



Effective Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum in Nigeria Senior Secondary Schools for Job Creation and Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The introduction of a new curriculum with different trade subjects which provides students with opportunity to choose only one trade based on their interest, is an innovation in senior secondary education towards achieving sustainable development goals by the target date of 2030. This decision is of great importance to provide students with skills and functional education for secondary school graduates especially at the period when emphasis is placed on job creation and economic development for sustainability of the nation. The unprecedented rate of unemployment among secondary school leavers, tertiary education graduates, undue emphasis on possession of certificate; poor implementation of the new curriculum and progress evaluation merit serious consideration and the attention of educational managers to act urgently for proper implementation of the giant programme envisaged in the national curriculum of secondary education. This paper discusses how entrepreneurship education in senior secondary schools can be a veritable tool for developing adaptive skills and competences for job creation and sustainable development in Nigeria if effectively implemented. The paper also highlighted some factors hindering effective implementation of the programme and established that, restructuring entrepreneurship education from senior secondary school to tertiary level will provide the knowledge and skills needed to promote job creation and sustainable development in Nigeria. The study recommended among others, for restructuring of entrepreneurship education curriculum from senior secondary school to tertiary level in Nigeria and that trade subjects offered in secondary schools should be used as one of the core subjects for admission into higher institutions in a related course of study.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Curriculum, Job creation, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Education has remained a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skills and acceptable attitude. Education remains a potent factor in national development. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated (Musa & Esiege,



2017). The need to plan for quality education reform in any nation cannot be overemphasized. When reform is adequately planned, it accelerates structural integration of a plural society by equalizing economic, social and political opportunities.

Nigeria, like other countries in the world, has adopted education as the key to socioeconomic transformation, especially in this era of science and technology-oriented knowledge driven economy in the 21st Century. No wonder the constant changes and reforms in her educational policy and curricula, since the attainment of her political independence in 1960 to meet the reality of modern times. The clamour now is the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum (NSSSC) which would produce well equipped secondary school graduates for tertiary institutions and for the world of works (Nigeria Education Research and Development Council, NERDC, 2011). From time immemorial, every activity or programme aimed at equipping the younger generation with skills and knowledge is considered necessary for them to function effectively and contribute to the overall development of the society. The continuing problems of poverty, unemployment, inequality, insecurity among others have bedeviled every developmental effort in Nigeria.

No other fields are innovations and reforms more needed than in education. Effective management is a sine-qua-non to the successful implementation and institutionalization of curriculum change. The whole structure of the senior secondary school was changed – English, Mathematics, Civic Education and one trade subject, such as hair plaiting, or GSM repairs or fishery are compulsory. The introduction of the NSSSC in secondary schools in Nigeria is a fresh initiative which according to NERDC (2011) aims at ensuring that graduates from secondary schools are among other things professionally trained in entrepreneurship skills and possess relevant Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills that will equip them for challenges of the labour market.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN-2016: 17) identified the broad goals of secondary education to include:

1. reparation of individual for useful living within the society; and
2. preparation for higher education.

This was modified as Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) to include

- (i) Senior Secondary Education
- (ii) Higher school and
- (iii) continuing education (FRN, 2016). The restructuring of the Senior Secondary School Curriculum resulted in the inclusion of 42 subjects and 35 Vocational Trades and Entrepreneurship subjects.

Based on the curriculum, compulsory subjects are:

1. Computer Science to be ICT literate for world of work and global competitiveness.



2. Civic Education to internalize sense of responsible citizen and contribute maximally to national development.
3. Trade/Entrepreneurship Subjects provide the required skills for job creation and poverty eradication.
4. Mathematics and English remain foundational for future educational pursuit of the learners. In a nutshell, a minimum of 8 subjects and maximum of 9 subjects are expected to be offered by all students (FRN, 2016).

Introduction of new curriculum with different trade subjects which provides students with opportunity to choose only one trade based on their interest, is an innovation in senior secondary education curriculum. This decision is of great importance to provide functional education for secondary school graduates especially at the period when emphasis is placed on economic development of the nation, and self-reliance (self-employment). In the same vein, the new curriculum aimed at strengthening the foundations for ethical, moral and civic values acquired at the basic education level, building and sustaining a culture of strategic educational research and development that will inform the formulation and effective implementation of the programme and policies in education and in other related sectors of the national economy (NERDC, 2011).

The purpose of entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level in Nigeria is to promote entrepreneurship and professionalism for gainful employment among others, as potential solutions towards economic development. However, it is pertinent to note that, the types of trade/entrepreneurship skills, available for learning in schools depends on equipment and resources available, and the need of the community where the school is located as well as the vision of the school. Igwe, *et al*, (2013) argued that, teaching methods employed in secondary schools in Nigeria are grossly inadequate because discussion, demonstration, discovery and concept mapping methods which are very important are rarely employed in teaching trade/entrepreneurship subjects in our schools. The former curriculum seems to be teacher centered and consequently, learning is based on note/memorization, contrary to the way the subject matter content of the new curriculum is expected to be delivered. In the same vein, Agbeze (2012) asserted that lack of in-service training and lack of commitment from both government and teachers impede appropriate teaching method. In recognition of the importance of the teaching methodology appropriate for these new trade subjects, the FRN (2016: 19) stated that ‘for effective participation of students in practical works, the teacher students ratio shall be 1:20, and informal artisanship industry shall be used to provide training opportunities for students at the post-basic level’. It further stressed that; the industrial training fund (ITF) shall organize staff development with the proprietors of institutions and industries to give adequate training to teachers. The question now is to what extent has these manifested since the introduction of the new curriculum in Nigeria senior secondary schools?



The required minimum numbers of tools, equipment and materials; quality and availability of teachers; infrastructure and adequate funding are inputs needed for effective teaching and learning of trade subjects in the senior secondary school curriculum. If the inputs are not adequately provided, it might be difficult for the teacher to deliver and equally for the learners to learn. Consequently, the objectives of the senior secondary school trade curriculum may not be fully achieved. Therefore, this paper addresses restructuring of entrepreneurship education in senior secondary schools to tertiary institutions as a veritable tool for developing adaptive skills and competences for job creation and sustainable development in Nigeria. For example, GSM repairs to be offered as Mobile Technology Engineering; Fishery as Aquatic Life Agriculture; Garment Making as Fashion Design Technology; Photography as Image Technology; Leather Work as Leather Formative to mention but a few necessitate restructuring of entrepreneurship education from senior secondary school to tertiary level in Nigeria. These trade subjects offered in the senior secondary schools to serve as basic requirement for the related course in higher institutions. Anyadike, Emeh & Ukah (2012) cautioned that, programmes should not be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency, rather, they should be judged by their abilities to accomplish the objectives for which they are designed.

In many developing countries, entrepreneurship has been a powerful engine of economic growth and wealth creation, and is crucial for improving the quality, number and variety of employment opportunities for the masses. It has several multiplier effects on the economy, as it spurs innovation, and fosters investment in people, which is a better source of competitive advantage than other natural resources that can be depleted. Entrepreneurs create new enterprises, new commercial activities, and new economic sectors. They generate jobs for others; produce goods and services for society; introduce new technologies and improve or lower cost of outputs; it therefore plays a key role in addressing poverty through their contributions to wealth and job creation, economic advancement and social empowerment. Agbeze (2012) believes that wealth and job creation generated by entrepreneurs is the core engine of a virtuous cycle that develops an economy. Effective entrepreneurial development can set in motion a wave of impacts in communities and regions that go beyond the wealth created by individual entrepreneurs and their enterprises. Jegede *et al*, (2019) established that, global entrepreneurship helps to reduce the rate of unemployment and poverty in both urban and rural areas. Unfortunately, absurdity does not prevent economically destructive policies from being proposed and implemented.

Entrepreneurship education is said to be integrated into the curriculum and only concentrated on few students who are interested in developing their entrepreneurial skills. Evans *et al*, (2021) reported the stride in University of Nigeria Nsuka, in 2010, where Centre for Entrepreneurship and Development Research (CEDR) was set up to promote entrepreneurial



culture and mind set, skill acquisition, self-employment, economic independence and self-actualization. However, the general perception that artisans and technicians are “never-do-wells”, dropouts, societal rejects or even failures who should perpetually remain at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder is still a deceptive motive of the young ones. It necessary at this juncture to reform Nigerian educational curricula which appear to be designed as a ”factory” for producing graduates who are made to believe that the only employer of labour is government (federal, state and local). Therefore, the introduction of entrepreneurship education which encourages creative thinking and promoting a strong sense of self-worth in the post-basic education curriculum will help inspire students to acquire entrepreneurial ideas and put them to use for sustainable future. Entrepreneurship competence carries with it, the concept of skills and mental awareness which are needed to understand the functioning of already existing businesses. Entrepreneurship therefore plays a key role in addressing poverty through their contributions to wealth and job creation, economic advancement and social empowerment.

In the light of the above, Obioma in Okoye & Ogunyele (2015) succinctly put it that, the new curriculum is structured in a way that will ensure that senior secondary school graduates are well prepared for higher education and that they had acquired relevant functional trade and entrepreneurship skills needed for poverty eradication, job creation and wealth generation. The curriculum placed higher emphasis on such skills as problem-solving, quantitative reasoning, communications, connections and information technologies. The graduates would have also acquired skills, with the capacity to set up their own businesses as a fall-out of the skills they acquired from the 35 trade subjects. The expected functional education will make them job creators instead of job seekers, thereby banishing poverty from their lives. This was all done so as to make Nigerian youths to be job creators rather than job seekers. This paper believes that if the Nigerian government must revitalize its economy and reduce unemployment progressively, a paradigm shift in policy that is critical to effective entrepreneurship education and development becomes imperative.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is about developing attitude, behaviours and capacities at the individual’s level and should be able to lead to self-reliant at present and in the future. In a related study, Anho in Musa & Esiege, (2017) defined entrepreneurship education as a form of education which makes people to be responsive to their personal, family, national needs and aspiration. Anyakoha in Ementa (2013) defined entrepreneurship education as the education that aims at helping the students acquire skills to be self-reliant, adding that for an individual to be self-reliant, he/she must have acquired the right habits, attitudes, and skills with which to explore his or her environment. It is also about application of those skills and attitudes that can make many



individual's career, creating a range of long-term benefits to society and the economy. Since its benefits are enormous, adequate steps should be taken to require entrepreneurial education by providing at all levels of governance-federal, state and local government areas, suitable environment through proper curriculum implementation, and by proper funding and equipping of entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education has the capability of providing jobs for many people in factories, agriculture, enterprises, and other service in industries and small-scale businesses. However, Education For All (EFA) as reported by Kalagbor & Harry ((2019) shows that sufficient attention is not given to skill training for youth and adults. This revelation underscores the goal and objectives of the trade/entrepreneurship education. Investment in education should focus on mass literacy that will allow every youth to be able to read and write; a development that will improve and enhance their professionalism and productivity. This is because, wealth and job generated by entrepreneurs is the core engine of virtuous cycle that develops an economy.

Concept of Curriculum

The present Nigerian education curriculum at the senior secondary is the re-aligned curriculum meant to meet the targets of the reforms in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which can be summarized as: value-reorientation, poverty eradication, job creation, wealth generation and using education to empower people. Obasi in Evans *et al*, (2021) argue that, the term curriculum is hydra-headed, in that it defies all efforts to pin it down to a definite meaning. The differences in the definitions stem from the varied views writers have on the nature of knowledge itself and the nature of learning. Traditionally, curriculum is perceived as information passed from one generation to another in the form of organized knowledge. Comprehending this definition, curriculum will comprise of essential subjects and the mastery of collection of books. Evans *et al*, (2021) conceptualize curriculum as a kind of step-by-step process used to create positive improvements in courses offered in higher education. The author further stressed that the world changes approaches and profiles development and new perspective on research and professions influences the curriculum. This implies that curriculum development is a continuous process in a self-improving school system and not as an event. As the society undergo evolving changes, the curriculum also changes in the same line for economic sustainability.

In this context, curriculum is view as a systematic process of teaching/learning manual development or improvement based on the subject and objectives to be achieved. In essence, curriculum is concern not with what students will do in the learning situation but with what they will learn as a consequence of what they do. Therefore, curriculum is the vehicle through which



knowledge and other learning activities are disseminated and as such focuses on knowledge and skills that are eminent for learning.

Concept of Job Creation

A growing degree of uncertainty in the world economy evidenced by rising unemployment levels, stalled the rate of job creation, and muted economic recovery has renewed the focus on entrepreneurial activity as a means to generate wealth and economic growth. The purpose of all economic activity is to produce as much value as possible with the scarce resources (including human effort) available. But no matter how far we push back the limits of scarcity, those limits are never vanquished. Probably, that is the reason for the continuous rise in unemployment and poverty index despite the various government intervention policies in the country (Anyadike, *et al*, 2012).

Job creation is an important aspect of economic growth that must be attained for economic development to come to stay. Umar (2011:4) defines job creation in the following manner; “the process of providing new jobs for unemployed people, the process of providing jobs for oneself, and the process of providing more paid jobs”. This implies that job creation is the act of providing jobs for the unemployed, either by helping them to create jobs for themselves or providing a paid job where they can get salaries or wages as the case may be. What can be deduced from the above definition is that job creation is the process of creating new jobs for unemployed and the under-employed without necessarily creating unemployment in the other sector as a result of the jobs that have so far been created. Creating jobs is a means to the ultimate end of economic activity, which is creating wealth. Therefore, creating jobs is not the problem; the problem is creating jobs in which people produce the most value for themselves and the entire community. Hence, Abati (2009) purported that, concentrating on the number of jobs and ignores the value being created, or not created might be the reason why unemployment and underemployment continued to witness steady and continuous increase in Nigeria.

The role of enabling environment in job creation cannot be overemphasized, hence, the 2004 Extraordinary Summit of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa Declaration as stated thus:



“We, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, COMMIT OURSELVES TO PLACE employment creation as an explicit and central objective of our economic and social policies at national, regional and continental levels, for sustainable poverty alleviation and to improve the living conditions of our people (Miller, 2012, p.4).”

However, these developments have not significantly yielded the expected results of massive job creation for the youth and ensuring national food security. It can be deduced from the above submission that entrepreneurship skills produce entrepreneurs and employment without enhancing job creation. Thus, the Education Development Centre (2016) in their publication titled, ‘5 ways to build better youth development programmes’, suggested five ways of building social programmes that work. They include:

1. Let the youth lead;
2. Include women;
3. Integrate entrepreneur and education;
4. Stay local; and
5. Build peace.

The aim of the programme is, to promote entrepreneurship as a viable career option in agriculture, construction, ICT, Fashion, Manufacturing and retail sectors for young Nigerians which in turn will create jobs and wealth. Successful entrepreneurs, through their breakthrough technologies and rapidly growing businesses, create new wealth that can generate greater economic growth. Effective implementation of entrepreneurship education can set in motion a wave of impacts in Nigeria economy that go beyond the wealth created by individual entrepreneurs and their enterprises including other national business environment.

Sustainable Development

Nigeria is adjudged to be one of the richly blessed countries in terms of human and material resources. But using this wealth to better the life of her populace has continued to be a mirage. Even meeting the basic necessities of life like; food, cloth and shelter have been very difficult for many of her citizens. Sustained economic growth seems to enhance job creation that consequently brings about economic development. Anything that has to do with investing in people or policies design to strengthen people’s skills and capacities and support them to participate fully in employment and social life influences the nation sustainability.



In their own perception, Jegede *et al*, (2019) and Okebukola (2022) sustains that sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This implies that sustainable development has given better economic opportunities to people without collapsing ecological functions of the economy. Hence it allows beneficiaries to take responsibility for their own business and assist owners of local business activities to become managers and employers of labour for sustainable economic development. The students on completion their studies will not only be gainfully employed but will be self-reliant and also contribute to the sustainable economic growth of the nation. This is to say that quality and functional entrepreneurship education is at the heart of every successful effort towards sustainable development in achieving sustainable development goals by the target date of 2030.

Challenges Facing Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education

It is quite unfortunate that many factors have posed grave challenges to effective implementation of trades/entrepreneurship education in Nigeria senior secondary schools. Some key indicators cited for this study include: Poor state of infrastructural development in the educational sector and lack of access to productive inputs such as finance and workplace. Also, epileptic electricity supply, Corruption perception index, Lack of workshop or laboratories; inadequate qualify teaching staff, practical support staff, relevant textbooks, limited equipment, inadequate facilities and tools for practical activities in trade/ entrepreneurship subjects limit student's acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitude for development of entrepreneurship competencies expected from secondary schools graduates (Musa & Esiege, (2017); Jegede *et al*, (2019) and Kalagbor & Harry 2019). However, some measures suggested in this paper can be put in place to curb these menaces identified.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that, achievement of objectives of any level of education depends largely on effective implementation of its planned programme. To this effect, effective implementation of entrepreneurship education from senior secondary school to tertiary level requires such for restructuring that will provide the knowledge and skills needed to promote job creation and sustainable development in Nigeria. With the present situation, the aim of providing 35 trade subjects for students to specialize in any area of their choice without requisite resources is factually unrealistic at the stage of implementation. Furthermore, discontinuation of the trade/ entrepreneurship subjects by those proceeding to higher institutions and inadequate human and material resources renders the objective of entrepreneurship education not achievable. This can definitely affect the goals of producing functional secondary school and university graduates who



would contribute to the economic and technological development of the nation and be self-reliant. This means that capacitation of teachers and students' interest amidst adequate provision of other material resources is essential in the successful implementation of entrepreneurship education in senior secondary school through tertiary level as they are the key players in the implementation process.

Recommendations:

1. Restructuring of entrepreneurship education curriculum from senior secondary school to tertiary level in Nigeria;
2. Trade/entrepreneurship subjects offered in secondary schools should be used as one of the core subject for admission into higher institutions in a related course of study;
3. Government: federal, state, and local should provide adequate funding and accessibility of material resources in the implementation of the programme;
4. Capacity building and re-training of teachers, provision of relevant textbooks in all the trade/entrepreneurship subjects will address the menace affecting effective implementation of the programme; and
5. School and community collaboration should be adopted for successful implementation of trade/entrepreneurship subjects in senior secondary schools. The school should partner with experts in the community for effective teaching and learning of the subjects.

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