



Entrepreneurship culture: An intervention mechanism for youth unemployment

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Abstract

The need to revive the entrepreneurial mindset of the youths for self and economic development necessitated the study. This becomes pertinent as the level of poverty and rate of unemployment of the youths keep increasing in Nigeria, it therefore behooves on the stakeholders (parents, guardians, teachers, religious groups and government) to look inward and revive the entrepreneurial spirit of the young people so as to minimize job seekers and increase job creators in order to reduce the unemployment of the youths. This paper therefore discusses the strategies that could be used to revive, rejuvenate and reposition the entrepreneurial culture to minimize unemployment and enhance youths' economic development for self-reliance.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship culture, youth unemployment, intervention mechanism, self-reliance

Introduction

The urgency of reviving the entrepreneurial culture among the youths calls for concern from stakeholders (parents, teachers, guardians, government, among others) as the rate of crime in the society increases as a result of unemployment of the youths. The youths remain the core of the economic growth for the future of any nation. A nation like Nigeria where white collar jobs are far-fetched, youths should therefore be made to appreciate the entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, values and attitude so as to harness their potentials and adapt to the labour world thereby, contribute their quota to the economic development of the nation. The success of entrepreneurial endeavor has a significant impact on the economy of any country. It helps in fulfilling individual aspirations, achieving objectives like financial gains, self-fulfillment and social identification (Pahuja, 2015) ^[21]. This means that successful entrepreneurship brings not only self and economic development but societal growth and development. Nurturing and reviving the youths' entrepreneurial culture are intervention mechanisms capable of engaging the youths in meaningful social and economic activities that would help them to gain vital skills, responsibilities and confidence necessary to become productive and self reliant. According to Gibb (1999) ^[11], entrepreneurship culture is a set of values, beliefs and attitudes commonly shared in a society which underpins the notion of any entrepreneurial way of life as being desirable and in turn support the pursuit of effective entrepreneurial behaviour by individuals or groups. It is the way of life where youths are coached, encouraged and supported with skills, knowledge, attitude and values that will help them to be productive and self reliant. Entrepreneurial culture has to be imbibed into the youths from their early stage of development. Inculcating the entrepreneurial culture into the youths' lives could help them to acknowledge that they can create choices in life, be aware of the implications of these choices, make informed decisions, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of their action (lackeus, 2015) ^[17]. It could also help the youths to think and identify the inherent talent in them and the strategy that could help them showcase the talent. Furthermore, inculcating entrepreneurial culture into the youths could create an enabling environment that would help the society to grow new sets of entrepreneurs which could enhance private sector investment and contribute to socio-economic development of the nation. It is therefore imperative that entrepreneurial culture should be revived for optimal self and economic development of the youths.

Review of Literature

Before the advent of colonialism in Nigeria, unemployment was a rare phenomenon (Oladele, Aleke & Oladunjoye, 2011) ^[20]. According to the author, this was because Nigerians and Africans at large were said to be highly entrepreneurial. Currently, the rate of unemployment is increasing by the day especially that of the youths. Unemployment among the youths has brought a lot of challenges not only to the youths but to the society at large. This ranges from anxiety, depression, drug addiction, prostitution, crimes and violence. This has a significant implication to the country's human resources. According to Lawanson (2007) ^[18] youth unemployment is a major contribution to losses in human capital. Therefore, in order to boost employment opportunities and job creation of the youths, reviving and sustaining the entrepreneurial culture becomes the indispensable tool to be used.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is one the powerful economic tools that empowers individuals to seek opportunity where others find intractable problems. It is a powerful driver of job creation. It is the cornerstone of economic growth and financial independence. According to Akuegwu and Udida (2008) ^[2], it is an antidote to joblessness, poverty, instability, insecurity and youth restiveness. Entrepreneurship involves the discovery, assessment and exploitation of opportunities, new products, services or production processes; new strategies and organizational forms and new markets for products and inputs that do not previously exist (Shane & Venkataraman, 2001) ^[26]. Furthermore, it involves ability to identify and exploit new opportunities to produce new products or market, create or expand businesses, take risks and accept failures. These competencies are usually exhibited by an entrepreneur. Shane and Venkataraman (2001) ^[26] maintained that an entrepreneur does not necessarily need to be a manager or founder of a firm. According to the authors, people who develop new ways to market, services and goods are also entrepreneurs acknowledged the idea and defined entrepreneur as the person who recognizes and acts upon profit opportunities, essentially an arbitrageur.

Several research studies have been carried out to identify the characteristics or traits of a true entrepreneur. Although there are no universally accepted characteristics that have been found to be possessed by all entrepreneurs, but there are some characteristics which several scholars have found that are similar. For instance, the study by Salamzadeh, Farjadian, Amirabadi and Modarresi (2014) ^[25] found open mindedness, need for achievement, pragmatism, tolerance of ambiguity, visionary, challenge taking, risk taking, internal locus of control as characteristics of an entrepreneur. In the same vein Deáková, Drážovská, Grznárik and Kondášová (2010) ^[7] listed the qualities of an entrepreneur as; courage, self-reliance, responsibility, determination, perseverance, proactive approach, creativity and scholarship in a particular area where the entrepreneur intends to do business. Hines (2004) ^[13] enumerated honesty, intelligent, skilful and well-educated in their chosen fields, courage, enthusiasm, desire to make money, creativity, resourcefulness, tenacity and leadership as some of the entrepreneurs' characteristics. Furthermore, Kozubíková, Dvorský, Cepel and Balcerzak (2017) ^[16] findings revealed; risk-taking and decisiveness as characteristics of an entrepreneur.

From the literature, it could be observed that there are several

characteristics or traits that are being possessed in common by entrepreneurs. These include but not limited to; motivation, determination, risk tolerance, visionary, mental ability and creativity. These characteristics of the entrepreneur could be taught, learnt, nurtured and sustained through the following means; formal training (entrepreneurship education), non-formal training (mentorship or apprenticeship system) and informal training (usually spontaneous).

Utilizing the formal training entails using the formalized structure, where a period of study will be involved with a structured curriculum and it is usually carried out in locations determined

by the educational or training providers. According to Dib (1988) ^[8], formal education is a systematic, organized education model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms, presenting a rather rigid curriculum as regards objectives, contents and methodology. Kapur (2019) ^[15] defined formal education as the type of education that is provided in educational institutions and training centres. In this type of training, several teaching-learning methods are used and there are proper rules and procedures. Usually, a formally recognized credential is obtained at the end of the training.

Some of the formal ways through which entrepreneurial attributes could be inculcated in the youths include; building the contents and syllabi that involve practical entrepreneurial activities; training the youths in schools to become successful entrepreneurs; providing the necessary infrastructural facilities required for entrepreneurship development in schools and creating awareness of entrepreneurship at all levels of education through entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is the type of education given to a person which helps him to acquire the cognitive knowledge, psychomotor and affective skills to explore and exploit an opportunity into a viable venture, establish and manage the venture successfully (Eze & Obidile, 2018) ^[9]. It involves the study of sources of opportunities, the processes of discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2001) ^[26]. Entrepreneurship education does not only build and shape better and stronger entrepreneurs, it also develops attitude, creates values and motivation, and helps the recipients to acquire skills they can use in any job or task in which they might be involved (Bhat & Khan, 2014) ^[5]. The knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education is expected to help the recipients to overcome business challenges (Obidile, Amobi & Uzoekwe, 2017) ^[19]. The entrepreneurial knowledge could be enhanced through the revival and sustenance of entrepreneurial culture.

Entrepreneurial culture aims at changing the youths' state of mind, behaviour and intentions and making them to understand entrepreneurship and become entrepreneurs that create job opportunities (Fayolle & Gailly, 2005; Hannon, 2005; Venkatachalam & Waqif, 2005) ^[10, 12, 23]. Youths' state of mind, attitude, values and intentions could also be re-directed to achieve the targeted goal using the non-formal or informal training.

Non-formal education according to According to Kapur (2019) ^[15], is the type of education that usually takes place outside the formal system of education with the main purpose of developing the skills and aptitudes of the individuals that are required for their day to day existence. It is considered to

be more flexible and learner centered. Utilizing the non-formal training entails the development of short-term training capable of bringing positive change in the lives of the recipients. Non-formal training involves on-the-job training, artisan or informal sector apprenticeships, industrial extension service development and all forms of in-service skill development, personal development training and vocational programmes for the unemployed. Non-formal education and training could be provided by public institutions, public-private partnerships, employers of labour, trade unions, media organizations, civic social groups, NGOs and international agencies.

The third type of training is informal training. This is the type of training that deals with the everyday experiences which are not usually planned. It is also termed as incidental learning. Informal training may or may not be intentional. It is often loosely organized. Rather than being guided by a rigid curriculum, informal training is mostly spontaneous and sometimes it could be experiential.

It is therefore important that all these training (formal, non-formal and informal) are gradually and continuously used to inculcate entrepreneurial culture into the youths, as they have great potentials of helping the youths to achieve more desirable and rewarding results for themselves and their communities. However, this could be enhanced and sustained through the use of some strategies.

Strategies for Sustaining the Youths' Entrepreneurial Mindset

Some of the strategies that could be used to sustain the youths' entrepreneurial mindset and values include the following:

Encouragement and continuous support of entrepreneurial endeavour/activities by the family members

The manner, in which the youths are trained from their early years plays a significant role in the initiation of values and attitude generally associated with their entrepreneurial behaviour. The youths' perceptions of what their families and friends think about entrepreneurship have crucial roles to play in their views about entrepreneurship. In addition, the opinions of the family members and their support with regards to failure are also important factors playing upon the young minds and framing their opinions. These opinions and supports are considered because in most cases, the youth might need to borrow the initial capital from family and friends to start up the entrepreneurial venture.

Furthermore, parental negative attitude towards entrepreneurial endeavours when compared to other careers like medicine, engineering, etc may influence the youth's mindset towards entrepreneurship. Exhibition of negative attitude by parents or family members could be as a result of wrong perception which they have about entrepreneurship. It is therefore imperative that parental knowledge about entrepreneurship should be enhanced especially in this era, where the white collar jobs are hard to come by, so that parents could have the right knowledge about entrepreneurship and give adequate support and encouragement to their wards who may wish to venture into

entrepreneurial activities.

Creating an entrepreneurial supportive environment by the School administrators

The school administrators should create a conducive environment for entrepreneurship to thrive. This is important because, the school environment could influence the youth's decision towards entrepreneurship. The school should provide the necessary equipment and tools for entrepreneurial education and ensure that appropriate teaching methods and strategies are used in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education. According to Bygrave (2004) ^[6], schools are the seedbeds of entrepreneurial studies and therefore should teach the youths the way to think and behave entrepreneurially. Roffe (1999) ^[22] maintained that school administrators are expected to create an entrepreneurially supportive environment that could encourage and develop the youths' entrepreneurial activities. Buttressing this fact, Babalola (2011) ^[3] averred that regardless of the type of person a student might be, several school-related techniques could be used, to drive students who are not naturally inclined to become entrepreneurs, to develop and sustain interest in entrepreneurial activities.

The school administrators should therefore encourage and enhance the youths' entrepreneurial mindset using several avenues like: sharing youth entrepreneurship events on all possible platforms; instituting young achievers awards and competitions; organizing youth seminars, conferences, festivals and fun-fairs; using print media in the form of brochures, banners, coverage in magazines; and interviewing successful entrepreneurs and young starters and making them available to the youths. It is therefore imperative that school administrators should provide entrepreneurially supportive environment capable of instilling and sustaining youths' interest in entrepreneurship. They should also intermittently expose students to; relevant skills and technical knowledge, available technology and raw materials, occupational experience and success stories of entrepreneurs so as to revive and sustain their interest in entrepreneurship.

Instilling the entrepreneurial mindset in the youths by the Religious groups

Berger (1991) ^[4] suggests that religion is an important cultural root associated with the development of entrepreneurship. Religious groups should help to disseminate information about entrepreneurship. They should minimize the rate at which they promulgate prosperity. They should rather propagate prosperity through hard work and entrepreneurship. According to Ajekwe (2017) ^[1], churches inadvertently discouraged entrepreneurship in their sermons. In the words of Weber (1976) ^[24], religion determines a person's basic values and beliefs which in turn affect entrepreneurship.

The religious groups should intensify their effort to encourage people to venture into entrepreneurial activities. This could raise the congregations' entrepreneurial instinct which might make them search for entrepreneurial opportunities. The religious groups could enhance the development of the youth entrepreneurial activities through the establishment of start-up entrepreneurs, supporting and

monitoring them until maturity. This could help to develop and sustain the youths' entrepreneurial mindset.

Making favourable entrepreneurial policies by the Government

Government decisions and policies on entrepreneurial activities could also influence the youths' decisions on entrepreneurship. Favourable government policies could encourage the youths to delve into entrepreneurial activities while unfavourable policies could bring lack of interest on entrepreneurship by the youths.

The government should therefore through their policies, create an entrepreneurially supportive environment that could encourage the youths entrepreneurial activities by making available several financially-assisted opportunities for business start-ups; reducing taxes for entrepreneurs; providing free entrepreneurial training programmes; monitoring and evaluating entrepreneurial programmes to ascertain their progress status. Furthermore, the government should create business incubators to assist start-up entrepreneurs. They should also create adequate marketing media for start-ups to sell their products. All these and more are relevant so as to develop and sustain the youths' mindset and values in entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

As entrepreneurship is the antidote of unemployment, stakeholders (parents, guardians, teachers, religious groups and government) should revive and sustain the entrepreneurial culture into the youths using the formal, non-formal and informal training, as this could help to prepare the youths and develop their mindset, values, skills and attitude which would enable them venture into entrepreneurship, function effectively and contribute to the economic development of the nation.

Recommendation

All stakeholders; parents, guardians, teachers, religious groups and government should help to revive and sustain the age-long entrepreneurial culture and inculcate them into the youths of today for smooth transition into the entrepreneurial activities for economic development.

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