

**INCLUSION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM
AS A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: JOHN DEWEY'S
PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Across the globe, entrepreneurship has been recognized as an active means of inspiring greater economic growth and sustainable development. This is usually done through the creation of greater employment opportunities, the improvement of local techno-industrial base for foreign exchange remunerations. The employment of John Dewey's perspective on the aim of education as our point of departure, is informed by his pragmatic principle. Dewey's pragmatic cum democratic methodology to schooling finds expression on child-centred education which considers the seats of learning on the interest-needs of the child as interpreted or contextualized in the light of societal needs within the labour market. Scholars, researchers and pundits hold the view that since entrepreneurship education has been discovered to be a vital instrument to students' development of entrepreneurial expertise and attitudes which positively prepares them towards starting their own future businesses "inter-disciplinary curriculum", or a curriculum that aims at relating multiple subjects which encourages students to easily pursue their areas of interests as well as helps them to develop the ability to construct their own paths for acquiring and applying knowledge is very necessary in schools. Dewey opines that school insistence on mastery of facts and disciplining of bodies has led to the production of passive students who lack the ability to contribute actively to economic growth. In this light, the essay argues that entrepreneurial studies, if incorporated into the school curriculum, is a viable tool for a nascent state that is aspiring for economic growth. Thus, the study recommends that entrepreneurial studies should be included at all levels of education so that students will be equipped with the necessary entrepreneurial skills needed in the labour market and for self-reliance.

Keywords: Education, Curriculum, Entrepreneurship; Sustainable Development, John Dewey

Introduction

The primary agenda of this essay is to examine the state of entrepreneurial studies within the Nigerian context from the perspective of John Dewey. It needs no elaboration that Dewey, being an instrumentalist, placed more value on the cash value of ideas. Whatever

can translate into improved living condition of the human entity, Dewey would not bat an eye over. It is within this reality that this study recommends the inclusion of entrepreneurial studies within the syllabus of Nigerian curricula. This essay examines the nature and aim of education, the essence of entrepreneurial studies; an overview of the status quo of Nigeria's educational system, to be able to justify its thesis.

The Nature and Meaning of Education

Education (as a concept) has its root in the Latin word 'educare' which means 'to make or mould.' However, education can be defined in various ways that seem to contradict one another. Nevertheless, each definition is limited in its own right. Be it as it is, education can be viewed from two perspectives. These include the broad perspective and the narrow/technical perspective (Kneller 1964: 20). In the view of G. F Kneller, when viewed in the broad perspective, education deals with the act or experience that helps to create a formative effect on the mind, the behavior or character of a person or the physical ability of a person or an individual. On the other hand, in its technical or narrow perspective, education is the process by which any society, through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions, deliberately transmit its cultural heritage, i.e., its accumulated knowledge, values, and skills, from one generation to another. (Kneller, 1964:20).

Having taken note of that, we now proceed to examine how some scholars perceive the concept of education. Taiwo (1981:10) sees education as the total effort of a community to raise its economic, social and political standard of life. In this definition, education is the responsibility of society. Ogbemor (1992:30), quoting James Elliot, defines education as a means of preserving the way of life which a person believes. Here, education is defined from a cultural spectacle. In his book entitled: "Education for Social Reconstruction," Ukeje (1966:23) submits that education is an investment by the society to make itself a better place to live in. This definition is in tandem with Freeman Butts' position that: to understand the education of any particular time or place, one must understand the culture in which it operates. It follows that a good programme of education cannot be divorced from the culture of the place. Although one might be tempted to argue that the foregoing definitions of education are too cultural and local rather than universal. Interestingly, John Dewey's definition of education appears to be a deviation from the cultural angle. Dewey (1916:39) states that "education is the reconstruction or reorganization of experiences that increase the ability to direct the course of subsequent experiences.

Consequently, Nyerere conceives the goals of education as:

To transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the society...to enable the young live in and serve the society, and to prepare them for the future membership of the

society...it involves the active participation of the maintenance and development of the society.

Now, that an idea of the meaning and function of education has already been developed, the task hereof is to examine the main thrust of entrepreneurial studies in order to be able to disinter how it assists the notion of pedagogy as a whole. This is the crux of the next section.

Entrepreneurship Education: A Conceptual Clarification

Entrepreneurship is commonly defined as the process of creating a new business or idea towards self-reliance. It is also a practical step which combines resources and opportunities in new ways. It involves the application of personal qualities, finance and other resources within the environment for business success. (Wokeh & Basil, 2011). In the same vein, Odah (2002) defines entrepreneurship as the willingness and the ability of an individual to seek out an investment opportunity. It is actually concerned with creating opportunity and meeting the needs of individuals; it is a process of identifying gaps in one's immediate community and society at large and bringing together an innovative manner to fill these gaps (Emmanuel, 2002). In the same vein, Kuratko and Hogetts (2001) opine that "An entrepreneur is an innovator or a developer who recognizes and uses opportunities, converts these opportunities into workable/marketable ideas and value through time, effort, money or skills, assures the risks of the competitive marketplace to implement these ideas and realizes the reward from these efforts."

From the foregoing, it is obvious that entrepreneurship is a recognized organ of job creation and economic development across the world. In fact, countries consider the needs of entrepreneurs by generating and developing strong infrastructural frameworks, proactive policies and supervisory environments, strong legal shields, flexibility of access to capital, and protection of intellectual property rights of infant industries and technologies from partial rivalry. Many graduates are unemployed not for lack of academic or intellectual qualification but because they lack the needed technical skills. This is caused by lack of "human capacity development for vocational education and training" in Nigerian educational curriculum and program which encourages sustainable development. This is why Wokeh & Basil (2011) posit that the role of entrepreneurship in the development of individuals and national economics cannot be overemphasized. It has been described as the fulcrum that drives every economic development.

Consequently, there is need for the inclusion of entrepreneurship in the school curriculum which will guarantee job creation, job opportunities and sustainable development. It encourages graduates to contribute immensely towards nation-building and economic development. For the schools that have included their curriculum, there is need for proper

implementation of the discipline. In other words, there is need to reorientate and reposition entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria in its entirety for youth employment, poverty reduction, income generation and all-round economic empowerment. Hence, they call for changing nature of behavior of youths and young graduates and, as a matter of urgency, be refocused and channeled towards entrepreneurial culture and spirit. It is meet for entrepreneurship education curricula in higher institutions of learning to be reviewed and refocused to equip young graduates with requisite entrepreneurial skills for self-employment.

Thus, entrepreneurship education, with its uniqueness, should be treated proactively to meet current challenges in global and national economic development. There is also the need to challenge policymakers on the need to refocus policies in problem-solving rather than maintaining the status quo (Wokeh & Basil, 2011). Jackson (2002) postulates that since entrepreneurship education has been discovered to be a vital instrument for students' development of entrepreneurial expertise and attitudes, it should positively prepare them towards starting their own future businesses through an "inter-disciplinary curriculum", or a curriculum that aims at relating multiple subjects which will encourage students to easily pursue their areas of interests. This will help them develop the ability to construct their own paths for acquiring and applying knowledge (paraphrased).

Therefore, entrepreneurship education could be seen as those steps involved in teaching students the fundamentals, theories and processes of entrepreneurial spirit, culture and methods (Pollyn, 2010). Education in the field of entrepreneurship here argues that entrepreneurial studies should be taught at various levels of higher education, ranging from colleges of education, polytechnics and to universities. Garba (2010) argues that the aim of entrepreneurship education is typically to prepare students for self-employment, occupations, vocations or enterprises without reliance on oil, unavailable or a few white-collar jobs that millions of qualified graduates are hustling to fit into. According to Owuala (1999), entrepreneurship education is a programme or part of life programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation of and acquisition of small businesses.

Gouws (2002), on his part, says that entrepreneurship education is the purposeful intervention by an adult (the teacher) in the life of a learner to impart entrepreneurial qualities and skills that will enable the learner survive in the world of business. Indeed, it aims at equipping learners with skills, knowledge and dispositions that can help them develop or implement innovative social or business plans (Nnazor, 2005). All above definitions show the importance of including entrepreneurial studies in the school curriculum.

The foregoing has been able to establish the persistence of a link between education and praxis. Specifically, we have been able to advocate that entrepreneurial studies are species of education that aim to cultivate development potentials in the child as well as in the society. Deductively, Nigeria, a country in dire need of development, we aver, can tap into the rich resource output that is embedded within this perspective to child upbringing. But what is the present state of Nigeria's educational system? What makes it alluring? What is the need of initiating entrepreneurial studies in the curriculum? These are the questions that inform the main kernel of the section that follows.

Nigerian Educational System: The good, the bad and the ugly

Perhaps, we can begin with the all too widespread and accentuated idea that Nigeria is blessed with so many higher institutions. As a country, she has also graduated in the past men and women who have contributed to the nation's development and beyond. However, it is unfortunate that in the present state, despite the number of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, the educational system in the country is beset with many setbacks that make graduates unemployable in the labour market. The problems confronting the educational system in Nigeria which give rise to unemployment are copious: poor funding, poor educational infrastructures, inadequate classrooms, lack of teaching aids and materials for practical, inadequate accommodation for staff and students, poor laboratories and libraries, the scantiness of quality teachers, and so on.

Apart from those, the curriculum of educational system in Nigeria is beset with some setbacks. The school curriculum is inherited from the colonial masters. This made the former Governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Fashola, to call for a complete overhaul of the curriculum the universities in Nigeria in the light of the current national reality of massive unemployment. Fashola's thinking is that the present curriculum in our universities was designed by our colonial masters to advance their own economic gains by setting up trade businesses controlled by royal charters in their own territories. In short, the school curriculum is obsolete and not needful again in this 21st century.

The Nigerian system of education is more of a certificate-based education in both structure and functionality than a competence-based one. It emphasises "paper qualifications" over knowledge, skills, and technical know-how. Often times, the emphasis is on how well one passes an exam and not how well one knows a particular discipline. So, most students cram answers in their memories just to pass examinations only to forget after the exams. Such students end up making good grades and earn wonderful certificates but are actually bereft of any knowledge necessary for a gainful employment in the future. Thus, students perceive education as a means of getting paid employment instead of a means of self-development and achievement of potentials to be able to make meaningful contributions to the development of society (Nwanyanwu, 2015).

Put differently, the Nigerian educational system itself fails to prepare students for competence that makes them employable in the labour market or even capable of creating their own jobs. According to Actoria (2012), for a certificate-based education to be relevant to the labour market, competence-based education must be included in the school curriculum. Roselin (2012) holds that the duty of education is to develop in students the strategic ability to deal with practical issues of their day-to-day experiences within and outside their environment. That is to say, the learning process must be societal-based as well as a means of bringing the world and the needs of the labour market into the classroom. Thus, the students should be taught how to develop inventive skills, problem-solving oriented attitudes, and self-developmental skills (Bentham, 2012).

On the other hand, the term competence-based education is another word for know-how or skill. It requires the ability for an individual to have the know-how or the skill to perform a task. According to Vincent (2008), competence is the quality or the state of being functionally adequate or having sufficient knowledge, strength and skill. In the same vein, Nwanyanwu (2015) opines that competence is mainly on the ability to do something well, measured against a standard, especially ability acquired through experience and training. Competence expresses itself in knowledge, ability, know-how, skill, and so on. Competence, thus, connotes knowledge and, so, the duo shall be used as convertible terms in this essay.

A competence-based system of education helps prepare students for the labour market and self-dependency. James and Okoro (2011) affirm that competence-based education helps students to develop the ability for critical analysis of world events, matching theory with practice, developing vision for a new and better society, ability to explore controversial issues and offer technical solution. In short, competence-based education aims at equipping students with the ability to apply appropriate theories to practical issues in one's work or a particular life situation. In addition, the goal of a competence-based educational system is focused on helping students to acquire critical thinking skills, self-dependency attitudes, good moral behaviour and creative thinking styles as tools that will help them individually in developing the ability to express the theoretical, in the light of the practical and, thus, contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the society (Regars, 2010).

In all, despite, the many institutions of higher learning and the many scholars and graduates that have contributed to the development of the nation in the past, the educational system in Nigeria today is of low standard. Eseola (2016) maintains that the low standard of education jeopardises most graduates' chances of job security since they do not possess the adequate skills needed for the job. Many employers are sceptical about

the applicability of applicants' intelligence in workplaces. To this end, Obemeate (1990) states that education is much more comprehensive than the mere process of learning to read and write, acquiring certificates in one field of specialization or another. It goes much deeper; it is concerned with the growth of habits and lifestyles that make a man what he is.

The Deweyan Framework for National Development via Entrepreneurial Studies

The attention herein is to provide the platform to launch Nigeria's development ideals from the springboard of entrepreneurial studies. Then, since this is going to be instigated from the classroom, which background is more suitable? Is this background more practically conscious? We affirm as we accent to the use of Dewey's reflections on education as a practical reality that must mediate between the school and the society.

While talking about the practical connection between what is to be learned and the learner, Dewey says, the curriculum must grow out of the learner's interests, experiences, impulses and needs. The curriculum must be child-centered. He stressed that the school subjects should be woven around the child's activities and lessons should begin with social topics such as food, shelter, modes of communication, speech reading, drawing, modelling, and so on (Aggarwal & Gupta, 2014). This implies that the school curriculum should be full of undertakings that are essential to the learner in the development of his or her latent potentials (Rude, 2010). Dewey highlights the following as the main characteristics and principles of the curriculum:

1. Curriculum should reflect the social life and activities. It should have utility.
2. It must follow the principle of progressive organization of knowledge, consisting of educative experiences and problems of the learners.
3. The new experiences and problems should grow out of the old ones.
4. The experiences should be flexible and changeable in accordance with the child's interests and should be graded (Aggarwal and Gupta, 2014:124).

Hence, the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the school curriculum would help or inculcate in students the ability to use their mind as a powerful tool to help both themselves and the society in which they live.

That Dewey's analysis is applicable to Nigeria's peculiar situation does not need much elaboration. One of the major problems that beset Nigeria today is the issue of unemployment. Many graduates of higher institutions of learning hopelessly carry their curriculum vitae from one company to another for years in search of jobs. This frustrating situation has led many Nigerian graduates to be involved in so many vices. Statistics reveal that unemployment in Nigeria increased from 21.1 percent in 2010 to 23.9 percent in 2011, with youth unemployment at 50 percent. From 2011 to 2013, there is an increase

of 16 per cent unemployment rate in Nigeria (Uddin, 2013). In fact, the recent ill-fated recruitment exercise by the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), where no fewer than 5000 youths turned up for recruitment exercise to fill vacancies of less than 1 percent of their population (that is, less than 5,000 vacancies) in the Service (Abiola, 2014) is deplorable. The applications of about 6 PhDs, 65 MBAs, 649 Masters and over 8,460 Bachelor's Degree holders who applied for the 100 vacant positions of drivers in Aliko Dangote's Company (Iroegbu, 2014) further show the debilitating state of unemployment in Nigeria.

When attention has been placed on certificates, very little attention has been given to ability and potential in our assessment of learning and social implications for jobs and the economy. This is the lacuna that an entrepreneurial education purports to seal.

Entrepreneurship is a recognized organ of job creation and economic development across the world. Entrepreneurial skills make one to be relevant and self-reliant in the society. Dewey was an entrepreneur since he believes that the goal of education is to enable the child to match theory with practice, and to be relevant in the society. This is best achieved if entrepreneurial studies are included in the school curriculum and are enforced on the student. Without this curriculum in schools, there will be no meaningful teaching, because it is curriculum that enables the teacher to know what to teach, how to teach and when to teach. It covers contents and methodology. Though the concept *curriculum* has no universal definition, no matter how one defines it, it should have the elements of content and methodology. To this end, Igwe (2000) holds that curriculum is seen as a programme, plan, content, and learning experience.

Evaluation

In essence, education goes beyond the acquisition of content knowledge. Education finds its expression as an instrument of social efficiency in terms of its duty of helping students learn how to live well by contributing to societal development. In this vein, John Dewey said that development of social efficiency is one of the aims of education, and the school as a social institution should be organized in such a way that the activities and needs of the outer world are reflected (Andrew, 2001). Hence, education starts with the active participation of the individual in social activities that affect societal growth and development. (Ashina, 2002). Therefore, in the light of John Dewey, the inclusion of entrepreneurial studies in the school curriculum can give students the command of themselves by preparing them for future life through the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills with regard to the development of their latent talents which makes the individual to contribute meaningfully to national development. It means that, in order to have sustainable development, entrepreneurial studies have to be included in the school curriculum just for "education to be most effective. Content must be presented in a way

that allows the student to relate the information to prior experiences, thus deepening the connection with this new knowledge.

Dewey's philosophy is attractive because of its power to illuminate all areas of human experience. Dewey, however, says the goal of education should be to help students develop effective problem-solving methods and for social interaction. Hence, the emphasis is on process and not content, and on learning by doing. With Socrates, Dewey opines that the role of the teacher is not to provide information but to bring the students to the point of discovering truth for themselves (Lawhead, 2002). Meoty (2000) holds that the context of entrepreneurship as a very positive force, for economic developmental acceleration is getting wider beyond traditional connotation of a small business and merely setting up a business. Adequate acquisition of entrepreneurial attitudes-oriented values is principal to socioeconomic growth, techno-industrial revolution, creation of job opportunities, and source of self-satisfaction in terms of self-realization in life's dreams and aspirations.

Conclusion

Education as a vital instrument for national development involves acquisition of fundamental knowledge and the essential developmental skills needed for technological breakthrough and socio-political development which accelerate economic growth. The development of an educational system that is knowledge-based in both structure and functionality requires inclusion of entrepreneurship in the school curriculum development. Schools are meant to be productive grounds for refinement and development of conceived ideas that have the potentiality of redefining the socio-political and socio-cultural tenets of any given society in the light of their future developmental needs.

The growing interest, in the area of entrepreneurship has developed alongside interest in the changing role of small businesses in the acceleration of economic growth and developmental sustainability. Inclusion of entrepreneurial studies in the school curriculum has an excellent potential of making students self-reliant and potential employers of labour in any developing country. The heart of this paper is to examine the inclusion of entrepreneurial studies in school curriculum as a panacea to sustainable development in the light of Dewey's perspective of what education ought to be. The essence of inclusion of entrepreneurial studies in the school curriculum in the light of Dewey's purpose of education of making the individual a self-reliant and effective contributing member of the society can be summarized thus:

1. Entrepreneurship encourages principal formation of the individual by mobilising the indolent thereby saving the public from high rate of crime.

2. It helps ameliorate the rate of unemployment in the country by providing immediate large-scale employment which encourages socioeconomic development.
3. It promotes balanced regional development by making students to become active contributing members of the society.
4. It promotes the country's export trade which is an important ingredient to economic development.

Recommendations

It is clear that entrepreneurship serves a good substance of economic growth. On the whole, the role of entrepreneurship in economic development of a country can best be put as "an economy is the effect, while entrepreneurship is the cause". It is recommended that the government should provide a more favourable and enabling environment in form of good infrastructural amenities, inclusion of entrepreneurial studies in the school curriculum and start-up of financial support to consummate inclusion of entrepreneurial studies in the school curriculum initiative.

Therefore, to challenge Nigerian Educational system that places emphasis on certificate rather than competence, the following recommendations have been highlighted:

1. The school programme and curriculum should be designed to encourage acquisition of skills through the adoption of global knowledge to meet the local needs of the people.
2. There should be encouragement and reward for competence, creativity, initiative and knowledge more than certification.
3. Government should invest in science and technology to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills to meet the challenge of the labour market.
4. Government should provide adequate laboratories and equipment for practical in our universities.
5. Government should make efforts to establish industries that can employ many workers for the economic growth of the nation. Nigeria's over-reliance on crude oil, to the neglect of other sectors of the nation's economy, has contributed to the problem of unemployment in Nigeria.
6. Stakeholders in education should design programmes that encourage knowledge acquisition, development of creative skills, development of technical know-how for practical rationality, and development of analytical skills for problem-solving and transformation of the society in accordance to the labour market.
7. The students should be encouraged to ensure that they put in their best and make efforts in their areas of study so that they will be more relevant to the labour market.

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