



Entrepreneurship Education: A Catalyst for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

Unyime Alphonsus Iwok¹ and Victoria Ikoobong Umoren²

iwokunyime@gmail.com¹ jacobvictoria05@gmail.com²

Ph. D Student, Department of Psychological Foundations¹

M. Sc Student, Department of Physical and Health Education²

Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education is therefore seen as that type of education fashioned out to prepare learners for innovative ventures which will lead to self-reliance and economic emancipation. It seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurship success at various settings. Consequent upon this, entrepreneurship education can serve as a catalyst for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals if all the stakeholders will purposefully chase after the targets and harness the necessary resources for full implementation. To achieve these targets, it becomes pertinent that the government and its agencies should encourage innovation by investing in research and development; creating a favourable business environment by reducing regulatory burdens and ensuring a threat-free environment; and granting access to finance by giving out grant and interest-free loans to prospective entrepreneurs. Thus, entrepreneurship education is a vehicle for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship Education; Sustainable Development

Introduction

Education is considered a tool for human development. This has a different meaning than school education. Education includes the entire process of human learning through the acquisition of knowledge, teachers are trained and various skills are developed. Education is also defined as the act or process of teaching or applying discipline to the process of changing one's mind or behavior. Education is a change that is expected to affect or contribute to the social behavior of educated people (Bassey, Inwang, and Warren-Oveh, 2023). Leonard, Collins, and Felix (2014) define education as the development of a person's intellectual, emotional, and psychomotor domains and the ability to function effectively and efficiently in society. People must contribute their mental, emotional and mental capacity to contribute to themselves and their society.

Goal 8 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is to "Leverage the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises for economic development". Maintaining economic stability and sustainable development is a challenge in many developing countries. In SDG 8, the UN said: "We must support development policies that support decent jobs, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and support the development and growth of micro, small and medium-sized businesses, including access to financial services. » the need to support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises half of the objective of "efficiency and economic growth" must be taken into account (Omobolanle, 2022).

According to the Brookings Institute 90.8million Nigerians now live in extreme poverty, which represents nearly 50% of its estimated 190 million population. Furthermore, unemployment has been on the rise with the rate more than tripling from Q4 2014 figure of 6.4% to the current 23.1% reported in Q3 of 2018 (National Bureau of Statistics). Another important measurement is income inequality which is measured by Gini Coefficient stands at 43%, implying that inclusive growth remains elusive. In terms of SDG Index which ranks countries based on their performance across the 17 goals, Nigeria is ranked a lowly 141 out of 149 countries at 36.1% against the regional average of 42.5%. In a nutshell, we are still a nation far away from achieving the SDG's nevertheless there are still areas to which Nigeria has made concerted efforts (Joseph, 2019).

The Sustainable Development Goals and Nigeria shows how Nigeria is implementing the Sustainable Development Goals across its 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprise 17 global goals designed as "a blueprint for achieving a better and more secure future for all". Each of the 17 goals should be achieved by 2030 in every country in the world. Nigeria is one of the countries that released Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on the implementation of the SDGs during the 2017 and 2020 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). In 2020, Nigeria ranked 160th in the 2020 Global SDG Index. The government has recognized that Nigeria's current development priorities and goals are focused on achieving the SDGs (Sustainable Development Report, 2020).

The policy emphasis on development aims to promote economic growth and development in a sustainable and inclusive manner. These policies can help create good jobs and increase global profits. Governments, businesses and other organizations can help reduce unemployment and increase economic growth by implementing growth policies. By addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality and promoting the health and prosperity of individuals, communities and countries, we can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote global development.

The Nigeria policy of education made it clear on the need for functional education, to be relevant, practical and acquisition of appropriate skills and development of competencies as equipment for the individuals to live in and contribute to the development of his/her society. The universities, polytechnic and any other academic institution stand to benefit a lot from entrepreneurs out there. Similarly the entrepreneurs may harness and use the expertise of faculties in those institutions. This kind of interaction and interrelationship will go a long way in bridging the gap that exists between the entrepreneurs and the institutions. Lack of this kind of synergy shows the weaknesses, inadequacies and fallacies of the educational policies in Nigeria in attainment of its educational objectives.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Rather than a narrow definition, the European Commission (2011) suggests a broader definition which sees entrepreneurship education as a process by which learners are equipped with a wide set of competencies that can bring about greater individual, social and economic benefits since the ability gained can be applied in any aspects of people's life. From the foregoing, it is reasonable to see entrepreneurship as individual's ability to plan and execute project for the purpose of achieving predetermined objectives.

Entrepreneurship education can be, according to the distinction made by Laukkannen (2000) in Education "about" Entrepreneurship and education "for" entrepreneurship. The first is based on the construct and transference of knowledge about the field, while the second focuses on the learning experience and the development of competences, skills, aptitudes and values.

Entrepreneurship education is therefore considered a form of education designed to prepare students for new business opportunities that will lead to self-reliance and financial independence. We seek to equip students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to support entrepreneurial success in various fields. At the same time, education is considered one of the prerequisites for business development, especially in places where the spirit and culture are very weak. It is an important factor in decision-making, innovation and business success (Dickson, Solomon and Weaver, 2008). However, the same assumption is made here that there is a positive relationship between education and business choices and business outcomes. The movement to reduce poverty should not be viewed or approached in isolation, but should be adopted in various ways and strategies. For a country to achieve economic growth and real growth, its education must be considered fundamental and important. Education is undoubtedly considered the foundation of economic, social and political development (Akpomi 2009).

Mani and Yahaya (2014) stated that the place of entrepreneurship in the work of bringing our citizens, especially graduates, to achieve the goals and objectives of economic development in Africa is not a matter of providing subjects or course content alone. It also holds and builds on a high level of application of key knowledge processes and structures, including the presentation of various technologies to achieve design goals and objectives in the development of the African economy. According to Akpomi (2009), these skills are aimed at solving Nigeria's economic problems, notably enabling graduates to acquire the following basic knowledge:

- (a) Acquisition of human resources and capacity-building skills
- (b) Promotion of human dignity and equality
- (c) Promotion of peace, democracy and democratic governance
- (d) Promotion of environmental stability and sustainability
- (e) Technological development and the necessary skills' acquisition
- (f) Natural resources management
- (g) Infrastructural development
- (h) Public –private partnership orientation
- (i) Sustainable poverty reduction
- (j) Employment creation and generation
- (k) Wealth creation; and
- (i) Value-orientation and or re-orientation.

Entrepreneurship education is therefore designed first and foremost to enable individuals to overcome and respond to all types of challenges and issues related to gender stereotypes, neglect and discrimination. It destroys the obstacles that hinder human development and progress and acts as an antidote. It supports the phenomenon of adventure that transcends group mentality, ethnicity and religious group. Business studies ask people, men or women, the following questions: (a) What do you think? (b) Are you willing to put in more effort to find the "golden fleece"? (c) Can you work hard despite your

situation? (d) Is your lifestyle narrow or narrow? (e) Are you ready to have a good heart? (f) Are you original and passionate about your thoughts? (Mani and Yahaya, 2014).

Accordingly, the issues involved in the foregoing reflections cut across gender affiliations, and therefore need to be capitalized upon so that the individual could make success of entrepreneurship education. The criteria re-counted above do not require heavy investment or heavy capital outlays. The individual, male or female, could start from almost nothing; he or she only requires the strong will, the ingenuity and iron-character to make things happen socio-economically. These lines of thinking could assist our nations to overcome the problems and issues which bear on economic development and therefore contribute enormously in the tasks intrinsic in achieving sustainable developmental goals (Mani and Yahaya, 2014).

Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria Today

Since independence, Nigeria government became more and more aware of the short comings and limitations of the colonial education heritage. Concerted efforts are being made to make education functional and a tool for national development. The history of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria according to Odia (2011) stated in the 1960s. The Nigeria industrial policy that came immediately after independence placed emphasis and concentrated attention on the establishment of big companies by completely neglecting the development of small scale sectors (Aladekomo, 2004). This neglect invariably means killing entrepreneurship which is considered to be a very essential ingredient for economic growth and development at the micro level in Nigeria at the very beginning. The over pressing demand for white collar jobs for majority of graduates is just an upshot of colonial educational policies.

However, in the mid-1970s, the government recognized the importance of small businesses to the economy and decided to focus its attention on small and medium-sized businesses. Thirteen business centers and some institutions have been established to promote the business of small and medium enterprises in the country. The organizations are: Entrepreneurship Development Center (EDC), Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS), Nigerian Bank of Commerce and Industry (NBCI), Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB), among others. Although promising, these programs were short-lived. The reason for the short lifespan of these programs is not far away. It's only because he didn't enter the office.

Education is a powerful tool to keep any business safe. In Nigeria today, the curriculum at all levels has been market-driven. The objective is to create autonomy, employment, growth and development. In 1969, the Schools Conference convened by the National Educational Research Council (NERC) responded to calls for better education. Ofoha (2014) believed that the system of 6-3-3-4 the Nigerian education system implemented since 1982 has brought significant changes to the Nigerian education system, but this is only a theory. Prevocational subjects were introduced into the Junior Secondary School (JSS) curriculum while vocational subjects were introduced into the Senior Secondary School (SSS) curriculum.

Integrated subjects such as Introductory Technology in the past were to prepare learners to acquire basic vocation such as woodwork, metalwork, basic electronics, technical drawing, automobile mechanics, etc. This was to empower learners to be productive at the end of the junior secondary school. In today's curriculum, the above integrated subject is now called Basic Technology. At the Senior Secondary School, the integrated vocational subjects are now learnt separately. They include subjects such as Agricultural Science, Food and Nutrition, Auto-mechanics, Commerce, Typewriting, etc. Due to the frequent review of Nigerian curriculum, various changes are made to accommodate modern trend in education. The changes are merely change of nomenclature, the structure and objectives remain the same. The subjects mentioned above are aimed at developing entrepreneurship skills. Entrepreneurship subjects such as photography, catering, craft, and data processing have been recently added in the new secondary curriculum. The secondary school curriculum structure which came into effect in September, 2011 has made it mandatory for every senior secondary school student to take at least a subject from the trade/ entrepreneurship subjects.

At the tertiary level, to ensure job opportunities and self-reliance, the federal government of Nigeria through the Ministry of Education has made it compulsory for every student to take a course in entrepreneurship before graduation. This is to free them from dependency on white collar job, to be self-employed and self-reliant after graduation. With all these efforts, the effects of entrepreneurship education are very low as millions of Nigerians are dependent on the grossly inadequate government jobs. In 2014, during President Goodluck Jonathan's regime, millions of graduates across the country gathered in various stadia for the Nigerian Immigration Service recruitment where less than a hundred thousand were to be employed. This is an obvious indication that entrepreneurship education practice is still very low in Nigeria.

Technical and vocational institutions were designed largely to prepare technicians at occupational levels. Fakae (2005) asserted that "emphasis is on skill-acquisition and sound scientific knowledge, which gives ability to the use of hand and machine for the purpose of production, maintenance and self-reliant". Despite these well-articulated policies, the problem remains very conspicuous. The Nigeria government is very worried on the increasing unemployment rate, poverty and generally bad economic condition in the country. In recent time, the most visible education reform in the country is on higher education. Under this kind of reform, Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VEIs) and Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs) were introduced by the government to provide another dimension for higher education in the country. VEIs and IEIs are principally private institutions that will offer vocational ,technical, technology or professional education and other skills-based, training at post basic (VEIs) and post secondary (IEIs), to equip our youth and working adults employment skill and knowledge to meet the increasing demand for technical manpower by various sectors of the nation's economy (Muhammad, 2008).

Entrepreneurship Education and Sustainable Development Goals 8

The targets of [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth](#) are:

- i. According to the country's situation, per capita growth should be maintained and annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth should be maintained at more than 7%, especially in least developed countries.
- ii. Achieve high levels of productivity through diversification, technological change and innovation, including a focus on value-added products and operational efficiency.
- iii. Promote the development-oriented method to promote production, create good jobs, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and promote the creation and development of micro, small and medium enterprises, including access to services financial.
- iv. Under the 10-year Agenda for Sustainable Consumption and Production, led by developing countries, we promise to improve the global efficiency of consumption and production resources by 2030 and decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.
- v. By 2030, achieve full and decent work for all women and men, including young people and people with disabilities, and equal pay for equal work.
- vi. By 2020, reduce the percentage of young people who are not working, studying or training.
- vii. Take immediate and effective action to eliminate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and end and eliminate the worst forms of child labor, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, by the end of 2025.
- viii. Protect the right to work and create safe conditions for all workers, including migrant workers, especially migrant women, and those doing incredible work.
- ix. By 2030, create and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
- x. Strengthen the capacity of national financial institutions to promote and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.
- xi. Increase trade assistance to developing countries, particularly least developed countries, including developing coordination of trade assistance related to least developed countries.
- xii. Develop and implement a global youth employment strategy by 2020 and follow the International Labor Organization's Global Jobs Pact (Tiago, 2023).

According to Omobolanle (2022), the concept of sustainable development calls for balance between the environment, social and economic in the pursuit of development and improvement of quality of life. Sustainability includes intergenerational equity, gender equality, justice and peace, social responsibility, environmental conservation and restoration, poverty reduction and economic savings. The major essential tool for achieving sustainable development include the following areas, they were:

1. Improve the quality of basic education;
2. Reorient existing education programmed to address sustainable development;
3. Develop public awareness and understanding; and
4. Provide training for all sectors of private and civil society.

Colleges and universities in many European countries provide research, business and commerce students with training that can help them build sustainable lives. Courses such as reconciliation, human rights education, environmental education and the "Young Entrepreneur" system have been implemented in many schools. These initiatives therefore help students and teachers understand the links necessary for sustainable development. Emphasis has been placed on education that provides life and work skills that enhance a person's capabilities, develop their autonomy, and improve their quality of life (Omobolanle, 2022).

The Sustainable Development Goals must respond to the economic, social and environmental challenges of development. Development aims to meet the needs of the present generation without denying future generations access to the same natural capital for their own needs. Development here is measured in terms of wealth redistribution and meeting the needs of the population at a sustainable level. This means that development must be sustainable to be able to affect and change the lives of citizens (Kazaure and Danmallam, 2006). Students who participate in vocational training programs have the opportunity to gain work experience and earn, save and invest money earlier than their peers, allowing them to have confidence in their abilities and their self-esteem. Small businesses are becoming more and more important to the economy, and as people continue to benefit from more services and businesses continue to downsize, self-employment and entrepreneurship will serve useful and beautiful purposes for today's students. Entrepreneurship can create new businesses and jobs and contribute to innovation and economic growth by bringing new products, services and technologies to market. In many developing countries, the informal economy constitutes the main source of employment and income for the majority of the population. Informal workers can be integrated into the formal economy by providing education and training and encouraging entrepreneurship. According to Tiago (2023), there are a number of ways to encourage entrepreneurship, including:

- **Provide access to finance:** Entrepreneurs often have difficulty finding finance, which can limit their ability to start and grow their business. Providing access to financing can help entrepreneurs overcome these challenges and grow their businesses.
- **Business development support:** Business development programs can provide entrepreneurs with training, coaching and other assistance to help them start and grow their businesses.
- **Create a good business environment:** The government and other organizations can create a good business environment by simplifying business registration, reducing administrative burdens and providing other supports.
- **Foster innovation:** Fostering innovation can help entrepreneurs create new products, services and technologies that can support business growth. This may include investments in research and development or support for new technologies.

The SDGs are based on the expectation that Entrepreneurship Education should optimize sustainable development by requiring all tertiary institutions in Nigeria to acquire entrepreneurial skills (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). Entrepreneurship Education therefore aims to develop business skills that are the driving force behind the achievement of human happiness, tolerance and freedom. Entrepreneurship Education, because of its central role of equipping individuals with relevant practical skills and opportunities, is very crucial for the development of a nation (Bassey, *et al*, 2023).

Conclusion

Education must be improved alongside the creation and strengthening of business and employment opportunities. The main thing here is to promote entrepreneurship among students through education. In fact, this requires major policy reforms and new systems adapted to current needs. Education for sustainable development is the goal or vision of education that prepares people to create the future. Stakeholders such as governments, businesses, schools, media and organizations play an important role in achieving sustainable development. Each company has a different vision of sustainable development. Some people like to preserve and protect the environment. Some will be interested in economic development, while others will be interested in social development.

Bringing together sustainability and growth can mean the expansion of the economy as well as the advancement of social, economic and political life, today and in the future. Sustainable development is therefore not a state of permanent and stable relationships. Rather, it is a perpetual process in which humans build things that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This can be seen as an increase in economic growth, leading to economic competition, high standards of living and self-reliance. This can also be seen as a development that will provide future generations with access to health, self-respect and independence.

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