

ADVANCING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES, INNOVATION, EQUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY: LESSON FOR NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

As the world grapples with complex global challenges in both human and material resources, as many are lacking the directions in business in emerging economy, entrepreneurial education emerges as a vital catalyst for innovation, equity, and sustainability. It is the focus of this paper to explore the transformative potential of entrepreneurial education in addressing pressing global issues, enhancing innovations and sustainability. By fostering creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration, entrepreneurial education can empower individuals to develop innovative solutions, drive social change, which the world will gear towards promoting sustainable development. The paper looked into available literature and discusses the importance of integrating entrepreneurial education into mainstream curricula, promoting diversity and inclusion, and leveraging entrepreneurial mindset to reach underserved populations. By advancing entrepreneurial education, we can unlock human potential, drive economic growth, and create a more equitable and sustainable future. The paper in its conclusion opines that reviewing the curricula to integrating entrepreneurial across all field of studies in our institutions of learning will be producing entrepreneurially mindset graduates and with existing trade/skill training recommends entrepreneurial training period of 3 to 6 months for all graduating students across all fields plus charging them a token for the personnel in supervision and assessment.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Education, Global Challenges, Innovation, Equity, Inclusion, Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing world, entrepreneurial education has emerged as a vital tool for addressing global challenges, fostering innovation through creativity, promoting equity, and ensuring sustainability. Due to the global economic downturn, especially in third world countries, the role of entrepreneurship education cannot be overemphasized. It is on this basis that major developmental discourse focused on the provision of entrepreneurship education to the youths (Ubogu, 2020). World Bank Group in Ubogu (2020) confirmed that "entrepreneurship education has been identified as the major determinant of job creation". On similar tone there is an implicit assumption that there is a correlation between providing Entrepreneurship Education and promised economic growth, job creation, and overall economic development (Alourhzal and Hattabou, 2021). Buttressing this importance, Maureen and Chinedu (2021) posit that "growing importance in the development of the concept of entrepreneurship is its intercourse with education which is such that it opens up a broad spectrum of potentials for creativity, innovation, enterprise and consequent development both at the individual level and the larger society".

As the world experiencing complex issues such as climate change, economic inequality, and social injustice, entrepreneurial education can play a critical role in empowering individuals and communities to develop innovative solutions. Horridly, academic circles realized the complexity of the term entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial education. This resulted from the difficulty in universal definition of the concept. The more one explores the term the more it expands encompassing many areas of business or venture development, social equity and self-independence. In this respect Alourhzal and Hattabou, (2021) acknowledged that the responses of many scholars with regard to definition, thus;

There are several narrow and broad definitions of entrepreneurship education and, each definition is taken

from the definition of entrepreneurship itself. However, an agreement has been reached on two elements for understanding (EE): one is a broader definition that includes the acquisition of personal values, attitudes, behaviors, and skills for entrepreneurship, and the other is committed to practical preparation to launch the entrepreneurial (ad) venture. (Alourhzal and Hattabou, 2021)

An analysis on the curriculum content showed some voids that need to be filled up as most of the demands of entrepreneurship education become difficult to be met. The only area must institutions can partially accomplished are the theoretical/classroom teaching while other areas remain dormant. Whereas it is clearly observed that offering training is more effective than purely teaching as far as entrepreneurship education is concern.

Literature Review

People exposed to entrepreneurship frequently express that they have more opportunity to exercise creative freedoms, higher self-esteem, and an overall greater sense of control over their own lives (National Content Standards, 2016). The techniques or methodology matters a lot in teaching the youth entrepreneurship during their studentship life. On methodologies and effective strategies for teaching of entrepreneurial education, the study identified simulation, case study, team teaching, computer-assisted instructions among others (Fagge and Mohammed, 2025). Okoye (2017) research revealed that business plan, simulation and computer-assisted instruction are effective strategies for teaching entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions. On the same note Many definitions were forwarded to bring out the conceptual meaning of entrepreneurship in light of self-reliance, economic development, social progress, security, employment opportunities and

many other advantages. However, Botha and Obeng-Koranteng (2022) observed that the entrepreneurship education objectives and curriculum are also perceived as wide-ranging, broad, and ambiguous. These factors are directly connected and responsible for non-unified acceptable definition. Shane & Venkataraman in Afolabi (2015) defined entrepreneurship as “an activity that involves the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities to introduce new goods and services, ways of organizing, marketing and processing of raw material through organize efforts that previously had not existed”.

a. Concept of Entrepreneurship

The attention of governments, academics, and other relevant stakeholder on what constituted entrepreneurship both technically and literally generated discuss at many fora and acceptable single definition has become virtually difficult. According to Acs *et al.* and Bögenhold in Botha and Obeng-Koranteng (2022) “governmental and public institutional interest in entrepreneurship education is driven by the search for alternative avenues for employment, poverty reduction and rapid socio-economic growth. Botha and Obeng-Koranteng (2022) shade more light on why there is no global definition on the differences in aims and objectives of entrepreneurship between countries; examples were cited as USA, China, Europe, South Africa and Ghana. Botha and Obeng-Koranteng (2022) summarized the objectives set by these countries on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education reflected their needs and that dictated how to reach their goals.

- a. USA aims to develop traits and skills germane to entrepreneurship and for planning and analysing business issues.
- b. Europe, the emphasis is on the development of functional management skills and entrepreneurial mindsets for establishing and managing start-ups, and increasing worker productivity
- c. South Africa, a developing country, chooses to address its high

unemployment levels with entrepreneurship education by focusing on the development of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes for fostering self-employment

- d. China’s entrepreneurship education prepares students to consider self-employment as an alternative source of employment by encouraging and equipping them with a foundational knowledge of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills
- e. Ghana, likewise, focuses on theoretical and business management topics such as ‘introduction to entrepreneurship’, ‘creativity and innovation’, ‘marketing research’, and ‘business plans

At this juncture Nigeria needs a reflection on her aims and objectives of entrepreneurship education in order to redefine the philosophy and redesign the curriculum. The key point here is Nigeria need to look at her peculiarities including geographical, traditions, norms, values and believes that defined our future and aspirations as nation in order to build our entrepreneurial visions and missions.

b. Definitions of Entrepreneurship

Muogbo and John-Akamelu in Iziengbuwa and Olubor (2021) defined entrepreneurship as the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coping them with management and organization skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth. Barakabo and Eze in Suea, Solomon and Duktur (2021) defined entrepreneurship as the ability to recognize and evaluate business opportunities, assemble the necessary resources to take advantage of them and take appropriate action to ensure success.

c. Teaching Entrepreneurship for Entrepreneurial Mindset

As mentioned earlier defining the term entrepreneurship posed difficulties as many differential factors across the globe. We can now agree that each country should have defined vision and mission on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education based on its peculiarities for achieving the set aspirations. Joshi, Neck & Corbett in Botha and Obeng-Koranteng (2022) ascertain that entrepreneurship education offers knowledge, skills and the tools for nurturing the entrepreneurial personality for business start-ups, their management and their growth. Blenker, Dreisler & Kjelden in Fagge and Mohammed (2025) posits that “studies indicate that educating and teaching for and not just about entrepreneurship should include different theories and methodology from the ones ordinarily applied. Presently, attention is focusing on effective ways of delivering entrepreneurial education, which can make it applicable to all areas of study. The growing number of students shunning traditional employment opportunities to become entrepreneurs has caught some business schools, faculty and administrators off-guard (Charney & Libecap, 2012). In a blog discussion by Shane (2010) Harry argued that “depending on the quality, quantity and context within which it is experienced, I can assure all of you that entrepreneurship education and training can, and often does have some very positive outcomes” on business initiation, development and sustainability. Entrepreneurship education is the process of training people in the development of the right skills, knowledge; attributes that would enable them identify opportunities and use such opportunities to create wealth for themselves (Maureen and Chinedu, 20).

In general, entrepreneurial education scholars agree that traditional pedagogy alone is not sufficient to trigger entrepreneurial thinking and acting. Consequently, there is an open call for more innovative teaching methods that can facilitate and enhance the entrepreneurial learning process. Thus;

An interesting but not entirely positive fact about entrepreneurial education is that it was initially widely conducted (mainly through experimentation based on intuition and observation of entrepreneurs) before the field actually emerged on the research map. The need for entrepreneurial education mainly derived from the grass- root demand for this type of education, not because the development of entrepreneurship as a field was scientifically adequate to be applied in teaching. (Häg and Kurczewska, 2022)

Through entrepreneurship education programme students will be prepared with the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to succeed in an ever-evolving entrepreneurial landscape, to help drive economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. Asodike in Maureen and Chinedu (2021) outlined objectives of teaching entrepreneurship for which includes:

- a. To provide meaningful education for self-reliance to youths
- b. To provide graduates with skills to recognize new business opportunities
- c. To provide graduates enough training in risk management
- d. To give graduates training to start up a career in small and medium scale ventures
- e. To provide graduates with skills that will enable them satisfy the manpower need of society.

Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Social entrepreneur is the person moved by identified gap in the socioeconomic life of a society and takes the risk venturing in order to provide ever lasting solution. This step is referred to as social entrepreneurship and innovation, which entails generating ideas, creating solutions that can add social value to the community and implementing these solutions to have a favorable social impact. On this perspective, Lateh in Arejiogbe, et al (2021) opines that

Social entrepreneurship is the practice of using entrepreneurial skills and techniques to create and implement innovative solutions to social, cultural, or environmental issues. Social entrepreneurs aim to address societal problems in sustainable and scalable ways while also creating economic value and generating revenue. (pp 3, 2021)

Therefore, Arejiogbe et al. (2023) posit that the combination of developmental objectives and the fundamental requirements of the people have created a closer link between social entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation for sustainable development that leads to social equity

Social equity refers to the fair and just distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges within a society or community. It involves promoting equality, justice and human rights for all regardless of any form of social barrier. Social equity focus on:

- a. Fair distribution of resources including education, health care and economic opportunities. This will reduce biasness and prejudice among the generality of the people.
- b. Offering equal accessibility to education, employment and justice will improve equality, economic growth and improve well-being.

By understanding its importance in social equity, entrepreneurship can improve overall well-being of individual by promoting fairness, justice and human right. Entrepreneurship development enhances

- a. Individual social mobility by providing opportunities for improving socio-economic status;
- b. Help in reducing inequality by giving equal right to all and addressing issues associated with poverty, education, and providing innovative solutions.

One of the core values attaining by entrepreneurship is innovation in an identified business opportunity. Maureen and Chinedu (2021) ascertain that “entrepreneurship is the conscious effort of initiating and developing a business idea into a business enterprise for oneself with the aim of profit maximization and indirectly creating job opportunities for other people”. However, close look into entrepreneurial activities, a *thin blue line* appeared between two different categories of individuals, those with capital on the one hand and those needing capital on the other hand. This triggered in-depth study in and about entrepreneurship and by mid 20th century and presently in the 21st century, the perception of entrepreneurs as an innovator was established (Maureen and Chinedu, 2021). The innovation qualifies an individual as social entrepreneur by identifying socioeconomic gap that need to be filled. Where the gap exists, is termed as Opportunity-Based Entrepreneurship where an entrepreneurs’ perception of a business opportunity and based on the assessment of the opportunity establishes a platform (enterprise) to pursue it which is regarded as social entrepreneurship. Kolakovic, Turuk and Turci in Arejiogbe et al. (2023) upheld that

Extant literature has established that social entrepreneurship facilitates the need to make social and economic structures, connections, institutions, organizations, and measures that can improve the quality of life in places where the private sector has failed to create sustainable benefits (Arejiogbe et al., 2023 pp 2)

Canestrino et al. in Arejiogbe et al. (2023) posit that social entrepreneurship is to create a more sustainable society by establishing and implementing strategies for improving social welfare, working towards sustainable development, and monitoring corporate actions.

Measures are continuously being put in place for the sustainability of entrepreneurship development for creating entrepreneurially mindset graduates. However, the factors dragging the effort backward are yet to be fully addressed. Nigerian is a business conscious society as there is no tribe without indigenous enterprise that contributes significantly to the economy. The problem is that all most of them are informal or none formal enterprises.

Discussion

Nigeria as a nation cannot skip the trend of event going on globally. The most challenging issue in the 21st century is high level of unemployment especially among the youth who constituted significant percentage among the general population. The rate of unemployment made governments at various levels to devise means of tackling it. One of the identified measures is arrest it from institutions of learning with aim of preparing the students generally to be creative for personal business building in them the entrepreneurial mindset of identifying, exploring, and developing business opportunity. Since its emergence in higher education in the mid-20th century with the aim of creating entrepreneurship awareness, promoting the enterprise culture, and developing students' entrepreneurial skills, entrepreneurship education as an academic subject area has gained global recognition (Botha and Obeng-Koranteng, 2022). However, as the journey began numerous issues unfolded, which include defining the concept, required tools and materials for effective delivery of the scholastic stuff. These and other challenges are creating bottleneck in running the programme. Nevertheless, despite the shortcomings efforts are being put in place to see something tangible is being done towards addressing unemployment among youth.

By this, fruitful results were recorded in creating awareness on changing the mindset of most students towards self-employment rather than job seekers. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) made compulsory entrepreneurship training for inclusion in senior secondary school curriculum through-out the

country (Okoye, 2017). The objective is that these subjects will instill business consciousness and empower youths upon completion of their education. Entrepreneurship mindset involves training of students and developing their minds to think outside conventional ways of doing things within a formal school setting with aim of helping them to become independent and useful to themselves. This will, in turn, produce graduates with self confidence and capacities for independent thought and thus encouraging human capital development necessary for economic transformation of a society (Maureen and Chinedu, 2021).

Our attention should direct to the fact that entrepreneurship has impact to the development of mindset that triggers individual self-efficacy. Entrepreneurship education allows students to have an opportunity in entrepreneurship tasks such as analyzing business feasibility, writing a business plan, performing their business plan (Wardana, 2020). On similar note Commarmond in Wardana et al. (2020) opines that "the gesticulation of education approach from teacher-centered to learner-centered education enables students to enhance their critical thinking on entrepreneurship". The technique provides business practice, visiting company, interviewing a successful entrepreneur and applied contextual learning and providing a real experience instead of a theory. This is considered as the most essential in enhancing their entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills. Wardana et al. (2020) acknowledged many scholars that "by paying attention to the curriculum and techniques of teaching practical entrepreneurship courses to these students will form an even better entrepreneurial mindset".

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the essential sustainable approach to impede unemployment as global challenge is to squarely face teaching entrepreneurship in our institutions of learning. Higher institutions of learning are the training ground in human resources; equally preparing ground for economic development. While sustainability is focused as

key to continuous every form of development, entrepreneurship is the driver to the development. At every stage new innovations emerged in existing business, new business outfit, industrial development due to technology and financial nomenclature that financial markets, our students need new knowledge in business transaction, formation, exploration, development and sustainability. Entrepreneurial mindset that includes perseverance, patient, risk-taking, business planning, record keeping is essential tool for the students preparing them for life after school. Regarding themselves as social entrepreneurs, they have the skills to innovation, equity and sustainability for the economic development of the nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Critical look into the issue, Nigeria specifically need to redefine her objectives about and on entrepreneurship education/training based on her peculiarities. Considering the examples of countries mentioned earlier, each one clearly spelt out how they viewed entrepreneurship and what aims and objectives developed their curriculum plus what are the needful for the successful implementations entrepreneurial mindset. On this ground

- a. Present faculties/schools/departments of our institutions responsible for entrepreneurship training need urgent in-depth discussion to redesign the curriculum with provision of training with specific objectives reflecting our norms, culture and national values.
- b. Training package of about 3 to 6 months prior to final graduation in entrepreneurship skills and mindset as part of the graduation requirements across all areas which each student must pass.
- c. All students must register for the entrepreneurial training and accomplished all tasks and assessment formulae should be employed both in written and practical.

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