

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS.**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

*Entrepreneurship education is equipped with potentials to make citizens of a country self-reliant and self-employed likewise contributing to the overall gross domestic product (GDP) of that Nation. The paper examined the definition of some terms, the benefits of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The paper also x-rayed incessant change in government policies regarding entrepreneurship curriculum, infrastructural deficit, in adequate manpower as the challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The paper recommend that Federal Government of Nigeria should make it mandatory that entrepreneurship education is introduced in primary, secondary and technical schools so that a preliminary solid foundation would be laid at a lower level before students get to university level, there should be efforts to reinforce in youths the concept of risk taking and patience in wealth creation, Federal Government of Nigeria should also mandate lecturers and teachers of entrepreneurship education to continuously engage in service training and professional development. The paper further concludes that entrepreneurship education is still at the stage of infancy in Nigeria waiting to be properly funded and nurtured into full maturity. Though there are a myriad of challenges confronting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. It is pertinent that Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), private and public sectors likewise Nigeria citizens strive to sustain entrepreneurship education in various levels of education.*

### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship education is a revolutionary approach that seeks to equip students with the right set of skills to be innovative, creative, calculated risk takers, self-reliant and self-employed in all spheres of life. According to Jimah and Unuigbokhai (2011), entrepreneurship education prepares students especially youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs, contribute to economic development and the sustainability of their communities. In a country like Nigeria where unemployment is prevalent, it is pertinent that its government have to adopt and implement strategies towards encouraging entrepreneurship education in the various citadels of learning because, Nigeria is faced with a myriad of local and global problems which include a high ranking profile on poverty, low gross domestic product (GDP), high unemployment index, thus; making these bedridden challenges issues of serious concern.

The Government in an attempt to solve these economic problems introduced and made it mandatory for students of tertiary institutions to offer entrepreneurial courses under the mandate of its regulatory supervisory bodies such as; National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National University Commission (NUC), etc. Nevertheless, in 2006, the Presidency directed all Nigerian higher education institutions to include entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course for all students with effect from the 2007/2008 academic session (Francisca and Edith, 2013).

Entrepreneurship education is not only advantageous to students but also to the country as it envelopes economic growth and job creation, making it a bedrock for societal development thereby, creating a knowledgeable work force equipped with technological and vocational skills in this era of digital economy.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

**Entrepreneurship:** involves the creation of business opportunities, drafting and implementing the required business models, evaluating the risks involved and utilizing the available man power towards achieving set goals. Nevertheless, European Commission (2012) defines entrepreneurship as an individual's ability to turn ideas into action, it includes; creativity, sense of initiatives, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

**Education:** is an activity aimed at achieving certain objectives, which include impacting knowledge, developing the mind to be rational and fostering collaborating skills. Furthermore, education is one that provides all learners with the required capabilities to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being.

### **Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Entrepreneurship is a widely accepted field of study that is pertinacious in nature and scope, with the intent of equipping students to be creative, inventive and innovative with productive ideas that when utilized will be an avenue for wealth creation and employment generation for the overall benefit of the society. In the same vein, the above view shows that entrepreneurship education by its scope, nature and characteristics is a rebranding education culture meant to guarantee a comprehensive educational system re-engineering arising from the obvious deficiencies of the existing education system (Enu, 2012). The major aim of entrepreneurship education is crystal clear. Beyond just creating employment for the unemployed, it also equips students with the required skills to transform business opportunities into reality within and outside the various societies they find themselves.

Entrepreneurship education also includes improving the ability of students to anticipate and respond to societal changes. Historically, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has made tremendous impact on the nation's socio-economic development due to the alarming rate of unemployment in Nigeria; the nation requires an education that will provide opportunities for employment and generate income to youths and the nation at large. Entrepreneurship education provides such education. In a most recently concluded survey carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) in 2014, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) employ 84% of the Nigerian Labour force (Infoguide, 2022).

Amidst all of these, entrepreneurship education also equips students with abilities that increase their employment potential which include: the abilities to solve problems, to develop social interaction, abilities to find information and to handle it for decision making, planning, communication and presentation skills, etc. Learning about developing business plans and creating a company allows students to better understand and integrate finance, economics, accounting, marketing and other business disciplines, offering them an integrative and enriching educational experience (Valentin and Calin, 2017).

### **Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

The world is turning into a global village with tech savvy skills taking a special prominence in recent times. The introduction of entrepreneurship education into schools, colleges and universities has played a vital role towards revitalizing the Nigeria economy due to its numerous benefits. Furthermore, Nicole (2022) stated that entrepreneurs are some of the biggest donors to charity for various causes. Some seek to invest their money in creating solutions to help poorer communities have access to things we take for granted, like clean drinking water and good health care.

Nevertheless, Infoguide (2022) stated the benefits and importance of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria as; increasing individual competence and self-development, a driver of economic growth, an agent of social change and a facilitator of regional development. infoguide (2022) also went a step further in highlighting that, through entrepreneurship education, learners can gain key entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, reasonable risk-taking, self-motivation, financial responsibility, and teamwork that can create job opportunities, produce goods and services, and contribute to exports, thereby boosting the economic growth of such nation.

In the same vein Enyi and Eru (2013) stated that the benefits accompanied with entrepreneurship education involves; the creation of employment, reduction of high level of poverty, creating a smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy, being a catalyst for economic development and growth of the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of Nigeria, provide young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish an occupation in small and medium sized business, inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on, reduce the high level of rural-urban migration, provide the youth with adequate training that will enable them to be more creative and innovation in identifying noble business opportunities likewise offering tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management.

### **Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Despite the huge benefits of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, or the transversal skills that entrepreneurship education will equip students with in order to increase their employability skills and solve complex societal problems, they are still countless challenges confronting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria schools and tertiary institutions which include the following; ineffective teaching methods, inadequate funding by government, unqualified teachers, inadequate or lack of entrepreneurship education equipments, weak government policies.

In the same vein, Sulaimon (2020) stated that Nigeria as a developing country is not exempted from a number of complications in connection to her economy and by extension

educational system. Nigerian educational system was until now structured to produce a pool of graduates who relied on the government for employment. This ideology contradicts a system that strives to equip its beneficiaries with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that will make them self-sustenance and employers of labour. Sulaimon (2020) further identified some of the challenges confronting entrepreneurship education which include:

- i. Incessant change in government policies regarding entrepreneurship curriculum
- ii. Infrastructural deficit
- iii. Inadequate manpower in the area of entrepreneurship education
- iv. Faulty Foundation of entrepreneurship education
- v. Poor or outright lack of funding to implement entrepreneurship curriculum
- vi. Insufficient Equipment and Technology
- vii. Pressure from parents for students to seek blue collar job

Osolor (2009) alluded that Nigerian Government should recognize these facts and take proactive measures towards promoting and cultivating the entrepreneurial culture in its country.

## **Conclusion**

The paper was aimed at exploring the prospect and challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. However, entrepreneurship education is still at the stage of infancy in Nigeria waiting to be properly funded and nurtured into full maturity. Though there are a myriad of challenges confronting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. It is also pertinent that Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), private and public sectors likewise Nigeria citizens must strive to sustain entrepreneurship education in various levels of education. Entrepreneurship education is equipped with potentials to make citizens of a country self-reliant, self-employed thus; contributing to the overall gross domestic product (GDP).

Nevertheless, education is the bedrock of societal development and individual prosperity all geared towards building a robust global economy. It is also imperative that effective teaching methods should be adopted for an effective delivery. Nonetheless, Sulaimon (2020) opined that effective entrepreneurship education requires creative teaching methods that will focus on students' inventiveness, innovation, capacity building which is a herculean task and the role of the teacher and his teaching methods are equally vital.

## **Recommendations for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria**

It is sacrosanct that the three tiers of government, school administrators and tertiary institutions implement the following recommendations in order to achieve a vibrant and effective entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

- i. Adopting effective teaching methods: Effective teaching methods should be used in the teaching of entrepreneurship education. Most often hands-on learning (experiential) should be employed (Nwaukwa, 2018).
- ii. The Federal Government of Nigeria should make it mandatory that entrepreneurship education is introduced at primary, secondary and technical schools so that a preliminary solid foundation would be laid at a lower level before students get to university level. This will make the subject matter or discourse more appealing and fascinating (Sulaimon, 2020).

- iii. There should be efforts to reinforce in youths the concept of risk taking and patience in wealth creation. This instils positive change of entrepreneurial attitude. They would thus develop habit of success out of failure. Knowing that life is full of risks and success comes from failure, youth should try again where they fail (Salihu et al, 2020).
- iv. The Federal Government of Nigeria should mandate lecturers and teachers of entrepreneurship education to continuously engage in service training and professional development.
- v. The Federal Government of Nigeria and Non-Governmental Organisations should institute a trust fund which will be solely for equipping and promoting entrepreneurship education programmes.

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