

## **Promoting Entrepreneurship Education at the Senior Secondary School Level in North Central Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

The paper focused on enhancing entrepreneurship education in senior secondary schools in the north central Nigeria. The present scenario of the entrepreneurship education at this level was reviewed. Major challenges confronting schools are also reviewed. Some of these challenges include inadequate sufficient and skilled manpower, hasty preparations by government and lack of practical facilities. Strategies for ameliorating the challenges were also discussed. These include, among others, relevant teachers should be committed and adopt social constructivist approach to teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education. It was recommended that Government of Nigeria should allow foreign investors into the country to pave way for more entrepreneurial practices. Enterprise colleges should be established, aimed at fostering specific skills required for entrepreneurship to serve as skill acquisition centers for the youths.

**Key words;** Entrepreneurship, Education, Social, Constructivists, Strategies

### **Introduction**

A good number of students who have completed their secondary education but could not secure admission into vocational and technology related institutions of higher learning are in dilemma in Nigeria. This is because they were not equipped with the requisite skills for self or paid employment during their senior secondary school education (Igwe, 2007). The clamor now is the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum (NSSSC) which would produce well equipped secondary School graduates for tertiary institutions and for the

world of work (Nigeria Education Research and Development Council, NERDC 2016). Federal government of recent compelled every senior secondary student to offer in addition to the major subjects, one entrepreneurship subject towards the acquisition of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, special skills and experiences by an individual for effective conquering and adaptation to his environment. According to Anyakoha (2009), entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students

with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings.

Entrepreneurship education is offered at all levels of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate university programs. This inevitable education is best attained through cogent strategies. That is the role played by schools, teachers, parents, communities, youths, non-governmental agencies (NGO) goes a long way in enhancing entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level. Strategies therefore, imply the measures or techniques that could be used to promote entrepreneurship education. To promote entrepreneurship simply means to enhance it for a meaningful development. Entrepreneurship can provide new division and it can make good students for world of work. In a similar vein, Charlie (2013) has explained that ultimately, entrepreneurship training is designed to teach one the skills and knowledge needed to know before embarking on a new business venture.

The findings concerning entrepreneurship education in the metropolitan area of Kaduna state senior secondary schools by Maxwell, Falola, Ibidunni, and Inelo (2014) indicate that the aspects of business education which features entrepreneurship education is not consistent with the goal of the development of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes in secondary school

leavers. The study further found out that the present entrepreneurship program in the sample schools covers the required content but the method of teaching was not practical oriented and was void of real life situations. Thus the program was not effective at motivating secondary school students to start their own businesses. Consequently, Arvanites, Glasgo, and Stumpf (2011) shared that innovative educational methods are needed to develop the entrepreneurial spirit and talents that are necessary to function effectively in an environment of strong market forces and complex people issues. For entrepreneurship education to be most useful, it must address and develop in students, the skills necessary for an entrepreneur. These skills seem lacking in the secondary school graduate which is a matter of concern to the writers. The need therefore arise to appraise the challenges and scenario as well as the strategies for promoting entrepreneurship education geared towards acquisition of entrepreneurial skills at the senior secondary Schools (SSS) in North central Nigeria. The following issues would be discussed in regards;

- Present scenario of entrepreneurship education at the secondary school levels
- Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education at the secondary school level
- Strategies for Ameliorating the entrepreneurship challenges in the Senior Secondary School Level in North Central Nigeria

### **Present scenario of entrepreneurship education at the secondary school levels**

The present scenario of entrepreneurship education at the secondary school levels in north central Nigeria is based understood in terms of its specific objectives, curriculum implementation, curriculum issues, teaching method and attitude of stake holders. The major goal of entrepreneurship education according to Maxwell, Falola, Ibidunni, and Inelo (2014), is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment among the citizens through the inculcation of entrepreneurial knowledge, competences and attitudes in the learners. Akudolu (2001) affirms that the goal of entrepreneurship education is for learners to acquire entrepreneurial capacities and skills that will make them to be self-reliant and self-employed. Entrepreneurial capacities include the ability to take risks, create opportunities and resources, manifest undaunted commitment to a goal, cope with change and generally act with entrepreneurial mindset. To achieve the major goal of entrepreneurship education, Akudolu (2010) asserted that there is the need to ensure that instructional activities are directed towards the achievement of the following specific objectives.

- i. Demonstrate awareness about entrepreneurship.
- ii. Create entrepreneurial ventures.

- iii. Demonstrate ability to act entrepreneurially in different aspects of life.
- iv. Manifest positive attitude towards changes in life endeavours.
- v. Demonstrate self-worth and self-reliance irrespective of daunting challenges.
- vi. Analyze their strengths and weaknesses and be able to take advantage of their strengths while making effort to overcome the identified weaknesses.
- vii. Recognize their entrepreneurial interests and capability.
- viii. Demonstrate self-management and take responsibility for themselves and their activities.
- ix. Engage in lifelong learning so as to manage and enjoy innovations.
- x. Identify and exploit business opportunities.

Lesko (2010) opined that for learners from ages of 14 and above, the objectives of entrepreneurship education should be to raise students' awareness of self-employment and entrepreneurship as options for their future career. A swift action is required for the achievement of those stated objectives through an effective strategy for curriculum implementation at the senior secondary school level.

In an effort to achieve the implementation of the entrepreneurship education in the secondary schools in Nigeria, Federal Government compelled all the senior secondary school students to offer one

compulsory entrepreneurship education course in addition to the core cross-cutting subjects. The overview of the senior secondary school curriculum consists of group of five compulsory, core cross-cutting subjects namely English Language, General Mathematics, Computer Studies/ICT, Civic Education, and Trade & Entrepreneurship and four distinct fields of study to include Science/Mathematics, Humanities, Technology and Business Studies, and elective subjects Plateau State Universal Basic Education Board (PSUBEB, 2015). Musibau, Amanda, Sa'adat, and Nkam (2016) asserted that limited time allotted for the entrepreneurship education on the school time table constitutes a major problem in teaching and learning. However, NERDC (2016) e-curriculum presents the list of New Senior Secondary education curricula for entrepreneurship to include 34 trade and entrepreneurship subjects which are; Air Conditioning Refrigerator, Animal Husbandry, Auto Body repair and spray painting, Auto Electrical work, Auto Mechanical work, Auto Parts merchandising, Block laying, Brick Laying and Concrete Work, Book Keeping, Carpentry and Joinery, Catering and Craft Practice, Cosmetology, Data Processing & Radio, TV and electrical work, Dying and Bleaching, Electrical Installation and Maintenance Work, Fisheries, Furniture Making, Garment Making, GSM maintenance, Keyboarding, Leather Goods Manufacturing and

Repair, Machine woodworking, Marketing, Mining, Painting and Decoration, Photography, Plumbing and pipe fitting, Printing Craft Practice, Salesmanship, Store Keeping, Textile Trade, Tourism, Upholstery, and Welding & fabrication Engineering Craft Practice.

The present scenario in terms of teaching methodology is not encouraging as stated in the findings of Maxwell, Falola, Ibidunni, and Inelo (2014). The study found out that the present entrepreneurship program in the sample schools in kaduna state covers the required content but the method of teaching was not practical oriented and was void of real life situations. The study further found out that neither practical facilities nor workshop is available for the implementation of the entrepreneurship course. The course is therefore being taught only in theory. The theoretical aspect is not sufficient for actual self-sustainability of the students upon graduation. Thus the program was not effective at motivating secondary school students to start their own businesses.

Furthermore, teaching of entrepreneurship education in the senior secondary school in north central Nigeria is still the teacher centered method as against social constructivism. According to Elena, (2014), traditional pedagogy is frequently in contrast to the needs of entrepreneurial education. Teaching entrepreneurial courses emphasized the used of social constructivist

approach instead. The essential core of social constructivism is that learners actively construct their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences. The teacher as a guide metaphor indicates that the teacher is to motivate, provide examples, discuss, facilitate, support, and challenge, but not to attempt to act as a knowledge conduit. Unfortunately, this principle of constructivism is not being practice in teaching of the subject in question in SSS. It is against this backlog that NERDC (2016) e-curriculum emphasizes the shift from the teacher centered to social constructivists approach where the teacher only guides the learners to discover and solve problems and not him solving it. The attitude of stake holders is not left aside as it affects the entrepreneurship education of the learners.

Various stake holders are supposed to compliment the effort of the Government by providing both adequate and efficient human and material resources for the smooth take off of the entrepreneurship education at the senior secondary school level. Unfortunately, such aids by stakes holders are nowhere to be found in the secondary schools (Maxwell, Falola, Ibidunni, & Inelo 2014). Government alone cannot provide the require facilities for this programme as others are on the pipeline too. Another discouraging scenario at this level as asserted by Unachukwu (2009) is that the community does not patronize the local entrepreneurship products

produced by the students. Instead, foreign products from china are being patronized which will demoralized the effort of entrepreneurs.

The necessary drive for an entrepreneur is not there and this leads to poor performance in entrepreneurship. Supporting this view is the assertion by Unachukwu, (2009) that an average entrepreneur is rugged and aggressive. This is in line with the old believed that entrepreneurs are mostly “out of schools”. Hence, secondary students pay less interest to the entrepreneurial practices in the school because of the stigmatization attached. In view of the present scenario of entrepreneurship education in the senior secondary schools, different challenges abounds.

#### **Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education at the secondary school level**

The Federal Government directive for immediate introduction of entrepreneurship education in all secondary schools in the country, including the universities has not only aggravated numerous problems confronting the country’s ivory towers, but has also created new challenges. These challenges in the North central include, but not limited to the following:

1. ***Number of Sufficient Skilled Manpower-*** the northern secondary schools do not have adequate and high level manpower for effective teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in the country. As was earlier discussed,

North in general has been known for its' educational backwardness. The available teachers were drafted from those whom have acquired vocational skills in the colleges of education and have not gotten additional skills to cope with the challenges of the new curriculum. Therefore, the expected products of the new entrepreneurship education may not perform any miracles if they are taught by the same old teachers. Arvanites et al (2011) has noted that traditional models of education fall short in their ability to link the knowledge and concepts covered in the classroom to the skills and practice of entrepreneurship.

2. **Curriculum issues:** SSS entrepreneurship education curriculum is yet to gain momentum as it is just at the implementation level. Access to genuine text books and other teaching and learning materials are quite difficult since the programme is just beginning (Unachukwu, 2009). Entrepreneurship demands a talented workforce but our system of education fails to provide the necessary foundation for such a work force. Our secondary schools up to the tertiary level presently do not have a well-developed curricular that emphasizes initiatives to increase accountability in entrepreneurship education.

3. **Student related matters.** The necessary drive for entrepreneurship education is not in the students and this leads to poor performance in the subject. Supporting this view is the assertion by Unachukwu, (2009) that an average entrepreneur is rugged and

aggressive. This is in line with the old believed that entrepreneurs are mostly "out of schools". Hence, secondary students pay less interest to the entrepreneurial practices in the school because of the stigmatization attached.

4. **Poor facilities:** The poor state of infrastructure in northern secondary schools is worrisome as the new entrepreneurship education will only worsen the situation. Obeleagu-Nzelibe and Moruku (2010) in regards noted that the state of infrastructure in Nigerian university system is, to say the least, embarrassing. This is worst at the secondary school levels. Though the government directed for immediate commencement of entrepreneurship studies in all secondary schools, no special funds have been made to the secondary schools in lieu of the new responsibilities. New classroom blocks, workshops, laboratories, books, academic journals, teachers, computers, among other materials are required for successful prosecution of the new programme.

5. **Instructional method:** Maxwell, Falola, Ibidunni, and Inelo (2014) found out that the present entrepreneurship program in the sample schools in Kaduna State covers the required content but the method of teaching was not practical oriented and was void of real life situations. The study further found out that neither practical facilities nor workshop is available for the implementation of the entrepreneurship course. The course is

therefore being taught only in theory. The theoretical aspect is not sufficient for actual self-sustainability of the students upon graduation. Thus the program was not effective at motivating secondary school students to start their own businesses. Furthermore, teaching of entrepreneurship education in the senior secondary school in north central Nigeria is still the teacher centered method as against social constructivism and ASEI (Activity, Student-Centred, Experiment and Improve) method of teaching (Naomi, 2011). According to Elena, (2014), traditional pedagogy is frequently in contrast to the needs of entrepreneurial education. Teaching entrepreneurial courses emphasized the use of social constructivist approach instead.

**6. Economic Pressure from Parents:** There is often great pressure from some Nigerian parents who prefer their children making money in the short term over long term benefits of education. This makes it difficult for the secondary school students at their age to devote enough time required for training in entrepreneurship. It is also as a result of such pressures that Nigeria is faced with a high rate of child labour without any skill in entrepreneurship.

**7. Government policies:** The government directive for immediate commencement of the programme is appreciated as it underscores the importance attached to it, yet preparations before the

commencement were hasty. There should have been provisions for a pilot scheme in some selected secondary schools before full scale implementation country wide. The introduction was similar to that of the Universal Basic Education, UBE, by the Obasanjo regime with the obvious consequent problems. Government of Nigeria has also failed to create a conducive, economically and a politically friendly environment for the smooth take off of the entrepreneurship education in the north central Nigeria. Government policies towards monitoring and evaluation of entrepreneurship education in the secondary schools seems also very slacked (Ngerem & Ngozi, 2016). The idea of fusing entrepreneurship education in the secondary school is not well appreciated by the author.

**8. School related issues:** Various schools in the northern part of country are yet to introduce and implement school based enterprises where students identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business using the school as mini-incubators (Mustapha & Umaru, 1998). Most of the schools in Nigeria including the north are yet to fully implement the entrepreneurship in the class (Nwachukwu, 2009). Insufficient time allotted to entrepreneurship education on the school time table is another challenge affecting the smooth acquisition of the appropriate entrepreneurship skills as asserted by (Ajagbe *et al.*, 2016).

The following are the most important obstacles facing rapid entrepreneurial development according to Sunday (2012). These challenges are applicable in the secondary school too.

- ❖ Rampant political and bureaucratic corruption together with the absence of social consensus on important macroeconomic policy issues.
- ❖ Absence of regulatory mechanisms for effective oversight of enterprise development initiatives, especially those in the MSME space.
- ❖ The presence of administrative and trade barriers that curtail capacity building and inhibit access to technical support.
- ❖ Significant infrastructural deficits (especially with regards to roads and electricity) and systematic irregularities inimical to small businesses.
- ❖ Absence of a pro-active regulatory environment that encourages innovative enterprise development at the grassroots level.

Therefore, teachers, schools, parents, communities, youths, NGOs and government can enhance the programme through different strategies. These strategies are discussed below for clarity.

#### **Strategies for ameliorating the entrepreneurship challenges in the Senior Secondary School Level in North Central Nigeria**

In other to ameliorate the entrepreneurship education challenges

in senior secondary school level in the north central of Nigeria, it is paramount for concerned stake holders to play their roles as expected. These basic strategies should include:

**Teachers' commitment:** In issues concerning entrepreneurship education, the central focus is usually on students (Hynes & Richardson, 2007). Since the success of enterprise programmes depends on the level of the teachers' commitment, knowledge, skills, and attitudes then teachers need to leave up to their responsibilities as their opinions will intentionally or otherwise be passed onto the students. The teacher of entrepreneurship education should ensure that practice and theories are congruent so that teaching will be effective. A non-entrepreneur and entrepreneurship educator who does not have genuine first-hand experience in, for example, commercializing science, should not educate in this space as opined by Fayolle (2008); Bennett, (2006) and Elena, (2014).

**Curriculum restructuring:** Curriculum designers particularly NERDC on their part should restructure and develop entrepreneurship internship programmes matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programmes. Adequate and appropriate provision of curriculum content that would cater for the students and community needs is highly recommended. In other to meet



the programme specific objectives, the content should not be design haphazardly. It is hoped that when the strategies discussed above are accorded the needed priority by the respective agencies, the beneficiaries of the programme will have a course to smile at the end of the tunnel.

***Student cooperation:*** Learners on their own should put in extra effort towards acquiring the appropriate skills. This can be done after school hours or during holidays by going to observe and practice what some entrepreneurs are doing within their locality that are of benefit to self, society and are related to what they are learning in the school. They should downplay the old idea that vocational skills are only for the dropouts. That stigmatization shouldn't weigh them down. In a nut shell, learners should develop positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education.

***Improvement on facilities:*** For any meaning skill acquisition, there must be practical facilities in terms of tools, equipment, laboratory and workshop. Special funds should therefore be made available to the secondary schools in lieu of the new responsibilities. New classroom blocks, workshops, laboratories, books, academic journals, teachers, computers, among other materials are required for successful prosecution of the new programme in the north

***Improvement on the instructional method:*** teaching of entrepreneurship education in the senior secondary schools in north central Nigeria should not be the conventional teacher centered method as against social constructivism. Powell (2013) support this assertion by suggesting that the role of the educator should change from the traditional stand-and-deliver approach and 'Teacher' should be substituted with 'facilitator'. Since traditional pedagogy is frequently in contrast to the needs of entrepreneurial education teaching entrepreneurial courses should emphasized the used of social constructivist approach were the learner interact with the learning situation directly, discover problems and struggles to solve the problems by him/herself without the teacher acting as a knowledge conduit. As such, learners can stand to transfer such skills learned to the benefit of the society there by becoming financially independent and self-sustainable.

***Parents/PTA:*** Parent should as a matter of concern reduce the pressure of making their children to make money in the short term over long term benefits of education. Parents should also try as much as they can to encourage, guide and counsel their children/wards towards attaining entrepreneurial education as it will help them in the long run. Where it is possible, enterprising facilities should be personally obtained for home training.

***Improvement on Government Policies:***

It is true that the present deficit in Nigerian economy is due to lack of genuine entrepreneurs and political reasons which lead to the present economic recession. Creating an economically and a politically friendly environment by government will enhance entrepreneurship education at this level. Since Government is the brain behind the success of entrepreneurship education at the secondary school levels in Nigeria, emphasis should be laid on the acquisition of the entrepreneurial education at this level. In extension, the idea of infusing entrepreneurship education in to the conventional secondary school should be debunk. My candid opinion is for the Federal government of Nigeria to establish separate entrepreneurship secondary schools where the learners can focus on only a single trade as it is in the present Technical colleges in Nigeria. This would go a long way in cushioning the effect of halve baked entrepreneurs in our country and for optimal transfer of learning to world of work after graduation. Studying everything will make the student to learn just a little and become master of none. This scenario is killing.

***School effort:*** The principals, Parents teachers association (PTA) and school Base management committee (SBMC) should also collaborate with the schools to ensure adequate provision of both human and material resources

needed for the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education where government falls short. Schools should also collaborate with the Non-governmental agencies/ philanthropies to compliment Government effort towards attaining the national goal of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The community should provide a very conducive learning environment for the programme. They should also patronize the locally made entrepreneurial products by the secondary school students. This will motivate and encourage the students to do more and in turn increase the internally generated revenue (IGR) of a country.

**Conclusion**

Senior secondary school students are exposed to constant changes in curriculum which is not good for their success in entrepreneurial development. As a recipe of economic development, the strategies discussed must be put in place to promote entrepreneurship education as expected. Most importantly, adequate and appropriate provision of curriculum content that would cater for the secondary school graduates and community needs is highly recommended. In other to meet the programme specific objectives, the content should not be design haphazardly. Since the essential core of social constructivism is that learners actively construct their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences, the educator should serve as a guide metaphor and to motivate, provide examples, discuss, facilitate,

support, and challenge, but not to attempt to act as a knowledge conduit. In addition parents, teachers, PTA, NGOs and stake holders should play their roles in ameliorating the entrepreneurship challenges facing the senior secondary schools (SSS) of north central Nigeria.

### Recommendations

- ❖ A non-entrepreneur should not teach entrepreneurship education at the senior secondary school level in North central Nigeria
- ❖ Adequate and appropriate entrepreneurship education curriculum content be made available in the senior secondary schools in North central Nigeria
- ❖ Government of Nigeria should strongly allow foreign investors into the country to pave way for more entrepreneurial practices
- ❖ Enterprise colleges should be established aimed at fostering the specific skills required for entrepreneurship to serve as skill acquisition centers for the youths no matter how much it will cost Government and Entrepreneurs
- ❖ Federal Government in collaboration with State Government should give Scholarship award to performing students in entrepreneurial education every year to serve as a motivational strategy
- ❖ Adequate and effective human and material resources be made available for the programme
- ❖ Government should monitor the implementation of social constructivists method of teaching

entrepreneurship education at the senior secondary schools to the later

- ❖ Employment opportunities be made available for the secondary school leavers

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