

Push and pull factors for entrepreneurship education alongside other disciplines in Nigerian universities

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Abstract: Entrepreneurship education has become recognized so much that it is now a compulsory course/programme in the Nigerian universities. In the same vein, besides establishing an academic department for entrepreneurship education, universities have, in addition, entrepreneurship incubation centres. This paper examines the need for institutionalizing entrepreneurship education alongside the traditional disciplines in the Nigerian universities. The study adopts a review method in examining what has been done in this knowledge area. Aside conceptualizing entrepreneur and entrepreneurship, the study identified the categorization of the latter concept into Opportunity-driven, Necessity-driven, Innovation-driven, Small medium, High-growth, technology-enabled, venture capital-backed. Findings show the push Factors for entrepreneurship training in Nigerian universities include the Dynamic nature of the society, Unemployment phenomenon, Economic Downturn in LDCs, Equipping the students/learners with innovative skills, Inculcate Trial-and-Error orientation in the learners, and Preparing students to tackle unexpected future situation. On the other hand, the following pull factors for entrepreneurship training in universities were identified, Charting viable entrepreneurial skills for the modern students, Non-challant attitude of youths towards acquiring traditional education, Mismatch between graduate skills and industry needs, Unrealistic curriculum of educational system in LDCs, Need for Formulation of viable and systematic programmes for ameliorating unwanted outcome of societal transformation and Need for enhanced ways and means of operations in human endeavours. The study concludes that the intrenchment of entrepreneurship education in the tertiary institutions is imperative particularly in the less developed countries (LDCs) with their peculiar socio-economic challenges, which tend to hinder the pace of their development.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, pull, push, university, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Evolution coupled with constant change permeates our existence and all human creations such as the organizations and institutions of learning around the globe. The case of higher institutions of learning particularly the universities and polytechnics, resulting from human ingenuities, are traditionally created towards encouraging (or subjecting) human beings to acquire knowledge, skills and flavour for critical thinking and improvements in our wellbeing and that of the society.

The pursuit of education is not just for the sake of acquiring knowledge but it should be accompanied with “welfare of the individuals so as to bring happiness in their lives,” the purposefulness of education, as held by Aristotle (cited in Maheshwari, 2016). Furthermore, Socrates and Plato (cited in Maheshwari, 2016) hold broad-based view on essence of education that accomplishment of knowledge is imperative for the interest of individuals in particular but also for the interest of the society at large. These views emphasize the fact that education should be laced with expertise of critical thinking for innovations beneficial to individuals and the society. But how do we ensure this without inculcating in students the basic ideas of innovation and risk taking (basic physiognomies of innovators) by institutionalizing entrepreneurship education alongside other disciplines in the universities.

As it were, our world, the environment and situations are very dynamic; evolving and changing at some unimaginable pace. Hence, the need for leaders of thought, policy makers and other people in the helm of our affairs in the society to always accept the need for changes from the traditional ways and means of carrying on our endeavours and activities from time to time as the situation demands.

Basically, the ordinary citizens, outside the helm of affairs, have been making concerted efforts in creating products and services, through technology and innovations, towards enhancing our existence. The basic issue at this juncture is: *how do we cajole and encourage people to keep on advancing technological usages and innovations in the face of daunting challenges confronting human race?* Hence, the need for institutionalizing entrepreneurship education alongside the traditional disciplines in the citadels of learning.

To this end, there abound some compelling reasons for institutionalizing the entrepreneurship education *pari passu* with other disciplines in our citadels of learning around the world particularly in the less developed countries (LDCs). Such compelling whys and wherefores for institutionalizing entrepreneurship education in our universities for all students regardless of their disciplines, is the subject of this discourse.

2. Conceptualization of Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship now permeates all facets of human endeavours in diverse areas such as technology, agriculture, entertainment, fashion, communication, and other modern socio-economic endeavours. But then, who is an entrepreneur? Besides, what is entrepreneurship? An array of expositions on entrepreneur and entrepreneurship is presented herein for discussion in relation to its imperative as a compulsory general course for all students in citadels of learning.

In some perspectives, entrepreneur refers to a person who identifies commercial opportunities and innovates to create unique goods, services or an improvement on existing goods, services or firms (Kirzner, 1997; Shane, 2003; Deakins & Freel, 2006; Sikalich, 2010). Generally, entrepreneurs evolve new business or combinations in the face of risk and uncertainty towards generating profit and growth. Hence, aspects that differentiate entrepreneurs from ordinary business owners include but not limited to *opportunity recognition, innovation, and non-risk averse*. Relatedly, entrepreneurs serve as agents of change; provide creative and innovative ideas for business enterprises; and help businesses grow and become profitable. Hence, the act of being an entrepreneur “is the ability to create and build a vision from practically nothing”, thus, being enterprising (Sikalich, 2010).

Furthermore, an exposition on it by Schumpeter (1965) cited in Eroğlu & Piçak (2011) holds that “entrepreneurs as individuals who exploit market opportunity through technical and/or organizational innovation.” Relatedly, Bolton and Thompson (2000) explain that an entrepreneur is “a person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognized value around perceived opportunities.” Furthermore, Hisrich (1990) cited in Eroğlu & Piçak (2011) espouses that an entrepreneur refers to “someone who demonstrates initiative and creative thinking, is able to organize social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical account and accepts risk and failure”. In related terms, Knight (1921) and Drucker (1970) cited in Eroğlu & Piçak (2011), simply see entrepreneurship as all about taking risk.

Entrepreneurship is also espoused as an activity that is embedded in *discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities* to introduce new goods and services, through organising efforts (processes, markets) that previously had not existed (Venkataraman, 1997; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) cited in Mbhele (2012). Peneder (2009) posts that the act of “entrepreneurship either enhances the allocative efficiency for given ends and means or drives the dynamic performance of the system through the progressive creation of new products, processes or markets.”

Entrepreneurship is the process of business creation while building and scaling it to make a profit. The more modern entails transforming the world by solving big problems. Like creating an innovative product or bringing about social change those contests the status quo of how we live our daily lives. Entrepreneurship involves what people do to take their career and dreams into their hands and lead it in the direction they want. It is about building a life on one's terms without bosses or restricting schedules and without inhibitions. Entrepreneurs can take the first step into making the world a better place – for everyone in it, including themselves (Ferreira, 2021).

An entrepreneur is a person who sets up a business with the aim to make a profit. Ferreira (2021) believes that the entrepreneur means involves much more than being a business or job creator; they are some of the world's most powerful transformers. Entrepreneurs see solutions and possibilities where the average person only sees problems and annoyances. Entrepreneurs take action.

An entrepreneur recognises a need that no existing businesses addresses and finds a solution for that need. Entrepreneurial activity includes developing and launching new businesses and marketing them, often with the

end goal of selling the business to turn a profit (Freedman, 2021).

In yet another view, entrepreneurship is also seen as “an activity which leads to the creation and management of a new organisation designed to pursue a unique, innovative opportunity” (Hindle & Rushworth, 2000). In this respect, enterprise is an outcome of entrepreneurship, i.e. the organization created is an enterprise. However, to other people, entrepreneurship is fundamentally, about using enterprise to create new business, and “can-do” organisations and services. This implies that “enterprise is a means of entrepreneurship” (Sikalieh, 2010).

To this end, it is appropriate to say that entrepreneurs focus on utilizing novel skills that characterize creation of innovative products, services and facilities that enhance the economic growth and development. Innovation is imperative in entrepreneurship and therefore, entrepreneurs are essentially innovators. He or she specializes in assuming peculiar responsibility and formulating crucial choices bordering on the utilization of productive resources. Impliedly, this view incorporates inherent characteristics of the entrepreneurship such as *risk, uncertainty, innovation, perception, and change* (Aulet & Murray, 2013).

Relatedly, it is important to recognize that entrepreneurial activities involve “coordination, arbitrage, ownership, speculation, innovation, and resource allocation.” (Hebert & Link, 1989; Bolton & Thompson, 2000; Diandra & Azmy, 2020). Basically, innovation requires skillful talent focusing on corporate model, process, and technology for business enhancement, which is opposed to the focus on “revenue, cash flow, and jobs over time” (Aulet & Murray, 2013).

There are different kinds of entrepreneurship as identified by some scholars (Gries & Naudé, 2011; Baptista, Karaöz & Mendonça, 2013; Aulet & Murray, 2013; Barot, 2015; Welter, Baker, Audretsch & Gartner, 2016; Jinjiang, Nazari, Yingqian & Ning, 2020; Diandra & Azmy, 2020). Accordingly, categorization of entrepreneurship is elucidated as follows.

1. *Opportunity-driven entrepreneurship* wherein a person identifies a commercial prospect and nurtures it for his/her occupational path, which involves originating business undertaking based on “new idea and personal amplifications”;
2. *Necessity-driven entrepreneurship* wherein the person engages in it for want of choice (compulsion) resulting from unemployment, as an instance, in order to earn a livelihood due to the absence of alternative personal engagement and not for the “value of entrepreneurship.”
3. *Innovation-driven entrepreneurship* wherein the person cherishes innovative knowledge about business with intention of reaching for the “global opportunities.”
4. *Small medium entrepreneurship* concentrating on local markets using traditional means devoid of global reach and enjoying only “low competitive advantage.”
5. *High-growth, technology-enabled, venture capital-backed business* focusing on “technology business and growth” with the intent of generating significant amount of revenue and return while churning countless number of job opportunities, and timely delivery of products as well as facilities that are far reaching in value chain in the molds of *Microsoft, Beta (Facebook), Yahoo, Google, Apple, Amazon, Uber, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Samsung*, among others.

3. Push Factors for Entrepreneurship Training in Universities

The precipitative factors necessitating the entrepreneurial training alongside other disciplines in universities are identified and discussed as follows.

1. *The Dynamic nature of the society*: -It has been observed that there are some discernible implications of the dynamic nature of the society such that: it is always in the process of change; change is occurring at snowballing rhythm, and the progression of such swift incessant transformation is decidedly reshaping the character of the society. *How then can we cope with the dictates of such unpredictable and unpleasant phenomenal changes in our society?* Hence, the need for entrepreneurship education to be imparted alongside the traditional disciplines for all students/leaners in the universities. This is to ensure that graduates can come up with innovative measures with which to cope with such

scenarios in the society.

2. *Unemployment phenomenon:* - The phenomenal rate of unemployment in all economies around the world is endemic. The situation in respect of unemployment in the less developed countries (LDCs) is more worrisome. Many factors are responsible for this ugly situation. Such factors include: declining industrial undertakings; decay in infrastructures; of retrenchment of workers from both the public and private sectors in recent years owing to some obvious reasons; decline in usage of manual operations in the industries; and poor performance of graduates arising from inferior skills acquired from university education, among others. Hence, the need to prepare modern graduates for innovative ideas and self-employment after graduation.

3. *Economic Downturn in LDCs:* - This arises from the impact of the global economic recession and glut in the primary commodity markets for export commodities of the less developed countries as well as low demand for the hydrocarbon products (petroleum or crude oil). The combined effect manifests in meagre foreign exchange earnings from low exports and cash crunch for the third world economies. To ameliorate such economic situation, the hard-hit countries resorted to pragmatic measure by subjecting the students in their citadels of learning to the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. This is aimed at making them to be meaningfully engaged and contribute their quota towards sustaining such countries' economies.

4. *Equipping the students/learners with innovative skills:* - There is imperative need for the students in all disciplines in the universities to be exposed to innovative skills besides learning the traditional courses to acquire critical thinking skills. The students or learners in the citadels of learning need to be equipped with the practical skills as well as expertise with which they can create products and services, and innovative on existing ones, during the course of studies and after graduation.

5. *Inculcate Trial-and-Error orientation in the learners:* - The students or learners in the citadels of learning also need to be made to develop instincts for engaging in trial-and-error activities particularly during their formative years so as to imbibe the culture of taking risks, which is the hallmark of entrepreneurship. This involves making them to "think out of the box" because necessity, as the cliché goes, is the mother of invention, and economic survival in life is not a roller coaster. Relatedly, given the fact that the society is evolving with inherent vicissitudes, the socio-economic leaders of our future should be equipped with the necessary expertise with which to make some innovative impact in the society.

6. *Preparing students to tackle unexpected future situation:* - In relation to the point above, there is the need also for the students or learners to be equipped with the necessary creative skills that ensure their survival and that of the society. A society that does not create or innovate cannot stand the test of time. In order to ensure that the society regenerates to guarantee its survival, the students who are the future shakers and movers of all human endeavours should be exposed to required innovative skills.

4. Pull factors for entrepreneurship training in universities

There are also exogenous factors that call for entrepreneurial training alongside other disciplines in the universities, which are considered below.

1. *Charting viable entrepreneurial skills for the modern students:* - It has become necessary for the universities particularly in the LDCs to inculcate the entrepreneurial skills in modern students or learners. The essence of charting such skills for the modern students is just for the purpose of self-employment but to encourage them into being inventive in respect of creating new products, facilities, and services. It is also aimed at inspiring them towards innovation on existing products and services as well as establishing enterprises that will provide job opportunities for other people in the society.

2. *Non-challant attitude of youths towards acquiring traditional education:* - The youths of these days have been known to be averse to the acquisition of the traditional knowledge through teaching of traditional disciplines. They are in most cases, interested in what will challenge their inquisitiveness and ingenuity. Hence, the teaching of entrepreneurship in universities alongside other disciplines will bring out their innate talents and inventiveness for innovative creativity, which will result in novel products, facilities and services for the welfare of the citizenry and defined progress of the society at large.

3. *Mismatch between graduate skills and industry needs*: - Related to the above point is the prevailing mismatch between graduate skills and industry need. This arises largely from lack of motivation for the students to take the conventional disciplines in good strides. Therefore, the teaching of entrepreneurship in addition to other disciplines serves as incentive for the students since they use such new knowledge to create novel products, facilities, services and innovate on existing ones. Invariably, they are equipped with new creative skills for the industry and establishing their own businesses as well.

4. *Unrealistic curriculum of educational system in LDCs*: - The scenario on the educational curriculum in less developed countries (LDCs) is such that what is being taught to the students right from the foundation level to secondary and tertiary levels is very unsuitable and do not align with their peculiar socio-economic situations. Some countries rushed to adapt the American system of curriculum for their educational systems without considering the momentous implications on their sociological dictates. In order to copy all that is American, we jettisoned the British curriculum, which is very ideal for developing economies. Furthermore, adapting an alien system without having the rudimentary ideas on how to make it work would result in disastrous fallouts for new environment. Hence, there is the need for the entrepreneurship education to be instituted alongside the conventional disciplines so as to provide mollifying measure for the students.

5. *Need for Formulation of viable and systematic programmes for ameliorating unwanted outcome of societal transformation*: - Realizing that the perceived mismatch between the skills of modern graduate and industry need can open some can worms for the society in terms of uprising in social ills and economic sabotage, Nigeria, for instance, took the policy move to entrench entrepreneurship education in the universities. In order to encourage the graduates to engage in entrepreneurial undertakings, the government in the country also instituted supportive measures such as financial incentives in recent years. The case is not just providing entrepreneurial education or training but financial support is also available for startups and development of enterprises arising from creativity and innovation by the graduates and youths.

6. *Need for enhanced ways and means of operations in human endeavours*: - In the evolution of the society, change in ways and means of operations in all human endeavours holds sway. Both ordinary and sophisticated improvements in our operations in respect of all human activities over time had characterized the quest of human beings, which differentiate us from the animals. Therefore, in order to keep the trend students in universities should be exposed to defined creative skills for more sophisticated improvements in the ways and means of carrying out our operations. This does not obviate the teaching of conventional knowledge inherent in traditional disciplines; manipulating such knowledge for creative and innovate purposes is what entrepreneurship entails.

5. Conclusion

The entrenchment of entrepreneurship education in the citadels of learning is imperative particularly in the less developed countries (LDCs) with their peculiar socio-economic challenges, which tend to hinder the pace of their development. The acquisition of such training by the students or learners at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in such countries' universities is germane. This is because it has the effect of engendering entrepreneurial conviction, which enhances innovation, creativity, non-risk averse attitude, application of modern technological advancement, generation of job opportunities, and economic transformation, among other others.

It is hereby recommended that such training should be practical oriented in order to generate some desired impact on the psyche of the youths. Furthermore, the policy measures instituted by some governments in LDCs towards making available financial support for graduates should be implemented religiously so as to engender entrepreneurial startups and development. It is also relevant that the government through the apex banks in such countries, introduce lease financing of business opportunities for the youths in order to obliterate the possibility of funds diversion.

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