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# **ENTREPRENEUR EDUCATION: IMPERATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This position paper critically looked at the state of entrepreneurial education in Nigeria with a view towards achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. The authors provided a retrospective perspectives of education, clarified the concept of entrepreneur education and advocated its integration in Nigerian educational system. A framework for entrepreneurship education was conceptualized with a strong advocacy for its adoption towards achieving sustainable development.

## **Introduction**

The term education is so elastic and polymorphous in meaning: hence, its susceptibility to varying interpretations and misrepresentations. The field is therefore filled with persons of various professional backgrounds. As the saying goes, education is a jack of all trade. A tour around people's perceptions of the meaning of education is quite revealing. Education according to the Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary (2011) 'is the activity of educating people in schools, colleges, and universities and all the policies . and arrangements concerning this'. This definition portrays education as knowledge acquired in school as a result of instruction. This is totally unacceptable and misleading. It saddens one's mind to say that this definition - represents the framework and guiding principles of our educational policies and practices even till today. A sharp departure from this parochial view of education is to consider education 'as the process of updating the knowledge and skills of the individual for the purpose of making that individual useful to himself or herself and to the community (Okebukola, 2012). This definition implies that education bequeath on individuals specialised skills to cope effectively within „. the community. This looks good but devoid of the process required to achieve its objectives. In furtherance to finding an appropriate definition, UNESCO (2012) viewed education as mere schooling ( but transcends) and should be seen as an articulation of informal opportunities for self-improvement, non-formal structures for the inculcation and sustenance of basic and post-basic life skills, and formal systems for the awakening and continuous development of the human potential. This definition is all encompassing and represents the pivot on which our discussion on entrepreneurial education and sustainable development will be anchored.

To achieve this, it will be necessary to provide a retrospective perspectives of education in Nigeria, clarify the concept of entrepreneur education, advocate its integration in our educational system, provide a framework for entrepreneurship education and provide the inter phase between entrepreneur education and sustainable development.

#### Education in Nigeria: A Retrospective Look

Formal, western education was part of Christian missionary efforts of late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose was centrally to promote the Christian religion and was partly responsible for the hesitation of the largely Muslim north to accept western education (Okebukola, 2012 ). The focus of education was purely on the 3R's (Read, wRite, aRithmetics). Educational experiences within school are structured such as to acquire knowledge of subject matter. Learning in this form induces passivity, monologue and artificiality in the learner. For instance, indoor Classes create the illusion that learning occurs only inside the four walls. Hence, biology classes take place largely in the classroom whereas plants are located outside the classroom. Geography classes are confined to the four walls even when field trip appears apparently the best method of teaching. It was clear that the essence of education was to prepare students towards examination and in readiness for white collar job when in actual fact we are a black nation. White collar jobs were created to satisfy the needs and aspirations of the white colonial masters. Their mission was to use education as an instrument to train people for missionary work (Obanya, 2000). Hence, the school curriculum contained such subjects as reading, writing, bible knowledge and English language. But later, there was need to provide a workforce which was needed by the British commercialists and administrators. The emphasis changed to English language, commercial arithmetic and British geography.

Prior to the advent of western education, Obanya (2000) noted that the primary function of education is enculturation, all traditional African societies sustained themselves through that form of education that seeks to inculcate social norms and mores in the young. This type of education according to Obanya (2000) seeks to prepare each person for his or her future role in society. It inculcates desirable skills for survival in the immediate community. Today, our education enterprise has gone through tensions as a result of the compartmentalisation of traditional knowledge and the western knowledge. Concerted efforts are still been dissipated to overcome the accompanied stress , and strain. There was growing dissatisfaction prior to independence about the content of secondary school curricula. In 1959, the federal government of Nigeria set up the Ashby commission to plan education policy and by 1960, the commission published its report which shed light on the inadequacies existing in many aspects of Nigerian education system including policies, curriculum and facilities. The commission made several recommendations which today formed the basis of the education revolution.

Desirous to make a change, Nigerian government set up several committees and commissions to reform education. Notable among these were Banjo commission (1961), Dike commission (1962), Ikoku committee (1962), Ajayi commission (1964), Asabia committee (1967) and the Taiwo committee (1968). These various efforts paid off when the national curriculum conference was convened. The conference gave birth to the national policy of education, the 6-3-3-4 system of education and made recommendations on the objectives, content, methods and materials for Nigerian education as we have it today.

#### The 6-3-3-4 System of Education

This represents 6 years of primary education, which centers around functional literacy and numeracy and the inculcation of positive attitudes and values for self, community and national development. 3 years of junior secondary education, with the broad goals to prepare the individual for useful living in the society. The major problems are that there are inadequate facilities to support the pre-vocational subjects, there is dearth of prevocational teachers and appropriate streaming is not achieved. 3 years of senior secondary education aimed at preparing students for higher education. There are several challenges at this level which included over population, insufficient number of teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities. The last lap is 4 years of tertiary education which is given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education and polytechnics.

The worth of education can be measured by the skills acquired in relation to human survival (NUC, 2005). The kind of education inherited from the colonial masters emphasised theories instead of values, concepts rather than human beings, abstraction rather than consciousness, answers instead of questions. A shift from the present practice is inevitable for our country to achieve her dreams among committee of nations.

We do not require education that will provide upward mobility and success as this will lead to mass production of people literally unfit for anything except to take part in an elaborate and completely artificial character.

#### Entrepreneurship Education

The question agitating the mind of everybody is what must education be for'. This is a billion naira question which everyone will want to know. Measured against the agenda of human survival, how should we rethink education?

The answer of course is to embrace entrepreneur education. Entrepreneur education is a learning platform which inculcates in learner desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to cope effectively with challenges in the society where you find yourself.

It can be argued that entrepreneurship education is not a recent development in Nigeria. However, what is recent is over-emphasis and interest\_ this has generated in a couple of years back. Entrepreneurship education provides students with challenging educational activities, experiences that will enable them to develop the insight needed to discover, create and solve human survival threaten situations. It is a lifelong learning process which progresses through all levels of education.

Common observations proved that some levels of success have been recorded with respect to acquisition of desirable skills. This is because there are graduates of our technical schools, polytechnics and university who today live on the skills acquired from school. Such graduates never bothered to look for job but rather created job themselves. They are too few to be noticed and be made a point of reference. It implied that a lot still needs to be done. The fore going possibly prompted the thunderous voice and alarming attention the issue of entrepreneurship education is generating in the country right now.

In Nigeria, there is growing realisation that entrepreneur education if well channeled can ameliorate the pervasive existence of unemployable and redundant graduates (NUC, 2006). The pre-eminence of knowledge as a key resource for economic and social development has been widely recognized. Knowledge is pre-requisite to sustainable development Knowledge is a vital resource needed to leverage economic growth and also the instrument for balanced, equitable and sustainable development. It is for this reason that the National Universities

Commission (NUC) mandated all Nigerian universities to come up with Entrepreneur courses. It is delightful to inform that several of these universities (federal, state and private) have heeded the call. Basic elements of entrepreneur education include attitude formation, motivation for employment, market assessment, business plan development, basic accounting and business management.

It is puzzling to ask whether that alone will lead us to the promise land. The entrepreneur education presently given seems to lack good management and acceptable content (NUC2005)). The content and delivery of the course lack proper knowledge, preparation and 'attainment of the aimed goals and objectives. We require far more than mounting of courses for undergraduate students. Large number of our teeming population has no access to university education. These categories of students must be captured. There are people in the informal sector and semi-formal sector that equally require specialised training to make them self-employed, self-sustaining and employers of labour. We possibly will require a framework that will guide our formulation of intentions, planning strategies and implementation.

#### Documentation of Good Practices

Entrepreneur education was introduced in 1990 in Kenya. It is offered in universities, vocational and technical institutions. In Botswana, entrepreneur education is well entrenched. There is training centres known as Know About Business (KAB). Also, there is a recognised outfit called Learning for Life, Work and the Future (LLWF). At the school level, the following are put in place: vocational orientation of academic subjects; foundation skills applicable to work situations; relating the curriculum to the world of work and career guidance and counseling.

There are centrally developed curricula by various agencies. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council is responsible for curriculum development at the primary school and secondary school levels. National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB) is responsible for curriculum development at the technical school level.

The curriculum consists of four components:

- i) General education
- ii) Theory and related courses
- iii) Workshop practice
- iv) Industrial training/production work
- v) Small business management and entrepreneurial training

This provides the needed experience for entrepreneurial skills development.

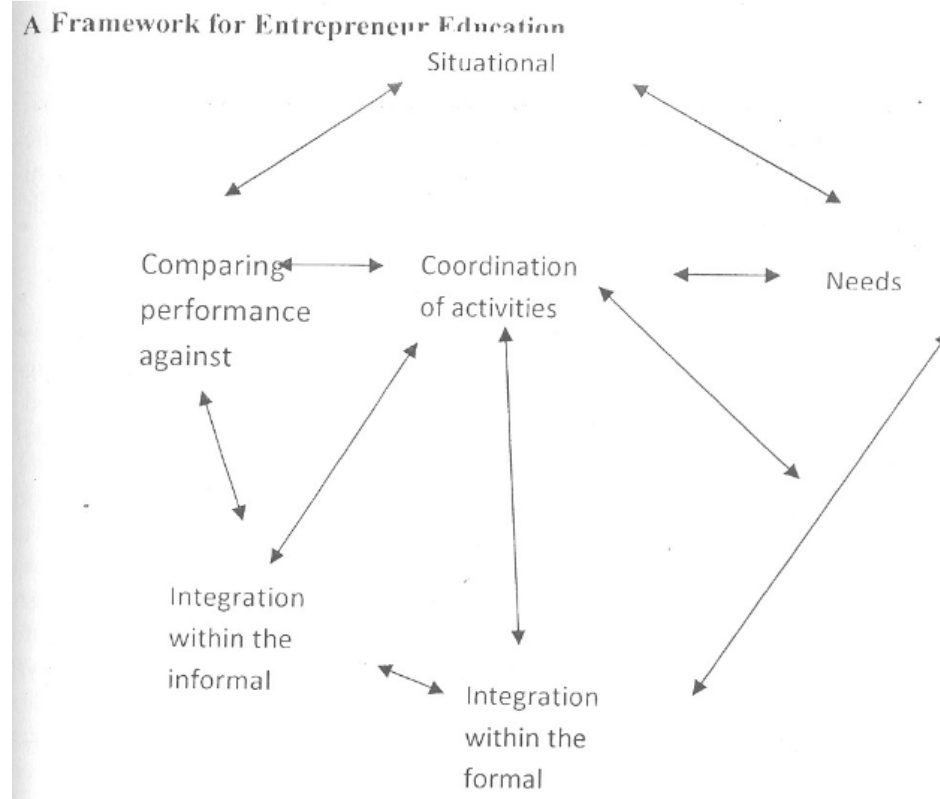
NABTEB is also responsible for regulation of activities (teaching, learning and testing). Examination under this body include technical and business examinations and award the National Technical Certificate (NTC), the National Business Certificate (NBC), the Advanced National Technical Certificate (ANTC) and Advance National Business Certificate (ANBC)/ Modular trade certificate. Length of course in a technical college, like other senior secondary schools is three years for the craft level (NTC/NBC) and one year for the advanced craft level (ANTC/ANBC) Modular Trade Certificate.

Trainees completing technical college programmes have three options:

- i) Secure employment either at the end of the whole course or after completing one or more modules of employable skill
- ii) Set up their own business and become self-employed and be able to employ others;

iii) Pursue further education in advance craft/ technical institutions such as science and technical colleges, polytechnics or colleges of education (technical) and universities.

There is increasing access to further education through university, polytechnics and college of education. Candidates have to choose among polytechnics, colleges of education and University of Technology.



Stakeholders' opportunity to deliberate on critical issues and components that will foster proper installation of entrepreneur education in Nigeria.

Stakeholders include academics of proven credentials, technocrats, industrial bigwigs, directors in the ministries and practitioners of various callings with track record of performance. They are to gather in a colloquium of this nature to critically analyse the situation on ground and suggest the way forward.

Needs Assessment

This will require experts in the field to examine the potentials in various disciplines identify and produce a strategic plan of action for possible adoption or adoption.

Integration within the Formal Education

The various regulatory agencies such as National universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education, National Commission of Colleges of education to mention but few will at this juncture convene parallel colloquium among its experts to integrate entrepreneurship into the various disciplines.

Integration within the Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education involves non-school settings. There are non-formal settings designed, to capture artisans and, interested members of the public. Synergy can be maintained between vocational and skills centres for the training and retraining of artisans and the development of technical competence of youths, acquisition of vocational and entrepreneurial skills for self-development and job creation. This could lead to award of certificate.

Comparing Performance against Acceptable Standard

The initiative currently championed should not be seen as conclusive. It is necessary to find out what is happening elsewhere or compare notes among countries. There are definitely some vital lessons to be learnt. Such good practices should be properly documented. At the appropriate time data base can be visited for possible adoption or adaptation as the situation warrants.

Coordination of Activities

A body is required to coordinate the various activities and harmonise for effective implementation. This body will receive feedback from various quarters. They should be responsible for planning and coordination of activities to harness exemplary practices and achievements. There is no policy that can actually stand the test of time. There should always be room for improvement. This stage provides platform for people to come together, deliberate and chart a new course. Entrepreneurial Education and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development can be interpreted in many different ways. Central to its definition is the need to balance varying, and often competing needs in the society. Sustainable development focuses on matching the diverse needs of all people with appropriate strategies to ensure promotion of personal wellbeing and creation of equal opportunity.

Nigeria today is the most populous black nation. Despite the oil wealth Nigeria is highly under-developed. According to USAID, 70% of Nigerians live on less than \$1 per day, and the average life expectancy is only 47 years. The country is presently faced with serious social and economic challenges with human development indicators among the world's lowest (appendix 1 refers). Majority of the population suffer from extreme poverty, poor infrastructural development and increasing unemployment opportunities.

The problems have accumulated over years and are begging for equal attention. They can hardly be tackled by any meaningful government in place. The panacea however is to equip every person with knowledge to confront these multifarious and multi-dimensional problems with double-edge sword. Entrepreneur is a key driver in this regards. It provides more opportunity to exercise creative freedoms, higher self-esteem and high sense of control over one's own life.

Recommendations

- There is need to integrate entrepreneurial skills in every school subjects at all levels
- Initiate a process for curriculum review.
- Maintain synergy between the school and the industry

- Establish a strong link between school and apprenticeship relationship.

## Conclusion

This paper started by operationally defining entrepreneurial education and provided a retrospective view of education in Nigeria. Attempt was made to critically analysed the 6-3-3-4 system of education and entrepreneurial education. The paper further discussed cases of good practices in some African countries and provided a framework that will improve the operational efficiency of entrepreneurial education in Nigeria.

It can be easily seen that the Nigerian educational system is the result of the effort of Christian missions, the British colonial administrators and Nigerian government. The quantity, quality, type, and level of Nigerian education is however shaped by Nigerian social, political and economic circumstances. The increasing enrolment in education (appendix 2-4 refers) is posing a daunting challenge to social and economic emancipation, most especially employment opportunities for the young people Okebukola (2006). A rethinking in the direction of entrepreneur education is the only plausible alternative for sustainable development in the country.



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## APPENDIX

**Table 1: 2007 World Bank ranking of economies**

Rank	Country	GDP (millions of \$)
*	World	54,347,038
1	United States	13,811,200
*	Eurozone	12,179,250
2	Japan	4,376,705
3	Germany	3,297,233
4	China (PRC)	3,280,053
5	United Kingdom	2,727,806
6	France	2,562,288
7	Italy	2,107,481
8	Spain	1,429,226
9	Canada	1,326,376
10	Brazil	1,314,170
11	Russia	1,291,011
12	India	1,170,968
13	South Korea	969,795
14	Mexico	893,364
15	Australia	821,716

**Table 2: Number of tertiary institutions in Nigeria (2008)**

Type of institution	Federal	State	Private	Total
Universities	27	33	34	94
Polytechnics/Monotechnics	53	46	16	115
Colleges of education	23	43	17	83
Total	103	122	67	292

Source: NUC, NBTE, NCCE

**Table 3: Students enrolment in Nigerian higher education institutions (2008)**

Type of institution	Enrollment
Universities	1,131,312
Polytechnics/Monotechnics	360,535
Colleges of Education	445,646
Total	1,937,493

Source: NUC, NBTE, NCCE