

Entrepreneurship Education: A Veritable Tool For Youths Empowerment In Nigeria

Bilhatu Kumah Dagari and Dr. Salman Abdulwahab Adisa
Counseling Centre, Student Affairs Division, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is a form of education given to a set of people especially the youth to enable them acquire principles, skills and practice in any chosen profession or occupation. The greatest problem facing Nigerian Youths today is unemployment. It has persisted despite efforts by government to reverse the trend. This paper attempts to discuss the concept, process, characteristics and philosophy of entrepreneurship. A study-work scheme in A.B.U., Zaria is discussed and presented as an example of entrepreneurship. Counselling implications are also highlighted.

Introduction

The Federal Government has made several efforts towards the creation of employment opportunities for youths. Among such are National Directorate for Employment (NDE), National Poverty Alleviation and Eradication Programme (NAPAEP) to the most recent one, Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP) to address youth unemployment. Despite these efforts, unemployment is still widespread and the future looks bleak especially for the youths. Researches and observations on this situation have therefore suggested that to tackle the unemployment trend, there is need to equip the youths with training in developing confidence that will enable them establish their own business or go in to partnership with others for employment opportunities.

In realization of the bleak picture of employment situation in the country, the government reviewed the educational policy from 6-5-2-3 system to 6-3-3-4. These policies were geared towards incorporating vocational education which is aimed at acquisition of saleable skills by the recipients of such education. However, the desired result was not realized and this further led to seeking out a solution that would improve the situation. The educational policy was reviewed again to 9-3-4 system and the inclusion of entrepreneurship education to inculcate the spirit of self-reliance through self-employment. Entrepreneurship education is hoped to be an instrument that would provide skill resources to create multiple jobs for the teeming unemployed Nigerian Youths.

Thus, the Federal Government is determined to make entrepreneurship education relevant to the life of our youths and the society at large. This is stated in the third National Development Plan.

The absence of career counseling in our educational and training systems in the past, must be held responsible for the frustration observed among many of the nation's young men and women. To remedy the situation, career counseling will be institutionalized in all the nation's educational and training systems with adequate state and federal government encouragement.

In addition, government also observed the ignorance of Nigerian students with regards to realistic educational and career choice in schools in its policy statement in the National policy on Education revised (2004: 43) which states that:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers will be appointed in post primary institutions.

This policy statement by the Federal Government is yet to be implemented. The problems are still facing the students of Nigeria in the face.

This Denga (1982) appreciated the recognition by the society that many young boys and girls of working age are ignorant of the job opportunities that are available to them in the society. The society also recognizes that youths are also ignorant of the relationship between the school subjects they study and the career they aspire to enter upon completing their educational studies.

Concept of Entrepreneur

The word entrepreneur is derived from the French term *entreprendre* which means to "undertake" or "go between". An entrepreneur, according to Lawson (2000), is an innovator or developer, who recognizes and seizes opportunities, converts those opportunities into marketable ideas, adds value through time, effort, money or skills, assumes the risk of the competitive market place to implement these ideas and realizes the reward from these efforts. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005), define entrepreneur as a person who makes money by starting or running businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks. Hisrich and Peters (1995) also define entrepreneur as action oriented and highly motivated individual who has the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities to gather the necessary resources, to take advantage of them, to initiate appropriate action to endure success and to take risk to achieve the goals.

Similarly, Sheshi (1995) sees an entrepreneur as a person who is willing and able to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and establish and run enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities.

Meredith, Nelson and Meck (1996) define entrepreneur as people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, to gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and to initiate appropriate action to ensure success. From these views, it can be deduced that entrepreneurs are action oriented, highly motivated individuals who take risks to achieve goals.

Meaning of Entrepreneurship

The term entrepreneurship means different things to different people and can be viewed from different conceptual dimensions. Lawson (2002) defines entrepreneurship as a process that involves identifying an opportunity that allows a person or groups of persons to create significant new value. Similarly, Soji (2000) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual or group of persons to search for investment opportunities, establish and run a business unit successfully. Entrepreneurship is creating something where none exists and sustaining the process into commercial success. The role an individual performs to achieve the above function is called entrepreneur while, the process is called entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurial process, according to Lawson (2000), involves the following steps:

- Identifying an opportunity
- Evaluating the opportunity to ensure that it matches the goals, lifestyle and disposition of the entrepreneur
- Narrowing the opportunity concept to come into sharp focus.
- Developing a business plan
- Assembling of resources both human and material
- Developing the value chain
- Institutionalizing the venture.

In the world today, every government has a desire for self-reliance. Entrepreneurial skills and awareness are the major steps that can deliver this dream. Duniya (2008) and Sheshi (1995) listed the following as characteristics of a working profile for entrepreneurship; self-confidence i.e. believes in what he is doing, task result oriented i.e. sets realistic goals which are achievable, risk taker i.e. calculate risks involve, others include leadership i.e. be a good leader, originality i.e. being creative, future oriented i.e. long term involvement and taking initiative i.e. deciding and solving problems.

Furthermore, Duniya (2008) summarizes the philosophy of entrepreneurship to include the need to:

- i. Have a model that an entrepreneur can learn to acquire his skills and behaviour.
- ii. Have definite goals and expectations that you want to achieve.
- iii. Have ability to see and evaluate business opportunities
- iv. Be willing to learn from experience.
- v. Be aware of new ways to increase your productivity
- vi. Be prepared to take risk
- vii. Possess some psychological traits.

A Study-work Scheme

The Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria's example of how a study-work scheme is conducted presents some hope for youth empowerment in Nigeria.

Several reports have painted a bleak picture of employment situation in Nigeria because opportunities for formal employment are diminishing. Educational institutions are being encouraged to provide relevant forms of education designed to promote self-reliance and responsible entrepreneurship for self employment (Duniya, 2008). One of such ways of meeting such challenges is the development of a study-work scheme in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria an entrepreneurial skills development programme. The focus of the programme is to assist indigent students to study at the same time work and earn some money to sustain themselves. The programme promotes creativity among youths who are students and broaden the sources of revenue generation for them. The staff needs of the local community are met thereby enhancing performance. The study work scheme gives students exposure to the world of work and how to manage resources.

Modalities to qualify a student to participate in the study-work scheme include:

- a. The scheme engages only registered students of the university.
- b. All interested students must be registered with guidance and counselling unit.
- c. Must sign an undertaking
- d. All interested staff seeking employee must register at the guidance and counselling unit.
- e. Both staff and students should fill a job form
- f. Payment for services rendered will be at the end of the month.
- g. A withdrawn student will have his work terminated.
- h. If a student graduates, he/she will be disengaged from work.

Duties of Counsellors in the Scheme

- a. Interview all students to determine their needs and suitability for jobs.
- b. Get employers for the students
- c. Assign each student to an employer
- d. Monitor students to ensure compliance with study-work scheme rules and regulations.
- e. Ensure payment to engaged students.
- f. Keep records
- g. Help to upgrade the scheme with new ideas.

Types of Work-Scheme Available in A.B.U., Zaria

1. Coaching (primary and secondary) WAEC, NECO and JAMB lessons
2. Harvesting
3. Baby sitting
4. Laundry work
5. Car wash.

This is coordinated by the university guidance and counseling unit.

Defaulters

All defaulters of the scheme will:

1. Have appointment terminated because of
 - a. poor performance
 - b. absenteeism
 - c. if employer is not pleased with performance
 - d. if staff is not paying regularly or do not follow rules and regulations of the scheme.

Gothard (1985) believes that career guidance organizes school work so that the student are helped to discover their own capabilities, aptitudes and interest, may himself learn about the character and conditions of occupational life and may themselves arrive at intelligent occupational choice. The essence of the scheme is to develop competencies in students that are intended to lead to self employment or economic self reliance.

Counselling Implication

Realistic career counselling is the process of helping an individual to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of him or herself and his or her role in the world of work, to test his or her concept against reality and to convert it into reality with satisfaction to him or herself and benefit to the society.

Realistic career counselling takes into consideration availability of employment opportunities, suitability of skills type, and personality characteristics of the individuals. It consists of strategies for helping students choose occupations that are most fitting and most viable not only to themselves but also to society in which they live. It is not based on mere affective feelings but on realistic job opportunities in the labour market. Career counselling is a guidance service that could be offered to students to help them acquire knowledge about themselves and about occupations of interest and thereby make suitable plus productive choices.

Realistic career counselling implies that students and youths, who were counseled to acquire adequate knowledge on skills that match their interest and personal characteristics, are able to practice them even while they are pursuing a degree. This practice enable them master the knowhow of the job and also identify the risky factors so that they plan on how to remedy them. It also enables an individual to identify his/her strengths, weaknesses, and what it takes to start and maintain a job. Thus, the student becomes owner of a trade and also employs others under him/her to work and acquire the skills of the trade to become their own masters in the future. The community and government can liaise with such an individual in the future to serve as a training point for other up-coming youths. This is necessary because, our educational system laid mere emphasis on paper qualification rather than necessary skills which are needed for self-reliance and national development efforts of the society.

Conclusion

Education at all levels has not responded effectively to a variety of students' need. The individual student is confronted with the reality of having to make decisions which will determine the course of his or her life. As such, realistic educational and career counseling should be viewed as valid and escape inescapable concern that should be given priority. This is because it is only through professional and effective counselling that Nigerian students could be provide with the opportunity to choose occupations.

References

- Crites, J. O. (1969). *Vocational behaviour*. New York: McGraw Hill Inc.
- Denga, D. I. (1982). *Educational and Vocational Guidance in Nigerian Secondary Schools*, Jos: Savanna Press.
- Duniya, A. S. (2008). *Entrepreneurship Development*. A guide for prospective and potential entrepreneurs. (2nd Ed). Zaria: Ado-channels.
- Federal Ministry of Information. Federal Republic of Nigeria(2004). *National Policy on Education* NERDC Press, Yaba – Lagos.
- Federal Ministry of Information. Federal Republic of Nigeria1975. *Third National Development Plan (1975-1980)*. Lagos. Federal Government Printer,
- Gothard, W. P. (1985). *Vocational Guidance Theory and Practice*. Australia, Croom Helm Ltd.
- Hisrich, J. & Peters, M. A. (1995). *Entrepreneurship starting, Developing and managing a new enterprise*. New York, McGraw Hill Companies Inc.
- Lawson, B. (2002). *Creative skills: Training and Development in Entrepreneurship and problem solving competencies*. Workshop training material.
- Mersedith, G. G; Nelson, R. E. & Meck, P. A. (1996). *Practice of Entrepreneurship*. Lagos, University of Lagos Press.
- Sheshi, S. G. J. (1995). *Entrepreneurship*. Jos: Jofagan Associates.
- Soji, O. (2000). *Managing your small scale enterprise successfully, a guide to entrepreneurs, managers and students*. Kaduna: Olajamon printers and Publishers.