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ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION IN TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES AS A TOOL FOR REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The problem of unemployment has remained intractable even in developed economies of the world. Unemployment is one of the social problems in Nigeria which has assumed a greater dimension. The Nigeria unemployment rate was recorded at 12.1% in the first quarter of 2016, translating into 20.57million. The situation in Nigeria is inherent in its economic capitalist system as policy makers are not committed to evolve pragmatic measures capable of reducing unemployment to the barest minimum. This treatise discusses the role of entrepreneurship education and trainings in solving the lingering problem of unemployment, particularly among youths. This role includes the development of human resources through formal programs in entrepreneurship education and teacher training, to implement curricula that emphasize the development of entrepreneurship knowledge and skills, hence promoting entrepreneurial and small enterprises creation and growth within local communities through training programs or consultancy services. The disquisition highlights the importance of developing entrepreneurship skills by embedding entrepreneurship teaching throughout the education system, providing information, advice, coaching and mentoring, facilitating access to funding and support infrastructure for business start-up, with the ultimate result of mitigating youth unemployment problem in the country. The exposition features the dimensions, causes of unemployment, problems associated with unemployment, the need to train teachers in entrepreneurship education and what teacher training program should include in the bid to reduce unemployment. The blurb suggests among others, the development of skills, infrastructure and sound curricula as well as training the trainers. The tractate emphasizes properly and well implemented Entrepreneurship Education and arresting population explosion.

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INTRODUCTION

Education remains the pivot upon which the wheels of the society revolve (Ediagbonya, 2013). The inability of the graduates of the educational system to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation by being self-employed was what informed the introduction of entrepreneurship education in schools. The call for the introduction of entrepreneurship education is an indication of its importance in economic empowerment and job creation. This education has become imperative as Nigeria continues to churn out graduates that are hardly self-reliant but solely dependent on white collar jobs. To support productivity and growth in Nigeria, it is essential to invest in education and training.

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Nigeria needs creative and innovative entrepreneurship, a flexible and resilient workforce well equipped with the necessary skills and key competences. Teachers cannot teach how to be entrepreneurs without themselves being entrepreneurial. Student teachers should get the opportunity to experience entrepreneurial learning in their training. Student teachers should graduate with the awareness and skills of entrepreneurial principles which will enable them ignite entrepreneurial sparks and inspire their student's right from the beginning of their professional career. To act entrepreneurially, active learning is necessary. Contemporary pedagogies such as project-based active learning should be applied. These can be piloted in specific teacher education programs. Non-traditional learning environment (real-life situations out of classroom) should be made available to all students teachers. Teacher's education need to develop an entrepreneurial approach to teaching and learning. They need to create an environment that enables innovation in teacher education and teaching practice. Entrepreneurial teacher

training programs should motivate student teachers to develop their own entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. University entrepreneurial education is in the embryonic stage, still a new venture in itself. The last decades have shown unabated growth in the number of universities offering entrepreneurship courses, but the subject is still considered suspect by many faculties and administrators (Ediagbonya, 2013). Defining entrepreneurship education according to Ocho and Ojeifor as cited in Ayatse (2013) is the process through which individuals are made participating members of the society. It enables them to become capable of living in the society and to contribute towards its economic development.

This shows that a functional education system takes into Cognizance the dynamic of the labor market, equips its graduates with occupational skills and competencies to enable them to be self-reliant. Entrepreneurship education is about developmental attitudes, behaviors and capacities at the individual level. It is also about the application of those skills and attitudes that can take many forms during individual career, creating a range of long-term benefits to society and the economy (Anho, 2014). The concept of entrepreneurship education according to Anho (2011) is associated with various activities such as innovation, creativity, risk taking, initiative, visionary focus, determination, team spirit, resourcefulness, financial control, self-confidence, versatility, *Knowledgeability*, dynamic thinking, optimum disposition, originality, people oriented, flexible in decision, apt response to suggestions and criticism, need achievement driven, profit oriented, persistence and persevering, energy for hard work, adjustment to challenges and future looking. Education in Nigeria is devoid of the elements crucial to averting the surging rate of unemployment in the country (Araba, 2012). The curricula in higher education do not adequately address the perennial rise in unemployment, as it is inclined to produce more job seekers than job creators. There is the need for a paradigm shift.

The State of Unemployment in Nigeria

The rate of unemployment has risen in the last decade in most of the sub-Saharan African Countries. The situation in Nigeria is rapid population growth and high graduate turnout with low level of employment rate (Akeyu and Olanipekun, 2014). The problem of unemployment has been of great concern to Nigerians. Unemployment in Nigeria has different dimensions. There are underemployment cases in which people receive incomes that are inadequate to support their basic needs, in terms of food, clothing and shelter. There are also cases of unemployment where people seeking for job opportunities cannot find any, either in the public or the private sector. There are cases of disguised unemployment where people take up jobs that are below their educational status and experience. All these have contributed significantly to the high level of unemployment and poverty (Oni as cited in Akeju and Olarupekun, 2014). There are many types of unemployment in Nigeria: structural unemployment, cyclical unemployment, frictional unemployment and classical unemployment. The structural unemployment occurs due to globalization and technological advancement which replace workers with machinery that causes layoffs in the economy. It is also caused by mismatch of skills of workers from the underlying job. Cyclical unemployment also known as Keynesian unemployment occurs when the aggregate demand of the economy is not sufficient to give the jobs to everyone who

wants to work, because aggregate supply of goods and services exceed the aggregate demand that discourage production and consequently reduces workers. Frictional unemployment occurs when the skills of the workers are mismatched with the underlining jobs, classical unemployment arises when government set the wage rate above the equilibrium prices that cause labor to rush for the jobs in the labor market which exceed existing vacancies.

Every year, many graduates come out from universities, colleges of education and other institutions in Nigeria with little or nothing to contribute to the society. According to the National Bureau of statistics, more than 200,000 alumnae graduate from Nigerians tertiary institutions graduate yearly, but only very few secure jobs after years of graduation. Over one million unemployment youths are readily applying for jobs where less than five thousand people are needed. Lack of entrepreneurial skill is closely related to the poor quality of education, as a cause of unemployment in Nigeria. For many years running, most Nigerians youths have disdained acquisition of skills, thinking that the time spent on such is futile, and opting for the so-called clean shirt jobs which are not readily available. Unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 10.40 percent in the fourth quarter of 2015 from 9.90 percent in the previous year. The number of unemployed persons went up by 578,000 to 8,000,000 and labor force population rose by 1,000,000 to 76,950,000. The underemployed rate grew to 18.7 percent (14.4 million). Unemployment rate in Nigerian averaged 8.85 percent from 2006 to 2015, reaching an all time high of 18.7% (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

Unemployment is a great problem associated with both rural and urban communities of the Nigerian economy. It results to the following problems to Nigeria.

- Threat to peace: the unemployed constitute available book for political trouble shooters in the country.
- Escalation of crime rate: many unemployed youths men and women engage in crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping and prostitution in order to earn a living.
- Waste of manpower: Unemployment especially that of graduates waste the much needed manpower which delays the economic development of the nation.
- Increase in dependence: the unemployed people increase the number of dependents and contribute in sampling the income of their families instead of contributing.

Role and Relevance of Entrepreneurial Education

The role and relevance of Entrepreneurial Development Program (EDP) in the process of economic development and growth is immense. Basically the EDPs are meant to train and develop new entrepreneurs who act as catalytic agents in the process of industrialization and economic growth. It is through the EDP that people learn to acquire knowledge and skills for running enterprises successfully which ultimately contributes towards economic progress in the following ways.

Creates employment opportunities: Acute unemployment has been a chronic problem of most part of the world. EDPs help in solving the problem of unemployment by creating adequate employment opportunities in setting up of their own small and big industrial unit where the unemployed are

absorbed. EDPs also help the unemployed to opt for secondary employment by choosing entrepreneurship as a career. In this way EDPs help the entrepreneur to get an opportunity to lead on independent and respectable life in the society and at the same time enable others to get gainful employment.

Helps in achieving balance regional development: Successful EDPs assist in accelerating the pace of industrialization in undeveloped areas and help reduce the concentration of economic power in the hands of individuals.

Prevents Industrial Slumps: The towns and cities are highly congested and overcrowded due to the growth of industries which results in overburdening of civic amenities and a lot of problems including adverse impacts on the health of the people. EDPs help entrepreneurs to know about the various schemes, incentives, subsidies and infrastructural requirement for setting their enterprises, particularly in backward and rural areas. This checks migration of rural people to urban sector and thus controls the growth of industrial; slums.

Use of local resources: A lot of locally available resources remain unutilized due to the absence of initiatives and lack of adequate knowledge by the entrepreneurs. Proper use of these resources will help to starve out a healthy based for rapid industrialization and sound economic growth. EDPs can help in the proper training, guidance and education of potential entrepreneurs.

Easing social tension: EDPs helps to channel on right lines the talent and energy of unemployed youth that feel frustrated after completing their education without a job or source of livelihood. Unemployment and frustration amongst youth and educated people lead to social unrest and tension. EDPs help in diverting the talent of the youth towards self-employment careers by establishing their own enterprises and this creates employment opportunities for the unemployed, in this way EDPs are able to defuse the social tension and unrest among the youth.

Economic independence: The entrepreneurs through EDPs are able to achieve economic independence of a country by producing a wide variety of better quality goods and services at competitive prices. They also through export promote and import substitution able to earn and save huge amount of foreign exchange which is essential for the growth and development of any economy.

Improves the standard of living and per capita income: EDPs provide the necessary support to entrepreneurs by educating them about the test innovation and techniques of production to produce a large variety of quality goods and services at competitive prices. EDPs also help in establishing more enterprises which provides more employment opportunities and help in increasing in per-capita income and thus helps in the improvement of standard of living of the people.

Provision of vital strategies for harvesting the vast untapped human skills: EDP provides vital strategies for harvesting the vast untapped human skill, and put them into industrial development, it results in the emergence of entrepreneurial development in a country.

Entrepreneurship Education: enabling teachers as a critical success factor. Offering specific training to teachers is crucial

in order to make entrepreneurship education available and effective. The teacher-centered approach has become inappropriate to the 21st century world. Teachers are expected to produce not just job seekers but job creators, unfortunately are not facilitated to do so. In this difficult situation, there is a growing awareness that a traditional academic education is inadequate to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they will need to be self-reliant and an entrepreneur. In order to meet these challenges an increasing number of Universities are introducing entrepreneurial education thus, this calls for entrepreneurship education for teacher preparation in Nigeria. Research carried out by the European Commission shows that the core skills and values linked to entrepreneurship education are seldom a priority in initial teacher education programs. Creativity is not embedded into these programs (European Commission, 2011)

Entrepreneurial education for teacher education should therefore include the following:

- Improving teacher competences, making sure that teachers possess the necessary pedagogical skills to teach their own subjects and the transversal key competences, including heterogeneous classes.
- Promoting professional values and attitudes in the teaching profession in which teachers adopt a culture of reflective practice, undertake autonomous learning and engage in research.
- Developing a participatory, active citizenship enhancing creativity and innovation in education and teacher training.
- Creating a positive entrepreneurial culture and attitude climate.
- Entrepreneurship studies should include vocational core curricula and the requirement of competence-based qualifications.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education is a lifelong learning process that should start as early as elementary school and progressing through all levels of education, including adult education. The standard and their supporting performance indicators are a framework for teachers to use in building appropriate objectives, learning activities and assessment for their target audience. Using this framework, students will have progressively more challenging educational activities; experiences that will enable them to develop the insight needed to discover and create entrepreneurial opportunities; and the expertise to successfully start and manage their own business.

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