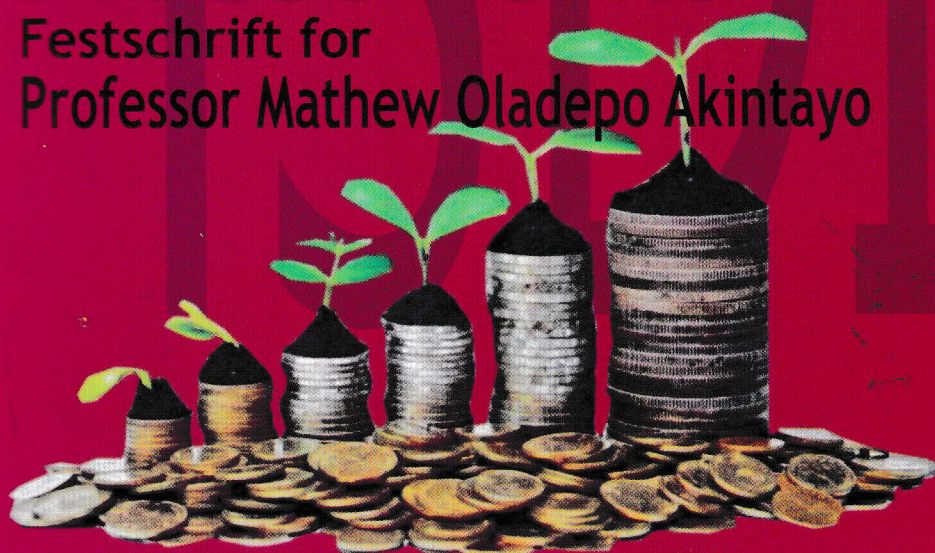


Human and Social Development Investments

Festschrift for
Professor Mathew Oladepo Akintayo



Edited by
K. O. Kester
P. B. Abu
I. A. Abiona
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CHAPTER NINE

Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development for Sustainable Development

A. O. Olawuni and T. O. Noibi

Introduction

The concept of skills acquisition is not new but necessary and must be handled effectively to promote sustainable community development in the communities that need development. However, this cannot be actualised without the development of entrepreneurship education as well. The two concepts were essential and they must be embraced in order to have sustainable community development. Skills acquisition which entails a philosophy of self reliance is an instrument of empowerment which individual need to develop themselves and their communities. Entrepreneur education prepares an individual for entering into private practices that will expose them to real life learning experiences to manage circumstances and to learn from. The paper addresses the conceptualisation of skills acquisition, challenges facing entrepreneurship and community development, entrepreneurship skills creation and the role of entrepreneurship in Nigeria's economic development. The paper recommended that skills acquisition and entrepreneurship education must be develop and embraced adequately to ensure sustainable community development in communities and in Nigeria as a whole.

Problems of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

In recent time, skill acquisition and entrepreneurship has posed serious challenges and threats to government and a great number of the citizens. Nigeria and its communities like other developing countries is faced with a number of problems ranging from youth and graduate unemployment, high level of poverty, insurgency, conflict and diseases, insincerity, over dependency on foreign-made goods, low economic growth and development, lack of capacity and required skills to move the economy

forward. In particular, unemployment has become a major problem bedeviling the lives of youths and graduates causing frustration, depression, dejection and dependency on family members and friends. The high level of unemployment among the citizens in Nigeria has contributed to the high rate of insecurity, violence in elections and poverty (Ajufo and Simkovic, 2013). The National Population Commission (2013) view that sixty-four million of Nigerian youths are unemployed, while one million six hundred thousand are underemployed bringing the total of youth's population that have problem of employment to eighty million representing. In the same vein, when this percentage is deducted from the total population of Nigeria, and then one would agree that repositioning entrepreneurship education among Nigerian youths is a task that needs to be pursued.

One of the possible causes for this lack of skills acquisition and entrepreneurship spirit in Nigeria addresses only output end of capacity development to solve problem. In addressing the input, hence a complimentary approach is needed. In developed economies or industrialised economies for instance, the education system emphasises the trail of inquiry discovery application in teaching; students to perceive problems (including societal problems) as challenges and allowing the opportunities that can be turned into goods and services of commercial value (Abayomi, Ojo and Odozi, 2014). One of the approaches to achieve this contending issue in Nigeria is teaching and research at entrepreneurship and innovation centres by universities and other tertiary institutions, and the promotion of universities - private sector collaboration. This should involve developing the capacity of staff and students in entrepreneurship and innovation; engaging in outreach activities with small and medium enterprises through such interventions as business incubators. Training entrepreneurs and conducting research and consultancies are inevitable as it pertains to entrepreneurial, industrial and economic growth in Nigeria.

Concept of Skills Acquisition

Skill acquisition, which is an instrument of empowerment that seek to provide the people with skills, vocations, bead making, hat making, sewing, shoemaking and workers interested in their jobs and at the same time improving on their existing skills. These practical training skills which also include carpentry, upholstery and others will in no doubt help to

reduce and eradicate the poverty level in the communities. The United Nation Development Report (1990) says enhancing the human factor is the real wealth of a nation. It is through human creativity, initiative, capability and commitment that true development can be achieved. Skill acquisition is the process and the means of releasing human energy, meaning that, it provides an opportunity for people to make the maximum contributions to their own self development and to the development of their communities. Everybody cannot get government job or white collar job and hence the need for skill acquisition that will shape and improve the lives of the people who have resigned to fate for lack of job. Electrical, Mechanical, Technical as well as fashion designing skills can be acquired. These skills if well acquired can make the individual to be self-reliant and thus, the issue of being a burden to others will not be there. Poverty in our communities is translated in all manifestation in terms of the absence of basic amenities of life, having not enough to eat; poor drinking water; poor nutrition; unfit housing; a high rate of infant mortality; low life expectancy; low education opportunities; inadequate health care; lack of productive assets; lack of economic infrastructure; and the inability to actively participate in decision making process.

In recognition of these facts, successive Nigerian Governments have put in place several policies, strategies and programmes and also established many agencies aimed at assisting citizens acquire employable skills to become economically stable. Among the agencies include: the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). Many Schemes have also been initiated to reduce poverty rates and create wealth amongst which are National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS), Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and a host of others. Moreover, private individuals and Faith based Organisations have also been providing the enabling environment to establish Skills acquisition centres to assist individuals acquire relevant vocational and technical skills.

Webster's Dictionary (2010) defines skill acquisition as developed or acquired ability. Skills acquisition is a vital instrument of empowerment that seeks to provide the people with different skills, vocation and entrepreneurial ability like bead making, hat making, sewing, fashion designing, shoe making and making workers interested in their job and at

the same perspective improving on their existing skills. Ezeani (2012) said there are things people can do to impact their generation, they can acquire skill. Skill acquisition is not left for the poor and middle class people. Even career men and women or professionals as well as the youths can acquire these skills to become versatile, self sustaining and independent.

Skills acquisition can also be in areas of making detergents, deodorants used in toilets and bathrooms, production of Izal, Rob, Soda soaps, basket, caps, school bags and a whole lot of skills. The eradication or reduction of poverty is one of the central objectives of contemporary development policy. The International community and its determination to overcome poverty has been highlighted by the sustainable activities of the International Development Donors such as the United Nations (UN), The European Union (EU), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, etc. are all ready and ever since they have been empowering nations and people (The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship (2012), Dasmani (2011) and UN (2009).

The concept of skills acquisition is aimed at fighting and reducing poverty level in Nigeria and in Kwara State in particular. According to the United Nations Report (1999), Nigeria's Human Poverty Index was only 41.6% which placed the country among the twenty-five (25) poorest nations in the world. Additional data from the Federal Office of Statistics (1999) further indicated that life expectancy for Nigeria was fifty-one (51) years and so to combat this phenomenon is the introduction of skills acquisition that would, in no doubt reduce the poverty level in Nigeria and in Kwara State in particular. Various Governments have repeatedly asserted its determination to use skills development as the main vehicle for assisting poor youths to break-out of the poverty trap. The empirical assumption continues to be that the acquisition of skills supported by public funding is the positive answer to the problem of unemployment. An entrepreneurial skills acquisition helps entrepreneurs to acquire self-confidence, self-esteem and participate in decision-making at household and community levels. Skill training and tertiary education could lead to business opportunities and impact on entrepreneurship (Emaikwu, 2011; Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi, 2012). Implementation of entrepreneurial opportunity also depends on the entrepreneur's level of education, skills or knowledge acquired through training, work experience and social network. Training and or education produce prior experience which leads to preparedness for entrepreneurial activity.

The awareness of the need for entrepreneurial skill training and supports is in order to stimulate entrepreneurial activity and reduce business failure among stakeholders in the industry, business and government of many countries because entrepreneurs could be born or made (Abdullah, Osman and Rahim, 2009). It is also a vital source of developing human capital, entrepreneurship graduates could not get employment because they possessed low skills and low self-confidence required by industries since there was no industrial exposures while in school, however; numerous studies asserted that skill training and tertiary education could lead to entrepreneurial activity or self-employment (Amadi, 2012). Skills acquisition training was found to have positive effect on entrepreneurial activity in Nigeria.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education pretends different meaning to variation of people as applicable to their values and observations. Ememe (2011) defined entrepreneurship education as the teaching of knowledge and skill that enables the students to plan, start and run their own businesses. Entrepreneurship education prepares youths for entering into private practices, exposing them to real life learning experiences where they will be required to think, take risks, manage circumstances and incidentally learn from the outcome. Entrepreneurship education is a potent and viable tool for self-empowerment, job and wealth creation. Entrepreneurship education entails teaching students, learners and would-be business men, equipping the trainees with skills needed for teaching responsibility and developing initiatives of prospective trainees (Ezeani, 2012; Abayomi, Ojo and Odozi, 2014).

Entrepreneurship education entails a philosophy of self reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment, promoting new sets of attitudes and culture for overcoming future challenges. Entrepreneurship education is the type of education which has the ability to impact on the growth and development of an enterprise through technical and vocational training. Actually, entrepreneurship education has its peculiar learning and teaching approaches. Ebong and Asodike (2011), highlighted entrepreneurship education teaching approaches to include business writing, lecture by professionals, case studies, programme supervision and experimental learning, visit of experts on site. Entrepreneurship education has been clearly observed here as a vehicle

that reduces the endemic problem of poverty, hunger enhancing youth empowerment, and this can result to community development. When the youths are provided with the right training in practice, they can explore opportunities in their immediate environment instead of chasing shadows in the cities. The development of Entrepreneurship education will go a long way in creation of self employment; give young people the opportunity to develop their enterprising skills, empowering the young to be job creators and not job seekers through the provision of necessary skills and knowledge to raise their output, income and wealth. Entrepreneurship education would also contribute to improve the image and highlight of the role of entrepreneurs in the society. The current industrial decay and the subsequent unemployment crisis among the Nigerian graduates have been traced to the theory-oriented university programmes and certificate frenzy combined with the Golden Fleece. The economic situation of Nigeria and the community needs re-engineering in order to strategically reposition Nigeria as the true leader of Africa (Nwalado, 2012). In view of this, the researcher strongly encourage the implementation of curriculum review, sensitisation, advocacy and mobilisation of support for entrepreneurship education, programme focus, and funding together with the political will and stability of the government in order to achieve the goals and the policy thrusts of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Ememe (2011) defines entrepreneurship as set of economic performance of an enterprise by making risk taking decisions. As he mentioned, the size or age of the firm is not of the essence, but the innovation is what he considered as the most important factor in defining entrepreneurship. From his viewpoint, entrepreneurship is a practice based on practical implementations. Entrepreneurship is the process of 'coming out' while the organisations are being created (Okifo and Ayo, 2013). This suggests that entrepreneurship is looked upon as a process to be taken by a person to facilitate an organisation to come into existence. There are many definitions of entrepreneurs ranging from the ones that stress upon broad criteria of venture creation to the ones that stress on specific criteria like creation of novelty, risk management, and goal attainment persistence. In simple terms, an entrepreneur is a person who forms a new company or creates a new business enterprise. Amadi (2012), gives a lot more detailed definition of an entrepreneurial role as an individual who assumes responsibility and ownership in making things happen; is open to and able to create novelty; who manages the risks

attached to the process; and who has the persistence to see through to some identified end-point, even when faced with obstacles and difficulties.

From the viewpoint of the management, entrepreneurs are persons who systematise, hold, control, and presume risk. Koh (1996) defined entrepreneurs as people with different beliefs, attitudes, and requirements which compel them and distinguish them from the people who are not entrepreneurs. And these are the key factors for an entrepreneurial mindset. Entrepreneurs seek avenues irrespective of the resources that they currently possess. This basically implies the capability of the entrepreneur to unite all resources, capital and labour to ensure that the business become a success for production means. According to Emaikwu (2011), entrepreneurship is the skill of exploring opportunities and using these opportunities in an innovative way to have better position in competition and take the competitive advantage in a risky way. Growth is one stage of the entrepreneurial activity and most firms tend to grow due to several reasons such as need for success, rivalry, etc.

It has been generally said that the development of any economic system or the community is dependent on the development of entrepreneurship within that economy or community. As such, the role of entrepreneurs in the economic development and wellbeing of the society and the nation have been acknowledged by policy-makers, industry practitioners, educators and researchers. This has led to the study and assessment of entrepreneurship programmes across different economies, regions, nations and economic development of the world. Entrepreneurship education has the capacity to impact positively on the entrepreneurial mindset of young people by stimulating their creativity/innovative abilities, their intentions towards entrepreneurship, their role in poverty alleviation, employability and finally, on their role in the society and the economy. In the same view of the study, it has been emphasised that the aim of entrepreneurship education is to provide graduates with the diverse range of skills required to pursue their career as an entrepreneur, help in the identification of innovative ideas/opportunities and transference of such ideas into practical entrepreneurial venture for the benefit of the individual, society and the economy.

Entrepreneurship Skills Creation for Undergraduate Studies

The wheel of development of any country and communities lies on the shoulder of how productive and creative the youths are. Parents, teachers

and government have the obligation to ensure that the youths are empowered. There is apparent economic depression in the midst of our so-called oil boom in Nigeria. The problem with Nigerian educational programmes is the too much emphasis on the value of certificate rather than the skills required in the career. In the same vein of opinion, the individual struggle hard through any means to attain the Golden Fleece which is the certificate rather than the knowledge and skills which should make them self-reliant. Hence, it is advisable that in the first place government should encourage a diversification of the economy through adequate support for private establishment and practical acquisition of skills in higher institutions.

For this, education should be refined with a view to creating and enhancing entrepreneurship spirit in the youth initiatives and activities. Apart from the entrepreneurship curriculum, there are other specific activities which can be carried out with a view to creating entrepreneurship skills in the Nigerian tertiary schools. Some of them as (Okojie 2008; Osibanjo, 2006 and Ememe, 2011), highlighted:

- (1) Establishment of entrepreneurship development centres.
- (2) Establishment of small and medium scale establishment resources centres.
- (3) Establishment of some clubs in the tertiary schools.
- (4) Organise business plan competitions.
- (5) Introduce networking events through workshops, seminars, symposia, lectures and stakeholders where cross fertilisation of ideas could occur.
- (6) Identify entrepreneurship business opportunities.
- (7) There should be role model interaction and mentoring to deliver motivated discussions in form of key notes or lectures.
- (8) Industrial visits and excursion for on site field trip like students of mass communication could visit media houses, medical students could visit pharmaceutical company and education students could visit modern schools with facilities to mention but a few.
- (9) Make the students master at least one vocation that can guarantee self-reliance.
- (10) Inculcate in the students the knowledge of the modern information communication and technology that will enable

them to interact effectively with their immediate and distant environment.

- (11) To fashion out modalities for setting up a career/entrepreneurship centre where students can be counseled and guided on the right career to follow after their graduation.
- (12) There should be a school based enterprise where students identify potential business plan, create and operate small business by using the school as a mini incubator.
- (13) There should be some form of innovative programmes for students who have done their practical work well during site supervision. These but to mention a few out of numerous will motivate them to establish businesses after school graduation as well as to develop themselves to be of good importance to their existence and also to catapult the economy of the nation with the development of their community.

Role of Entrepreneurship in Nigeria's Economic Development

It is generally accepted that entrepreneurs play a key role in business than the private sectors as a result of the advantage derive from entrepreneurship. The following are some of the role of entrepreneurship in the development of the Nigerian economy:

Product and Service

The fundamental economic function of business is to make and distribute the product and service that people want. Business entrepreneurs fulfil the role to discover consumer demands and to do whatever is required to satisfy them.

Employment

Entrepreneurs are the major providers of real jobs, that is, employment for people who need and want to work. The level of gainful employment is crucial to a nation's well-being.

Provision of Social Services

Social institutions and services are provided for, by the taxes on the incomes of individuals and businesses.

Income, Wages, Salaries and Profit

Through its employment creation, business provides an income based to its stakeholders in terms of salaries, wages, profits, and taxes. The tasks performed by businesses, enable the earning of wages, salaries and profits which are of crucial importance in order to pay taxes and to provide disposable income to finance consumer spending and savings (investment capital).

Investment in Productive Assets

A business needs capital investments to create productive capacity, innovative technology, modernisation and the expansion of its productive assets. This is generated through retained profits, borrowings or through sales of equity.

National Well-being

Most of the capital goods, commercial and social services as well as technological know-how required to satisfy our needs come from business activities, i.e. through economic development of privately owned resources.

Market Competition

It changes and rejuvenates market competition. Entrepreneurs are agent of change in a market economy. This is because they see environmental change as an opportunity to use their initiative and skills to fill that gap identified by using the other factors of production to produce goods or services for customer satisfaction.

Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Entrepreneurship education has received a boost as a source of job creation, empowerment for the unemployed and the underemployed in a globalized economy worldwide. Some of the factors that hinder entrepreneurship development in Nigeria include:

- (1) Poor entrepreneurial culture.
- (2) Poor knowledge based economy and low spirit of competition.
- (3) Insufficient entrepreneurial teachers, materials and equipment.
- (4) Non-inclusion of entrepreneurship practical programme in the school curriculum.

- (5) Inadequate funding.
- (6) Poor societal attitude to technical and vocational education development.
- (7) Inadequate facilities and modern equipment for teaching and learning.
- (8) Insensitivity of government to enterprise creation and expansion strategy.
- (9) Poor plan and execution of processes of action.
- (10) Isolated or pockets of ineffective programmes and management incompetencies.
- (11) Breakdown of family values and indiscipline.
- (12) Political manipulation of youth organisations.
- (13) Inadequate parental care.

Despite the difficult situation present within our community, there is need for change. The government has done little to reduce the misery and frustration of its citizenry, fostering hopelessness in the majority of young people who have resorted to any means including crime to succeed in life. The youths are expected not to involve in crime but to channel their energy towards the development of their community and their country.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The challenge of employability among the youth is rampant and there is need to address the issue in order to reduce or put an end to such occurrences. From the primary school to secondary schools even in tertiary institutions, there is need to amend the school curriculum to accommodate skills acquisition education and entrepreneurship education. This will assist to imbibe the spirit of self-reliance and the youths and adults will be able to depend on themselves from their earlier years of study. Also, government should have good plan for the youths. Government should also improve and encourage skills acquisition programme of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) during their one year of national service. This will enable them to be self-independent and they would not be looking for white collar jobs that are not available anywhere. The youths were desperate for white collar jobs and ready to pay any sacrifices at the detriment of their life. Skills and Entrepreneurship education is inevitable in our contemporary life.

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