

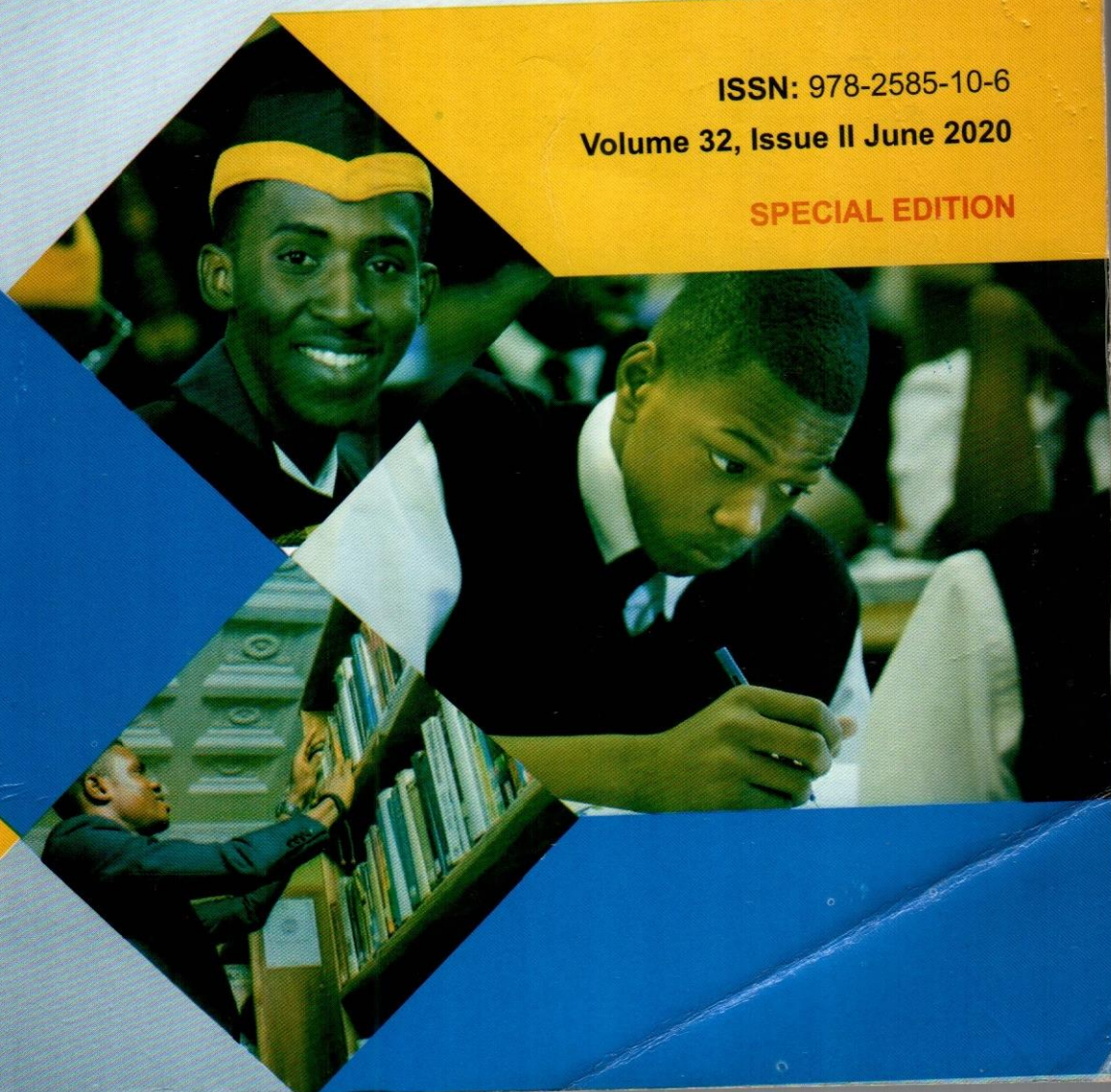
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ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION AT THE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL (JSS) LEVEL

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Abstract

The functionality of any educational curriculum depends to a very large extent on its capacity to develop a total person in society. The given curriculum becomes more purposeful when it is geared towards addressing the three domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor. The paper critically examined the major imperatives for promoting entrepreneurship education as a sure way of achieving self reliance for optimal sustainable National development in developing countries like Nigeria. This curriculum when properly implemented will equip the Nigerian child with enabling skills for poverty eradication and other vices that plague today's society. It discussed the perceived challenges of its effective implementation and highlighted possible solutions.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Sustainable Development

Introduction

The role of an entrepreneur in national development cannot be over-emphasized. An entrepreneur plays a significant role particularly in the economic development of a nation. The word entrepreneur was formed from a French word "entreprendre" which means to undertake. An entrepreneur is one who undertakes to manage, organize and assume the risks of a business. According to Esu (2012), an entrepreneur is someone who has the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and initiate appropriate action to ensure success. The author also observed that this is further cited by academic scholars to mean all forms of knowledge delivery that seek to empower the individual to create real wealth in the economic sector, thereby advancing the cause of development of the nation as a whole. The entrepreneur is an inventor, an innovator who needs to have some entrepreneurial discipline or mindset to function. This, in other words, means that the entrepreneur must have certain sterling attributes that will separate him/her from others. These characteristics according to Ezedum, Agbo and Odigbo (2011) include: creativity, taking initiatives, overcoming obstacles, getting the job done and bearing uncertainty and risks. These important characteristics of an entrepreneur have confirmed why entrepreneurship is being talked about globally today.

Meaning and Importance of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a noun formed from entrepreneur. It is the ability to create, innovate and bring to the table new ideas that will turn things around, whether in the business sector or in other areas of human endeavour. According to Etuk and Mbat (2010), entrepreneurship is a process through which individuals and or government either on their own or jointly exploit available economic opportunities without being scared by associated risks or inadequate resources under their control. Entrepreneurship is so much talked about today because of its importance to the economic growth and development of the nation. For instance, Ezedum, Agbo and Odigbo (2011), observed that entrepreneurship is a necessary ingredient for stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities in all societies. So in a developing country like Nigeria, the entrepreneurship attitude among the people is necessary. The reason is because such attitude will

help in starting small businesses which serve as catalyst for job creation, income growth and poverty reduction.

Through entrepreneurship, the individual gives the market place a product or service by using resources in a new way (Ogbonna, 2012). In other words, entrepreneurship encourages an individual to use his/her ingenuity to discover different ways of either manufacturing a product or disseminating new ideas on how to make a situation better. This has underscored the imperativeness of entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian education system.

Entrepreneurship Education and Sustainable Development

Entrepreneurship education is a concept that has attracted a lot of definitions, opinions, views and suggestions to itself. According to Lukman and Oviawa (2010), entrepreneurship education is a collection of formalized teaching that informs, trains and educates anyone interested in business creation or small business development. Obih (2011) described entrepreneurship education as one of the most crucial allies of national development. The author further observed that entrepreneurship education is that type of education and orientation that make one bold and willing to utilize his/her skills, capacity and drive to identify and harness investment opportunities through the judicious utilization of available resources to achieve given objectives. This, in other words, means that through the entrepreneurship education, an individual is assisted by training to discover his/her skills, ability and capacity to innovate or invent. It is also that type of education or training that enables someone to discover his/her strengths and weaknesses, consolidates on his/her strengths and then work on his/her weaknesses. Entrepreneurship education is necessary for effective and efficient delivery in today's world of works. Undergoing this type of training makes one to gain confidence even in this present competitive society especially at the junior secondary school level. Yunus (2009) asserts that entrepreneurship education equips students with entrepreneurial behaviours and mindset, self-confidence, self-efficiency and leadership qualities. It implies that entrepreneurship education enhances creativity, innovations and ability to think out of the box to solve problems as well as build relationship, networks and social capital which are basic for human development and capital formation.

The reason for entrepreneurship education cannot be over-stressed. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cited in Akomaye and Osan (2012) entrepreneurship education helps in educating individuals for and about business; provides a continuous programme of planned learning experiences designed to equip individuals to fulfill effectively three roles namely providing and distributing goods and services as workers, using the products as consumers, other areas include to provide educational opportunities to students who are preparing for careers in professional fields or disciplines other than businesses, to acquire business knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in the world of work; and providing career information that could help individual students relates their interest, needs and abilities to occupational opportunities in business. Still on the objective or purpose of entrepreneurship education Lukman and Oviawa in Ede (2012; 66) suggested that it could among others to provide meaningful education for the youth which could make them self-reliant and provide them skills and support necessary for career development. Other aims include to provide youths with trainings and skills that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities. Unarguably, from the objectives/purposes, it could be deduced that entrepreneurship education is geared towards helping youths especially at the basic education level. The full implementation of this type of education will help to configure and reconfigure the mindset of youths toward being self-reliant or independent and confident in

showcasing their potentials. Also, the configuration and reconfiguration of the mindset of youths will in the long run bring about the type of development that can be sustained.

Sustainable development was first discussed in the United Nations General Assembly in 1987. Since that time till date it has continued to dominate national and international discourses and as a result of this, the concept has attracted many definitions. According to Etakpobunnor, Shaka and Umar (2012), sustainable development is that type of development that is appraised in terms of both redistribution of wealth and meeting the basic needs of the masses at sustainable level. This means that sustainable development does not happen by chance. It must be first conceived, planned and executed. Also, before any type of development can be sustained, it should have focus/target or objectives that are set out to be achieved. Attah (2004), regarded sustainable development as a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional changes are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potentials to meet human needs and aspirations. From the definition given by author, it could be deduced that development is said to be sustained if it is conscious of the future.

Sustainable development is driven by education. This is supported by the fact that between 1987 when sustainable development was first mentioned and 1994 when it was formally launched, a 40-chapter document titled, Agenda 21 was devoted to how to re-orientate education towards sustainable development, how to increase public awareness and how to promote training (Etuk, 2004). The contents of chapter 36 of Agenda 21 contains all forms of education both formal and non-formal.

From the forgoing, it has been established that education is key to the achievement of sustainable development. However, it must be functional education or entrepreneurship education. This entrepreneurship education must be implemented among all the strata of Nigerian education system especially at junior secondary school level. The reason for this is because at that age (11-13 years) it will be a lot easier to configure and reconfigure the mindset of a child towards something that is more profitable. At this point, it has become imperative for countries especially the developing ones including Nigeria to re-examine and restructure her education system, to accommodate some forms of education that will produce job creators rather than job seekers. Having said this, entrepreneurship education appears to be the most favoured and should be implemented across all the strata of the Nigerian education system especially at the junior secondary school level. The reason for Junior Secondary School (JSS) is because entrepreneurship education will make more sense to them at this level with the aim of catching the children young and this will be better for the country. Therefore, Nigeria as a nation has a lot to gain for incorporating entrepreneurship education into her educational system.

Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education

The benefits that are associated with entrepreneurship education are inexhaustible. They include:

- i. To create better future through business entrepreneurship, social enterprise and community services
- ii. To give students more challenging educational experiences which will enable them develop the insight needed to discover entrepreneurial opportunities.
- iii. To empower students for job creation and employment generation as an essential component for sustainable development.
- iv. To give the students opportunity to exercise leadership roles, communicate their ideas and influence others effectively through the development of self advocacy and conflict resolution skills and engage in problem solving as a team.

- v. To help students to know what their firms would be like, thereby helping them to improve the national economy.
- vi. To enable young children including those with disabilities to learn organizational skills, including time management, leadership development and interpersonal skills which make them better and useful citizens hence prepares them for a career which will in turn improve the economy.
- vii. The development of entrepreneurship will optimize the use of the unexploited resources to generate self-employment and self-sufficient economy (Obih, 2012: 88).

With all these benefits as itemized by the author, there is need for the entrepreneurship education curriculum to be effectively implemented from the Junior Secondary School level. This will help equip the junior secondary school leavers with the entrepreneurial skills that will make them creators of jobs instead of job seekers thereby contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P) which will bring about sustainable development in the country.

Junior Secondary School and the Need for Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

Nigeria which is one of the developing countries of the world has numerous challenges confronting her. Among these challenges is the ineffective implementation of the entrepreneurship education at the Junior Secondary School (Upper Basic) level. Today, there are changes in the internal and external economic, social, political and technological environments. It has become essential therefore, for Nigeria as a country to manage these challenges and effectively put itself on the part of development by effectively implementing the entrepreneurship education starting from the JSS level so that junior secondary school graduates who do not wish to further their studies can become self-employed and contribute to the development of the country.

Irrespective of the huge advantages accruable from the entrepreneurship education, one still observes with nostalgia that most of the junior secondary school graduates in Nigeria are not properly exposed to skills acquisition training at school due to ineffective implementation of the curriculum at this level. For this reason, many of them are seen moving about the streets of our cities and towns aimlessly. Faced with this aimless and near hopeless situation many of them have resorted to doing all sorts of things ranging from trading activities (Nelson & Johnson 2017) to "okada" riding to survive (The News Africa, 2011). Some others have joined the illicit business of kidnapping, drug trafficking, armed robbery, betting (gambling), ritual killings and smuggling. It may also be observed that in a bid to survive some of these innocent young girls that have completed their JSS education have ignorantly become sex hawkers due to the inability of the school to equip them with the relevant skills. Furthermore, some of the young promising boys among them have lost their lives either in the deserts or in the mediterenian sea while trying to go to Lybia or any other countries in Europe for other illegal businesses.

The fact that these JSS students graduate without being properly armed with any life demanding skills to guarantee their survival in this present 21st century competitive world, due to poor curriculum implementation has created the atmosphere of lack of confidence among parents and guardians in the Nigerian school system and has resulted to a situation where foreign schools are preferred to our local schools. This problem of lack of confidence in the quality of our school started creeping into our education system about 20 years after Nigeria got her independence from the colonial rule in 1960. From this point the education system and the curriculum that were designed for the school became a challenge. To contain with this situation, the government of Nigeria came up with some curriculum reforms which among others included the 6-3-3-4 system of education. The 6-3-3-4 system was a complete departure from the colonial curriculum (which

aimed at producing clerks, messengers, interpreters and workers with minimal skills). It was quite comprehensive, covering academic, pre-vocational and vocational (Ughamadu 2006:278). The system also placed emphasis on science at all levels.

Looking at the structure of 6-3-3-4-curriculum, it will be observed that it was designed to address the entrepreneurial deficit of the country. Unfortunately, the curriculum was not effectively implemented as a result of government unpreparedness. This led to the failure of the system. The government unpreparedness was due to insufficient fund, lack of technical personnel (both teaching and non teaching staff), lack of well equipped workshops in schools and many other challenges. Observing that the 6-3-3-4 curriculum could not achieve the objectives for which it was designed, the Federal Government of Nigeria under President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 in Sokoto, launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme. The new education scheme was designed to take care of the first 9 years of the child in school which is 6 years of primary school and 3 years of Junior Secondary School levels respectively (Federal Republic of Nigeria) Also, according to the UBE act 2004, education under this scheme should be free and compulsory. The curriculum of the UBE at the primary school level according to National Policy on Education (NPE 2014;12), stated that 'subjects like computer education, Agric. Science/ Home Economics, Cultural and Creative Arts should be taught at this level'. Obviously, the content of the Primary school curriculum was designed to create the entrepreneurial mentality in the Nigerian child at this level but the Junior Secondary School curriculum, critically speaking was designed to equip the child with the entrepreneurial skills.

Junior Secondary School Curriculum

The curriculum of JSS is comprehensive for learners at this level. It contains both academic and pre-vocational studies which will go a long way in equipping the learner with the entrepreneurial skills. The subjects are as follows: (1) English studies (2) one Nigerian language (3) mathematics (4) basic science and technology (Basic science, Basic Technology, Information Technology and Physical and Health Education) (5) Religion and National Values (Christian Religious studies, Islamic studies, social studies, civic education and security education) (6) pre-vocational studies (Home Economics and Agriculture) (7) French Language (8) Cultural and Creative Arts (9) Business studies (10) Arabic (optional) (NPE, 2013). To ensure effective implementation of this curriculum, the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National Policy on Education recommended that the teacher-student ratio shall be 1:40. But in many UBE schools including the Junior Secondary Schools across the country, this ratio is rather observed in breach. According to Onuoha, Nwokocho and Nwanorim (2017), in most schools, classes have up to 60 pupils/students. This large class size has posed a serious challenge to the effective implementation of the entrepreneurship education at the Junior Secondary School level.

Challenges of Implementing Entrepreneurship Education at the Junior Secondary School

There are many challenges encountered in trying to implement the entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian school system especially at the junior secondary school level. These include Parental and societal wrong perceptions of entrepreneurship education, Poor or lack of conducive teaching and learning environment; Gender discrimination in entrepreneurial skills acquisition, process, Lack or dysfunctional Guidance and Counselling units in schools; Violation of the 1:40 teacher students' ratio (in some schools that have large population, one teacher can handle about 80 students or more) and ; Cultural and religious barriers Lack of policy sustainability;

Additionally, Obih (2012:91) itemized the problems thus; Obsolete and dysfunctional equipment and workshop; Poor funding of the UBE (upper level) in particular; Lack of essential facilities like; water and power supply; Inadequate supply of basic tools and essential instructional

materials; Insufficient classroom blocks, workshops and laboratories; Lack of technically trained teachers; and Lack of motivation and encouragement of teachers. Obviously, these challenges confronting the implementation of the entrepreneurship education must be tackled to ensure the achievement of the objectives of this curriculum

Conclusion

The junior secondary level is the transitory stage between the basic and the post-basic education and career development education level. This is a very crucial stage in the life of children since it is developmental stage where their mindsets can be tailored towards becoming useful for themselves and society. Therefore, it is incumbent on the stakeholders like parents, government, captains of industries among others, to come together to fashion out effective ways of overcoming the challenges of implementing entrepreneurship education at this level of education, so that Nigeria may be enlisted among the 20 most developed economies of the world by 20:20:20. With the ever-increasing gap between the developing and developed countries of the world in the areas of technology and skills acquisition, it has become necessary for Nigeria as a nation to take its destiny in its hand. This can be done by making sure that through the effective implementation of the school curricular, JSS graduates acquire the necessary skills that can help them compete favourably in the world of works anywhere in the world.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing the following are recommended:

1. Entrepreneurial skills acquisition should be practically oriented, not theoretically based.
2. Selection of learning experiences should be guided by the three domains of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor). This will enable the learners make use of their head, mind and hands. Evaluation should be such that will examine the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the learner. This will make skills acquisition among learners much easier.
3. Government should provide schools with functional technical workshops with all the needed equipment.
4. Originality and creativity are the hallmark of entrepreneurship and therefore, should be emphasized at all times.
5. Government should not allow politics and religious sentiments to becloud sense of responsibility during teachers' recruitment. In other words, government must always recruit teachers who are qualified to teach these foundational learners. Also, since the emphasis is on skills acquisition, resource persons who are skillful/technically inclined should be recruited to assist the teachers.
6. Appropriate teaching methods should not only be recommended but be strictly used in the teaching and learning of these subjects proposed at junior secondary school level in Nigeria.

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