

Relevance Of Entrepreneurial Education In Nigerian Schools

MGBEMENA, Emeka Ebuz

OKONTA, Ebere Donatus

Department of Architecture, Obafemi Awolowo University,
Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

Abstract: Nigeria like every other developing country is engulfed with numerous economic challenges. Every year thousands of graduates and non-graduates are plagued with the reality of unemployment and find it difficult to contribute their quota in developing the nations economy through sustainable practices. Their inability to confront the challenges is not far from their lack of knowledge and skill needed to walk upon the heights of the mountains before them. It has become increasingly important to revert back more seriously on educating them right from the beginnings of their academic journey on entrepreneurship. This study seeks to focus on major ways entrepreneurial education can be integrated into the Nigeria school, it seeks to establish a link between entrepreneurship and economic growth. Thus, it evaluates with respect to entrepreneurial education, 'what should be taught', 'when should it be taught' and 'how should it be taught and with what materials'. It was discovered that entrepreneurial education is the key to unlock innovations which will metamorphose to developing ideas, and then help in implementing it in an organization or bringing it to the market. The responsibility falls on both the government and private institutions to help establish strong educational structures that are themselves entrepreneurial if the future of the nation will be insured.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Education, Relevance, Secondary Schools,

I. INTRODUCTION

'Two friends came to a remote countryside and observed that virtually everybody was barefooted. The first man laughed about the situation, the second man saw it as an opportunity to create wealth' The world today is full of different sets of persons who react to problems in different ways, there are those who solve problems, those who create problems, those who do nothing about the problem, and those who don't even notice the existence of a problem. Whichever category we fall into, we must remember that what makes us relevant in our generation or the next is the solution we provide for the problems around us. But those who will solve some of the problems are not born with the solutions in them, often times it is expedient that they go through consistent and rigorous trainings that are tangential to the kind of solutions they will offer. Equally speaking, it is no longer a new fact to understand that Nigeria is beguiled constantly with economic challenges. It is expedient that we understand this challenge

and seek to solve it by observing how other nations emerged to be strong economically and then learn from them.

It is difficult to separate economic growth from entrepreneurship. Nations that made tremendous progress economically had entrepreneurship to thank for. They created conducive environment for entrepreneurship to thrive and also made its trainings and lessons a way of life, inculcating the younger generation how to thrive and be responsible citizens who think and act on ways to solve problems. Entrepreneurship is not exclusively a path to personal fulfillment but should be a conscious effort by all to contribute to the nation's growth economically. Entrepreneurship has to be learned not when one discovers that it is needed but in every phase of development. Thus, the focus we be to examine ways entrepreneurial education can be integrated into the Nigeria school, it seeks to establish a link between entrepreneurship and economic growth. Thus, it evaluates with respect to entrepreneurial education, 'what should be taught',

‘when should it be taught’ and ‘how should it be taught and with what materials’.

A. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EDUCATION IN NIGERIA SCHOOL

1980's may be known as the decade in which entrepreneurship emerged as an important element in the dynamics of modern economics.

New small businesses have become the major source of new job creation. Individuals and small businesses have made major contribution to the discovery of new technologies and to their commercial application. In short, the 1980's brought about a renewed emphasis on the individual as entrepreneur, as producer and consumer.

The relevant questions are not concerned with whether entrepreneurship should be taught in pre-university programs but, rather, what should be taught, and when and how to teach and with what materials.

The study and promotion of entrepreneurship should be based on some rationale as to why entrepreneurship is important to economic wellbeing of society. One hypothesis is that entrepreneurship is a creative process, that entrepreneurship activity stimulates innovation and that economic growth depends upon the existence of an innovative environment.

With these premises, it becomes imperative then that there should be a high degree of correlation between entrepreneurship and economic growth (Williams, 1981, p.517). Therefore, understanding the role of entrepreneurship in economic progress (as measured by increases in per capital income and the quality of life) is critical to our understanding of the dynamics of our society and its future wellbeing. The first question to be considered in achieving this understanding of the linkages between innovation and economic growth is what is entrepreneurship? Mark Casson (1982) has developed a list of quality that one must possess in order to fulfill the functional definition of an entrepreneur, these include:

- ✓ Self-knowledge
- ✓ Imagination
- ✓ Practical knowledge
- ✓ Analytical ability
- ✓ Search skill
- ✓ Foresight
- ✓ Computational skill
- ✓ Communication skill
- ✓ Organizational skill

Though a few of these attributes are innate, all the identified attributes of entrepreneurs can be positively affected in some manners by education.

B. DIMENSIONS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

For the next generation of entrepreneurs, it is very important to teach them that entrepreneurship education has at least two broad dimensions namely, awareness and skill.

a. AWARENESS

When we are discussing awareness, it takes two major forms. The first concerns the student becoming aware of the past, present and future roles that entrepreneurs play in society. It is important that as part of the process of education students become aware of the importance of entrepreneurs in the growth and development of the country's economy.

Allowing students to experience positive entrepreneurial role models, either by class contact or through curriculum materials become the first step in entrepreneurship education, and should begin well before the secondary grades. This can be accomplished by in-class speakers, (ie inviting the person), by viewing videos, or by reading case studies. Another method is designing a program that will ensure periodic attachment of the student to the entrepreneur. A second form of awareness comes through allowing the students to see that entrepreneurship may be a career possibility for them. The student need to understand that while there are rewards to the entrepreneurial life, entrepreneurs live with risk and constantly face the possibility of failure. Although many varieties of psychological tests have been developed to determine the aptitude of student for various other occupations, no such test has yet been developed for venture initiators.

b. SKILLS

Entrepreneurial skill also consists of two components namely, the technical and managerial skill. Students must possess a high degree of technical knowledge in the field of their entrepreneurial activity if they dream to be successful. Students have to be given to vocational skills necessary to successfully compete in the market place.

The second skill component covers certain managerial skills that entrepreneurs need to learn. Entrepreneurs must have the necessary financial management skills to at least understand the information given to them by their accountant, banker, insurer, or for tax purposes. His managerial competence also will involve his dealing with employees, customers, and public. Students must be taught how to deal with humans. Knowledge of psychology and human relations will drastically reduce the possibility of having conflicts in the organization.

C. INTEGRATING ENTREPRENEUR IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Where should entrepreneurship be introduced and taught in the high school curriculum? As we know, there are several courses and levels at which entrepreneurship can be integrated while full unit on entrepreneurship could be taught as a self-standing, independent course of study, this is neither the only approach nor necessarily the most effective. Its effectiveness however will be enhanced if entrepreneurial insights are provided throughout the curriculum.

a. ECONOMICS

The first course where the infusion of entrepreneurship should occurs in high school is economic course.

There are certain basic concepts regarding entrepreneurship that should be integrated into the economic curriculum if the economic students are to have a grasp of how market system function and how a growth begin and is sustained. Yet most economic text or curriculum ignores the vital position of entrepreneurs in the economy. There are four micro and three macroeconomic concepts regarding entrepreneurship that should include;

- ✓ Entrepreneur as a factor of production should be clearly distinguished from land, labor and capital. In fact, entrepreneur creates the other three factors as well as organizes them to turn those inputs into highly valued output.
- ✓ Entrepreneur creates disequilibrium. Traditional economics shows how market move towards equilibrium in reconciling the forces of supply and demand. Entrepreneur creates disequilibrium by the introduction of new products or processes into market place and, thus create entirely new market while destroying old ones.
- ✓ Profits as a motivation. While the desire to earn, a profit is a motivating force for entrepreneurs. It is not the only one. Certainly, the desire for autonomy and the need for achievement are equally as important yet they are rarely included in economists' models (Brockhaus, 1982).
- ✓ Innovator as entrepreneur. Schumpeter (Schumpeter, 1979), Martins (1984) saw innovation as what distinguished an entrepreneur from others. Entrepreneur are constantly developing new ideas and new technologies and introducing it to the market place. Therefore, it is a very useful insight for economic students to understand that the process of innovation is not mysterious. There is a person behind it who has the idea and who commercializes it as well. On the macro-economic side we shall consider 3 points.
- ✓ Student need to understand the pivotal position of entrepreneurs in economic growth, both for the developed and underdeveloped world. Entrepreneur provides the new technologies that improve the material welfare of human kind (Seldone, 1980).
- ✓ Students discussing macro-economic policy should be aware that creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurship is an effective policy for job creation.
- iii) Macro-economic analysis focuses on the mechanical relationship between aggregate supply and demand variables that are subject to quantification such as interest rate and money supply receive attention. However, Keynes(1936) emphasized that behind all this relationship there are entrepreneurs who must make the decision whether to invest.

b. BUSINESS EDUCATION

This is the next obvious place where entrepreneurship should be included in secondary school curriculum. This is the appropriate place for the financial and human management skills to be introduced, developed and practiced by potential entrepreneurs. The most appealing approach to business education is to have the student view themselves as employers rather than employees.

c. GOVERNMENT

The action of government in creating and limiting the environment for entrepreneurship should be included in high school courses on government. Those portions of these course that deal with government taxes and regulation should be careful to demonstrate that these policies may not have a neutral effect on the entrepreneurial environment (Vesper, 1983). By reducing the rewards to entrepreneurial activity, taxes also reduce the likelihood of the entrepreneurial event (Kent, 1984; Stoll and Walter, 1980).

d. PSYCHOLOGY

The course of psychology is an excellent place for student to learn about the psychological characteristics of entrepreneurship and to determine if those characteristics describe them (Brockhaus, 1982). The high school psychology course that goes beyond description and has students evaluate their own personalities and motivations is a means of both identifying and motivating potential entrepreneurs.

e. SOCIOLOGY

Courses in sociology can also be important in the total entrepreneurship curriculum. Student should recognize that entrepreneurs both shape and are shaped by the culture in which they live e.g. why do some ethnic groups seem to be more entrepreneurial than others? What is the impact of displacement (immigration, unemployment, divorce etc) on entrepreneurship?

f. HISTORY

The importance of entrepreneur as a historical figure should not be overlooked. History teachers can do a great deal towards expanding the horizons of their students by focusing on case studies of entrepreneurs who have contributed to the betterment of human kind at all times and in all places (Dibacco, 1987). Case studies are particularly valuable if a variety of alternative stories are included that allow the student to relate to entrepreneurs of different races and gender.

g. SCIENCE

Entrepreneurship can also be a thread woven into the fabric of science courses. Since technological advancement often begin with scientific insight and continues because of entrepreneurial persistence. Students should understand the relation between scientific discovery and entrepreneurship (Martin, 1984). Many of the great scientists were also entrepreneurs, who not only invented but also innovated. The computer industry is filled with stories of entrepreneurs whose ideas were both developed and commercialized.

Those who design secondary curriculum should make sure that entrepreneurship is inculcated in these programs and not neglected. As this area has demonstrated, entrepreneurship is neither a separate nor an alien concept, but rather one that can enrich the students' understanding of a variety of secondary subjects.

II. WHAT ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION SHOULD TEACH IN SCHOOLS

The age of entrepreneurship education in the schools has certainly arrived. A number of new or re-activated programs at the secondary level focusing on entrepreneurship and small business development should be initiated.

It probably gained momentum when an increasing number of business leaders in the late 1960's and 1970 have fulfilled Maslow's hierarchy of needs by leaving secure positions and starting their own businesses. This people were probably seeking the highest height of Maslow's Hierarchy ladder-*self fulfillment*, since they had achieved the lower need such as economic security and social esteem. They defined self fulfillment as being their own boss and using their skills and knowledge to create something new on their own.

Entrepreneurship education should be multi-disciplinary in nature. The positive contributions that can and should be made from different disciplines such as business administration, communication, arts, economics, history, mathematics, psychology and sociology are necessary understandings for being an entrepreneur. Working for an entrepreneur or understanding how the entrepreneur relates to the total economic and social system is very vital.

The student should be made to see entrepreneurial venture having no discipline no environmental segregation, no socio-cultural background. They should know that entrepreneurs:

- ✓ Create ideas and organize other factors of production
- ✓ Entrepreneurs create jobs in our economy and have created new ways of doing things
- ✓ Entrepreneurs determine the economic and political life of the people

Entrepreneurial education should be the main factors or educational theme of this millennium. It will encourage private initiative, the creative genius of the individual, innovation, and the ways our economic system rewards these qualities.

In our public and private sectors, there is a growing awareness that many of our public institutions are out-modelled and ineffective. Innovative changes must enable these institutions provide services consistent with what the public need in this age.

Students will gain an understanding of the role of the entrepreneur in a market-oriented system. They will learn the nature of our economic system and how it works. Students can also gain a better understanding on how economic concepts can be used in making practical decisions. They can visualize how these concepts can be helpful in making decisions as, wage earners, consumers, and citizens.

A. ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Albert Shapero (1982) said, "Entrepreneurs are not born...they become through the experiences of their lives". Those who dream of creating a business need the skills to run one. Every government should review the educational offering of its schools – in particular its vocational programs in secondary schools and community colleges.

The federal government should encourage the advancement of entrepreneurial education and the study of the free enterprise system by promoting an early awareness of the free enterprise system, beginning with primary education and continuing through all levels of education. This training should be taught by small business people or teachers with hands-on entrepreneurial experience and must include curriculum input from small business people.

Vocational education offers an educational opportunity for young people who need a choice of specialization. A student may have problems in chemistry or French, but may handle a computer like a wizard. They may be highly skilled at working with their hands to create of electronic systems. Room should be given to, or an enabling environment should be created to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to excel.

B. CASE STUDY AND OTHER STUDENT BASED PROGRAMS

Once it has been determined that students will benefit from experience-based teaching, the next question is how to prepare those experiences that students have yet to personally encounter. For a high school student, studying entrepreneurship is different from watching movies. Therefore, the objective is to find ways to supplement the standard textbook and lecture with experience-based activities to encourage students, in the use of both inductive and deductive thinking. Students need to be placed in the middle of a real-world situation and provided with the opportunity to reason their way to a solution.

By allowing students the opportunity to practice their decision making in such situations without the risk that is attached to failure, educators will provide them with understanding that will last a lifetime. There are a variety of methods that will allow for this experience-based learning.

Experimental learning does not utilize this reinforcement process. When students are subjected to go on industrial attachment, follow ups should be ensured to guarantee that they adhere to the focus of the program, and not just the mere reason of making money.

Experience-based learning is accomplished through case studies because when he is analyzing a case situation, he casts himself as a role model because of past experience.

Cases can be simple or detailed. They can require the use of few economic tools (scarcity, opportunity cost, etc); however, cases must contain adequate information for the analysis to take place. The case should provide enough background information, facts about the situation and details to allow the reader to reach a conclusion.

III. CONCLUSION

Collectively, we will all agree that entrepreneurship is a creative event that can take place in a variety of setting. It is the capacity of an individual to see what others have overlooked and to act on the insight. It requires incredible knowledge and passion which is focused in exploiting a particular niche that had previously gone unnoticed.

Entrepreneurship involves innovation, which must metamorphose to developing the idea and then implementing it in an organization or bringing it to the market.

Entrepreneurship education must be multi-disciplinary. It should be more than teaching mere technical and managerial skills.

Entrepreneurial education deals with attitudes and values i.e. there are certain personal attributes and attitude that entrepreneurs have. They possess a great deal of inner control; they are highly disciplined, self-motivated and willing to tolerate risks and uncertainty.

For the full benefit of entrepreneurial effort to be achieved, more research is needed in this field of endeavor, to ensure efficient utilization of scarce resources.

Whether this nation or any other will be able to solve its economic and social problems will depend on the availability of a continued and increasing stream of creative talents.

Entrepreneurship education can be a major contributor to creating new education structures that are themselves entrepreneurial. If this happens, then the future of the nation will be insured.

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