance, self - employment and entrepreneurial skills of Nigerians as they became permanently dependent on the colonial masters (Nicks, 2008; Raimi, 2010) this led to massive unemployment and craze in the contemporary times for “all - ready - made jobs. The end result of what is being witnessed today has propelled the author of this paper to investigate how entrepreneurship education can help reduce or eradicate unemployment among the teeming youths of Zaria Metropolis and the implications on counseling. Succeeding titles of this work have carefully been discussed as follows:

Concept of Unemployment

International Labour Organization (ILO) (2015) defined the unemployed as the number of the economically active population that is without work but is available and searching for work, including those that have lost their jobs and those that have voluntarily left work. Fajana (2000) refers to unemployment as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid unemployment. It is one of the macro - economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher the poverty level and associated welfare challenges.

Olagunju (2004) on his part viewed entrepreneurial skill as the dexterity of an individual to exploit an idea and create an enterprise that is not only for personal gain but also for social and developmental gain. Salgado - Banda (2005) in his research asserted that

entrepreneurial skill is the ability to have passion, empathy, boldness, tenacity, self-belief, readiness to take expert advice, desire for immediate result and ability to recognize opportunities. Ubulom (2003) defined entrepreneurial skills as vocational business skills, which an individual acquires to enable him function effectively in the tumultuous business environment, as an entrepreneur of a self - employed or a self - reliant. The entrepreneurial skills identified by Ubulom (2003) include the ability to:

- i. Plan, organize and manage small - scale or medium scale business.
- ii. Source for fund for running small - scale business.
- iii. Develop skill of keeping the accounting records of small-scale business.
- iv. Develop human and public relations skills.
- v. Develop the skills for the maintaining of law relating to the registration and running of small - scale business and co - ordination of both human and material resources.
- vi. Acquire the skills for effective supervision and coordinating of both human and material resources.
- vii. Develop the skills for effective utilization of the profit for the growth and development of the firm.
- viii. Apply integrating business skills.
- ix. Acquire proprietorship and high productivity skills.
- x. Develop the broad base investment planning and implementation skills. Ubulom and

Enyoghasim (2012) further identified entrepreneurial skills to include ability to:

- i. Initiate strict guidelines for tardiness, business exploration and discipline.
- ii. Express work value through entrepreneurship activities.
- iii. Encourage self - esteem in the customers
- iv. Promote and require timeliness, effort, responsibility and other values and.
- v. Use the available tools to illustrate the importance of entrepreneurship skills development.

Okolie and Ogbaekirigwe (2014) in their study identified entrepreneurial skills to include innovative skills, self-motivation skills, marketing skills, administrative skills, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills and secretarial skills which form basis of the modular approach to business education.

Causes of Youth Unemployment

Youth's unemployment in Nigeria is a consequence of several factors. One major factor is that of population growth. Nigeria has continued to experience high rate of population growth. This increasing population growth has produced an overwhelming increase in the youth population thereby resulting in an increase in the size of the working age population. Lack of employable skills due to inappropriate school curricula is another factor contributing to the rising youth unemployment. Analysts have argued that in Nigeria generally, the skills

that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demands of employers (Mcgrath, 1999 in Ajufu, 2013). According to them, the education system in Nigeria has its liberal bias which indeed over supplies the labour market with graduates who do not possess the skills required by employers. Many graduates in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self-employment (Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye, 2011).

Another factor is the perception of policy makers and the youth themselves about employment. To the policy makers and the youth, employment means a job with salary and working for someone else. It is this perception that has continued to influence the institutions in Nigeria that provide skills and training. Based on this, curricula and training programmes are generally tailored towards preparing young people for formal sector jobs. Since these jobs do not exist, there is often a mismatch between the skills possessed by the job seekers and the available jobs. Among other factors responsible for youth unemployment are poor governance, ineffective targeting of the poor resulting in resources being thinly spread among competing projects, overlapping of functions, poor coordination and lack of sustainable measures (Musari, 2009).

Entrepreneurship Education and the Nigerian Schools

Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria amongst other things seeks to provide students in educational institutions with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of ventures. Variations of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling in Nigeria, from primary to secondary schools through the graduate university programs. It is a lifelong learning process. The concept of lifelong learning is essential to the competitiveness of the knowledge economy. It applies to all levels of education and training and concerns all stages of life as well as the different forms of apprenticeship. Therefore, the move by the government through the Federal Ministry of Education to make entrepreneurship education one of the compulsory general studies for students in schools across the country should be seen as a positive step in the right direction. This is to inculcate in the youths the spirit of self-reliance.

This development will not only address the problem of unemployment and underemployment but also ensure an entrepreneurial human capacity for national development. It is the hope that with the introduction of entrepreneurial education in our institutions the universities will better be repositioned to become centers of excellence with the equipping of technical laboratories both at secondary and tertiary levels. This will put the country on the path to join communities of nations that have fought poverty through strengthening of small-scale businesses. There is more creative freedom for people who are exposed to entrepreneurship education. There is higher self - esteem, and an overall greater sense of control over their own lives. It is the believe of many experience business people, political leaders, economists and educators that fostering a robust entrepreneurial culture will maximize individual and collective economic and social success on a local, national, and global scale. It

is with this in mind that the National Standards for Entrepreneurship Education were developed - to prepare youth and adults to succeed in an entrepreneurial economy.

Lack of entrepreneurial skills is no doubt a major contributing factor to the problem of unemployment of graduates and youths in Nigeria (Adebisi and Oni, 2012). The incidence of graduate/youth unemployment is attributed to the educational system operated during pre and post- independence era in the country which placed emphasis on liberal education rather than acquisition of vocational skills which prepares school leavers and graduates with vocational skills for better employment opportunities. Suffice it to say, that the system focused on and produced school leavers and graduates whose number are always on the rise year after year without commensurate provision of employment opportunities.

Entrepreneurial skills and attributes provide benefits to society, even beyond their application to business activity. Obviously, personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship such as creativity and a spirit of initiative can be useful to everyone in their working responsibilities and in their day - to - day existence. Also, the relevant technical and business skills need to be provided to those who choose to be self-employed and or to start their own venture or might do so in the future.

Entrepreneurial skills: A panacea to Youths Unemployment in Zaria Metropolis

Entrepreneurial skills acquisition is certainly essential in curbing youth restiveness in any human society. It is made available through various avenues such as attending entrepreneurial training classes, development programmes, seminars and workshops. Others include job rotation, special (intensive) training, artisanship or apprenticeship, organizational learning, R & D. Institutions, consultants, national and international agencies and bodies, non - governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional bodies can collaborate in this area of needs. On its part, the Federal Government of Nigeria under the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE - P) launched the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) in October, 2012 to create opportunity for 50,000 graduates to be attached to firms /organizations, where they can work for a year and enjoy a monthly stipend of N18,000.

The GIS is meant to provide the opportunity to unemployed Nigerian graduates including youths from Zaria to gain working experience during a period of one year and enhance their employability in the labour market, get retained by their firms of engagement, or even seek other opportunities through other government programmes like the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin) where they can develop business plans and get loans to run their businesses independently (Suleiman, 2013). The expected outcomes of the GIS include: increased skills of youth, increased number of interns employed or engaged in self - employment and increased Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. Before now, other youth empowerment programmes had been launched at different times by different government.

Challenges of Entrepreneurial Skills for Zaria Youths

Nigerian schools are faced with many challenges especially in the integration of entrepreneurship education as a significant subject in all fields of study. The setback according to Amoor (2008) is the absence of teachers with practical entrepreneurial skills and awareness. While few teachers are aware of entrepreneurship education having a positive attitude to the new curriculum, a lot of others still doesn't understand fully the contents, objectives, and the method of training for entrepreneurship especially among the unemployed youths where the paper is focused on. This makes it difficult for them not to efficiently communicate to their students on entrepreneurship intentions. A very long technical process is required to prepare courses being included in the curriculum of the entrepreneurial education programme in schools (Blenker *et al.*, 2008).

Entrepreneurship education is capital intensive as money is required for the theory and practical aspect of establishing and running the enterprises. This challenge frustrates the provision of entrepreneurship in academic curriculum of the Nigerian schools. Brown (2012) highlighted nine (9) challenges faced in the inclusion and provision of entrepreneurship education in our schools in Nigeria. According to Agbonlahor (2006), he summarized the challenges from his review as follows:

- i. Poor quality lesson delivery of the entrepreneurial courses to the affected students because of the poor knowledge of the course by the teacher in charge. There is a dearth of lecturers and instructors with both theory and practical training in entrepreneurship. Brown (2012) posit that lack of entrepreneurial consciousness is also a challenge to the quality delivery of entrepreneur education in all Nigerian schools where they are offered (Amoor, 2008).
- ii. The absence of curricular syllabus to support the training. The problem - based learning method is not used in developing the curriculum. This was observed to be common problem of most entrepreneurship education curricular (The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, 2012). The curriculum in Nigerian schools is overloaded already with main courses which makes entrepreneurship education not included in most cases or have less time to be taught.
- iii. The present method of teaching entrepreneurship in our schools (theoretical based). This method doesn't allow the students to be exposed to realities of the business environment. There is no organized workshop on entrepreneurship for the students where they have interactions and get inspiration from entrepreneurs.
- iv. Inadequate facilities for teaching and learning in practical - related courses is the main reason why entrepreneurship education has not been able to record a significant impact in Nigeria industrialization drive and reduction of youth unemployment (Brown, 2012) to

record a significant impact in Nigeria industrialization drive and reduction of youth unemployment.

- v. **Funding:** Indeed, learning takes place better and faster in a school environment with adequate provision of buildings, classrooms, accommodations, furniture and equipments than in a school environment where these are lacking. Also, teachers teach better in a school that is well equipped with infrastructural facilities and equipment than in a school where these are lacking. All these can only be provided where they are adequately funded, unfortunately, reverse is the case especially when the sector is been mentioned.
- vi. **Lack of proper Planning:** Proper planning is fundamental to the successful implementation of any educational programme. This is true of the fact that planning is the systematic and intelligent preparation for realizing the identified goals any educational programme. Indeed, it is planning that provides guidance and direction for the effective implementation of educational programme. Regrettably, there were no well thought out plans and strategies for implementing entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigeria's education institutions. This means that the objective of this educational programmes will hardly be achieved since there is no road - step leading to it and one cannot achieve any worthwhile objective in a state of possesses.

Conclusion

The introduction of entrepreneurship education programme into the nation's education institutions is a step in the right direction in view of the fact that poverty and unemployment have reached alarming proportions in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education equips people with the knowledge and skills with which they can establish and run their businesses or ventures effectively and efficiently thereby creating employment and reducing poverty. However, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is faced with a lot of challenges that if not addressed, it will spell doom for its planners. This is especially as many NCE graduates of today do not want to teach but with entrepreneurial skills, they can be self-employed in any sector of the economy.

Recommendations

Among others, the following recommendations have been put up:

- 1. The need to consider competent hands who can train NCE students to acquire entrepreneurial skills in the different subjects offered at the primary schools should be looked into as a matter of urgency. Majority of those presently teaching primary education students at the Colleges of Education are observed not to have a suitable academic qualification to teach the subject.
- 2. NCE minimum standard would require a review to accommodate entrepreneurial education for her students aimed at supporting their training. As identified earlier on,

there was nothing like this. What is presently obtained in Colleges of Education today is done in a haphazard manner and with no adequate plan for the students.

3. Adequate funding should not only be provided but released as at when due to acquire adequate and essential facilities to aid the training of NCE students in entrepreneurial skills to reduce cases of unemployment.
4. The need for adequate planning of entrepreneurial skills considerations and not be done using fire brigade approach. Such planning is to cover the contents, methodology, evaluation, environment and instructional materials to mention a few.

Role of Primary Educators

The roles performed by primary educators on NCE students prior to their graduation from Colleges of Education in Nigeria are same. They include but not limited to the followings:

- i) Implementation of Entrepreneurial Education Curriculum: As an implementer of the curriculum, the teacher devices the methods most suitable for imparting the knowledge, skills, and values required by society to his students (Afe and Egbochukwu, 2001).
- ii) Pace Setting: As a pace setter, the teacher determines the expected outcome of the teaching process. Owing to the teacher's role as a pace setter, the National Policy on Education (2004) acknowledged the fact that no nation can rise beyond the level of its teachers;
- iii) Facilitation: As a facilitator, the teacher helps in goal setting, programme selection, and provision of leadership for the students as the need arises, with the child as the main focus of the teaching-learning process;
- iv) Guidance: By reason of his superior level of attainment, the teacher is expected to know what will be required of the student at each stage of learning (Afe and Egbochukwu, 2001). His job of stating objectives, selecting contents and methods qualifies him as a guide. Furthermore, the teacher helps the students to achieve the self- understanding and self-direction necessary to make the maximum adjustment to school, home, and community (Ikeotuonye, 1984);
- v) Motivation: As a motivator, the teacher adopts a system of rewards and punishments to provide extrinsic motivation to his students. Through appropriate statements of behavioral objectives, the teacher is able to release the innate drive within the learner as he leads the learner to realize the intrinsic worth of the education programme (Afe and Egbochukwu, 2001). The teacher can also arouse and sustain the interest of his learners through demonstration of genuine interest in students' progress and performance (Ngwoke, 2004);

- vi) Model: As a role model, the teacher is expected to be an embodiment of decency and virtue since many students acquire attitudes, mannerisms, gait, styles of speaking and other behavioral tendencies from their teachers. Furthermore, the learner perceives the teacher as a superior achiever to be copied, emulated and imitated (Afe and Egbochukwu, 2001).

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