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The Roles of Counselling Services and Mentoring On Entrepreneurship For Sustainable Economic Growth

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is viewed as a legitimate source of employment, wealth and job creation for communities. Modern societies encourage and celebrate successful entrepreneurs, spurring many young individuals to be enthusiastic to start and grow their own business empires. It is worthy of note that due to joblessness in Nigeria as an example, there are reported cases of militancy and restiveness among youths in the Niger Delta area, Boko Haram in the North, Bakasse boys and O'dua youth movement (OYM) in the Southwest (Iwuama and Ekwe 2012). These syndicates indulge in dangerous drugs, alcoholism and smoking which trigger them into violent acts and of course posed threats to national security. All hands must be on deck

ransform such minds and up coming youth into great entrepreneurs. Identifying one's passion is an important step in the path of entrepreneurship developing the corresponding skill set and/obtaining experience that can translate one's passion into a business that adds value to the society of undoubtedly requires accessible right support structures. In this light, the study advocates for implementation of counselling services and mentoring, skills for entrepreneurship education to turn around social vices in the society on the path of economic growth of Nigeria's vision 2020 as one of the largest economy in the world.

Keywords: Counselling services, mentoring, entrepreneurial education, sustainable economic growth.

Introduction

Despite the 2014 rebasing in Nigerian economy as the largest in Africa, unemployment or the search for paid employment in Nigeria has become endemic. This is supported by the claims that Nigerian education system is bookish and academic oriented and lacked vocational and entrepreneurial value (Obi, 2012). The culture of innovation is lacking in schools. Stakeholders will generally agree that the education system tends to focus on theoretical education, failing to offer more practical curricula that can adequately prepare youths to work in entrepreneurial enterprises. Among colleges and universities in sub-Saharan Africa, only 7% have an entrepreneurship centre dedicated to entrepreneurial development; 28% offer courses specializing in entrepreneurship; and 10% offer a course in innovation and technology (Source). Limited opportunities for hands-on learning and managing small projects means that students are not afforded the paths for cultivating competencies related to practical thinking and creative problem-solving-skills needed to successfully build and manage a business. As a result, most Afro-entrepreneurs do not feel adequately trained to manage a new firm which for many leads to the tendency to look for jobs in well established firms and corporations. According to the skills to manage new firms are quite low: 9% in South Africa; 10% in Ghana and Nigeria; 19% in Ethiopia; 22% in Tanzania; and 23% in Kenya.

Formal education, including attitudes and behaviours, play a vital role in entrepreneurship. The lack of a basic business culture in most small-scale enterprises evidenced by traits such as procrastination, poor client management and missing deadlines may be attributed to lack of entrepreneurial education. Such challenges in most small business reduce the ability to retain long-term clients or acquire new ones. As such we need to redirect the energy of counselling and mentorship from primary, post-primary through tertiary institutions towards programmes that will inculcate knowledge and skills that prepare citizens for employment and self-reliance, economic diversification and sustainable development. Notwithstanding, the harsh economic realities in the country today if the upcoming generations of graduates are given proper orientation and entrepreneurial education, they would become successful and highly fulfilled persons.

Entrepreneurial Education for Sustainable National Growth

Entrepreneurial Education (EE), according to the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (CEE, USA) is a form of education that seeks to prepare citizens especially youths to be responsible enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial thinkers and who will contribute to economic development and sustainable national growth. It is not based on a textbook course, rather students are immersed in real life learning experiences where one has an opportunity to take risks, manage the results and learn from the outcomes. Entrepreneurship is the act, the skill and dexterity of the entrepreneur in doing business. In the same vein, Uwaneje and Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2006), described entrepreneurial education as the knowledge, skills and mind set needed to create jobs by conceiving and starting a new business. Thus, entrepreneurship has to do with the ingenuity to create business ideas, develop the business, manage it, make profit and reap the rewards involved. Entrepreneurial Education programme entails entrepreneurship courses, training and certification for educators, economic developers, and business counsellors. Moris and Jones (1993), stated that Entrepreneurial Education programme should include efforts aimed at ensuring that the training offered at all levels of education inculcates in the students, skills that will enable

them on graduation to;

- Identify and evaluate opportunities
- Identify a business concept
- Identify the needed resources
- Acquire the necessary resources and
- Implement, operate and harvest the venture

According to Adiele (2010), the curriculum content of Entrepreneurial Education programme should be such that will expose the learners to the business options that are relevant to the economy and which will offer them career opportunities, they prefer. Also maintained that in the long run the education offered in schools should be able to inculcate creativity, spirit of initiative, responsibility, capacity for confronting risks and independence.

In the quest for perceived objectives of Entrepreneurial Education programme, according to Obi (2012), its content or agenda should focus on the following:

- i. **Innovative Thinking:** The students should be trained on how to recognize opportunities that others have overlooked. How to develop new ideas, new technology, new methods and imaginative skills for re-organizing an enterprise for good
- ii. **How to start Business of your own:** Entrepreneurial Education (EE) should provide the students with the right mind-set, and boldness on how to break through the chains of starting business of one's own after graduation. It should afford students the opportunity to be informed of different types of business and what it requires to venture into them. It should also expose the students on sources of raising fund that could be exploited.
- iii. **Inculcation of management skills:** Entrepreneurial Education programme should be designed to practically equip students with organizational skills, time management, interpersonal skills and financial management skills.
- iv. **Inculcation of problem solving skills:** Entrepreneurial Education should inculcate in students requisite problem solving skills and decision making abilities. This will help to enhance their

psychosocial development such as self-esteem, ego and self efficacy.

- v. **Growing your business and creating employment:** EE programme should prepared the students on how to grow their own business after graduation and create jobs i.e. by becoming employer of labour and not job seeker or mere employee.

Recent literature according to Umameiye and Aduwa (2006), advocates that apart from classroom instructional delivery, the entrepreneurship educators should include approaches such as seminars, visitation, internship and practice as options to enhance quality delivery in entrepreneurial education. (In a nutshell, Entrepreneurial Education if it must be a catalyst education programme as it is designed should be practical and plausible- practically oriented).

The Consequences of National Negligence to entrepreneurship

Between 2005 to 2010, police recorded some 1.4 million violent crimes in Nigeria that actually took place. The predisposing factors included joblessness, politics, religion, secret cult, land disputes, boko haram, among others (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011). One of the nagging problems confronting Nigerian society and the world these days is the problem of youth unemployment- idle minds are devils workshop. According to UNICEF (2007), there are estimated 300,000 violent cases perpetrated by adolescents under the age of 20 years in more than 33 conflicts around the world. In 2002, more that 877,700 young people in the United State at age 10- to 24 were injured from youth's violence, over 5,000 youths were murdered, over 80% of these victims that were killed from armed violence were males, (Bukoye, Adeoye, Usman and Oyinloye, 2012).

Youth violence has immediate and long term consequences, which include physical, psychological and social. College of Education COED (2011), opined that youth violence does not only contribute greatly to the global burden of premature death, imprisonments, injury and disability, it also has a serious lifelong impact on behaviour, psychological and social functioning of victims, families, friends and communities. In this regard, various governments and organizations in many countries including Nigeria

have made many reasonable efforts to curb the menace of violence but have not yielded permanent solution to the cankerworms of these vices. For example, the Federal government of Nigeria called Boko Haram for reconciliation but to no avail. The government also granted general amnesty to ex-militants in Niger Delta Areas, gave stipend wages, scholarships within and outside the country, skills acquisition, general infrastructural development, yet the spate of violence is increasing (Iwuama and Ekwe 2012). This paper is therefore advocating for yet another approach through counselling services and, mentoring for better gaining insight into these problems and consequently solving them.

Counselling and Mentoring for Entrepreneurship Development

Career Counselling is an essential process of help to facilitating a clients career development for entrepreneurship. Reason being that career counselling enables people to recognize and utilize their resources to make career related decisions and manage career related problems. Thus, counselling experience helps to raise a person's awareness about the choices he or she is making in life.

Career development is not just the process of finding a job, but the development of all of our various life roles and the factors that go into shaping them. Numerous studies show that career planning and counselling are related to job satisfaction and positive mental health (Spakane, 1985; Assouline & Meir, 1987). Psychoentrepreneurial support is often seen as helping individuals in building confidence, overcoming pressures and strains, assisting their personal life, getting opinions heard and valued, sharing dreams, providing feedback, creating awareness and teaching with examples.

Specifically, Trait and factor counselling approach is considered as the best method to use by counsellor in carrying out the rescue operations about career choice conflicts that may lead to job dissatisfaction and failure in one's future career endeavour because. Trait and factor counselling approach emphasises a fit between the individual and the environment. The Counsellor focuses largely on assessment of ability and interests of clients to facilitate understanding of one self and assist in making decisive career decisions. A trait and factor counsellor uses variety of techniques

to examine the vast arrays of clients skills, interests and personality variables which could affect their career choices. The better the ability of the individual to match his/her traits to occupations, the more likely the individual will have success and feel satisfied (Neukrug, 2003).

In addition, the dynamic and supportive roles of the counsellor can be best achieved under warm and permissive atmosphere, and through interactions with significant others, enable one to discover himself and first experience ideals.

Trait and factor Counsellor holds several hours of counselling sessions with clients on individual or group basis, focussing on intensive self-exploration, interpretation of appropriate tests results and critical job analysis and feedback. The better the ability of individual to see it is evident that a more accurate of self-image and a clearer conception of one's values can be achieved for career/ entrepreneurship development.

Mentoring is another vital empowerment tool for entrepreneurship. A formal mentoring program is often viewed as the structured and coordinated relationship between mentor and mentee using standard norms, continuous action plans, time frame and particular objectives. Mentoring according to the Business dictionary is employee's training systems under which a senior or more experienced individual (the mentor) acts as an adviser, counsellor or a teacher. The mentor passes on valuable skills, knowledge and insights to the mentees to help them develop their careers. The mentees on their part feel more confident and self supporting to develop greater self-awareness and see the world and themselves as others do.

Specifically, mentoring program has same salient characteristics such as:

- Open mindedness. The mentor and the mentee must possess the ability to keep open minds. They must be willing to share skills, knowledge and expertise. Good mentoring requires time and commitment and willing to continually share information and their ongoing support with the mentee.
- Active listening: There is need to engage in active listening with one another watch body movements and maintain eye contact. Active listeners are always alert, sit up, and show sincere interest in what the other person is saying. A good mentor takes personal interest in the mentoring relationship and he is committed to helping their mentees find

success and gratification in their chosen profession.

- **Total honesty:** A good mentor demonstrates positive attitude and honesty. He is ready to act as positive role model and exhibits enthusiasm.
- **Tough questioning:** Powerful skills of smart questions should be used in effective mentoring. Ask the right questions that make the mentee do the thinking. Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with just yes or no. the way to dig deeper into an issue is by asking questions which must done with diplomacy and tact.
- **Provides guidance and constructive feedback:** A good mentor possesses excellent communication skills, value the opinions and initiatives of others. Motivates others, sets and meets ongoing personal and professional goals.

In brief, mentoring should not be taking lightly as it helps to empower the mentees to develop their own strengths beliefs and personal attributes to manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit. Entrepreneurial spirit is characterized by innovation and risk taking, and is an essential part of a nation's ability to succeed in an ever changing and increasingly competitive global market place. (Term of the Day Business Dictionary, Newsletter Nov6, 2014)

Conclusion

Nigeria and mentorship schools should embrace the act of providing guidance and counselling services to help students discern between various career options. By developing training programmes/modules on how to communicate the attraction of greater individual responsibility within entrepreneurial venture, would be will become better prepared to articulate the opportunities for professional advancement that their business/ require companies offer. Best practices such as can be applied to increase entrepreneurial education in formal institutions in Nigeria should be provided for sustainable economic growth.

Recommendations

There should be establishment of National Entrepreneurship Counselling and Training Centers (NECTC) across the thirty six states in Nigeria including the Federal Capital Abuja. This has become so pertinent

in attaining Nigeria's vision 2020 of becoming one of the largest economy in the world.

The stakeholders in education should include entrepreneurial and vocational training in the education system in Nigeria so that learners are exposed to entrepreneurship from young age. This will help future workers ascertain the possibilities of having their own business, the financial rewards attached to ownership and the challenges inherent in the journey.

Create and adopt an entrepreneurship curriculum for primary and secondary schools with practical apprenticeship-like programmes that supplement theoretical learning, collaborations between schools and local stakeholders to provide internships, and training as a means to develop the talent needed to support small scale enterprises. This will expose young learners to the full reality of entrepreneurship. In Singapore, for example, students receive mandatory entrepreneurship education for one year within the primary school system. In Mexico, students are required to learn basic economics and business skills; beginning with basic classes at the age of 18. The United States and many other countries exhibit numerous examples where primary and secondary educational curricula emphasizes group-learning and hands-on projects.

Leverage internet-based solutions that offer training in business skills and entrepreneurial management to provide assistance to entrepreneurs at affordable and relatively low costs.

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