

MOTIVATING STUDENTS FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE 'CATCHING THEM YOUNG PHENOMENON'

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ABSTRACT

There have been warnings pointing to the fact that in order for young people in Nigeria to succeed in the global job market there need to be a strong focus on entrepreneurship education in the country. Whereas the importance of entrepreneurship education has been widely acknowledged, its extent of implementation as well as its scope in the Nigerian educational system have constituted serious issues for continued public discussions. The issues of how it has been implemented and who have constituted the beneficiaries were among the factors that motivated the writers to embark on writing this paper. The main objective of this paper, therefore, was to discuss some motivational techniques that could be applied in entrepreneurship education among primary school pupils. The paper examined the meaning, aims, and importance of entrepreneurship education and its effects on entrepreneurial intentions. It proposed the use of the 'catch them young' principle claiming that the appropriate educational stage for the introduction of entrepreneurship education should be at the primary school level.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship, Primary School, Motivation

Citation: Okoro, C. C. and Ezeonwumelu, V. U. (2019). Motivating students for entrepreneurial education in Nigerian primary schools: The 'catching them young phenomenon'. *Equatorial Journal of Education and Curriculum Studies*, 3 (1): 28 – 36.

Introduction

In Nigeria today, many graduates including masters and doctorate degree holders are parading the streets of urban cities searching for jobs. A good number of them have been in this condition of joblessness for a number of years. Yet it had been thought both by them and many others around them that their undergoing formal education would save them all through life from penury, in that, even if they did not eventually land in a condition of affluence, they would at least secure gainful employment after schooling.

For quite some years now, there have been clamours from various quarters for governments in Nigeria at different levels to make efforts to create jobs that would cater for the teeming population of unemployed graduates. Unemployment has constituted such a popular phenomenon that even politicians use the promise for job creation to gain votes for their electioneering success.

The problem of unemployment has been with Nigeria for quite some time now. Olajide and James (2011) observed that there had been inadequacy of white collar jobs to satisfy the teeming population of graduates at professional levels in the country and that unemployment had been of utmost concern to the Nigerian government for many years. Agada and Pius (2014) presented data from online publications by the National Bureau of Statistics which showed the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2009. This source also revealed alarming yearly increase in unemployment rate from 2007 to 2012, which stood at 5.3% in 2007 and increased to 23.09% in 2012. It was observed by Agada and Pius that the figures presented, might even not have captured in totality the graduate youth unemployment situation in Nigeria.

Yusuf (2013) pointed out that having been alarmed by the worsening unemployment trend in the country, the Federal government had to develop

a broad based school curriculum for secondary level students through the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). According to her, subjects like trade and entrepreneurship education among secondary level graduates had been incorporated by the new curriculum which had been expected to be operational with effect from September, 2011.

Among the outstanding efforts to reverse this ugly trend and reduce the rate of unemployment in the country was the contribution by the Nigerian National Universities Commission (NUC). As reported by Adelowo, Egbetokun and James (nd):

the NUC had since 2006 mandated every university in Nigeria to establish an Entrepreneurship Development Center (EDC) and to offer courses in entrepreneurship to all students using a curriculum developed by the NUC. Additionally, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) organized a series of capacity building workshops for entrepreneurship teachers in all Nigerian Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in 2009.

Sequel to this initiative, by the NUC, a lot of discussions and efforts have been made on articulating a suitable entrepreneurship education and seeing to its workability in the contemporary Nigerian setting.

While applauding the honest efforts of government in her attempt to ameliorate the ugly unemployment situation, these writers hereby propose that Government should be made to consider adopting entrepreneurship education at the primary school level to cater for primary school dropouts. This, if considered, would give an early enough exposure to the upcoming generations of her citizenry and be able to 'catch them young'. In the same vein, Yusuf (2013) had proposed that it would be very appropriate to begin to inculcate entrepreneurship skills in children at the basic education level (i.e Primary 1-6 and JS1-3) since that is the foundation level. This idea was again supported by Ohamobi and Ezeaku (2014) who had also reasoned that entrepreneurship education would help the child to be a total child, since he/she would learn collectively using the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, thereby commencing the development of both the head, the heart and the hand, early in life.

In this paper, the writers are apt to also discuss a few motivational techniques that could be applied in entrepreneurship education in order for teachers to catch the children young with ease.

Meaning of Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education

It is pertinent to explain what entrepreneurship means and the concept of entrepreneurship education. The Wikipedia (2015) defined entrepreneurship as a process of starting a business. Typically a startup company offering an innovative product, process or service. Agada and Pius (2014:67) quoted Nwafor (2007) to have defined entrepreneurship as the right and ability to set one's own goals and realizing them as much as possible through one's own efforts. According to Toluhi and Diakwo (2009),

entrepreneurship is "a purposeful activity which an individual or group of associations undertake to initiate and maintain a profit oriented business unit for the purpose of production and contribution of economic goods and services."

Essia (2012:52) saw entrepreneurship as a dynamic and social process, where individuals, solely or in cooperation with others, identify possibilities and utilise them to transform ideas into practical and goal-oriented activities in a social, cultural or economic context. According to him, it involves inculcation of a range of skills and activities consisting of the ability to think creatively, work in teams, manage risks, and handle uncertainties.

Osuala (2004:166) claimed that entrepreneurship education is a specialised training given to students to acquire the skills, ideas, and the managerial capacities for self-employment rather than being employed for pay. Akpan and Etor (2013) asserted that it is that aspect of education which equips an individual and creates in the person the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in school. Suleiman (2010) also intimated that entrepreneurship education sought to prepare people, particularly the youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who would eventually become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real life of creative learning experiences whereby they would take risks,

manage results, and learn from the outcomes. Ojo, Abayomi and Odozi (2014) quoted Ezeani (2012) as claiming that entrepreneurship education entailed teaching students, learners and would-be businessmen the essential skills required to build viable enterprises, and equipping the trainees with skills needed for taking responsibility and developing their initiatives. They (Ojo, Abayomi & Odozi) also cited Okereke and Okorafor (2012) to have asserted that entrepreneurship education had been acknowledged worldwide as a potent and viable tool for self-empowerment, job and wealth creation. They further assented to this claim because, according to them, it is the type of education which has the ability to impact on the growth and development of an enterprise through technical and vocational training.

Aim of Entrepreneurship Education

In his paper entitled *Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria*, Ojeifo (2012) argued that entrepreneurship education would equip the students with the skills with which to be self-empowered and self-reliant. According to him, it sought to, among other things, provide students in tertiary institutions with the knowledge, skills and motivation to promote entrepreneurial success in a variety of ventures. He quoted Paul (2005) as claiming that entrepreneurial education was structured to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant,
- ii. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities,
- iii. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development,
- iv. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain risk bearing feasible,
- v. To reduce high rate of poverty
- vi. Create employment generation,
- vii. Reduction in rural-urban migration,
- viii. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses,
- ix. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to

persist in any business venture they embark on, and

- x. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Entrepreneurship education is intended to influence students' attitudes and motivate them towards becoming potential entrepreneurs. Akpan and Etor (2013) cited Tulgan (1999) as stating that the primary purpose of entrepreneurship education was to develop in the learner entrepreneurial capacities and mindsets. This, it was reasoned, would help graduates to recognise business opportunities, mobilise resources and exploit the opportunity for self-employment. Efi (2014:19) also opined that entrepreneurship education plays a major role in influencing students' preference to become entrepreneurs through raising their attitude, perceived behavioural control and intentions towards entrepreneurship in small businesses. Imeokparia and Ediagbonya (2013) again added that the overall objective of the government making entrepreneurship studies compulsory for all students of higher educational institutions is to continuously foster entrepreneurship culture amongst students and faculty members with a view to educating them as well as supporting graduates of the system towards establishing as well as monitoring sustainable business ventures. Osuala (2004:168), on his part, listed the major objectives of entrepreneurship education to include:

- i. To provide meaningful education for the youths which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit, and be independent.
- ii. To provide graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.
- iii. To provide graduates with training in skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
- iv. To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing feasible.
- v. To stimulate the industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
- vi. To provide graduates with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.

Need for Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education is in dire need in the country today. Alarape and Aladekomo (2007) identified unemployment, particularly graduate unemployment, as one of the major factors responsible for the increasing quest for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Increase in unemployment rate resulting from the lack of employment skills by the teeming population of graduates has necessitated the recent emphasis on entrepreneurship education. Alabi, Alanana and Bahal (2014) cited a UNESCO (2005) publication which stated that the the aims of various governments was to combat poverty through the establishment and creation of poverty reduction programmes, had failed because graduates of the education system lacked practical skills. They, however, added that many stakeholders and political leaders believed that fostering a robust entrepreneurial culture through entrepreneurial education would maximise individual and collective economic and social successes. These authors were of the opinion that the economies of Asian countries currently competing with those of the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom , among others, had attained their current level of development through individuals' and groups' entrepreneurial activities, and that their governments had provided the appropriate framework and policies for the thriving of entrepreneurial ventures. They further reasoned that building the entrepreneurship culture into the Nigerian educational system and instilling the entrepreneurship spirit in our graduates would lay a strong foundation in the country for reducing unemployment and associated social problems. According to them, entrepreneurship education would produce graduates who would provide jobs, create wealth and fast-track the country's economy to attain the status of one of the first twenty most developed economies of the world by the year 2020. In other words, without adequate entrepreneurship education, empowering Nigerian youths towards wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value orientation which are a sine qua non to national development could prove a herculean task.

Aja-Okorie and Adali (2013) also proposed that entrepreneurship education should be a lifelong learning process, starting as early as in elementary school and progressing through all levels of education ,including adult education. They reasoned

that, in this way, youths would have progressively be exposed to more challenging educational activities and experiences that would enable them to develop the insight needed to discover and create entrepreneurial opportunities, and manage their own businesses. Van der Kuip and Verheul (2003) insisted that entrepreneurial qualities should be taught preferably at an early age because young children were still malleable and entrepreneurial qualities were comparable to personality traits developed during upbringing.

Yusuf (2013) intimated that students would derive numerous benefits through their involvement in Entrepreneurship Education .Through it, she claimed, students would learn organisational skills, achieve academic excellence, acquire bincreased problem-solving and decision making abilities, improved interpersonal relationships, enhanced social development, among others. Having examined the opinions of some other thinkers in the issue of beginning entrepreneurship education at the primary school level, it is the candid submission of the writers that both individual and the country at large will benefit immensely if the 'catching them young' principle is applied by introducing entrepreneurship education at that early stage of the children's development.

Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurship Intentions

It is worthwhile asking the question whether there is connection between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intentions. The reason is that knowledge derived from such an enquiry would provide the assurance on the relevance of embarking on a programme on entrepreneurship education. Izedonmi and Okafor (2010) set out to examine the effect of entrepreneurship on students' entrepreneurial intentions and found that exposure of youths to entrepreneurship education for a period of four years was capable of provoking the intention of becoming entrepreneurs. They concluded that education conveys the required knowledge and skills which were capable of turning students entrepreneurial intentions into entrepreneurial activities. They also assured that, even where participating in entrepreneurship education did not lead to entrepreneurial intentions, it had a way of motivating students into initiating entrepreneurial ventures.

Educational stakeholders and policy makers in the developed western nations believe that, more emphasis should be laid on entrepreneurship if a nation desires to attain a higher level of economic growth and innovation. Indeed, empirical research supports that positive links exist between entrepreneurial activity and economic growth and innovation (Van Praag and Versloot, 2007; as cited in Oosterbeek, Van Praag and Ijsselstein, 2010).

Policy makers also believe that increased levels of entrepreneurship can be reached through education, (European Commission, 2006, as cited in Oosterbeek *et al.*, 2010; Odu and Upula, 2016; Udosen and Ekpo, 2016). Therefore, entrepreneurship education is supposed to be promoted and implemented in the school curricular as obtained in most developed countries. A key assumption underlying these intended programmes is that entrepreneurship skills can be taught and are not fixed personal characteristics. Indeed, it has been shown that the effect of general education as measured in years of schooling on entrepreneurial performance is positive (Vander *et al.*, 2006; Van der Sluis & Van Praag, 2007) and that business training is effective for the performance of people who applied for micro finance loans to start their own business (Karlan & Valdivia, 2006; as cited by Oosterbeek *et al.*, 2010). Cheung (2012) as cited in Gangi (nd) opined that entrepreneurship education in many aspects is so important for both individual and national development. At micro level, it can help students to understand business and its purpose, structure, and interrelationship with the different sectors of the economy in the society.

This assertion is inspired by a study by Cheung and Ng (2010) which observed that conducting entrepreneurship activity through learning in business subjects created a positive atmosphere, which enhanced students' motivation to learn and develop generic skills. A further study by Cheung (2011) as cited in Gangi(nd) inferred that entrepreneurship education would have a positive impact on the strength of the students' entrepreneurial spirit in terms of starting up a new business as a high percentage of students acknowledged that the entrepreneurial knowledge that they had acquired would be useful to them in the business world. In a nutshell, the above author tried to buttress the point that entrepreneurship education is designed to produce graduates who are capable of identifying opportunities and developing ventures, through setting up new businesses or

developing and growing part of an existing venture. It focuses on encouraging students to apply enterprising skills and attributes to a range of different contexts, including new or existing businesses, charities, non-governmental organisations, the public sector, and social enterprises.

According to Baba *et al.* (2015) there exist empirical research findings that support and gave evidence that entrepreneurship education influence students' intention to become entrepreneurs. The authors cited Kakkonen (2010) findings which revealed that taking entrepreneurship education courses has positive effects on entrepreneurial career choice of students. Dyer (1994) also cited in Baba *et al.* (2015) found a link between offering entrepreneurship education courses and students intention to start business. Dyer explained that entrepreneurship education training might give some students the confidence they need to start their own businesses. The authors(Baba *et al.*) further cited the findings of Robinson (1995) to highlight the importance of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intentions of students. They concurred that entrepreneurship education increase and improve the perceived feasibility for entrepreneurship by increasing the knowledge of students, building confidence and promoting entrepreneurial self-efficacy. According to them, it would also improve the perceived desirability for entrepreneurship by showing that entrepreneurship education is highly desirable, regarded and socially acceptable and that it can be highly rewarding.

Applying Motivational Techniques for Entrepreneurship Education

In this section, some of the techniques that the teacher can apply to enable the students derive enough benefit from undergoing entrepreneurship education are discussed. In order for entrepreneurship education to be effectively executed, teachers are expected to employ a number of teaching techniques to motivate their students. The list of such strategies as discussed by Santrock (2001), is presented below. Santrock (2001:419) maintained that the teacher should behave in the following manner

- i. Be a competent model who is motivated to learn.
- ii. Create an atmosphere of challenge and high expectations.

- iii. Communicate his expectations of goals that his students will achieve and provide the necessary academic and emotional support.
- iv. Encourage students' intrinsic motivation to learn.
- v. Work with students to help them set goals, plan and monitor their progress.
- vi. Select learning tasks that stimulate interest and curiosity.
- vii. Use technology effectively.

A brief explanation of each of the strategies will be very beneficial at this juncture. With regards to the first strategy, it is pertinent to note that, the teacher's attitude to learning, his effort and achievement have significant influence on his students' development of positive attitude about these things. How curious and enthused a teacher is will rub off on his students. Santrock intimated that the teacher's excitement about a lesson will be contagious and advised him to display an attitude that learning is an important goal in itself. Santrock further advised the teacher to talk with his students about how much he (the teacher) had enjoyed learning about various topics and to narrate to them circumstances in which he had established goals for himself, planned how to reach the goals, faced hurdles along the way, and persisted with considerable effort to succeed. Such real-world stories about the teachers himself would, according to Santrock, help to personalize achievement and let students see the teacher as a real person with whom they could identify and whom they would want to emulate.

The second strategy demanded that the teacher should set a high standard of achievement for his students. The teacher was advised never to accept low-quality work and minimal effort by students. He should challenge each of the students to do his best and should accept nothing less from any of them. The teacher was also instructed to tell his students that it was their responsibility in life to take the talents to reach the highest level possible. In that regard, he was to place inspiring quotations in visible locations around his classroom.

In the case of the the third strategy, the teacher was expected to monitor his students' progress and also communicate to them his confidence in their ability to handle academic challenges. He was expected to encourage the students using positive comments about their efforts and to get them to stretch their talents realistically.

The teacher was also expected to recognise when a student needed to learn specific academic skills, such as reading and mathematics skill, whose knowledge would enhance that student's overall success. He was also expected to monitor the emotions of his students and strive to improve their confidence and to reduce the anxiety of those among them who were highly anxious so that such a negative state will not be detrimental to their achievement.

The fourth strategy indicated that the resolution by students, that they would succeed and their pledge of commitment to that success placed them on the right intrinsic motivation path to achievement. The teacher was advised to help the students understand that success came from effort and determination in the face of challenges. He was to fuel students' intrinsic motivation by giving them a menu of choices of topics to study and projects to execute. While the students were working on their projects, the teacher was expected to use rewards to convey information to them about their mastery of the subject matter.

With regards to the fifth strategy, the setting of attainable goals by students had been seen by psychologists to function as a veritable tool for the sustaining of motivation. It was reported by Santrock (2001) that researchers had found engaging in goal-setting to improve the self-efficacy and achievement of those goals as some of the most important means for their success. He consequently advised the teacher to make a commitment to include goal-setting, planning and self-monitoring of students' classroom experiences and to have the students do time management exercises.

Concerning the sixth strategy, Santrock recommended that the teacher should endeavour to select tasks that would stimulate the students' interest and curiosity. It is also true that presenting the subject matter in various ways maintains the curiosity and interest of students and using a variety of examples can as well sustain their interests.

On the seventh strategy, Santrock recommended the extensive use of technology in teaching and pointed out that educational technology games were highly motivating to students and would help the teacher to vary the format of instruction, which in itself often increases learners' motivation. According to Snowman, McCown and Biehler(2009), technology increases

intrinsic motivation by making learning more interesting and meaningful.

The writers intend to reiterate here that, the interest of the students is very important in any learning situation. Interest, in this context, refers to the extent to which an individual's curiosity is aroused and sustained over time (Brophy, 1998).

The teacher can stimulate and maintain the students' interest and curiosity in a lesson using novel, incongruous, conflictual, or paradoxical events. He can also use anecdotes and other devices to introduce emotional elements into the learning material, as well as incorporate gamelike features into the learning activities. He can as well guide the students into a process of question generation or enquiry. He can find many activities that will interest and involve the students if he/she takes into consideration their own point of view, experiences, background and level of maturity (Garrison and Magoon, 1972).

Conclusion

The increasing level of unemployment in this country is a cause for concern for many Nigerians at home and abroad. While most observers easily allude to various economic variables as the chief causes of this malaise, it is vital that job creation should be a major goal of every potential graduate in Nigeria, rather than job seeking. In this paper, the writers set out to highlight the importance of entrepreneurship education in the early development of an individual and its resultant effect on the generation of employment in the economy. This paper identifies the primary school level as a perfect stage to launch entrepreneurial education because it enhances the ability of an individual to internalise all the benefits of entrepreneurial education through his formative years, thereby equipping him with the requisite entrepreneurial skills needed to survive in life. Important motivational techniques applicable by teachers, and to some extent, the school authority, to ensure the successful implementation of the entrepreneurship education programme in the Nigerian Primary School system were discussed. These techniques are vital if the aims of entrepreneurship education are to be achieved in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the views of the writers, and the works of other renowned authors in related studies, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Curriculum planners should restructure the school curriculum in such a way that prospective graduates would commence their entrepreneurship education from the primary school level in order for them to learn and develop entrepreneurship consciousness, attitude, aspirations, and skills at a tender and malleable age.
- ii. The government at all levels should organise regular seminars and workshops for teachers of entrepreneurship education subjects in order to update their knowledge of suitable teaching methods and appropriate motivational techniques on how to manage their students.
- iii. The government and other stakeholders should sponsor the development of relevant textbooks and information that would help in the enhancement of entrepreneurship education.
- iv. The government and other stakeholders should in partnership with seasoned entrepreneurs erect infrastructure in institutions of learning at all levels to cater for the implementation of entrepreneurship education.
- v. Curriculum planners in conjunction with seasoned entrepreneurs should develop and schedule entrepreneurship internship programmes akin to Students' Industrial Working Experience Scheme (SIWES), Teaching Practice, and Housemanship, in order to enable future graduates to be better grounded before hand in the practical in the practical aspects of entrepreneurship.
- vi. The government should ensure that only experienced and qualified teachers who had acquired adequate entrepreneurial skills and were operating as successful entrepreneurs should be recruited to teach courses on entrepreneurship education in schools.
- vii. Adequately trained counsellors should not be left out in the planning of entrepreneurship education programme in schools. Their expertise in career and vocational counselling is vital for the successful implementation of

entrepreneurship education programme at all levels of our school system.

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