

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION FOR QUALITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The role of education in sustaining society cannot be overstated. Entrepreneurship education remains a reliable means for transmitting societal values and promoting economic growth within a nation. It is the bedrock of development in any society or nation. To this end, every society and nation has in the past given an important place to it as a means of transferring to the next generation the tools that would foster proper means of living and a peaceful society. And since society is changing by constantly evolving, admitting and manage innovations in the curriculum and delivery system. This response of entrepreneurship education to the dynamics in society with innovations is a sure way to ensure or enhance quality in the educational offerings to society. It is in the light of this that the paper was researched on. Other people's works were reviewed. Hence, the methodology includes conceptualizing constructs such as creativity and innovation in education, enhancing entrepreneurial creativity and innovation in tertiary education in Nigeria, Impact of entrepreneurial creativity and innovation in the economy of Nation. The paper concluded that entrepreneurship creativity and innovation is the foundation for ensuring quality entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Again, it suggested that institutions should build a strong culture of innovation and creativity in students. Also observing students with structured and innovative ideas should be recognize and rewarded to serve as a focal point to emulate by other students.

Keywords: *Creativity, Innovation, Entrepreneurship Education.*

Introduction

The educational system in Nigeria has passed through so many stages, be it formal or non-formal. To put it straight, every

society has a form of education. The education system differs from place to place and changes with time. It is equally a means of development. Education has no definite definition; it depends on the perspective from which one views it. Education refers to the discipline that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in a school or school-like environment (EduHutch, 2025). Before the advent of Western education, there was an indigenous type of education in Nigeria. However, modern education influences the country of its indigenous education to a very great extent. For example, Christian Education was promoted by the colonial masters to suit its purpose of colonization.

At some point, the purpose of education in Nigeria was changed to focus towards developing individuals to contribute to the development of the country and in preparation for self-government at its independence. After independence, a critical examination of the education was carried out and it was discovered that it was not adequate and satisfactory to the nation's expectations. There have been different changes and innovations to make the educational system relevant to the needs of Nigeria people. Some of these innovations would be discussed in this study, taken into cognizance those that took place in the last three decades (1991-2021). The Nigeria National Policy in Education published in 2013. The policy document was reviewed to ensure that the policies address the perceived needs of the government in power and to try to ensure that the education sector is supportive of government developmental goals. Following the democracy in the country, the government acknowledged the need to review and update the national policy on education once more to ensure that education system meets the needs of a new democracy in 1999 to be brief. National policy included two studies on the education sector. The first study, "A situation Analysis policy study (SAPA)" was conducted in cooperation with the United

Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF, 1992). The study was undertaken to analyse the factors that inhibit access to education and factors that affect the quality of education. this study was conducted between 1991 and 1992. The second was in 1999 to assess the learning achievements of Nigerian primary school children. The result indicates that children lacked basic numeracy and literacy competencies. The problem with policy changes in Nigeria is implementation. These problems could be removed through the following suggestions: There should be compulsory training for all teachers and instructors on changes in curriculum; Experts should be trained abroad or locally and recruited from abroad in disciplines where no qualified Nigerians are yet available. And last but not least, there is a need for a shift from theoretical certificate to practical knowledge necessary for the future and self-employment.

Creativity and Innovation in Education

Creativity is a process by which a symbolic domain in the culture is changed; on the other hand, innovation means adding new to an existing product or process (Isaac, 2015).

Creativity and innovation are integrated into entrepreneurial success. They empower entrepreneurs to discover opportunities, solve problems, differentiate themselves, adapt to change, continually improve and drive business growth. By embracing creativity and fostering an innovative mindset, entrepreneurs can build successful ventures in an ever-evolving business landscape.

Innovation encapsulates original invention, creative use, generation, admission and realization of new ideas, products, services and processes (OED, 2016). Innovation is a positive, planned and specific change that is initiated to facilitate the achievement of some defined goals. Educational innovation is planned changes in the educational objectives, policies, programs,

methods or practices within the intent of improving educational goals and achievements.

The educational department of the USA viewed innovation as a spark of insight that leads a scientist or inventor to investigate an issue or phenomenon. That insight is usually shaped by an observation of what appears to be true or a creative jolt of a new idea. Meanwhile, Room 241 Team (2018) expresses that invention is an overused term. It's a single word that encapsulates everything that is exciting in any industry, a goal to shoot for because it means a new idea and is almost magical.

Furthermore, they stressed that innovation in education is always seeking knowledge that will support new and unique ideas in instructional techniques that will reach the learners in more effective and exciting ways. Innovation in education is stepping outside of the box, challenging or methods and strategies in order to support the success of all learners as well as other people. This transformation may be small or a complete overhaul, but it is done with purpose and supports learners.

Entrepreneurial creativity and Innovation entrepreneurship means the study of an individual who coordinates, manages, interprets and controls an Enterprise with a view to making entrepreneurial profit. It is the ability to create and build a vision from practically nothing to something and an embodiment of calculated risk-taking, creativity and innovation.

Numerous scholars have acknowledged entrepreneurship as an important aspect of organizations and economics that contributes in an immeasurable way towards creating new jobs, alleviating poverty, wealth creation and a way of making an individual self-reliant (Babe, 2013, and Ojeifo, 2013).

Creativity has to do with the use of imagination or original ideas to create something; Innovation is crucial to the continuing success of any business Enterprise; Innovation is the method characteristic that allows a person to think outside the box, which

results in innovative or different approaches to a particular task. Entrepreneurial creativity and Innovation are tantamount to economic development.

Impact of Entrepreneurial Creativity and Innovation in the Economy of Nations

Creativity and innovation in entrepreneurship have led and will continue to lead the economic revolution that has proved repeatedly to improve the standard of living for people. Entrepreneurial creativity and innovation have helped to improve entrepreneurial activities, which have played a vital role in the nation's economy. the key role of entrepreneurship is significant contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Income (GNI), harnessing of local raw materials, employment creation, poverty reduction and alleviation, enhancement in standard of living, increase in per capital income, skill acquisition, advancement in technology and so on (Banabo, 2019)

Need for Entrepreneurial Education Program in Nigeria

Entrepreneurship education is a lifelong and work-based learning that prepares learners to be future business owners. Entrepreneurship education is considered a collection of formalized teachings that inform, educate and train anyone concerned with business establishment. Entrepreneurship education may also be defined as a pedagogical process which supports entrepreneurial activities, behaviors and outlook (HBRECK 2016). In this regard, he maintains that institutions of higher education should function as role models of sustainability with fairness in their own social, political and economic interactions. Entrepreneurship education prepares and builds persons to be responsible and enterprising individuals capable of deep entrepreneurial thinking that contribute to economic and sustainable development.

Lucas, Alekan and Odozi (2014) observed that entrepreneurship education plays numerous roles in the lives of individuals, including the nation, and these roles include:

1. Entrepreneurship education is a key driver to economic wealth, and a high majority of jobs are created by small businesses started by entrepreneurially minded individuals. Thus, it will make learners relevant in today's economy.
2. Entrepreneurship education positively impacts a learner at all levels in a wide number of contexts. This may explain why there are such a wide entrepreneurship education programs, all of which can provide important outcomes at various stages of a learner's life.
3. Entrepreneurship education also provides individuals with adequate training that will enable creativity and innovative, relevant skills acquisition, which encourage self-employment and self-reliance.
4. Entrepreneurship activities are real-life vehicle for developing academic skills. Hence, trained entrepreneurs are always empowered to tap into local resources in their immediate environments. This is a phenomenon that has been demonstrated in China, Japan, India and other emerging economies of the world.
5. Entrepreneurship enables employers to be more successful as a result of understanding the operations of small businesses and the problems of their boss.
6. Entrepreneurship education inculcates in learners the mentality of hard work, one of the keys to unlocking poverty doors and developing rural areas. Entrepreneurs are trained to work hard to be able to run the business profitably and successfully.
7. Entrepreneurship education provides a guide to empower the youth based on the belief that young people are themselves the best resources for promoting their development in meeting the challenges and solving the problems faced in today's world.

Innovation in the Nigerian Education System

Some of the innovations to improve the education system in Nigeria include the following:

1. *Universal Primary Education (UPE).*

One of the objectives of UPE at that time was to improve the management of the education system. A number of initiatives have also been taken as basic steps to improve access to education since 1990. Obasanjo's government relaunched Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999 as one of his top priorities. The re-launch of Universal Basic Education in 1999 is aimed at providing free universal basic education for all to enable all citizens to acquire appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative, manipulative and life skills. the intention was to provide nine years of compulsory education, which would be spent primary and secondary levels.

2. *Review of 6-3-3-4 to the new 9-3-4 system of education.*

In an attempt to find the best type of education for Nigerians after independence, the Federal Government of Nigeria identified the 6-3-3-4 system of education dates back to September 1969, during the International Literacy Day. The Federal Government stated that the program was conceived as an instrument of national unity and also to inject functionality into the Nigerian school system. The 6-3-3-4 was fashioned to provide graduates who would be able to make use of their hands, their heads, and in hearts. This program, however, was fully introduced in 1982 and continued into the 1990s.

3. *Distance Education and Open Learning.*

According to Omovo (2006), distance education is how the teacher is taken literally to the students. it is a teaching and learning process in which the students are separated from the

teachers by physical distance, which is often bridged by communication technologies. Distance education is a learner-centred education process, which means departing from the conventional teaching and learning culture to one which employs a wide range of tools to affect the learning process.

4. *Information Communication Technology.*

Nigeria as a nation has recognized the potential of information and communication technology in the school system. This is evidence in the educational reform policies aimed at integrating the use of ICT, particularly the computer, in the Nigerian school system. The first national program on ICT was the Federal Government's 1988 policy document, which is the national policy on education. That is the National policy on computer education (FME, 1988).

The documents emphasize the need for primary school pupils to be introduced to basic computer skills, the use of computers to facilitate learning and rudimentary use of test writing, computation and data entry. For secondary schools, the goals were as identified for primary schools, but to be pursued at the higher level. The addition was the organization of curriculum for secondary school students on computer education and the decision to use the Unity schools as the pilot institutions for computer education. The tertiary institutions were also required to teach computer science and subject discipline, and also integrate it into the school administration and instruction. Other components of the documents include equipment requirements, teacher training and specific recommendations on different tertiary institutions. However, as noted earlier, the implementation was not effective. The national policy on education, as reviewed in 1998 and 2004, reemphasized the need for integrating ICT in the Nigerian education system.

Enhancing Entrepreneurial Creativity and Innovation in Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Like all subjects in schools, the process of innovation and creativity in entrepreneurship requires a very crucial and strategic process in developing the curriculum and building the student mindset in entrepreneurship. The process does not necessarily mean that the student will jump from theoretical to the design stage. The student will need to start the innovative and creative process from an early stage in their educational career. Students from primary and secondary school must be encouraged to challenge themselves to be problem-solving oriented and develop a culture of creativity and collaboration. Among other strategies, teachers should be encouraged to adapt the following means in enhancing entrepreneurship education through creativity and innovation.

1. Enhance students' entrepreneurial personality characteristics and spirit through communication, collaboration and reflection. And this can be achieved through the following:

- i. Personal communication skills among student entrepreneurs should be regularly taught using paraphrasing and intensive listening tools.
- ii. Reinforce the philosophy that collaboration group behavior can achieve more results than individualism.
- iii. Support students to improve on their character traits by embracing their natural talents and gifts, enhancing and building on their strengths as well as improving on their weaknesses and capabilities.
- iv. Group collaboration and teamwork should be encouraged by associating with diversity in cultural and ethnicity trust is effective communication.

2. Build a strong culture of innovation and creativity with tertiary schools and this can be achieved by:

- i. Frequent exposure of students to terminologies like creativity, innovation, collaboration, customer focus and so on.
 - ii. Encourage students' participation in decisions and communications that affect them through adequate feedback and a participatory process.
 - iii. Recognize and reward deserving students who have distinguished themselves using entrepreneurial skills.
 - iv. Encourage domestication of ideas and skills in the immediate environment of the students. Basically, ideas of would-be entrepreneurs should be able to solve the problems of their immediate environment before thinking of the global stage.
3. Community involvement, this community involvement can be achieved through the following:
- i. Involve parents of students in the creativity process during career days workshops and other activities like alumni reunion.
 - ii. Parents and guidance with entrepreneurial jobs, vocations and professions should be encouraged to share their challenges and success factors through visits, blocks, University, Polytechnic, and college newsletters.
 - iii. Encourage communities to involve tertiary schools in their domain to share community problems with the students and the school community to profile solutions through creative and innovative thinking.

Conclusion: The entrepreneur is the litmus that determines and leads the innovative action and process in the school of creativity and innovation. Through the leadership competencies and skills, entrepreneurs activate, focus and accelerate the expected results. As a result of poverty and unemployment in Africa (Nigeria), the desired outcome is always financial and wealth-oriented. The outcome should be contributing to a society that is driven by

equitable wealth distribution that is driven by equitable wealth distribution through quality education, peaceful coexistence, and personal striving for success. This is the key essence of entrepreneurial education, the way to a reassuring future. And it is up to teachers/lecturers and educators in general to build the future generation in this much-needed shift.

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