

Entrepreneurship Development and Unemployment in Nigeria

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Abstract: Today, entrepreneurship is promoted as an effective means of stimulating economic growth and development through the generation of greater employment opportunities, the development of local technological base, a source of foreign exchange earnings and the conservation of foreign exchange of the national government. This paper examines how youth unemployment can be reduced through entrepreneurship development. The paper discusses among other issues what entrepreneurs do, the role of entrepreneurship in national development and entrepreneurship development strategies for youths in Nigeria. This will impart entrepreneurship skills and attitudes to the youths as well as favourably dispose them towards establishing their own businesses. This will further reduce youth unemployment and empower them to contribute positively in the nation's economic development. The paper recommends that the teaching of entrepreneurship should be taught as an activity and not just as an academic field. Appropriate conducive environment in the form of quality infrastructural facilities and start-up capacity should be provided.

Key words: Entrepreneurship • Development • Unemployment and Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria like most developing nations of the world is faced with myriad of problems and harsh realities which include poverty, unemployment, conflict and diseases. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in the country thereby calling for the development of youths to function effectively in the society in which they live in. Available information by National Universities Commission (NUC) (2004), [1], reiterates the massive unemployment of Nigerian Universities graduates in the country. This problem is said to be traceable to the disequilibrium between labour market requirements and lack of essential employable skills by the graduates [2 and 3]. This obvious critical skill gaps inhabits the development of youths and the entire development of the nation [4].

It is generally agreed that human resource is an important asset in any country. Thus labour represents a crucial input in the production process. Labour (skilled and unskilled) contributes to the national output of any economy. Even when technology and/or machines are seen as also important, it is human beings who, in the first place, will have ideas or think about machines as well as

tend the technological process. If an economy is growing, it must also imply that its labour force is efficiently and effectively utilized. It is, therefore, not uncommon to measure the output loss of a country by examining the man-hour loss due to non-utilization of its labour force. Oviawe (2010:113), [4] and Ekpo (2011:38), [5], have discussed extensively the unemployment problems facing the youths in Nigeria.

The implication of the scenario is that the leadership and policymakers in Nigeria must conceptualize, formulate and implement strategies and programmes that will generate employment both in the short and medium term [5]. Therefore, the youthful period is a very critical one and hence an essential time for training of youths in entrepreneurship which provides a positive distractive alternative from the self-destructive and aggressive behaviours that are frequently associated with adolescents and growing up [6]. In a study of American adolescents in 1998, it was reported that a good number of the youths had little information about life and life expectations. If this is true about youths in a developed nation, what then can be said of Nigerian youths? This critical age however is the right time to teach them the concept of entrepreneurship to help them learn wealth creation.

It is very imperative to state that the twenty-first century has been tagged the "entrepreneurship age". This is because nations are being shaped by entrepreneurs, men and women who have taken their destinies in their own hands by risking their resources (time, money and energy) in establishing and running their own businesses. Entrepreneurship development has been taunted as a means of stimulating economic growth through the generation of greater employment opportunities, the development of local technological base and conservation of foreign exchange earnings of national governments [7 and 8]. We shall begin to discuss this topic "Reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria through Entrepreneurship Development by examining first conceptual issues".

Conceptual Issues, Definition of Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneur: It is strongly desirable, if not absolutely necessary to define some words when you want to talk to people. Therefore, a clear definition of a word is an elemental type concept. And unless concepts are clear, meaningful to those who use them and are used consistently, what may be said by one person who attempts to explain knowledge will not transfer to another in the same way. Several authors have given their respective definitions of entrepreneurship. Some of the authorities include [9, 10 and 11]. Other authorities are [12, 13 and 14].

From the above therefore, we define entrepreneurship as the Willingness and ability of a person, or a firm or an organization to see environmental change as an opportunity and use the factors of production to produce new goods and services. Entrepreneurship can occur when an individual or group of individuals, firm or government starts a new business or it can occur within an existing business organization. Thus, entrepreneurship is the practice of taking an idea and inventing an organization for developing that idea. Thus, entrepreneurship is concerned with change, creativity and innovation.

On the other hand to capture what is meant by the entrepreneur, several authors have attempted a comprehensive definition of the concept. Some of the authorities are [15 and 16].

From the above therefore, we define an entrepreneur as either the originator of a new business venture or a manager who tries to improve an organizational unit by initiating productive changes.

Thus, the entrepreneur is an individual or group of individuals, who sees environmental change as an

opportunity and uses the factors of production to produce new goods and services.

The originators of new business ventures, such as sole-proprietorship, partnership, limited liability companies are all entrepreneurs. Also the small business owner is in every way an entrepreneur. Usually, the entrepreneur organizes even the smallest aspects of his business. He also takes risk. Sometimes, the profit may be small or initially non-existent. However, the psychological satisfaction the owner derives from the business often rival the profit satisfaction at the initial stage.

The entrepreneur is a keynote in most free enterprise economy. He discovers new ideas and business opportunities, brings together funds to establish a business, organizes the business and often manages its operations to provide economic goods and services for the public. Without doubt, much of the economic success of the United States of America has resulted from the vast energy and innovations of its entrepreneurs operating in an environment of private enterprise.

Therefore, the entrepreneurial process is sparked by some environmental change, which gives the entrepreneur an idea for a new product or service. Many ideas grew out of the entrepreneur's work experience while others come from the entrepreneur's observation of established business or even franchises and training and development. In preparing to launch an entrepreneurial organization, they would be entrepreneurs need to conduct feasibility study and prepare a business plan. Before they can do this, they must recognize the barriers to entering certain business areas, come up with a business strategy and choose a form of organization.

What Entrepreneurs DO: Bolton and Thompson (2008:27), [17], list ten action factors of entrepreneurs. He, (2011:8), [9] classified what entrepreneurs do as the functions which entrepreneurs perform in the process of establishing and running an enterprise. He listed seven functions that are performed by entrepreneurs. Inegbenebor (1989:59), [18], regards the functions of the entrepreneur or action factors of entrepreneurs as the activities which entrepreneurs carry out whenever they establish and operate business enterprise. He grouped them into six activities.

Irrespective of the choice of nomenclature the key functions or action factors of entrepreneurs are:

- Entrepreneurs are individuals who make a significant difference.
- Entrepreneurs are creative and innovative [9].

Table 1: Benefits and challenges of being an entrepreneur

Benefits	Challenges
1. Social recognition	1. Long and irregular hours of work
2. Increased income	2. Low level and insecurity of income
3. Improved standard of living.	3. Low life style due to hard and demanding work.
4. Flexibility in decision-making.	4. Potential loss of resources invested in business.
5. Developing self-confidence.	
6. Self-employment.	

- Entrepreneurs identify investment opportunities, [19].
- Entrepreneurs decide on the investment opportunities to exploit,
- Entrepreneurs find resources required to exploit the investment opportunities.
- Entrepreneurs decide on the form of business enterprise.
- Entrepreneurs have control of the business.
- Entrepreneurs create capital.
- Entrepreneurs manage risk.
- Entrepreneurs are good networkers.
- Entrepreneurs direct the business enterprise,
- Entrepreneurs combine the resource,
- Entrepreneurs are determined in the face of adversity and
- Entrepreneurs put the customer first.

Benefits and Challenges of an Entrepreneur:

Entrepreneurs enjoy a range of benefits for being in business. At the same times, they are confronted by a range of challenges in the course of doing their work as entrepreneurs. Table 4.1 shows the benefits entrepreneurs enjoy and the challenges their face.

The Role of Entrepreneurship in National Development:

Entrepreneurship benefits the society in different ways [10]. Also Zimmerer and Scarborough (2006) are of the view that entrepreneurship has led and will continue to lead the economic revolution that had proved repeatedly to improve the standard of living for people every where. From the above authorities, we summarize the contributions a entrepreneurship to National Development thus:

- It creates New Technologies, Products and Services [9],
- Provides Employment Opportunities,
- Improvement in the Standard of Living through Innovation,
- Reduction in Rural-urban Drifts,
- It Changes and Rejuvenates Market Competition
- It Increases Productivity, [17].
- It Foster Economic Growth and Development and

- Conservation of Foreign Exchanges,

Linking Entrepreneurship to Unemployment:

Unemployment, as defined by the International Labour Organisations occurs when people are without jobs and they have actively looked for work within the past four weeks. The unemployment rate is a measure of the prevalence of unemployment and it is calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by all individuals currently in the labour force.

The relationship between unemployment and entrepreneurship has been shrouded with ambiguity. On the one hand one strand in the literature has found that unemployment stimulates entrepreneurial activity, which has been terminal as a "refugee effect". On the other hand, a very different strand in the literature has identified that higher levels of entrepreneurship reduce unemployment, or what has been termed as a "Schumpeter effect". Taken together, these two relationships result in considerable ambiguities about the relationship between unemployment and entrepreneurship.

That unemployment is linked to entrepreneurship dates back at least to [20], who pointed on that individuals confronted with unemployment and low prospects for wage employment turn to self unemployment as a viable alternative. This was an extension of Knight's view that individual make a decision among three states-unemployment, self-employment and employment. The actual decision is shaped by the relative prices of these three activities but there was a clear prediction that entrepreneurship would be positively related to unemployment.

It is very pertinent to state here that entrepreneurship reduces unemployment. Entrepreneurship is a process which encompasses the stages of initiating the process of exploiting opportunities and identifying a business idea; incubating, grooming and translating the idea into a business and running the resultant business successfully. It is about creating and building something of value. When I employ myself and you employ yourself and others, unemployment most reduces. The issue now is how can we develop youths as entrepreneurs?

Entrepreneurship Development Strategies: A Successful entrepreneurship development programme will achieve the following.

- Make the average Nigerian youth discover the entrepreneurial talents in him/her and therefore be guided to take the risk of starting a business,
- Impart the requisite skills and knowledge needed to successfully launch and grow a business,
- Provide information on where and how to get both financial and technical assistance when the need arises and
- Provide employment opportunities for the youths. The question now is what strategies can be adopted to achieve the above objectives. The strategies are:
 - Formal Entrepreneurship Education and Training.
 - Informal Entrepreneurship Education and Training.
 - Formal Entrepreneurship Education and Training.

Universities in the USA lead the world in the area of entrepreneurship. The experience goes back to the early 1970s with the University of Southern California in Los Angeles starting the first course in 1971. By the mid-1980s there were over 200 universities offering entrepreneurship courses and by the mid-1990s this had risen to more than 500, [21]. This figure has now risen to 1500. Some of these universities have excellent entrepreneurial programmes that link in with technology transfer mechanism, funding provision, a business incubator and technology park. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute 'has developed since 1981 a comprehensive infrastructure for technological entrepreneurship. This total package approach is important because it allows students to move easily into starting (their own enterprise with appropriate support, as they develop it into a growing business. It recognizes that students of entrepreneurship require a different kind of support when they leave college to those who are simply looking for a job. It is rather simplistic to say that because they are entrepreneurs they will sort themselves out. This may be true in the long run but in the early days unless they are quite exceptional they will need help to get started and make progress. One of the main purposes of support at this point is to stop unnecessary business mistakes being made.

For the entrepreneur the educational and training activities are the beginning of the journey and should be seen as such. They are not an end in themselves. Courses in entrepreneurship can be placed in one of the following three categories:

- Entrepreneurship as a subject.
- Entrepreneurship as an activity.
- Entrepreneurship as an enabling activity.

Entrepreneurship as a Subject: The majority of courses are in this category. At worst, they are courses on small business or other traditional business school course with an entrepreneurial spin. At best, they cover all the key areas from economic development to business plan preparation, with a major focus on the entrepreneur. The America Success magazine provides an annual review of entrepreneur programme in the US and lists the 25 Best Business Schools for Entrepreneurs'. Most offer masters and doctoral programmes. In Nigeria today courses in entrepreneurship are offered, in all Universities and Polytechnics either within the domain of Business studies or in the context of General Studies based on the understandable directives of the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) respectively.

These courses have two main difficulties, as far as the potential entrepreneur is concerned. Firstly, they are about entrepreneurship and approach the subject as if like most other academic subjects, it were based around a body of knowledge. The educational process is then about imparting that body of knowledge. Whilst there is certainly much that the would be entrepreneur has to know, entrepreneurship, like medicine and engineering, has a strong 'learning by doing' element. Many courses do involve local entrepreneurs and run projects in their companies and this should be encouraged. They are, however, curriculum driven which means they are topic focused and are assessed in traditional ways. There is no reason to believe that this approach will identify or develop entrepreneurs but there is a clear possibility that it might put off and constrain potential entrepreneurs and bury their talent still deeper.

The second difficulty with this approach is inherent in any new subject. Whilst it is relatively well established in the USA, it is relatively new to the UK and some other countries including Nigeria and suffers accordingly. The problem is that either the subject is ignored by the academic main stream or else it is hijacked by one department that interprets entrepreneurship within the perceptions of the specialisms. There is a similarity here with the new subject of contemporary Cultural Studies which Richard Hoggart (1996) told us is an area of study that can draw fruitfully from several disciplines, the social sciences, history, psychology, anthropology, literary study and others. Each discipline can make its case for

pre-eminence. Others simply ignore it'. Hoggart quotes a Professor of English who said 'all very interesting but I don't see how to fit it in, the syllabus is already crammed. Entrepreneurship meets similar responses. Cultural Studies found its place because the students voted with their feet. 'In 1995 Media Studies, a branch of Cultural Studies was the subject most sought by all applicants to higher Education courses in the UK and it has continued to prosper. It is to be hoped that the same thing will happen with entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship as an Activity: These courses have a different approach. They do talk about entrepreneurship but they are also for entrepreneurs. They teach a range of topic in entrepreneurship but the main locus in the preparation of a viable business plan. Students can take part on a competitive basis within their university and polytechnics and across universities and polytechnics. Some of them base their whole programme around a business plan competition and/or an Entrepreneur of the Year Award. The major business plan competition in the USA is the MOOT CORP Award at the University of Texas at Austin which started in 1984 and went international in 1990. It has been referred to as 'The Supper-Bowl of World Business Plan Competitions' and 'The Mother of all Business Plan Competition'.

The MIT Enterprises Forum has a similar business plan focus but the participants -are seeking funding for real businesses. Participants make a presentation to a large audience and then are 'grilled' in public by a team of assessors. It is backed by an educational programme that seeks to promote the formation and growth of innovative and technologically oriented companies'. Plans are in hand to replicate the MIT Enterprise Forum in Cambridge, England.

These courses are a good way of revealing the entrepreneurs although there can be an air of unreality about them depending on whether the business plans are 'for real. In the early years of the MOOT CORP competition was internal to the Institution and was an academic assessment. As things developed some participants used the business plan as a basis for their own business and this brought a real dynamic to the programme. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are involved in these kinds of entrepreneurship development strategy.

The main disadvantages of this competition based approach is that, it produces a few winners and many losers, based on somewhat artificial criteria. The ability to prepare a good business plan or to stand up to a grilling from potential investors, is in itself no proof that those

involved will be able to run a successful business or that idea will turn out to be commercially viable. It can be a useful indicator but it is not a sufficiently effective instrument to do anything more than picks potential winners and it can seriously de-motivate the losers.

Entrepreneurship as an Enabling Activity: The two approaches discussed above are important and each meets different needs. The first produces people who know about entrepreneurship and the second will challenge the potential entrepreneur. Both will develop technique and understanding and the activity type course will also test temperament and identify talent though not in a structured manner.

This third type of course is concerned with potential entrepreneurs and how their talent can be identified, their temperament managed and their technique developed. Its participants have already decided that they want to be entrepreneurs. They bring a dedication and focus to the course that is motivated by their desire to run their own business. The downside is that they may discover that they are not entrepreneurs or that the opportunity they have selected is not viable and the course needs to be structured to cope with such eventualities.

These enabling courses can be found in the university and the employment sectors, both public and private, though certainly not as extensively as 'subject based' course. We profile two that have worked well, one in Holland and the other in Ireland.

In 1984 the University of Twente in Holland set up its TOP programme. It runs for one year and provides a part-time university appointment for the potential entrepreneur. This gives the person some income and the opportunity to use the resources of the university in developing the product, assessing the market and preparing the business plan. A start-up loan is available on favourable terms. Participants attend a course on 'How to become an entrepreneur' by the Twente Centre for entrepreneurship. This centre is run by the university's Entrepreneurship. This centre is run by the university's Department of Graduate Studies in Management in close collaboration with a Business and Development Centre, a major Dutch bank and a firm of innovation consultants. The programme has been very successful with more than 84 percent of participants going on to run their own business.

The University Industry Programme at University College, Dublin runs a similar enabling programme. Termed the 'Campus Company Development Programme. It addressed the needs of potential entrepreneurs to

develop their innovative ideas, to build multi-disciplinary teams and to prepare a detailed business plan. The programme runs annually for a period of nine months and accepts a maximum of fifteen projects. In terms of the enterprise process model, they see themselves as taking the idea through the embryo stage from 'proof of principle' to 'working prototype'. Mentors are assigned to each project team and there is a half-day interactive workshop each month with seminars on selected topics. One of the main benefits of the programme is the supportive relationship that develops between the entrepreneurs themselves. Prizes are awarded to the top three projects in each programme.

The employment sector normally sees its enabling courses in terms of training for self-employment. As an indication of the level of this activity, one of the leading private (raining providers in the north of England and Scotland was helping around 2000 people a year to start their own businesses in the late 1990s, programme are also available that will build business teams and assist the growing business by advice and mentoring. Most of them are based on the framework and elements of the start up stage. They tend to produce well-managed businesses but not necessarily entrepreneurial ones. This is because the focus is on 'training' rather than 'enabling' the participants. This is an important distinction for those seeking to promote on entrepreneurship but for the employment sector the main concern is job creation and a well managed business is a satisfactory outcome.

Factors That Hinder Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria: There are several factors that hinder entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. They include:

- Poor knowledge based economy and low spirit of competition.
- Poor enterprising culture.
- Lack of entrepreneurship teachers, materials and equipment.
- Unavailability of fund
- Non- inclusion of entrepreneurship programme in the school curricula.
- Poor societal attitudes to Technical and Vocational Education development.
- Inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning.
- Insensitively of government to enterprise creation and expansion strategy.
- Poor plan and execution of process of action.
- Isolated pockets of ineffective programmes and management incompetence [5].

Informal Entrepreneurship Education and Training: The approaches here include:

- An interdisciplinary approach
- Team work
- Activity based
- Mentoring
- Launching of learners businesses
- Goal oriented and achievement oriented approaches and
- Experience based learning or experiential approach. This is an experiential approach towards the teaching of entrepreneurship.

Much of what entrepreneurs do is the product of tacit knowledge, also referred to as knowledge by doing [22]. Because of the nature of tacit knowledge, it is most often acquired through learning by experience. Educator can address the gap between Formal explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge by incorporating experiential education, also known as informal education, into the curriculum. Informal education can be defined as "the life-long process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment at home, at work, or at play". Informal education is how individuals develop practical skills inside and outside the formal educational curricular. One way of incorporating information education into the curricular is to utilize action learning, which envisions action learning as a social and on/nizational process. The action learning process has also been addressed at the organizational level to characterized the learning organization.

Problems of Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria: Government after government has initiates programme to aid entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. In spite of these exempts at encouraging entrepreneurship development, the underlisted problems are specific to Nigeria entrepreneurs [23].

- Lack of trust by Nigerians: This has resulted in the rejection of "made in
- Nigeria" goods as inferior to the imported ones. The mentality that anything made in Nigeria is inferior has discouraged and forced many local entrepreneurs to go out of business.
- The dire shortage and inadequacy of infrastructure facilities. This is to mind is the greatest problem facing the Nigerian entrepreneur. It is no longer news that more than 50 years after independence, the

supply of electricity is epileptic if non-existent, the roads are death-trap?, leading to loss of lives and properties.

- Corruption: Since entrepreneurs have to deal with government officials from the Local Government to State government and the Federal Government, the demand for gratification in forms of bribes, double taxation etc has brought frustration to many entrepreneurs. According to Morphy (2007), it is hard to do business in many poor countries because governments are so corrupt. It is very difficult in such countries to get permission to build a factory or open a store without a government permit, which is obtained largely through bribery of public officials.
- Lack of management know how resulting in inability to apply appropriate managerial concepts and principles in running the affairs of the business. This is usually manifested in poor financial control, weak marketing effort, failure to develop a strategic plan, uncontrolled growth, improper inventory control.
- Inability to make entrepreneurial transition: As the business grows from the craft to entrepreneurial stage, informal and unprofessional management will suffice. However, the advent of the professional stage(s) calls for the business to be managed on professional basis. This will see authority delegated, policies formulated and a formal structure of relationship established [24].
- Unguided and unrestricted importation of goods into the country. The advent of globalization with its attendant liberalization and deregulation has forced the Nigerian government to remove restrictions on the importation of goods even when there is a local substitute or competing brand. The unguided implementation of globalization has strangled most businesses. This is because, these businesses use obsolete methods of production and private sources of power and in the end, their products are inferior and cost higher than the imported ones.
- Inadequate entrepreneurship development strategy. Such shallow entrepreneurship development curriculums lack the opportunity to practice what has been learnt etc.

Conclusion and Implications: Entrepreneurship development is the rave of the moment. Any country left behind in this race will remain perpetually undeveloped. This underscores the recent attention given to entrepreneurship development among undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The

belief is that when students are exposed to the concepts, principles and theories of entrepreneurship, their entrepreneurial spirits will be fired to ginger them into thinking of how to create jobs for others instead of being job seekers.

The course will open their eyes to see the latent entrepreneurial talents within them and enable them to spot and exploit business opportunities. Having been armed with the knowledge of the theories, concepts and principles of entrepreneurship, students develop the confidence that a successful application of these will enable them succeed in business.

There is no argument that the technique of entrepreneurship is a discipline that can be taught or learned. However, the environment plays an important role in putting readiness into action or reality and hence. There is an urgent need for the government to provide an enabling environment in the forms of efficient and available basic infrastructural facilities, especially electricity: Also venture capital should be provided through micro-finance banks and other specialized agencies to adequately empower young entrepreneurs.

Lastly, the present method of teaching entrepreneurship as a subject should be replaced with teaching entrepreneurship as an activity. As subject, abstract concepts of entrepreneurship are taught to students without practical supplements, while entrepreneurship activity combines teaching with experiential exercises.

This paper has some important implications for the nation's tertiary institutions. It encourages tertiary institutions to demonstrate high level of commitment to entrepreneurship education. It also reveals the need for all stakeholders in education to understand the relationship between empowering Nigerian Youth for national development and entrepreneurship education and training.

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