

ADOPTING STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude to enable the learner apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realize new trends and opportunities for meeting those challenges in all aspects of human life. This paper discussed entrepreneurship education that is in consonant with the prevailing contemporary global and local environment. This could be successfully achieved through the adoption of strategic management in setting the objectives, planning, implementation and evaluation of entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigeria. This will enable the students fit into a comprehensive entrepreneurship education programmes according to their interest and passion with the prevailing opportunities provided by the environment. Such programmes will not only provide theoretical knowledge but will also ensure that graduates develop an entrepreneurial mindset, through developing entrepreneurial skills, behaviours and attitudes that will equipped them with the key competencies to enable them enjoy an entrepreneurial /intrapreneurial career or engage in new venture creation.

Keywords: Planning, Implementation, strategic management, entrepreneurship, education,

Introduction

Globalized competition and the radically altered economic climate now lends greater urgency to the provision of education that will equip graduates with the innovative, problem-solving, entrepreneurial skill sets required to promote enterprise and economic recovery. Unfortunately, the inability of graduates to engage in gainful opportunities is due to the

previous educational system that did not prepare them for gainful living. The current quality of education especially in developing economies leaves much to be desired. The focus is on rote learning and the education system does not actively encourage students to think on their own and take on responsibilities. It is therefore, imperative that entrepreneurship education with curriculum content designed to enable students attain the society's expectations, and perhaps most importantly, their needs should be put in place.

The growing literature on entrepreneurship education tends to argue that a different learning environment is required to support the study of entrepreneurship within a university setting (Gibb, 2002). "Entrepreneurship has become the engine of economic and social development throughout the world" (Audretsch 2003:5). It behove on educational administrators to design programmes that will enable students in various institutions of higher learning to acquire skills and capacity. This could be effectively achieved with the adoption of strategic management process, which involves setting objectives, planning, implementation and evaluation of entrepreneurship education in line with the scanning of the contemporary environment which provides opportunities and threats and the students' capabilities which are express in terms of their attitude, skills knowledge and values.

1. Concept of entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the transformation of an innovation into a sustainable enterprise that generates value. Entrepreneurship is the act of being an entrepreneur, which can be defined as "one who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods" (Wikipedia, 2011). An entrepreneur is "any entity, new or existing, that provides a new product or service or that develops and uses new methods to produce or deliver existing goods and services at lower cost." (William, Baumol, Litan, & Carl 2007:3).

Entrepreneurs innovate new ways of manipulating nature, and new ways of assembling and coordinating people and the innovator shows that a product, a process, or a mode of organization can be efficient. Entrepreneurs take risks to develop a novel, sustainable enterprise, a new or improved product, service, or mode of organization that can exist independent of its originator that benefits the economy and society.

The defining trait of entrepreneurship is the creation of a novel enterprise that the market is willing to adopt by combining various input factors in an innovative manner to generate value to the customer with the hope that this value will exceed the cost of the input factors, thus generating superior returns in the creation of wealth Hence, entrepreneurship entails the commercialization of an innovation, new ideas, products, or organizational

schemes no matter how little until they achieve concrete reality in the marketplace which will about the creation of profit and increase in wealth that elevates the entire economy (Bradford-DeLong, 2007). The entrepreneur's risk, therefore, is not a gamble but an informed calculation about the viability of the new enterprise in the market, about its capacity to meet a demand or need of others.

2. Defining Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude to enable the learner apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realize new trends and opportunities for meeting those challenges in all aspects of human life.

It has been recognized as one of the crucial factors in fostering entrepreneurial attitude (Kourilsky and Walstad, 1998), and it is widely accepted that many aspects of entrepreneurship can be taught (Garavan and O'Conneide, 1994). Colin and Jack (2004) state that entrepreneurial education is the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them. It also includes instruction in traditional business disciplines such as management, marketing, information systems and finance. Simply speaking, entrepreneurship education is intended to cultivate students' core entrepreneurship ability, guide interested entrepreneurs in fostering entrepreneurship spirit and ability of identifying business opportunities and impart necessary entrepreneurship knowledge and skills by means of systematic courses or training activities.

According to Akudolu (2010) entrepreneurship education is distinguished from other forms of education because of its emphasis on realization of opportunity. These opportunities can be realized through starting a business, introducing new products or ideas or through doing something in a different way with the aim of achieving goals

In most Nigerian tertiary institutions, the entrepreneurial programmes are not systematic in terms of course framework, and variety of course content, as a result, students of different departments offer virtually the same courses which are often theoretical in nature. Moreover, the individual capabilities and personal attributes, values, skills and experience are not being given much attention.

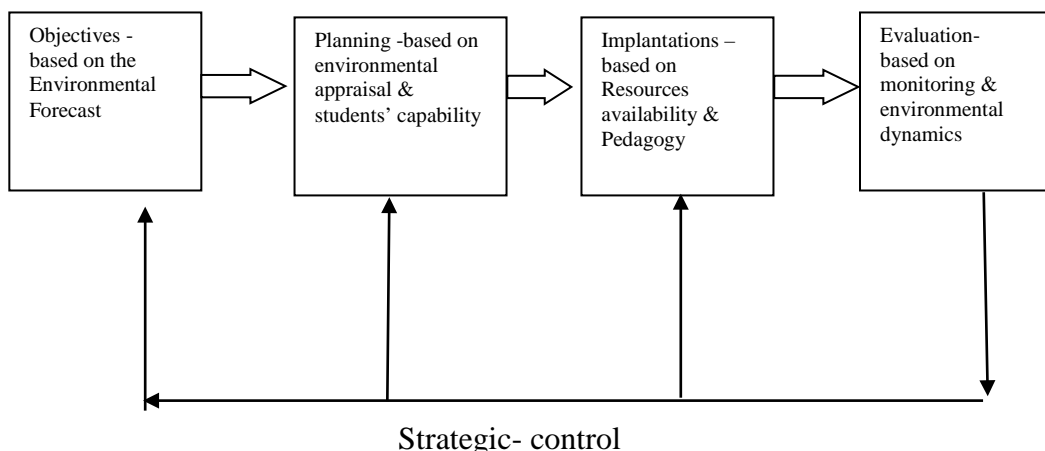
Essentially, an entrepreneurship education requires a teaching style that is action-oriented, encourages experiential learning, problem-solving, project-based learning, creativity, and supportive of peer evaluation. It is thought that such a process best provides the mix of enterprising skills and behaviours akin to those required to create and manage a small business.

3. Strategic Management For Entrepreneurship Education

Strategic Policy Requirements for Enterprise Development called for a longer-term framework to underpin national prosperity taking into consideration that decisions made today, affect all our tomorrows. It seems fitting to echo this call within the education context. In order for the tertiary education in Nigeria to fulfill its objectives of enabling students to fulfill their potential and of delivering graduates who can create indigenous employment or deliver benefit to employers, change must occur. This can be achieved by adopting the strategic management process which emphasizes that the prevailing international and national environment must be taking into consideration because they provide the opportunities within which the entrepreneur can succeed and the threats that may scuffle the success of the entrepreneur.

The process of strategic management in planning and implementation of entrepreneurship education is depicted below:

Model of Strategic Management in Implementing Entrepreneurship Education



Source; Adopted from Kazim (2008) Strategic management and business policy. Third Edition; Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company. New Delhi

Kazim (2008), sees the environment as the aggregate of all conditions, events and influences that surround and affect the operation of business activities. It is therefore apparent that since environment influences the outcome of business activities in multitudinous ways, its understanding is of crucial importance. Agbonifoh (2008), noted that environment could be effectively manage by anticipating, analyzing, forecasting, articulating and responding appropriately to changes and anticipate changes in the external environment.

In addition to the environment, the individual capabilities must be matched with the opportunities and challenges in the contemporary environment. In this regards entrepreneurship education should be designed

in such a way that each student knowledge, skills, attitude and values are in consonant with identified environmental opportunities and avoid or minimize the threat. A student attitude is characterized by initiative, pro-activity, independence and innovation in personal and social life, as much as at work. It also includes motivation and determination to meet objectives, whether personal goals or aims held in common with others.

In this regard, the attitude and values dimension of entrepreneurship education should cover the demonstration of:

- a. Interest and enthusiasm
- b. Hard work and perseverance
- c. Orientation to change
- d. Intra-personal skills (knowledge of self).
- e. Positive disposition to life long learning
- f. Initiative
- g. Creative thinking

Entrepreneurship education must be made available to all students in Nigeria within the higher education sector irrespective of their field of study. This will require strategic vision and leadership from Education management or administrators within Higher Education Institutions and the allocation of the necessary resources by Government to enable the conversion of policy into action.

4. Designing the Objectives Of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurial education is the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them. It includes instruction in opportunity recognition, commercializing a concept, marshalling resources in the face of risk, and initiating a business venture. Entrepreneurship education is in fact the fundamental aim of education. It is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude to enable the learner apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realize Traditional business education programs, though well attended, have come under criticism for failing to be relevant to the needs of the changing business environment and the student attitude and values. Although entrepreneurial education emphasizes imagination, creativity, and risk-taking in business but the traditional business schools tend to over-emphasize quantitative and corporate techniques at the expense of more creative skills (Porter, 1994).

What distinguishes entrepreneurship education from other forms of education is its emphasis on realization of opportunity. Furthermore, it is argued that new opportunities themselves emanate from the insights of entrepreneurs (Holcombe 1998). Entrepreneurship, therefore, creates changes and such changes may equally create opportunities. The objectives

must be in line with the identified environmental opportunities and threat as well as students capability.

The objectives should aim at the following:

- To explore how the Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria can develop and deliver a framework for embedding entrepreneurship education across all disciplines
- To provide individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them.
- To provide instruction aimed at commercializing a concept, marshalling resources in the face of risk, and initiating a business venture.
- To Create the Entrepreneurial Graduates who are equally valuable within organisations ('intrapreneurship') across public, private and third sectors.

The process of Entrepreneurial curriculum development should involve the following:

- Problem definition/Situation analysis: This must take care of societal needs, Student needs, identification of entrepreneurial traits, Professional needs and Industrial needs.
- Structuring the Curriculum: examination of different pedagogy, Student's Constraints, Accrediting or vetting group Resource i.e. faculty, money, media facilities.
- Implementation and Evaluation: Advisory Committees, Course Boards External Assessors and Feedbacks from Industry.
- The content of the curriculum should be written in behavioural objectives which is student centered.

5. Planning Of Entrepreneurship Education

Planning of entrepreneurship education implies adapting and applying the mindset and capabilities of the student to the relevant context of the contemporary environment and exercising judgements about the optimal actions to be taken within the set environments.

Planning involves the appropriate combination of students:

- Enterprise awareness.
- Entrepreneurial mindset.
- Entrepreneurial capability.

The learning methodology should be designed in a manner that engages and enhances the student's abilities and skills, and should be frequently set within a context that is meaningful and relevant. They should challenge the student to think about the future and visualise opportunities

that link them to their capabilities. As with all academic disciplines, practice should be underpinned by theory. Learners should typically be engaged in scenarios that challenge their thinking and make explicit the need for creativity and innovation.

The courses to be taught should help the students to assimilate and reflect upon existing knowledge and resources that enhance their understanding of a topic or theme. They should draw upon a more traditional pedagogy involving lectures and set texts in an enterprise context. Classes should be more focused on exploring past trends within small business sectors and the theoretical underpinnings of enterprise and entrepreneurship. As a matter of guiding principles, entrepreneurship training should focus on:

- The future rather than the past
- Creativity rather than critical analysis
- Insight rather than knowledge
- Active rather than passive understanding
- Involvement rather than detachment
- Manipulation of events rather than symbols
- Personal communication rather than written communication

Akudolu (2010) recommended the following to be included in entrepreneurship education policy and planning in Nigeria:

- (i) Entrepreneurship education as general education across all levels of education should be made a policy issue.
- (ii) Entrepreneurship education should be a general course in every tertiary institution in Nigeria.
- (iii) Practicing teachers at all levels of education should undergo professional training through seminars, workshops and other in-service training to acquire knowledge and skills in the adoption of entrepreneurship – driven instructional methodology.
- (iv) Dimensions of entrepreneurship should be a component of teacher preparation curricular.
- (v) Federal and State Ministries of Education should build resource centres and networks for exchange of good practice.
- (vi) School administrators should establish linkages with entrepreneurs.

6. Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is the unique process of fusing innovation and implementation, which allows individuals to bring new ideas into being for the benefit of themselves and others. It is also about devising and implementing new ideas and practices or improving old ones. In a progressively technological, scientific, and interconnected world, the quality of innovation will to a large depend on the superior advanced learning.

A strong educational foundation helps ensure that new ideas will be effective and substantive. Because entrepreneurship promotes, implements, and rewards innovation, it is necessarily to correlate it with other educational courses or subjects. In this light, a key task of Nigerian higher education surely is to continue to stress and reward innovation and its implementation as a core educational goal and to lay emphasis on a teaching style or methodology that is action-oriented, encourages experiential learning, problem-solving, project-based learning, creativity, and supportive of peer evaluation. It is thought that such a process best provides the mix of enterprising skills and behaviours akin to those required to create and manage a small business.

The teaching methods to be adopted must provide an entrepreneurial approach where the focus is on the process and not the content. Entrepreneurial education should relate to:

- ❖ Emphasis on ‘know-how’ instead of ‘know-what’.
- ❖ Training that increases the ability of trainees to generate ideas.
- ❖ Flexible and responsive lectures to the environmental needs.
- ❖ Learning that encourages peer exchange. While trainers (teachers) learn alongside, mistakes should be seen as a major means of learning.
- ❖ Interactive programmes which should involve group projects, writing of business plan and practical experience in the production and sales of goods and services
- ❖ Co-ordination and promotion of activities and collaborative working between academics, researchers, enterprise support staff and technology transfer functions within institutions.

7. Evaluation Of Entrepreneurship Education

The current lack of proper or adequate evaluation of entrepreneurship education offerings within Nigeria must also be addressed. Effective evaluation and a climate of continuous review and improvement can only serve to enhance student learning.

The university should devise an appropriate evaluation technique for evaluating the level of understanding by the students in entrepreneurial education at end of each programme.

The student should be evaluated practically in the following areas:

- The students’ ability to identify, analyse and respond to relevant opportunities while considering risk factors
- The students’ ability to develop and produce multiple solutions to identified problems, shortfalls and similar challenges

- The student’ ability to be flexible and adaptable, seeing alternative perspectives and offering a choice of solutions
- The students’ ability to review and evaluate multiple solutions in contexts that anticipate and accommodate changes in the international and local environment.
- The students’ ability to take independent responsibility for managing projects
- The students’ ability to reflect and persevere in challenging environments in pursuit of achieving desired objectives or goals
- The students’ ability to use of social skills to build trust, relationships and networks and to communicate ideas and information

In addition to the evaluation of the students immediately after the programme, the university administrators should continuously track the employment status of the graduates having studied the programme in their various institution and find whether the knowledge and skills they have acquired from studying the programme have become a competitive edge in whatever field they find themselves. This will form the basis of improved programme planning, implementation and evaluation.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper recommends entrepreneurship education that is in consonant with the prevailing contemporary global environment. It must be a comprehensive entrepreneurship education for all students according to their interest and passion and must not only provide theoretical knowledge but ensure graduates develop an entrepreneurial mindset, through developing entrepreneurial skills, behaviours and attitudes and equipping them with the key competencies to enable them to enjoy an entrepreneurial /intrapreneurial career or engage in new venture creation.

This can only be achieved through student-centred teaching and learning that employs innovative, experiential learning methodologies in conjunction with assessment mechanisms that award credit for extra-curricular and practical activities delivered by a coordinated, student-focused Institutional infrastructure. It is therefore essential that educators are recognized and encouraged to act as “entrepreneurial champions” and provided with the means to enhance their own teaching skills and to be entrepreneurial and innovative in developing new teaching methods and resources.

Effective implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria requires a transformation of Nigerians’ educational ideology which most of the times are theoretically oriented. The education wave has moved from elite education to mass education; from examination oriented to all round development and from employment oriented to entrepreneurship oriented

education. Effective implementation of curriculum for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria will result in the entrepreneurialization of learning environment in the country and consequently in the development of confident and empowerment.

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