

REPOSITIONING OF SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH INNOVATION, CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria as a developing nation is faced with myriad of problems and harsh realities which include; poverty, unemployment, conflicts and diseases. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in most developing nations thereby calling for the training of student from secondary education on entrepreneurship skill to enable them function effectively in the society in which they live. This paper examines the role of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skills in Secondary Education in Nigeria. The article x-rays the concept of education, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skills that is able to achieve economic empowerment. It further indicates that education empowers individuals to a great extent and especially secondary students' empowerment and sustainable development. Also, discussed are strategies for repositioning of secondary education for economic empowerment through Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship skills in Nigerian.

Keywords: Education, Secondary Education, Innovation, Creativity, Entrepreneurship Skills

Introduction

One of the tools of every successful nation is embedded in education to pilot and proffer solutions to global problems confronting the citizens. Education has been perceived in various ways by scholars. Umoh (2005) referred education and sustainable development as two sides of the same coin. The fact that education and sustainable development shows glaring connectivity probably explained why scholars emphasize the need for education for the purpose of achieving the desired sustainable development. Education is seen as the light that drives away the darkness of ignorance and enables mankind to find its ways through the tortures and labyrinth of development and civilization (Ikechukwu, 2006). Anugwon (2009) asserted that education is the main tool for imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to ones contribution to the development of the society. It is the key every individual should possess in order to make significant contribution to national development. Stuart (2010) defined Education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adults develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of

behaviour which are of positive value to society in the individual lives. Education is a tool with which people, using the human ability to respond to, and interact with environment, pass on from generation to generation, those aspects of their culture and values which they consider to be worthwhile (Rodgers, 2010). According to Adedokun (2011), education holds the key to other conditions taking proper decisions about living and skills that can assist one economically, politically and socially in one's society.

Also, the prosperity of a country depends not only on abundance of its revenue, but on the number of its citizens that are enlightened through education (Imogie, 2012). Education has been defined as a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture through formal and informal training of people in a society; it deals with mental, physical, psychological and social development of citizens in a given society (Ebong, 2013). Education as a means of sustainable national development are interwoven, intertwined and interconnected. Although several factors have been adduced for the persistent high rate of poverty incidence in Nigeria (ie corruption on the part of the implementers of poverty alleviation programme, ineffective anti- poverty programmes, poor implementation of anti-poverty programmes, lack of government political-will among others), the fact remains that the hallmark for overcoming these challenges is effective and functional education. It is a vital enterprise that touches the lives of both the present and future generations. Its importance in translating the futures of great nation cannot be overemphasized (Asaju, Thomas and Silas, 2013). However, it seems functional education through entrepreneurship skill has not been realized as an effective tool for overcoming some of the developmental challenges like poverty.

Education is the bedrock of the socio- economic and political development of any nation. Developed countries of the world like China, Japan, Russia, and United States of America among others have achieved various breakthroughs due to their commitment to ensuring an educational system in their countries that is innovative, creative and skill-oriented. Education as a tool with these qualities does not end up in reading and writing; rather practical aspects are being emphasized and carried out continuously such that economic empowerment will be the outcome. Hence, there is need to catch them young and inculcate this necessary skill to ensure no idle hands and mind as an adage says " *a young idler an old beggar*". In this review, the reviewers tend to explore repositioning of secondary education for economic empowerment through innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skill. Education levels in Nigeria includes primary, secondary and tertiary.

No nation can develop beyond its educational standard or level. Thus, education is seen as a catalyst for social, economical and political development of a nation. The success of many nations in tackling major development problems such as poverty, unemployment, inequality among others can be traced to their educational system. One of the developmental problems in Nigeria is the increasing rate of

poverty in the country. According to Onyechi (2014), it is an understatement to say that, 'a whole lot is wrong with education in Nigeria'. The quality of the products of the educational system, the level of learner's achievement, the desperation of pupils to succeed as evidenced by unabated incidences and sophistication of examination malpractices, and falsification of credentials, frequency of teachers strike, and poor quality of teachers, all point to inefficient performance of the system (Aina in Abubakar 2009).

The gross underfunding of the educational sector, coupled with other related problems of infrastructural decay, dearth of infrastructural facilities at all levels of the educational institutions, inadequate teaching practicing and learning materials, incompetent teaching and incompetent teaching staff, inconsistency and lack of clear-cut education policy, these and many more hampers the quality of education rendered in Nigeria. A country that denies education to its people denies them and the country a future; denies them civilization and optimum utilization of God-given human resources which is a key factor in individual entrepreneurial and national development. All these and many more call for repositioning of secondary education for economic empowerment through innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skills.

Embarking on innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skills as part of secondary education in Nigeria will bring about economic empowerment that will turn around the available resources into wealth for the nation. Starting this strategy from secondary education will help in harnessing/catching the future youth at an early age of 10 years while in junior secondary education level to fan into flame their God given talent using education package that has innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skills. Especially, the case in Nigeria where majority of the graduates of the educational institutions search for white-collar jobs that are very scarce and difficult to secure will be a thing of the past. Hence, solving the problem of poverty and will lead to the elimination of other developmental challenges and social ills presently experienced in the country. Therefore, an educational system that is practically based on innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skills will bring about graduates who are entrepreneurs and self-dependent and ready to practise what they had learnt in school. These entrepreneurs will also become employers of labour. With this chain, more jobs will be created and income generated. The end result is that many will be uplifted from the dudgeon of unemployment and poverty. Thus, it can be adduced that there is a symbiotic relationship between innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship skills and poverty alleviation, especially starting early at secondary education.

Innovation is defined as adding something new to an existing product or process. The key words are adding and existing. The product or process has already been created from scratch and has worked reasonably well. Most of the subjects here have been in existence, but they needed some level of innovation to bring about the

desired change. When it is changed so that it works better or fulfils a different need, then there is innovation on what already exists.

Innovation is the successful exploitation of new ideas. All innovation begins with creative ideas. Creativity is the starting point for innovation. In addition, both innovation and entrepreneurship demand creativity. Creativity is a process by which a symbolic domain in the culture is changed. Creativity is also an attitude, the ability to accept change and newness, a willingness to play with ideas and possibilities, a flexibility of outlook, the habit of enjoying the good, while looking for ways to improve it.

Entrepreneurship skill through education is a carefully planned process that eventuates into the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies. The education is a set of very valuable skills needed by the entrepreneur to avoid future trial and errors (Osuala, 2004). By implications, the stage of learning is the stage to make most of the mistakes and learn from them. Entrepreneurship education equips the learner with skills on decision making, acquisition of new ideas, methods of raising and maintaining conversations and establishing business relationships. Through entrepreneurship education, qualitative ability that facilitates computation and record keeping are further learnt. It starts with developing programmes in entrepreneurship centres where people are trained to develop and acquire skills. The secondary students from junior class should equally be given opportunities to gain experiences as they are linked with mentors, get access to information and are given opportunity for growth. This implies that they are provided with information and knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would enable them perform well as business men and women. They will turn out to be business men and women who have developed business capacities and are learning to make money. These competences will in turn help them deploy their zeal for nation building in a very efficient manner. Anything short of these realities will be handling Nigerian problems of repositioning the young adolescent with kid gloves. When one attains the height of employing labours such strategy has lead to economic empowerment to the individual and the nation at large.

Economic empowerment is state of being equipped with legitimate and sustainable source of earning to enable one cope with challenges of life. Entrepreneurship is not just skill acquisition for acquisition sake. It is an acquisition of skills and ideas for the sake of creating employment for one's-self and for others. It also includes the development based on creativity. Entrepreneurship leads to the development of small, medium and sometimes large scale businesses based on creativity and innovation. The success of these businesses in turn helps in economic empowerment and developing the nation. It also reduces poverty rate with visible increment of employment rate among the youth

Concept of Education

Education has been perceived in various ways by scholars; Rodgers (2010), defined education as a tool with which people, using the human ability to respond to, and interact with the environment, pass on from generation to generation, those aspects of their culture and values which they consider to be worthwhile. According to Adedokun (2011), education holds the key to other conditions taking proper decisions about living and skills that can assist one economically, politically and socially in one's society. Also, the prosperity of a country depends not only on abundance of its revenue, but on the number of its citizens that are enlightened through education (Imogie, 2012). Education has been defined as a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture through formal and informal training of people in a society; it deals with mental, physical, psychological and social development of citizens in a given society (Ebong, 2013). Education as a means of and sustainable national development are interwoven, intertwined, and interconnected. Education is conceptualized more as a process, activity and outcome of skill, knowledge acquisition which makes the citizen a better and more productive person to himself and to the society at large. For education to be tool as it is meant to be it has to be functional, practical and problem-solving. According to Kayode and Sunday (2014), education should be functional in which the ability to perform productive tasks is more emphasized than the education that aims at producing ideological conformity.

Functional education is a kind of education that emphasizes practice more than theory. Kayode and Sunday (2014), posits further that the Nigerian education has not been functional because too much emphasis has been placed on theoretical and academic knowledge. There is undue emphasis on the possession of certificates instead of on what one can do. To buttress this fact, Ukeje in Kayode and Sunday (2014), states that educational processes are geared primarily to preparing candidates for examinations to acquire certificate. The fact still remains that through this process of education, the products acquire knowledge and facts with little real understanding and without saleable skills.

The result of this dysfunctional education is that schools turn out graduates without useful knowledge and skills and who become alienated from their own environment. According to UNESCO (2013), "education refers to the total process of developing human ability and behaviours". It is an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills and understanding value for all activities of life. Education demands efforts and discipline. It is also a formidable tool for man's survival. Although several factors have been adduced for the persistent high rate of poverty incidence in Nigeria, the fact remains that the hallmark for overcoming these challenges is education that consist of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skill starting at early age for internalization and mastery. It is a vital enterprise that touches the lives of both the present and future generations, its

importance in translating the futures of great nations cannot be overemphasized (Asaju, Thomas, and Silas,2013).

However, it seems functional education through entrepreneurship skill has not been realized as an effective tool for overcoming some of the developmental challenges like poverty. Fafunwa (2013), defined education as “the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops abilities, attitudes and behaviours which are of positive value to the society” He stressed further that education is a process of transmitting culture in terms of continuity, growth and for disseminating knowledge to ensure social control and rational direction of society. Education is one of the most important means of empowering human beings with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate in the development of a nation (Ozokwere, 2013). Oloniyi (2015) affirmed that education is an indispensable tool for change towards economic empowerment.

Secondary Education in Nigeria

Secondary education is the form of education that comes after primary school education. The student at this level of education are within the ages 10-18, mostly adolescent. State-owned secondary schools are funded by each state government and are not comparable to the Federal government colleges. Although education is supposed to be free in the majority of the state-owned institutions, students are required to purchase books, uniforms and pay for miscellaneous things. Teachers in State-owned institutions usually have a National Certificate of Education or a bachelor's degree, but this is not always the case as many secondary schools in Nigeria are filled with unqualified teachers who end up not being able to motivate their students. Often some schools are understaffed due to low state budgets, lack of incentives and irregularities in payment of staff salaries.

Some state-owned secondary schools are regarded as elite colleges because of the historically high educational standard and producing alumni who have prominent citizens in the various careers. However, the college ranking of these institutions has since dropped because of the arrival of some private institutions. Private secondary schools in Nigeria tend to be quite expensive with average annual fees ranging from two hundred and fifty thousand naira to One million naira (\$1000.00 – \$4000.00). These schools have smaller classes (approximately twenty to thirty students per class), modern equipment and a better learning environment. Most teachers in these institutions possess at least a bachelor's degree in a specific course area and are sent for workshops or short term programs on a regular basis (UNESCO, 2013).

Repositioning our secondary education toward Economic Empowerment

Secondary education in Nigeria needs to be repositioned from what it used to be that yielded to increase in unemployment, poverty- laden nation and social vices.

The type of Secondary education this article vie for is education that contains innovative, creative and entrepreneurship skill as a package introduced from junior secondary education to get the student ready to surmount any challenge in future. Thus, making our students economically empowered because after school they will not join the cue waiting for government jobs rather with their hands they practise those skills which they are taught and become employer of labour. For instance, if agricultural science taught in secondary school is practised for entrepreneurship skill, some students can learn how to plant crops like potatoes, cassava, yam, lettuce etc. A student with such background can develop interest on planting potatoes which will help him even while in school, using small portion of land near his house to nurture the idea obtained from knowledge of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skill. This may blossom into production of potato chips, potato flour and such a student may become economically empowered and with time he will become an employer of labour, also known as an entrepreneur.

The youthful period is a very critical one that has been noted as an essential time for grooming adolescents in entrepreneurship training, because it provides a positive distractive alternative to the self-destructive and aggressive behaviours that are frequently associated with adolescences. Through entrepreneurship education, qualitative ability that facilitates computation and record keeping are further learnt. It starts with developing programmes in entrepreneurship centres where people are trained to develop and acquire skills. The secondary students from junior class should be provided with information, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would enable them perform well as business men and women. These competences will in turn help them deploy their zeal for nation building and economic empowerment.

Innovation as a factor for economic empowerment in secondary education

Innovation is the process that transforms new ideas into new value- turning an idea into value. It cannot take place without creativity. Innovation is the process that combines ideas and knowledge into new value. Without innovation, an enterprise and what it provides quickly become obsolete. The dictionary defines innovation as the introduction of something new or different. Innovation is the implementation of creative inspiration. Innovation is also about “new processes and new ways of doing things” that may not be obvious to customers but add significant value in delivering the services and products that customers require (Ann, 2002).

The National Innovation Initiative (NII) defines innovation as “the inter-section of invention and insight, leading to the creation of social and economic value” Innovation is “value” – the creation of value adding value to customer’s satisfaction- “delighting the customers”. Innovation is the basis of all competition advantages, the means of anticipating and meeting customer’s needs and the method of utilization of technology.

The present economic reform of the Nigerian Government- National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) calls for less dependence on imported materials – goods and services and technology. The need to develop new technology which can be used to process the raw materials which may result from the investigation of natural resources suggested above and with a view to producing goods and services from them (Okpara, 2007). Joseph Schumpeter in his Theory of Economic Development (1912) considered the entrepreneur's task and capacity to realize new combinations of the production factors, i.e. innovation, as the basis of his theory. And Arrow (1962) pointed to the relationship between economic welfare and the resources assigned to innovation.

Also, the concept of innovation is described as the use of an invention to create a new commercial product or service, it is the key force in creating new demand and thus new wealth. Innovation creates new demand and entrepreneurs bring the innovations to the market. An idea does not become an innovation until it is widely adopted and incorporated into people's daily lives. That is the reason behind this article; most people resist change, so the key part of innovating is convincing other people, starting from secondary level to reposition education for economic empowerment through innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skill. Some of these entrepreneurship skills though in existence need to be repositioned via innovation and creativity.

Creativity as a factor for economic empowerment in our secondary education

Creativity is marked by the ability to create, bring into existence, to invent into a new form, to produce through imaginative skill, to make to bring into existence something new. Creativity is not ability to create out of nothing (only God can do that), but the ability to generate new ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing ideas. Some creative ideas are astonishing and brilliant, while others are just simple, good practical ideas that no one seems to have thought, of yet (Harris, 1998). Creative thinking has various definitions; it is the art of generating solution to problems by the force of imagination and reasoning (Okpara, 2007). It is necessary to know that we live in a thinker's world. It is therefore, not surprising to see that the men/women who are ahead are those who see ahead with the eyes of their mind. Every idea is a product of thinking and every product is the manifestation of idea naked in a thinker's mind.

These are people who see problems as opportunities to improve and do something new or something better, people who keep these two vital questions on their mind. "What can I do to make things better, or what can I do to make better things? This is the product of thinking.

The celebrated discoveries of man are not accidents. The minds of men/women were engaged in creative thinking to deliver the visible products we enjoy today. Name them: Bill Gate and the computer, Graham Bell and the telephone,

Michael Faraday and electricity, Isaac Newton and physical law of science, the Wright brothers and Aero plane, and so on. The list is endless. Our secondary student if well guided too can join them as we begin to “ponder the path of their feet, economic empowerment may be established.” Creative outcomes seldom emerge in an instant: a recognized process is involved, even if it appears to be rather chaotic (Thompson, 2001). Entrepreneurial activity depends on the process of innovation following creativity, not on creativity alone.

Entrepreneurship skill in secondary education for economic empowerment

According to Redecker and Qystein(2013), skills such as problem-solving reflection, creativity, critical thinking, learning risk-taking, collaboration and entrepreneurship are becoming increasingly important. United nation (2014) asserted that the present state of technology and social organization can be managed and improved to make way for a new era economic growth. Sustainable development through innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship skill is not a fix state but rather a process of change in which resources exploitation, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are made consistent with the future as well as present needs (James, Magee, Scerri &Steger, 2015). Entrepreneurship provides young people across the nation with valuable life skills and tools to empower them to build sustainable and prosperous futures for themselves and their communities. Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish, and run an enterprise successfully.

The concept of entrepreneurship has been associated with several activities concerned with the establishment and operations of business enterprises. Entrepreneurship instills the enterprise culture into the individuals (Eno-Obong, 2006). Enterprise here is defined as resourcefulness, initiative, drive, imagination, enthusiasm, zest, dash, ambition, energy, vitality, boldness, daring, audacity, courage, get up, and go. Entrepreneurship, therefore, encompasses all the productive functions that are not rewarded immediately by regular wages, interest and rent and non-routine human labour. It is also not investing capital funds along. It is actually, the functions of seeking investment, production opportunity, organizing an enterprise to undertake new production process, raising capital, hiring labour, allocating resources, and creating new enterprises. Entrepreneurial success in this century, therefore, depends on the seriousness with which innovative activities are undertaken by the enterprises in terms of indigenizing input sourcing and the development of new indigenous products (Eno-Obong, 2006).

Strategies for repositioning of secondary education for economic empowerment through creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship skills in Nigeria.

Nigerian youths tackle daily series of problems – poverty, unemployment, conflicts and diseases. This is not an easy task. These problems therefore will demand that secondary education be empowered to be creative problem-solving skills and also provide economic empowerment. The training of educated individuals who can function effectively in the society for the betterment of self and the society will require special attention as the system will be deliberately set to concern itself with the development of sound human capital required for economic empowerment through creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship skill (Ocho, 2005).

Practically the society must do the following:

1. Schools should be properly staffed and equipped for teaching entrepreneurship and creativity at an early age
2. More modern learning aids such as computers, internet web sites facilities, overhead projectors, films etc should be provided in schools
3. There is also the need for government's commitment to the resurgence of science and technology as well as technical education in Nigeria. This should start from the secondary level.
4. Teachers who are to disseminate knowledge must be properly motivated to give and put in their best. As such the need for salary increment and better working conditions;
5. Government at all levels Federal, state and local must contribute their respective quota to the development of education. This will ensure a speedy achievement of sustainable national development.

Finally, in Nigeria repositioning of secondary education through creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship skills for the eradication of unemployment, there would be need to transform the student into confident, aggressive and purposeful individuals.

Conclusion

The importance of teaching young people the difference between vision, mission and principles of getting things done have been emphasized. This paper emphasized the need to get students in Nigerian secondary education trained on various skills including: entrepreneurship skills, managerial experience, record keeping, creativity and innovation. Getting trained also in such areas like garment making, experts in sports, playing musical instruments, generating and operating statements, balance sheets are also seen as essential. The young youth through training are said to learn to develop inner qualities for self and organizational improvement. They also learn the need to develop common sense, creativity and wisdom. They learn from compiling and working for the collective good of the team

with which they relate. They use the creative process to converse for organizational priorities and personal development as they learn to dialogue, deliberate and discern future business opportunities.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this review, some recommendations are made;

1. Vocational subjects in secondary schools should be made compulsory especially at junior secondary school to ensure they start entrepreneurship skills at early.
2. Educational sectors should have a body set aside for that plan and execution of processes of action toward secondary education
3. School laboratories should be well equipped, to enable effective and practical teaching and learning
4. School playfield should be made available for various sports to be trained. This will enable some talented student to become experts
5. Training that encompasses skill acquisition should be made compulsory for the secondary school students during vacation and will be funded by government and non- governmental agencies.

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