

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: AN INDISPENSABLE TOOL FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EKITI STATE

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Abstract

The study was carried out by the researcher in Ekiti State to determine how entrepreneurship education could be a source for achieving sustainable development. A survey research design was used for the study. The population comprised 30 business educators teaching in public Universities offering Business Education in Ekiti State. A self-structured questionnaire was adopted by the researcher for data collection. The result of the study showed that entrepreneurship education programme is an indispensable tool for achieving sustainable development in Ekiti State because it provides the needed manpower required in all sectors. The study equally revealed that one of the strategies for achieving sustainable development in Ekiti State is through entrepreneurship education programme which ensure that the school curriculum is relevant to the skills required in all sectors of the economy such as: industries, education, agriculture. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended among others that the curriculum planners should ensure that the school curriculum content is relevant to the skills required of industries because of the relevance of the programme in providing the needed manpower in all sectors of the economy.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship education, Sustainable, Development and Nigeria*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship education can be described as an aspect of education that is concerned with specialized training giving to students of vocational education to acquire the skills, idea, and the managerial abilities and capabilities for self employment rather than being employed for pay (Akiti, 2010). It involves preparation of persons for qualified skilled performance on any task laid before him/her. It is a type of educational training or retraining that is focused on making the learner or students more productive through performance in paid employment or self employment. It is the central point on which a country's socioeconomic, technological, cultural advancement must be built. The main objectives revolve around the socio-economic, industrial and technological objective that will be evident in improved standard of living for citizens as well as in economic stability, industrial harmony and technological advancement. Entrepreneurship education therefore equips an individual for economic independence, self – actualization and also being productive in various fields of learning. This can lead to societal development and socio-economic security. It also has the economic role of providing qualified manpower by enabling individuals to make use of complex technology, the emphasis is not only on provision of skilled labour for a dynamic one, especially one with changing societal needs for technological advancement (Mandara, 2012).

Entrepreneurship education is important because it is an education and training that empower students to develop and use their creativity to initiate responsibilities and risks. According to Paul (2005) entrepreneurship education aims at achieving the following objectives; to: offer functional

education to the youths that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant; provide the youth or graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities; serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development; offer tertiary institution graduates adequate training in risk management; reduce high rate of poverty; create employment opportunities; reduce rural-urban drift; provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish careers in small and medium sized businesses; inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on; and create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy. management reduce high rate of poverty; create employment opportunities; reduce rural-urban drift; provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish careers in small and medium sized businesses; inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on; and create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy for a national sustainable development.

Sustainable development means all round development of an individual. This tallied with the statement made by China, Lilly and Igbemi (2017) that sustainable development is all about improving the lives of people. In the opinion of Hansa (2014), sustainable development deals with the carrying capacity of natural system with social, political and economic challenges faced by the society. Sustainable development is believed to be a holistic approach to improve the quality of life through judicious use of available natural resources. In the context of business enterprise, sustainable development means adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders presently and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future. In the context of the study, sustainable development entails equipping the graduates of the programme with vital skills for self employment that they can contribute to the economic development of the Nation. This will help to reduce hunger and improve the standard of living of the populace. The aim of sustainable development is to balance our economic, environmental and social equity and justice.

The United Nations development program (2015) in its framework for sustainable development marshaled seventeen sustainable development goals. The sustainable development goal also known as transforming our world is a set of seventeen goals to transform the world by 2030. The sustainable development goals include among others to end extreme poverty including hunger, promote economic growth and decent jobs within the planetary boundaries; achieve gender equality, social inclusion and human rights; achieve health and well-being at all ages; improve agriculture systems and raise rural prosperity; empower inclusive, productive and resilient cities; curb human -induced climate change and ensure sustainable energy; secure biodiversity and ensure good management of water, oceans, forests and natural Resources and transform governance and technologies for sustainable development. The main aim of sustainable development is to balance our economic, social and environmental needs. In support of this, Ukairo (2017) noted that for sustainable development to be achieved in any nation there must be a balance between environmental, societal and economic considerations needed to maintain and improve the quality of generations to come.

Ekiti State which was carved out of the former Ondo State in 1996 has put in place policies and established Enterprise and Economic Development Agencies to encourage promote and coordinate investment activities in the State with a view to stimulating economic growth. One of such developmental strategies is the industrial development and expansion of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs). Past and the present governments of Ekiti State have emphasized the contributions of internally developed economy of the State through the encouragement of SMEs. In this present administration in Ekiti state, several meetings have been held with the Nigeria Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (NASMEs), Ekiti chapter in order to promote the micro, small and medium enterprises in the state so as to ensure development of entrepreneurship for sustainable development in the state.

Statement of the Problem

Most countries of the world especially developing countries are facing economic recession. At a critical time like this, what the nation needs is a theoretical and skill oriented programme that can equip the individual with skills relevant for sustainable development. This will help to end extreme poverty, hunger, create jobs and promote economic growth and finally achieve sustainable development. Without a functional education program like entrepreneurship education, achieving the sustainable development goal of ending extreme poverty including hunger and promoting economic growth and decent jobs within the planetary boundaries will be a mirage. If these problems of unemployment, poverty and hunger are not properly addressed by Ekiti state government, majority of the youth who lack entrepreneurial skill after their educational training develop unethical conduct and so become visible threat to national security.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to determine how entrepreneurship education programme could be an indispensable tool for achieving sustainable development in Ekiti State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. Relevance of entrepreneurship education in achieving sustainable development in Ekiti State of Nigeria
2. Strategies for achieving sustainable development in the Ekiti State of Nigeria through entrepreneurship education program

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered by the study:

1. What are the relevance of entrepreneurship education in achieving sustainable development in Ekiti State of Nigeria?
2. What are the strategies for achieving sustainable development in Ekiti State of Nigeria through entrepreneurship education programme.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. The study was carried out in two public Universities in Ekiti state of Nigeria offering business education programme: Ekiti State University Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State and Bamidele Olumilua University of Science and Technology Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State. The population of the study comprised all thirty business education lecturers, seven from Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and twenty-three from Bamidele Olumilua University of Education,

Science and Technology Ikere Ekiti. There was no sample because the population was manageable. The instrument used for the study was a self- structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The items had a 4-point rating scales of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with a corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1. The instrument was validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, Ekiti state University, Ado- Ekiti. The internal reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach alpha which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.68 showing a high reliability index meaning that the instrument was reliable. The instrument consists of 23 questionnaire items. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Any item with a mean of 2.50 or above was regarded as agree while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as disagree.

Results

The results of the study were obtained from the two research questions answered by the study.

Research question 1

1. What are the relevance of entrepreneurship education in achieving sustainable development in Ekiti State of Nigeria

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Business Educators on the Relevance of Entrepreneurship Education in Achieving Sustainable Development

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	Exposes the students to the relevant skills required of industries	2.64	0.49	Agreed
2.	Help the recipients to make judicious socio-economic decisions as citizens	2.68	0.73	Agreed
3.	Help the recipients to have ability to think critically	2.90	0.86	Agreed
4	Educates individuals for and about business	2.72	0.43	Agreed
5	Help the recipients to make judicious socio-economic decisions as citizens	2.78	0.63	Agreed
6	Help the recipients to be initiative, innovative and creative	2.87	0.44	Agreed
7	Help the recipients to contribute maximally to the social and economic development of the nation	2.73	0.57	Agreed
8	Produce graduates that are job creators	2.61	0.48	Agreed
9	Provides the recipients' with necessary skills for transition into labour market	2.96	0.55	Agreed
10	Provides effective learning for the recipient for lifelong livelihood	2.68	0.91	Agreed
11	It reduces the high rate of unemployment	2.79	0.71	Agreed
12	Help the recipients to be producers and distributors of goods and services	2.58	0.89	Agreed

Table 1 shows that all the 12 items with corresponding mean of 2.64, 2.68, 2.90, 2.72, 2.78, 2.87, 2.73, 2.61, 2.96, 2.68, 2.79, 2.58 are the relevance of entrepreneurship education in achieving sustainable development in Ekiti States of Nigeria. The standard deviation of the responses range between 0.43-0.91 shows the homogeneity of the respondents in their responses.

Research Question Two:

What are the strategies for achieving sustainable development in the Ekiti States of Nigeria through entrepreneurs education programme.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Business Educators on the Strategies for Achieving Sustainable Development Through Entrepreneurs Education Programme

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1	Ensuring that the school curriculum content is relevant to the skills required of industry	3.52	0.47	Agreed
2	Integration of new technologies in teaching and learning of Entrepreneurial education.	3.56	0.49	Agreed
3	workshops and conferences that promote sustainable development need to be organized for students.	3.63	0.50	Agreed
4	Proper mentoring of students on sustainable development issues	3.67	0.56	Agreed
5	Participatory teaching that motivate learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development	3.54	0.50	Agreed
6	Improving the programme through upgrading of facilities or equipment	3.52	0.50	Agreed
7	Training and re-training of entrepreneurship education teachers	3.46	0.57	Agreed
8	improve school/industry relationship	3.59		Agreed
9	Provision of grants from the government and international organization	3.00	0.84	Agreed
10	Proper mentoring of students on sustainable development issues	2.67	0.59	Agreed
11	Link curricula to real world business	3.50	0.49	Agreed

Table 2 indicates that all the 11 items with corresponding mean of 3.52, 3.56, 3.63, 3.67, 3.54, 3.52, 3.46, 3.59, 3.00, 2.67, 3.50 are strategies for achieving sustainable development through entrepreneurs education programme in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The standard deviation of the responses range between 0.47-0.84 shows the homogeneity of the respondents in their responses.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings in table 1 revealed that entrepreneurship education is very relevant in achieving sustainable development in Ekiti state because entrepreneurship educates individuals for and about business and also it provides the needed manpower in industry. According to Osuala (2004), education for business is for technology and vocational education students. It helps them to develop personal skills such as recording retrieving, co-ordinating, analyzing, organizing and reporting data used for business decisions. It also helps entrepreneurs education students to develop personal use skills related to business occupation. The skills acquired in entrepreneurs education can help the recipients to establish small scale business and run it successfully. By doing this, it may likely end poverty and hunger leading to good health and sustainable development in Ekiti State of Nigeria.

From the findings of research question 2, it was found that some of the strategies for achieving sustainable development through entrepreneurship education programme include among others, to ensure that the school curriculum is relevant to the skills required of industry and also improving the programme through upgrading of facilities or equipment. The findings is in uniformity with the findings made by Nwokike and Okoli (2015) that one of the ways of improving the quality and relevance of entrepreneurship education programme in universities is by institutions laying more emphasis on the manpower need of the industry. Nwokike and Okoli, (2015) also affirmed that quality mechanism should be put in place so that students are not taught without dated equipment. The researchers are of the opinion that if the recipients are taught with modern technological equipment, the graduates of the programme will acquire the relevant skills required of industry and for self-employment.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that entrepreneurship education is an indispensable tool in achieving sustainable development because of its relevance in providing the needed manpower in industries. The skill acquired by the recipient could help them to be self-employed by establishing small scale business. By doing so, the sustainable development goals of ending poverty and promoting the well-being of individuals could be achieved through entrepreneurship education programme which will eventually lead to sustainable development in Ekiti State of Nigeria.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Funds should be made available to support entrepreneurship education programme. This could be achieved through the collaboration with donor agencies and development partners.
2. Training and re-training of business educators should be encouraged in our tertiary institutions. This will prepare the teachers with current methods and techniques of teaching entrepreneurship courses.
3. The curriculum planners should ensure that the school curriculum content is relevant to the skills required of industry because of the relevance of the programme in providing the needed manpower in industries for sustainable development.
4. Policy measure should be put in place to improve the quality of the training facilities for proper acquisition of skills by the recipient for sustainable development.

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