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ASSESSING THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A STRATEGY FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN SOME SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN NASARAWA STATE

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Abstract

The global topic of poverty has received a lot of attention lately. Unemployment due to lack of entrepreneurship education perpetrate poverty among graduates both at lower and higher levels. The aim of the research is to determine the level of poverty as precipitated by inadequate entrepreneurship education in some selected Local Governments in Nasarawa State. The study adopted a descriptive approach, as such primary and secondary data were used as basis for analysis. Head count index was also used to quantify poverty incidence in the selected Local Governments in the State. The findings of the research showed that poverty is very high among unemployed graduates; the graduates are ill-equipped to start and run a business; and that Governments' efforts towards poverty eradication are inadequate. The research suggested that in order to address the poverty and unemployment issues, entrepreneurial education should be incorporated at both lower and higher levels. Governments should also do more on policy implementation.

Keywords: Education, Entrepreneurship, Governments, Poverty, Lower and Higher Levels

Introduction

In the past school leavers who had gone either to colleges, polytechnics or universities were certain to find some type of compensated job. The exigencies of modern societies and Nigerian economy in particular, the situation is no more feasible since the economic climate is characterized by high poverty and unemployment rates. According to Nwakolo (1997), in a Federal Bureau of Statistics report in Nigeria reveals a 9.1% urban unemployment rate and a 4.5% rural unemployment rate. The findings of the poll also showed that school dropouts continue to make up the majority of the jobless, who made up 69.4% of the urban unemployed and 54.5% of the rural unemployed. The ugly trend calls for entrepreneurship education which will serve as an intervention at both lower and higher schools to reduce the scourge of poverty and promote productive enterprises. Nigerian entrepreneurs continue to struggle with finding the most effective ways to

provide services and products. In order to break out of the slavery of over-dependence on government, there is the need to have a generation of individuals with appropriate traits or personal qualities needed for successful entrepreneurship. In an economic world, nothing is best as economic independence. We cannot say we are independent if we are not economically independent. There is, thus the need for individuals to have qualities of life self-reliance free from fear of being economically intimidated. Some may even take the excitement associated with risk-taking, inherent in the drive towards the realization of these qualities to be worthwhile. A strong basis for the sustainable development and growth of the fabrication industry depends on effective entrepreneurship. The prime objective of any developing economy is to enhance its resources. Combine them to produce goods and services for the citizenry. The ability of such economy to have rapid growth and development in the industrial sector

will depend on the effort of entrepreneurship development. It is with a healthy economy that objectives such as economic diversification, self-reliance, freedom from negative foreign interference in nation's economy and politics, increased employment: opportunities, increased gross domestic products (GDP), political stability, poverty reduction and prosperity of a nation can be attained. Consequently, entrepreneurship training is necessary for those who aspire to be independent and proud business owners. Thus, this study aims at determining the level of poverty as precipitated by inadequacy of entrepreneurship education in Nasarawa State and to suggest ways of reducing poverty in the State.

A study of this nature is significant to the Government by highlighting the need areas at policy formulation levels; to the educational institutions in curriculum development; and to current and prospective graduates in preparing their minds for the challenges after graduation. It is glaring that poverty and unemployment among school leavers is very high in Nasarawa State. And the quest by victims to be self-employed and be owners of enterprises faces so many challenges few among others include, low entrepreneurial skills hinders effective performance. Additionally, their capacity to exploit business possibilities that may result in development is limited by a lack of suitable academic qualifications and extensive commercial interaction, as well as by poor and ineffective physical amenities, inadequate access to adequate credit; poor management practices and financial indiscipline.

Since entrepreneurship education aims to provide students the information, skills, and drive to support entrepreneurial success in a variety of situations, all these inadequacies may be remedied. All of these elements made it essential to evaluate the contribution of education in entrepreneurship to the fight against poverty by utilizing several local governments in Nigeria's Nasarawa State. To achieve this end the following specific objectives. Were identified:

- i. To evaluate the role of entrepreneurship education on poverty reduction in the selected Local Governments; and
- ii. To examine the effects of entrepreneurship education in Governments' strategies for reducing poverty among graduates in the selected Local Governments.
- iii. The following queries were put forward to direct the study in order to fulfill the stated objectives:
- iv. What is the role of entrepreneurship education on poverty reduction in the selected Local Governments in Nasarawa State?
- v. What is the effect of entrepreneurship education on the strategies adopted by Governments for reducing poverty among graduates in the selected Local Governments? Literature Review

One good theory adopted for entrepreneurship education is the Schumpeter Scio-Economic approach to entrepreneurship development. The questions stated below were posed to help guide Schumpeter (1950), who postulates that entrepreneurship education tries to provide students the information, skills, and incentive to foster entrepreneurial achievement in a range of situations. In order to fulfill the put forth objectives. All levels of education, from elementary or secondary schools to graduate university programs, provide various forms of entrepreneurial education. He also recognizes innovations as the main element in entrepreneurship the profit motive as the development, and the factor. Economic growth was seen by Schumpeter as a distinct dynamic shift brought about by entrepreneurs who implemented novel production combinations, or innovations. According to him, any of the following scenarios might result in the launch of an innovative combination of production factors:

- a) An innovative item entering the marketplace;
- b) A new production technique utilized in a field of manufacturing that has not yet been thoroughly evaluated;
- c) The identification of an entirely novel raw material supply source

- d) Implementing a new type of industrial structure by consolidating monopolies or dismantling existing ones.

The entrepreneur as an economic entity—one that differs from the capitalist and emphasizes the worker—was the driving reason behind the creation of his theory. According to Schumpeter, entrepreneurship is a unique talent and a trait of human nature that is independent of class or social standing. In the quest of profit, the entrepreneur employs a novel combination of production variables, aids in the development of novel goods, introduces novel production techniques, expands into novel markets, and offers novel management techniques. The entrepreneur makes money as a consequence of this endeavor, and the economy as a whole experiences an increase in growth. Therefore, it may be said that the entrepreneur is the primary focus of economic growth. His actions support the advancement of technology. Surplus value is produced, the "static situation" is broken, and the economy is encouraged to grow.

Joseph Schumpeter made significant improvements to entrepreneurship research. He was perhaps the first academic to formulate theories in this area. Mark I and Mark II are popular names for his core ideas. In the first, Schumpeter maintained that entrepreneurs, or "wild spirits," are responsible for a country's creativity and technical advancement. He created the phrase *Unternehmergeist*, which is German for "entrepreneur spirit." When Schumpeter was a Harvard professor, he created Mark II. He argued that huge corporations with the financial means to spend in R&D are the forces behind economic growth and innovation. Today, these claims could be complimentary (Shionoya, 1997).

The Concept of Entrepreneurial

The French term for someone who organizes musical or other forms of entertainment is where the word "entrepreneur" originated. An entrepreneur was similarly described in the Oxford English Dictionary of 1877 as the managers or directors of a public musical organization. Early in the sixteenth century, it referred to those who were taking part in military missions. It was expanded to include the fields of manufacture and

building in the seventeenth century. However, the term "entrepreneur" was employed in the eighteenth century from an economic standpoint. Before it arrived at its current meaning, the term "entrepreneur" underwent generations of change.

According to Fapolinda (2006), an entrepreneur is a leader in the economy who has the capacity to recognize the successful implementation of novel concepts, methods, and sources of supply and to put together the required tools and personnel in order to achieve its goals. An entrepreneur is a coordinator of elements that enhance the value of resources used in manufacturing. Additionally, Schatz (1990) defines entrepreneurs as (artisans, housewives, and workers) who effectively allot their resources in the production of products and services in order to build an equilibrium and dynamic economy. Being an entrepreneur means operating a large business or organization in the manufacturing, service, or agricultural sectors. Entrepreneurship, which encompasses creativity, invention, and taking risks, may be simply described as the capacity to transform an idea into a business. In order to accomplish goals, one must also have the capacity to organize and oversee tasks.

The Concept of Poverty

It's difficult to escape poverty. It has distinct connotations for many individuals, groups, and institutions. The inability of a person or family to get enough money to meet their fundamental necessities is known as poverty. In Ogiji and Akpan's (2004) basic need approach to the study of poverty, the lack of access to adequate nutrition, health care, possibilities for learning, and other aspects of welfare is seen as poverty rather than an absence of money. According to Agara (2005), poverty is a complex state marked by unsafe living conditions, lack of security, and limited access to essential services and facilities such as schools, hospitals, roads, water, and power. Hunger, a lack of housing, being ill and unable to visit a doctor, not having access to education, and not being able to read are all signs of poverty. Lack of a job, worry about the future, and losing a kid to an illness brought on by contaminated water are all examples of poverty. According to the

World Bank (1994), poverty is an absence of freedom, representation, and power. The Vision 2010 defines poverty as a situation in which a person is unable to achieve minimal criteria of fundamental necessities such as food, health, shelter, education, and clothes (Eyo, 2006). This definition appears to be the official one given by the Nigerian government. Poverty, according to Nagya (2002), is the inability to make decisions and take action. Volatility, a lack of long-term planning since the impoverished are unable to figure out ways to thrive today, insecurity, and an absence of belief in one's abilities.

Nigeria's Entrepreneurship Education Policy's Deficiency

According to Act No. 9 of 1977, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) is the government organization tasked with managing technical and vocational education and training across the nation. The agency's duties also include advising the federal government, coordinating all aspects of technical and vocational education outside of academic institutions, and recommending national policies for the training of specialists, artisans, and other middle-skilled workers. Additionally, to build Technical Institutions, Colleges of Technology (polytechnics), and Technical colleges; and to assess the nation's labor demands in order to design training facilities in general. But unexpectedly, the Minister of Labor and Productivity reports that the Nigerian economy is now facing skill imbalance, a scarcity of graduates with transferable practical abilities, and significant disparities involving labour and the demands of the sector.

The Factors Affecting the Lack of Skilled Labor Supply and Its Effects

According to Aladekomo (2004), the Nigerian educational policy at the higher level focuses on developing middle-skilled and upper-skilled labor for major corporations, filling open positions in government agencies, and leaving no room for self-employment in the private sector. Additionally, the Nigeria Industrial Policy, which went into effect right after the country gained its independence, favored the construction of

large corporations while completely ignoring the growth of small-scale industries (Aladekomo, 2004). The emphasis of technical and vocational education, according to Fakae (2005), is on skill acquisition and solid scientific knowledge, which empowers an individual's use of hand and machine and independence. The Nigerian government is extremely concerned about the rising unemployment rate, poverty, and general poor economic condition despite these well-formulated initiatives. Importantly, some academics believe that there is a gap in vocational and technical education (Onifade, 2008). In order to support this claim, Kazaure (2011) stated that "our educational institutions have been disconnected from our industrial and socioeconomic needs, despite the existence of 100 universities, over 120 polytechnics, and other similar institutions, as well as technical/vocational colleges. The International Labour Organization (2009) states that when the global economic slump begins, around 8 million people would lose their jobs, with young, women, and children being the most severely impacted. On the already deplorable state of the Nigerian labor market, the projection has already taken a toll. In terms of a rise in religious riots, armed robberies, kidnappings, and disturbances by armed militants, among other things, this unfavorable scenario has had a detrimental impact on the country's security report (United Nations Office for West Africa, 2005). Governmental Efforts to Reduce the Skill Manpower Shortage in Nigeria. The Nigerian government has identified the problem of graduates' lack of marketable functional skills as well as the root of the enormous disparities between labor supply and demand. Following this trend, both the previous and current administrations in Nigeria have prioritized the development of technical and vocational skills. This is due to the fact that it serves as the cornerstone of industrialisation around the world. As a result, a new national strategy on technical and vocational education was announced in 1977, bringing these courses into the Nigerian syllabus. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established in 1986 and given the critical task of fostering employment with a focus on independence via the following programs:

- i. National Youth Employment and Vocational Skills development Programme
- ii. Small-scale sector Employment Programme
- iii. Agricultural sector Employment Programme
- iv. Special public works programme

Additionally, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), which was recently implemented, is oriented on reorganizing the economy and encouraging private initiative and self-reliance. Additionally, the Entrepreneurship Development Center (EDC) initiative was supported by the Nigerian University Commission (NUC), which the majority of institutions in Nigeria are following and are thought to be performing well in terms of entrepreneurship teaching.

Methodology

The study sample was drawn from Keffi, Akwanga, and Lafia LGCs of Nasarawa State in 2012; these are from the three senatorial zones in the state (Nasarawa West, North, and South respectively). The study adopted a descriptive approach and used both secondary and primary data. Head count index was used to determine the percentage of school leavers living below poverty line due to inadequate entrepreneurship education. According to Okoh (1998) "The notion of the statutory minimum pay rate was substantially related to the cost of essential requirements as measured by the poverty line. Then, by comparing real spending (for income) to the CBN measure of the chosen unit of study, such as an individual or a model household, poverty was determined". Therefore, the poverty line for this work was set at N18, 000. Using head count index the aggregate in percentages of the total sample under the poverty threshold was regarded as poor.

For instance, Headcount index = $H = g/n$ q = number of people in poverty

n = total sampled population

The reason for the utilization of this research type is under-listed: headcount index is one of the absolute

measure of poverty, the simplest and best known poverty measure (Anyanwu, 1997).

To determine the level of poverty based on the information in the table

$$H = q/n$$

q = number of people in poverty

n = total sampled population

If your income falls below N18000, you are regarded as poor. Total number of respondents whose income falls below N18000 was 100 (71%). And the total number of people under investigation was 140. Therefore $H = g/n = 100/140 = 0.714$ Based on this result, one can infer that about 71.4% of school leavers (primary secondary tertiary) are living in poverty in Nasarawa state.

Results and Discussion

According to the survey of primary secondary and tertiary school leavers in Keffi, Akwanga and Lafia, 90.7% of primary/secondary leavers reported to have no any form of business knowledge during and after leaving school. Similarly 92.8% of tertiary graduates claimed not have any knowledge of business prior to graduation and it was after graduation that 85% of them acquired entrepreneurship training through National Directorate of Employment (NDE). About 71% of the sampled population is unemployed due to lack of skill which by extension consequently affects their level of income. A large proportion of respondents (86.4%) believe that the Government is not enforcing the policies relating to entrepreneurship training. The survey also indicated a great disparity in income distribution as about 100 respondents earn less than N18,000 while only 40 respondents earn above N18,000. The finding invite continued attention to imparting entrepreneurship education precisely at various educational institutions namely:

- i. Primary institutions
- ii. Secondary institutions and
- iii. Tertiary institutions

Table1: Graduate entrepreneurship in Keffi, Akwanga and Lafia Local Government

Items	Sample	Yes	No	No Response
knowledge of business prior to graduation	140	12	127	3
knowledge of business immediately after graduation	140	10	130	-
knowledge of business post NYSC/NDE Training	140	21	119	-
the role of government in policy implementation	140	19	121	-
unemployed due to lack of basic skill	140	100	26	14
income less than ₦18, 000.00 per month.	140	100	40	-

Summary and Conclusion

The research was aimed at assessing the role of entrepreneurship education as a means of reducing poverty in some selected Local Governments in Nasarawa State of Nigeria. It was observed that graduates are ill-equipped and unprepared for post-graduation challenges. Based on the analysis of data gathered from 140 graduates, it was discovered that: most do not have basic knowledge of business prior to graduation; and did not gain any further understanding of business even after National Youth Service Corps and National Directorate of Employment training. It was also discovered that the high prevalence of unemployment and poverty was the lack of basic entrepreneurship skills as well as the poor implementation of Government policies.

Recommendations

In light of the study's conclusions, the subsequent suggestions are provided:

- i. Entrepreneurship education needs better integration at both lower and high levels of

education to tackle the poverty and unemployment situations.

- ii. The government should actively foster a socioeconomic climate that supports the growth of innovative and profitable business from the ground up, locating and addressing infrastructural gaps and structural disparities against small businesses.
- iii. Utilizing the vast human capital reservoir of the nation by reforming the school system and giving young people in rural and urban areas access to managerial competencies and trade schools.
- iv. The government should create a reward scheme to get additional citizens to become specialized or trade instructors.
- v. Advanced training programs to promote and aid in the development of a Nation-wide apprentice program that will make trainees easier to hire.

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