



ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS ACQUISITION FOR YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY IN NIGERIA: SOCIAL STUDIES TO THE RESCUE

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Abstract

One of the humanity concerns is the reduction of poverty and acceleration in social, physical growth, fiscal development and youth employability. This paper studies the need for integrating entrepreneurship skills into social studies education programme with the aims of creating job opportunities, which would enhance youth employability in Nigeria. It is anticipated that Nigeria has the highest rate of poverty, unemployment, corruption, amongst other social drawbacks that need to be tackled. These socio-economic problems need to be solved using different approaches for solving these social problems. It is in the light of these, that social studies and entrepreneurship education are employed to fight these anti-social problems which would go a long way in augmenting youth employability, which would serve a harmonizing role in creating job opportunities in support of the Federal Government. If all hands are on deck, issue of poverty, unemployment, corruption and social ills etc would be a thing of the past. The conclusion was done with some recommendations among which are that all students in secondary schools should be made to offer entrepreneurship and social studies education in Nigeria. Guidance and counsellor awareness will help them develop assertive spirit, initiative spirit, creative spirit, team spirit, facilitating spirit, collaborative spirit, project spirit, empathetic spirit, positive mind-set, etc. which will help them to be self-employed.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition; Youth Employability; Social Studies

Introduction

In our society today, improvement in technology, social studies and entrepreneurial or entrepreneurship education has abridged the entire world to a global village thereby increasing competition in fields of individual vocations. This competitive and ever-changing environment has posed serious survival challenges to all individuals and nations of the world as it affects empowerment of individuals. Osakwe (2011) attributed the high level of unemployment in the country to lack of entrepreneurship skills in our educational system. Okebukola (2012) and

Nduononwi, Surveyor, Nduaesa & Bassey (2017), reaffirmed this statement when they reportedly said that most graduates go into kidnapping business probably because they lack entrepreneurial skills to set up legitimate business. This means that the Nigerian educational programmes emphasize theory and are more of certificate oriented than practical or skills acquisition.

This is in line with the observation of Oftiasia, Nwalado & Dede (2013) who observed that the training programmes in Nigeria at both secondary and tertiary levels have concentrated more on teaching knowledge and skills in principle devoid of practical experience in various fields of studies. Consequently, many graduates of the programmes lack the required skills that are necessary for self-employed jobs to meet their basic needs and economic growth. Danledi (2013) criticised this current ugly situation where many literate people in Nigeria, are unemployed due to lack of necessary career skills to earn a living, in situation where the white collar job cannot be found. Osakwe (2011) complained about the practice of relying on the government to provide white collar job for graduates. Osakwe stressed that the present global economic crisis demands individual with entrepreneurship skills and competence. In other words, it is only those with entrepreneurial skills and competence that can contribute meaningfully to the growth of the economy.

Ubah (2012) reported that due to the dwindling economic situation in Nigeria and the resultant massive unemployment of both youths and adults in Nigeria, the Federal Government has emphasized the need for every Nigerian citizen to strive for self-reliance through self-employment. It also directed all institution of higher learning to introduce entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course for all students, irrespective of their disciplines (Nduononwi, et al, 2017). Danladi (2013) has advocated for a social studies programme that should provide entrepreneurship skills for citizen to achieve self-actualization. He emphasized that education should serve as an instrument that move man to the next level of the ladder of growth and development. One of the basic requirements for survival in this kind of contestable environment is for social studies graduates to embrace the entrepreneurial spirit that can enable them to identify and exploit these opportunities as well as positively approach the threat for improved job opportunities.

It was in the wake of this fact that Joseph Schumpeter (1949) once argued that entrepreneurship was the engine of youth empowerment and national development. Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide for knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. It also strives to educate youth about the benefits of entrepreneurship, which is a distinctive area of education as it focuses on realization of opportunity. Social studies education as well as entrepreneurship education are courses seen as tools for realizing some of the objectives of the Nigerian educational system as spelt out in the National policy of education (FGN, 2013), which similarly formed the main aims and objectives of both social studies and entrepreneurship education. The objectives of both social studies and entrepreneurship education, according to National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013) cited in Nduononwi, et al (2017) is as follows:

- i. the inculcation of the type of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- ii. the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around him/her;
- iii. the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical, social abilities and competences as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

This paper, therefore, discusses how entrepreneurial skills acquisition can be used for youth employability in Akwa Ibom State.

The Concept of Social Studies Education

Aduralegbe (1980) defines social studies as a problem approach discipline through which man studies and learn about problems of survival in his environment. It is an inter-disciplinary study of a topic, a problem issue, a concern or an inspiration. It is a study of how man influences and in turn is influenced by his physical, social, political, economic, psychological, cultural, scientific and technological environment. While Okobia (1984), defined social studies as a subject for inculcating the right type of skills and civic virtue through unified and integrated inter-disciplinary studies of man that the planners of the national policy on education it a pre-eminence of place within the core subjects of the Junior Secondary school curriculum.

On the other hand, Akinlaye (2000) puts it thus, pupils in the classroom do not have adequate information to touch, feel, smell, build, destroy, analyse, synthesize for developing ideas and learning to take decisions. A large section of our educational system is bound to an academic bookish and sedentary curriculum wholly irrespectant to life and needs of any modern society. He went on to assert that, social studies emerged then as a subject of prime importance for study in schools. It involves a study of basic characteristic of man, a detailed investigation into the way and varied expressions of the adoption of man to the area in which he lives and his relationship with other men.

Objectives of Social Studies Education

Okonkwo (2012) enumerated the following as the general objectives of social studies which are derived from the National goals, as follows:

- a. To give man adequate information and knowledge about society and the worldwide;
- b. For man to know what the society expects of its members so that he/she will be able to judge his/her action as well as those of others;
- c. To familiarize man with the norms of his society, and thus socialize him in accordance with such norms. This will enable him to improve and perpetuate his society;
- d. To help man become a good citizen and develop the necessary values and attitudes in a democracy.
- e. To expose man to the problems of society and lead him to develop appropriate functional approaches to the solutions of such problems.
- f. To enable man develop psychomotor skills involving locomotion and non-locomotion skills, manipulative and creative skills, perceptual and physical abilities,
- g. To help man develop valuable and socially acceptable concepts, ideas and philosophy of life etc.

Need for Entrepreneurship Education in Social Studies

Social studies objectives cannot all be realized with theoretical based curriculum. According to Besmart and Digbori (2009) theoretical based social studies curriculum lack entrepreneurship skills acquisition for self-reliant. This has led to increase in the level of unemployment in the country. The teaching of entrepreneurship education with social studies will help to balanced theoretical training with entrepreneurship skills acquisition for self-reliant.

Through the teaching of entrepreneurship education, social studies students will acquire practical skills that will enable them set up small scale business and contribute meaningfully to the society in which they live. It should be expedient to note that one of the basic objectives of entrepreneurship education is to develop students' conceptual thinking and manipulative skills. This is exactly what social studies curriculum objective intends to achieve. One of the fundamental objectives of social studies education as stated by Okonkwo (2012) is to develop man psychomotor skills involving locomotion and non-locomotion skills, manipulative and creative skills. The inclusion of the entrepreneurship education in social studies will help to achieve this objective. This is because the skills acquired through entrepreneurship education are not confined to the classroom; they are more practical than theory.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of setting. Social studies education therefore, should develop awareness of entrepreneurship education from an early age (primary through the tertiary), in order to equip the students with the necessary skill that will enable them to survive in their environment. The social studies curriculum content prepares the mind of the learner in the understanding of the world around them. Exposing them to entrepreneurship skills will enable them to see more opportunities. It will also help them to develop their initiative and make them to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertakes; and this will give them the opportunity to assume more responsibilities in job creation and act in socially responsible way. This is also congruous with social studies curriculum objectives which require social studies students to be trained as good citizens. Experiences from the daily newspapers have shown that most youth engage in crime because they are idle.

According to a popular adage, the idle mind is the devil workshop. Through the acquisition of appropriate skills, students will be empowered to be self-reliant and this will help to reduce crime as most of them will be taken off the street through self-employed jobs. It is gratifying to note that most countries of the world that have reached a level of economic development and even the fast developing ones such as Singapore, China, South Korea, Indonesia among others came to the level they are as a result of entrepreneurial class. Okebukola (2012) reasoned that entrepreneurship education is worthy of attention in Nigeria because it will boost national economic development and help her to become one of the 20 leading economic in the world by 2020. He emphasized, "No entrepreneurship education, no vision 20-2020". He also posited that entrepreneurship education need urgent attention because, it has the potential ingredients of lowering poverty and elevating living standards and the quality of life of Nigerians. Through social studies entrepreneurship education students will be empowered to set-up small business after graduation and this will boost family income and in turn living standard

and quality of life will be improved. The need for introduction of entrepreneurship education into the social studies curriculum therefore, cannot be over-stressed.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the practice of starting new organisations, particularly new business generally in response to identified work opportunities (Nduononwi, Surveyor, Nduaesa and Bassey, 2017). According to Nduononwi et al (2017), entrepreneurship ranges from solo projects to major undertakings creating many job opportunities. Entrepreneurship development is considered a vital link to an overall economic growth of a nation through its positive impact on economic development especially at the grassroots (Barringer & Ireland, 2012; Weihrich et al. 2008). Entrepreneurships help to create wealth and reduce unemployment, produce creativity and innovation, and increase the total production of a country (Shane, 2003). Aguably, the technological advancement or transformation in any country mostly can be made possible through innovative sciences, ideas and utilizing uncommon opportunities; and entrepreneurship is the best way to achieve this. (Nwanaka and Amaehule, 2011).

In Nigeria, entrepreneurship skill acquisition programmes introduced into educational institutions were meant to provide the level of education or knowledge needed to exploit entrepreneurial opportunity which could help the economic development of the nation (Emaikwu, 2011; Shane, 2003). Studies have shown that skill acquisition is the most critical factor in the utilization of entrepreneurship opportunity for self-employment (Ekpe et al., 2012). In line with this, the Nigerian government has put in place several entrepreneurship development programmes, including the introduction of entrepreneurship courses in various universities in the country in order to train aspiring entrepreneurs. The aim of such programs was to impact skills, attitudes, aspirations and competencies mostly in the youths, and provides micro-credit, to enable them practice entrepreneurship or create self-employment as well as help generate employment for others (Abdullah et al., 2009; Samian & Buntat, 2012).

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

According to Ojeifor (2012) has stated the following as objectives of entrepreneurship education:

- a. To offer functional education for youths that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
- b. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
- c. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
- d. Offer tertiary institution graduates training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible.
- e. To reduce rule of poverty.
- f. Create employment generation
- g. Reduction in rural-urban migration.
- h. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.

- i. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adult which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark up on.
- j. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy,

Ubah (2012) has also highlighted the following as the objectives of entrepreneurship education:

- k. Enhancement of economic growth for the individual and the nation,
- l. Poverty alleviation,
- m. The solving of the problem of youth restiveness, cultism, armed robbery, vandalization of oil pipelines among others,
- n. Reducing the issue of kidnapping and of life and property,
- o. Minimizing human trafficking and prostitution,
- p. The reduction of level of unemployment and,
- q. The increase of income per capital.

In addition to the above objectives entrepreneurship education helps to ensure national peace and security. It is aimed at producing graduates who will be self-employed and be able to generate employment for others. It aims at deemphasizing white collar jobs.

The Concept of Entrepreneurship

In the view of Zuomo and Aondoko (2007) entrepreneurship is the process of identifying and bringing a vision to life. The vision according to them may be an innovative idea, an opportunity or simply a better way of doing something. The end result of this process is the creation of a new venture under conditions of risk and considerable uncertainty. Azubuike (2010) conceptualized entrepreneurship education as a type of education that deals with acquisition of skills and ideas which transforms an individual into self-reliant through self-employment. It prepares people especially youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneur or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute meaningfully to economic development and sustainable national security.

Osakwe (2011) described entrepreneurship education as the development of personal skills and qualities that enable the individual gain knowledge and understanding of the way in which the economy works and react to market forces. This according to her involves ways and methods in the development of creativity, problem-solving, taking calculated risks, time management, Communication skill, leadership skills among others which can lead to improved employment prospect. According to Ubah (2012), the term entrepreneurship education means a formal training to acquire knowledge, skill and attitudes which can direct human and material resources towards business objectives for self-reliance. It is aimed at helping the students acquire necessary skills which can help them become self-reliant citizens and problem solvers in their environments. Entrepreneurship education therefore, may be defined as the type of education that equips the students with entrepreneurial skills, abilities and competences as well as the means of surviving in the face of unemployment. It focuses on the starting of new business venture and tends to draw the interest of students who want the opportunity to operate on their own businesses, make wealth and live a successful life.

Social Influence and Entrepreneurship

Similarly, the acquired skill may not lead to self-employment if there is a negative social influence. Social influence involves the social ties, the influence of friends and family, role models and advice-givers. This could affect aspiring entrepreneur's decision for self-employment (Asikhia, 2010; Shastri & Sinha, 2010). Society's perception about, and attitude towards, entrepreneurship is poor (Mayer et al., 2007); whereas social networks was found to be positively related to entrepreneurial opportunity for self-employment in Nigeria respectively (Carter & Shaw, 2006; Lawal et al., 2009; Shane, 2003). Perceived social environment also had positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions in China (Yun & Yuan-qiong, 2010).

A weak relation was found to exist between social norms and entrepreneurial intention, indicating that social environment affect individual's attitude to entrepreneurial intention (Ajzen, 1991; Kruger, 2004). On the other hand, Vob and Muller (2009) concluded that entrepreneur's behaviour towards entrepreneurial activity is influenced by a set of factors such as personality in form of attitude, resources and environment. Other studies concluded that the possession of education, right attitude to risk, motivation and work experience aside; social environment could hinder identification and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunity (Ekpe & Mat, 2012; Shastri & Sinha, 2010).

Entrepreneurship and Social Studies as a Tool for Youth Empowerment

Within the context of their developmental role, Otaha (2010) cited in Nduononwi, et al (2017), opined that social studies and entrepreneurship plays crucial role in youth empowerment by contributing to nation's wealth through increased production activities in the following ways:

- a. creates job opportunities thereby enhancing the utilization of human resources;
- b. breeds favourable grounds for innovation and invention leading to improved or new products and services;
- c. creates a competitive environment therefore promoting effectiveness in production;
- d. raises national and individual income whereby improving the general standard of living;
- e. provides services to the society through identification of customer needs and satisfying them in production;
- f. those people working already in organizations can prepare themselves for eventual retirement through entrepreneur and social studies education;
- g. Breeds innovativeness, creativity and flexibility in organization thereby necessitating new as well as improved products to have competitive advantages.

From the above analysis, it can be inferred that entrepreneurship and social studies education jointly contribute a lot to the empowerment of youth. This is because the objectives of social studies are interwoven with the objective of entrepreneurial education as Nduononwi, et al (2017) and Otaha (2010) outlined hereunder.

1. Social studies create an awareness and understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in the natural man-made, cultural and spiritual resources together with rational uses and conservation of those resources for self-employment.

2. Develop a capacity to learn and acquire certain skills including not only those of listening, speaking, reading and initiating but also those skills of hand and head together with those of observation, analysis and influence which are essential to forming of social-economic and political judgment which ensure the acquisition of that relevant body of knowledge and information which is an essential pre-requisite to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind in his business.
3. Develop in student's positive attitude of togetherness, commandership and co-operation towards a healthy nation, the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, hard work, fairness and justice at work and play, which enable an entrepreneur to interact well with his customer and clients.
4. Development of the ability to think reflectively and come to independent conclusion in business of any human endeavours.

Moreover, Otaha (2010) further opined that human relation skills necessary for any entrepreneurship and social studies activity are learnt and that are pursuit of self-economic interest and maximization of gain which are the prime movers or motivators of people to go into business. Hence, social studies drives enable entrepreneurs to interact properly with his customers, clients, creditors, competitors and the general public including tax authorities, policy makers and policy implementers.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial education is education that is meant to prepare social studies' students to become self-employed by creating in them positive mind set, self-efficacy, creativity, productive awareness, self-reliance in order for them to impact the society positively.

Educational Implication

Any nation who wants to move forward must have great need for its citizen to embrace dynamism as a tool for responding to unemployment and anti-social behaviour by tackling the threats that stand on our way of achieving success through the study of entrepreneurial and social studies education, which can help to reduce youth unemployment. The educational implication of this study is that if entrepreneurial and social studies education are properly exploited, our nation which is characterized by high levels of instability, ambiguity, difficulty and uncertainty will be a object of bygone.

Recommendations

- i. All students in secondary schools should be made to offer entrepreneurship and social studies education in Nigeria.
- ii. guidance and counsellor awareness will help them develop assertive spirit, initiative spirit, creative spirit, team spirit, facilitating spirit, collaborative spirit, project spirit, empathetic spirit, positive mind-set, etc. which will help them to be self-employed.
- iii. guidance counsellors should also create in the students the desirable behaviour for self-actualization which are all aims and objectives of social studies.
- iv. Promotion of research should be encouraged, with special emphasis on social studies and entrepreneurship education.

- v. Government at all levels should provide an enabling operating environment such as stable supply of power, and empowering of specialized financial institution through the central bank of Nigeria to grant loans to social studies and entrepreneurship graduates for business start-ups.

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