Influence of Entrepreneurship Centres on Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills

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Abstract: The research was conducted to analyze the impact of entrepreneurship centers in Nigeria on the development of entrepreneurial skills. Among other items, the study found that entrepreneurship centers have a moderate impact on the development of creative skills, marketing skills and business management abilities. It was concluded on the basis of the results that entrepreneurship centres play an important role in students’ development of entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, it was suggested, inter alia, that higher institutions provide training to facilitators and equip business directorates with up-to-date equipment and facilities for the purpose of enhancing student training. From time to time, there is also a need to invite experienced entrepreneurs to engage with students in practical ways and best practices to develop, maintain, and sustain business projects. This will go a long way in developing the passion for entrepreneurship after graduation among students.

Key Contents: Acquisition, Entrepreneurial, Skills, Entrepreneur, Business Venture, and Students.

I. INTRODUCTION

There has been growing global concern about the rising rate of unemployment around the world in recent times, particularly in most developing countries such as Nigeria, where young people have been identified as the most affected group. As implemented in Nigerian polytechnics, entrepreneurship centers are expected to inculcate in students the practical skills and experiences required to be self-employed and self-reliant through small-scale business management of small-scale businesses. To this end, educational institutions need to equip their students with the requisite entrepreneurial skills to be self-employed and fit into the modern world of work (Idogho & Esheotse, 2011).

Entrepreneurship centres, also known as entrepreneurship resource and information centres in some polytechnics, are a nomenclature arising from the off-shot of government responses to the global problem of graduate unemployment, poverty, and wealth formation. Agboola (2010) states that the entrepreneurship centre in the polytechnic framework is a unit or directorate of the polytechnic saddled with the mission of ensuring the sufficient acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by students so that they can be self-reliant and self-employed after graduation. Likewise, Audu (2013) believes that because polytechnic education is technically focused, entrepreneurship centers are set up to build the skills of identifying high-potential, technology-intensive, business opportunities, collecting resources such as talent and money, and managing rapid growth and significant risk using principled decision-making skills in polytechnic students.

The polytechnic system is technically focused as it houses Skill-oriented and entrepreneurship-oriented courses from the courses and programs offered. With the establishment of entrepreneurship centres, the expectation is that students should be prepared to have a blend of business knowledge, especially within their discipline, regardless of discipline. This informs the decision of the National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) to make it mandatory for each polytechnic to set up a well-equipped and well-managed Functional Entrepreneurial Resource Centre for expert technocrats to enable students to acquire varied entrepreneurial skills. Emmanuel, Dazala, and Daniel (2016) note that the praiseworthy efforts made by governmental and non-governmental organizations to establish various centers for the growth of entrepreneurship in Nigeria have facilitated the successful acquisition of practical skills among students in polytechnics. These policies are funded, among other things, by various agencies such as the National Jobs Directorate (NDE), Need for Power (N-Power) and the Social Investment Programme (SIP) to resolve the unemployment problems among Nigerian people.

According to Osemeke (2012), ability implies an ability that can be created, not inherently inherent, and that manifests itself not merely in potential, but in performance. Many scholars have defined skill development as the formula for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by creating an avenue for work, creating an opportunity for jobs and creating wealth while ensuring that self-sufficiency is achieved (Isaac, 2011). It has been noted that the development of skills is the key to the battle for the elimination of hunger and poverty, the reduction or elimination of unemployment in society, and the reduction of crime by successful youth participation. Acquisition of skills is the ability to master a manual skill, such as Learning how a company is constructed, built, planned, and created.

The aim of establishing Polytechnics in Nigeria is to train technologists, technicians, and management skills in courses leading to the award of National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) certificates that are applicable to the needs, expectations, and growth of the diverse economy and industries of the country. Such training received from the Polytechnics is equally expected to contribute to the transformation of the country’s economy and industrial growth.
I. CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The concept of entrepreneurship is not new in the contemporary world; it is about being innovative in any venture. Any nation's future depends on the entrepreneurial projects created by innovative people. These are motivated people, risk-takers who seized the available opportunities to exploit and optimally unusually use capital to bring about a noticeable change. The terms entrepreneurship and entrepreneur are often used interchangeably. An entrepreneur refers to the person who takes the initiative and creativity to set up an enterprise while the process of undertaking a business venture is entrepreneurship. Evans (2011) claims that entrepreneurs are of two kinds: the type of artisan who has less schooling, prefers manual work and wants a steady income to help the family and the entrepreneur who takes environmental opportunities and aims to develop and expand his business. Moreno and Casillas (2008) note that the process of creating something new with entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assumes the accompanying financial, social risk, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.

Entrepreneurship is an endeavor in which the development and management of an organization for a reason is checked. The purpose may also be intimate, social, or developmental as well. Again, with an operational structure, the entrepreneurial solution appears to be achieved. Therefore, entrepreneurship is not only related to the start-up of small enterprises, it can take place in companies of all sizes and styles. Oni and Olaleye (2008) suggest that, when their operations are honestly assessed, most small businesses are not especially entrepreneurial.

Drucker (1985) suggests that it is not personality characteristics that entrepreneurs have in common, but a devotion to creativity. In order for creativity to take place, not only must the entrepreneur have talent, imagination and experience, but he or she must also be hard-working, concentrated and strong. Madsen (2007) believes that entrepreneurship is the capacity that some individuals have to take risks and combine production factors to create products and services.

It can also be seen as an individual's ability and capacity to pursue investment opportunities in the environment and to be able to effectively develop and operate an enterprise based on the opportunities found. This means that in order for an entrepreneur to succeed, he or she must have the opportunity to explore the world for economic opportunities that will improve the economic value of an entrepreneur and society's economic development in general.

Wang (2008) suggests that a human builder is an entrepreneur who can turn a stumbling block into a stepping stone. No mountain, to an entrepreneur, is unmovable. He or she is an innovative and aggressive innovator who supports the partnerships needed for the new company to come into being. He is a risk bearer, starts a business and develops the methods of doing stuff, generating job opportunities for the crowded population in the process.

Entrepreneurship is the process of finding an opportunity relevant to needs, fulfillment, and turning it to an item, product, or service of value, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2009). The method and activities performed by entrepreneurs to capture value associated with market opportunities can also be conceptualized to mean. It is also defined as a process guided by the desire to innovate, i.e. creating new things, products, and services, processing or approaches, or improving and profiting from existing ones.

III. ENTREPRENEUR

The entrepreneur is any person who, by investing his scarce resources in business projects, co-ordinates other development factors and bears the risk of uncertainty. In doing so, he incorporates the administrative roles of planning, coordinating, hiring, overseeing, and directing business enterprise management (Osuala, 2004). Oviawe (2009) defines an entrepreneur as a person who is willing and capable of taking risks, recognizing economic possibilities, mobilizing and coordinating resources to maximize benefit. In other words, with their capital, time, and other tools, entrepreneurs are job and wealth creators, visionaries, innovators, and investors who undermine the risks leaking into the future to accomplish what others considered impossible.

An entrepreneur is, in essence, a person who creates or begins a new project, opportunity, or venture. Mason and Gos (2014) identify entrepreneurs as people who see potential and take responsibility for mobilizing the required capital to create new and improved products and services. Nelson, Maxfield, and Kolb (2009) assume that an entrepreneur is an innovator who, in return for a reward, undertakes the risk of a business, organizes and efficiently uses the production factors to turn business concepts into desires, fulfilling products and services. They define an entrepreneur as an individual's willingness and ability to search out investment opportunities in an area and to be able to effectively develop and operate an enterprise based on the opportunities found.

Onifade (2010) sees entrepreneurs as people performing the act of floating, investing in, and managing a self-employed and profit-driven enterprise. An entrepreneur is an agent (individual or collective) who, according to Ineigbenebor and Osaze (2009), advocates a novel contribution of productive capital as a means to an economic end. Thus, the following points can be noted from these definitions: that a person is an interested individual, woman, young and old, has an idea of a company, converts the idea into floating a business, invests in the business through the use of resources, takes risks, solves
problems (human and non-human problems) tirelessly, self-reliant, disciplined, imaginative and inventive and wants to make a profit.

The entrepreneur must be able to see market possibilities, be willing to take chances, and be able to prepare and follow through, in addition to these occupational survival skills (Ekwue, 2008). To Udu (2014), entrepreneurs are individuals who are able to recognise market opportunities, evaluate and organize capital to address social needs while satisfying them, rather than processes. That is to say, failure does not distract entrepreneurs, but rather takes it as a chance to succeed.

Likewise, according to Steinholf and Burgess (2008) in Odulami (2012), an entrepreneur is a person who organizes, manages, and assumes the risk of a company or enterprise. The owners of small business companies may be considered entrepreneurs because they have decided to find business opportunities, collect resources, mimic the action, and set up a company to satisfy some need or market opportunity to take risks. Ojeifo (2012) sees an entrepreneur as the owner or manager of a business enterprise who seeks to make a profit through risks and initiatives.

From the above, the word entrepreneur is referred to as a business founder, planner, organizer, operator, controller, creativity, developer, innovator, risk-taker, mobilizer, and visioner who provides the required resources through extensive technical and practical experience as well as financial capacity that will not only help to give birth to a new business but also give it direction, sustainability. An entrepreneur is therefore always prepared to question and improve the economic, social, psychological and even ecological shortcomings of potential treasures with relevant and sound ideas. An entrepreneur is, in essence, a person who creates or begins a new project, opportunity, or venture.

The definition is rapidly gaining popularity among people in the government and private sector in developing countries like Nigeria. Therefore, entrepreneurs are those who search for and discover economic opportunities, marshal the financial and other resources required for the creation of opportunities, analyze environmentally available alternatives, assign resources to the most productive ones, and take ultimate responsibility for the management and/or efficient execution of opportunities. In taking and assuming chances that are passionate about the dream being sought, an entrepreneur is somewhat relaxed. He or she knows where and when assistance is needed and is always ready to receive adjustments in the Schumpeter (1994) market climate in Ojeifoo (2012).

Therefore, the entrepreneur includes any person who develops and manages a business enterprise.

This is the man or woman who owns a store, beauty center, bookshop, catering for the home, business center, shoemaker, car washing center, photography. Others include dry washing, video centers, telecenters, wholesale, coffee and teashops, restaurants, yogurt manufacturers, fruit juice, aluminum steelwork, cellophane papers, water treatment and treatment table, bakery and confectionery, tie and dye, soap and cosmetics manufacturing, barbing and hairdressing, bead and wire jewelry manufacturing, mat weaving, fashion design tailoring, events. In the background of this report, all of these are entrepreneurs. They are all companies and each has a specific contribution to make to the economy's growth.

**Qualities of the Entrepreneur**

Some of an entrepreneur's attributes include mental capacity, motivated by high achievement, integrity, human relationships, and imagination. According to Osuala (2010), entrepreneurs' characteristics include the desire for transparency, desire for self-discipline, good work ethic, open-mindedness, preference for moderate risk, trust in personal performance, desire for immediate input, high energy level, future-oriented, high organizational skills, and belief in achievement. An entrepreneur is vigorous, resourceful, and alert to new possibilities, able to adapt to changing circumstances, and willing to take on the risks of change and development. An entrepreneur makes technological improvements and increases his/her product's efficiency.

An entrepreneur extends the scale of activities and carries out allied pursuits and reinvests his/her profits.

In order to be able to compete in the business world, Lerner (2009) notes some fundamental qualities that an entrepreneur must possess. The possession of these characteristics helps the businessman fit into the changing market climate.

(i) **Planning/evaluation**: this involves setting goals to be achieved within the constraints of time and finance. Setting goals within constraints gives the entrepreneur a sense of direction. Evaluating achievements and failures help the entrepreneur to strategize and re-strategize to ensure that the business is on the path of success.

(ii) **Risk-taking**: an investment in time and money is involved in launching a new business or extending an existing one. There is still no assurance that it will recover the money invested. But the contractor should still be an 'optimist' for the company to succeed.

(iii) **Creativity**: A new way of doing business or creating a product/service should be recognized by an entrepreneur. This also includes reinforcing the old way of doing business.

(iv) **Ambition or commitment**: an entrepreneur would work hard to make the company succeed. He should also devote time and energy to updating his business.

(v) **Smartness/Flexibility**: By understanding the evolving demands of the market, an entrepreneur should be aware. He should also be able to respond effectively to these changing situations by strategically positioning himself.

(v) **Smartness/Flexibility**: Through recognizing the evolving demands of the market, an entrepreneur should be alert. He
should be able to react efficiently as well. By positioning himself strategically in these changing conditions.

IV. CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The complexities of entrepreneurship should be familiar to entrepreneurs. Osuala (2010) listed the problems of potential small business managers as follows: Knowledge of such challenges can allow them to pre-empt them by taking precautionary measures against such challenges or issues.

1. Ineffectively of management
2. The lack of experience
3. Lack of Equity
4. Inappropriate company position
5. Lack of management of inventory
6. Over fixed asset investing
7. Bad lending practices of customers
8. Improper attitudes i.e. Laziness, extensive vacationing, over-commitment, and unethical behaviours.
9. Inadequate skills, tools, and support to succeed
10. Lack of infrastructure and management capacity

Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition

Skills are commonly described as the ability to expertly perform an action or a mission. It is seen as having the capacity to do anything well (Onele & Nwit, 2011). The process of successful use of available resources in the economy for sustainable development requires special skills or abilities to be developed as the future of any nation in the Polytechnic students. Entrepreneurial skills are defined as the strength, knowledge, and experience needed to accomplish certain tasks. Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is the process of learning about a specific information, ability or experience required to put ideas into action (Oduma 2008).

It is a mechanism by which an individual acquires or learns a specific skill or form of behavior necessary for business through training or education. (From Amadi, 2012). The learning of skills is the second of three components that make up the entrepreneurship trainee to become a businessman. In higher education, it is possible to teach students how to be entrepreneurs by helping them develop the entrepreneurial skills required to turn ideas into action. Njoku and Nwosu (2011) citing Nwuka, (2009) state that entrepreneurial studies allow students to develop certain personal characteristics and allow attributes, skills, attitudes, and abilities, including functional management skills necessary for successful entrepreneurial projects within or outside one's field of expertise.

The level of acquisition of skills is measured on the basis of the following features: imagination, analysis, motivation, networking, and adaptability. Polytechnic students educated in entrepreneurship centers are more inventive, have more analytical abilities, are more able to inspire others to gain support and aid in the realization of opportunities, have stronger networking skills, and are less able to adjust to situations and cope easily with different situations. Training in entrepreneurship aims to train students to be responsible, enterprising people who have the behaviors, abilities, and expertise required to achieve the goals they set for themselves to live a fulfilling life. The main competency of entrepreneurship is the composition of an entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial skills, and entrepreneurship awareness. Entrepreneurship centers have a positive influence on individual students' entrepreneurship characteristics. Entrepreneurial abilities are all about gaining abilities that culminate in a person being self-employed, self-reliant, and then creating a job and wealth for himself. It involves the acquisition of skills, expertise and competencies that will enable Polytechnic students to optimize the use of established resources for company career commitments, such as setting up companies, marketing service or becoming efficient employees of organizations (Ezenwenne, 2008).

Strategies for Effective Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

To achieve viable entrepreneurship education that will enhance sustainable development in Nigeria certain steps must be adhered to. Ayodele (2012) opines that the strategies for ensuring the viability and sustainability of entrepreneurship in Nigeria include the following:

i. Establishment of genuine school work-based learning incorporated in some studies as part of the national economic development strategies. The development of an apprenticeship scheme would give new graduates some work skills and experience.

ii. Pooling local, public, and private funds to create a small venture capital fund.

iii. Providing School-based enterprises where students identify potential business, plan, create, and operate a small business using the school as mini-incubators.

iv. Providing small business schools where interested students and community members can participate.

v. Developing entrepreneur internship centres matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programs.

vi. Establish an enterprise school aimed at fostering the specific skill sets required for entrepreneurship to serve as a skill acquisition centre for the youths.

vii. Creating an economically friendly political environment.

viii. Improving government taxation on small-scale businesses.

Influence of Entrepreneurship Centres on Acquisition of Innovative Skills

Innovation is the process of bringing the best ideas into reality, which triggers a creative idea, which generates a series of innovative events. Innovation is the creation of new value. Innovation is the process that transforms new ideas into new value- turning an idea into value. You cannot innovate without creativity. Innovation is the process that combines...
ideas and knowledge into new value. Without innovation an enterprise and what it provides quickly become obsolete. Entrepreneurs need to have the ability to create and build something from practically nothing, through creating value by pulling together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity (Singh & Sharma 2011). According to the authors, the need of the time is to empower people technically through the acquisition of skills to cope with the changing times and applying the skills acquired in setting up and sustaining enterprises.

Innovation is the basis of all competitive advantages, the means of anticipating and meeting customer's needs, and the method of utilization of technology. Innovation is fostered by information gathered from new connections; from insights gained by journeys into other disciplines or places; from active, collegial networks, and fluid open boundaries. Innovation arises from organizing circles of exchange, where information is not just accumulated or stored, but created. Knowledge is generated from new ideas from connections that were not there before.

Wheatley (1994) in Umunadi (2010) reports that innovation requires a fresh way of looking at things, an understanding of people, and an entrepreneurial willingness to take risks and to work hard. An idea doesn’t become an innovation until it is widely adopted and incorporated into people's daily lives. Most people resist change, so a key part of innovating is convincing other people that your idea is a good one – by enlisting their help, and, in doing so, by helping them see the usefulness of the idea. Enterprises throughout the world are experiencing what can be legitimately described as a revolution: rising energy and material costs, fierce international competition, new technologies, increasing the use of automation and computers.

All these are major challenges, which demand a positive response from the entrepreneur and management if the enterprise is to survive and prosper. At a time when finance is expensive, the firm's liquidity is bordering on crisis, the need for creativity and innovation is more pressing than ever and as competitors fall by the wayside, the rewards for successful products and processes are greater. The instigation of new development is the responsibility of the enterprises themselves, which, through experience, are aware of the difficulties created when undertaking innovative investments in a period of great uncertainty.

Innovation calls for special entrepreneurial and management skills, the cooperation of a committed workforce, finance, and a climate that will create the optimum overall conditions to encourage success. Schumpeter (1934) in (Solomon, 2011) believes that the concept of innovation, described as the use of an invention to create a new commercial product or service, is the key force in creating new demand and thus new wealth. Innovation creates new demand and entrepreneurs bring innovations to the market. This destroys the existing markets and creates new ones, which will in turn be destroyed by even newer products or services. Joseph calls this process "creative destructions."

Kelly, Gibson, and Aniexter (2016) emphasize that in a world with so many problems to solve, that it is time to put more emphasis on the development of innovative skills in Students. Indeed there may be no more important capability that polytechnic students would have in the 21st century than knowing how to innovate. This is because innovation is the driver of growth and is very necessary for keeping pace with new technologies and emerging market opportunities (Staufier, 2015). Casson (2013) defines innovativeness as the propensity to introduce something new. It is the capability to rapidly incorporate changes in business practices through the creation and adoption of new ideas that add value in the form of increased competitiveness and sustainability.

Being innovative include being imaginative, exploratory, observant, reflective, empathetic, adaptive, resourceful, disciplined, inventive, and insightful. It is hard to imagine any context or role in life where these qualities would not be helpful (Kelley, Gibson & Aniexter, 2016). Innovativeness is not restricted to product development. It could also encompass service, processes, business practices, marketing, or organizational innovations.

Innovative skills enable graduates to introduce something new, to generate ideas of doing things different from the way such is being done before. This skill makes individuals think of a new product, goods, and services that will be of great benefit to society. When Polytechnic students are trained to develop such skills, they will contribute positively to their nation's economic growth and development through job creation. Influence of Entrepreneurship Centres on Acquisition of Marketing Skills Okoro and Osula (2012) indicated that while skills are to be learned, a fundamental problem needs to be considered. The first is the factors that facilitate acquisition, while the second is the shift that will take place when the ability is acquired. Therefore, skill is the ability to perform a task often within a given amount of time, resources, or both, with pre-determined results. Polytechnic students must therefore be equipped with skills that allow them to become autonomous, self-sufficient, self-reliant, and place themselves well for self-employment. Marketing skills are a valuable skill that will help promote self-employment among Polytechnic students. Marketing is the art and science of selecting target audiences, by generating, providing, and communicating superior consumer experience, getting, retaining, and increasing consumers.

Marketing is described by Farese, Kimbrel, and Woloszyk (2010) as the process of planning, pricing, promoting, selling, and distributing ideas, products, or services to establish client-friendly exchanges. Marketing skills are very necessary for any small-scale business enterprise to succeed.

In addition, Ezeani (2008) highlights good business marketing skills that polytechnic students should have as an
understanding of seasonal product volatility, the ability to evaluate the degree to which goods are sold, knowledge of various aspects of sales and sales, the ability to budget and forecast, the ability to determine current trends in product sales, the ability to determine what is going to be sold. She further states that marketing skills are crucial to any business venture’s survival. Therefore, it becomes imperative that Polytechnic graduates are properly equipped with such skills upon graduation for the survival of their companies.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it was concluded that entrepreneurship centres play an important role among students in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. This means that students need to actively engage in the skill development training provided by these entrepreneurship centres to be relevant and self-reliant. If, in any event, the centres fail in their duties or the students leave school without the requisite entrepreneurial skills, then it is best to imagine the consequences. The polytechnic system would create graduates who, by being self-employed and self-reliant, would not be able to work efficiently and who could not contribute anything significant to the growth of an economy that is marred by a high rate of graduate unemployment, poverty, and youth resilience.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Curriculum planners should develop a comprehensive curriculum on entrepreneurship education and training for use by all polytechnics. The new curriculum should emphasize the identified skill areas because they are essential skills required to start, manage, and succeed in any business venture.

2. The government should provide training facilitators and equip the entrepreneurship directorates with up-to-date equipment and facilities for the purpose of better training of students from all the departments in the institution.

3. Experience entrepreneurs should be invited from time to time to dialogue with students on practical ways and best practices to starting, managing, and sustaining any business venture. This will go a long way in developing in the students the zeal to venture into entrepreneurship after graduation.

4. To further assist and encourage the polytechnic students to actualize a self-employment job interest, the polytechnic management should organize an annual self-employment fair with business executives and cooperative societies in attendance with motivating prizes.

REFERENCE


