ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILL ACQUISITION AS A VERITABLE TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract
The study x-rayed entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a veritable tool for sustainable national development. The study explained entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a concept, sustainable national development, benefits of entrepreneurial skill acquisition, challenges and ways forward. There are many entrepreneurial skills needed by the undergraduate and the youths which will lead to success in job creation, meaningful education for the youths, provide graduates with enough training and also reduce the high rate of poverty, insecurity and violence. It was revealed in the course of the study that entrepreneurial skills like innovativeness, creativity, communication, administrative and others were identified to be needed by youths for self-employability. It recommended among others that prospective entrepreneurs should ensure that necessary skills aimed at enhancing their businesses are acquired before venturing into their choice businesses; there should be a thorough knowledge of the pros and cons of businesses by prospective entrepreneurs before committing their financial resources and time to the business in order to avoid business failure and government at all levels should endeavour to promote small scale businesses by setting policies aimed at providing soft loans to intending investors in order to enhance speedy economic growth and development.
Keywords: *Entrepreneurial skill, skill acquisition, national development.*

Introduction
Entrepreneurial skills are skills which an entrepreneur needs to successfully run a business or add value to the business. Agu, Chiaha and Ikeme, (2013) argued that entrepreneurial skill acquisition must be nurtured through proper education so that it can be directed to responsible and enriching small and medium business endeavours that will profit the individuals and the communities in which the entrepreneurs operate. Also, entrepreneurial skills are skills that an entrepreneur should possess to enable entrepreneurs succeed in a virtual learning environment. Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is seen as a technique by which one acquires or learns a particular skill, behaviour needed for business through training or education in order to identify and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities for self employment (Samian and Buntat, 2012). In Nigeria, entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of wealth creation and reducing unemployment among youths thereby leading to increased creativity, innovation, and gross total production of the nation (Shane, 2013).

Entrepreneurship skill acquisition in our society is very important and cannot be over emphasized because in olden days, when jobs were available everywhere both in the private and public sectors of the nation (Kareem, Ademoyewa, Jolaosho, Ojenike, and Sodiq, 2015). The dwindling economic capacity of the present administration in the country, the state of the economy and the resultant youth unemployment have resulted in the need for every Nigerian graduate to become self-reliant through self-employment via skills acquisition and entrepreneurship education. Therefore, the integration of entrepreneurial skills into higher education curriculum, the problem of youth unemployment may be minimized or eliminated. Youth unemployment in Nigeria, which is becoming a problem, may be partly explained by the obsolete educational system that is more of theory with theoretical learning and little or no practical skills. Olaitan (2010) opined that if

most of the graduates are unemployed, it means they do not have a technical ability or an entrepreneurial competence that is commensurate with their certificates. This may simply mean that the educational system in Nigeria today apparently does not equip its graduates to meet the challenges of the present labour market. Therefore, Entrepreneurship skill means setting up and running a business in a profitable and sustainable manner. Entrepreneurs innovate; discover new products, new opportunities, and start-up new ventures. Entrepreneurship according to Omolayo (2006) is the act of starting a company, arranging business deals and taking risks in order to make a profit through the education skills acquired through creativity. Entrepreneurship can be described as the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coupling them with management and organizational skills in order to combine resources, money and people to meet an identified need and create wealth. In a similar vein, entrepreneurship is a process which include land, labour and capital so as to provide a product or service for public consumption (Nwangu, 2007).

Olagunju, (2014) in his view sees entrepreneurial skill acquisition as the ability of a person to exploit an idea and create an enterprise (Small or Big) not only for personal gain but also for social and developmental gain. While, Misrich and Peters, (2002) also see entrepreneurial skill as ability to create something innovative or new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks, and personal satisfaction and independence. Entrepreneurial skill acquisition scheme introduced into educational institutions most especially higher institutions of learning were meant to provide the level of education or knowledge needed to increase entrepreneurial opportunity that can help economic growth and development of a country (Shane, 2013). Therefore, Nigerian government create several awareness on entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme by introducing entrepreneurship courses and establishment of entrepreneurship department in various schools in the country so as to expose youths to entrepreneurial skills to allow them to become self reliant and wealth creators.

The main reason behind the introduction of entrepreneurial skill acquisition by the government was to ensure that youths were equipped with skills, attitude, aspiration and competencies needed to effectively contribute to the development of the nation. Samian and Buntat (2012) opined that the realization of the above reason by government was to provide micro-credit facilities to entrepreneurs to enable them practice entrepreneurship, create self-employment and help generate employment opportunities for others. Hence, the researchers x-rayed entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a veritable tool for sustainable business development.

Concept of Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition

Educating people on the need for making their own business decisions, acquiring some basic vocational skills and using them with the knowledge gained in school is the bedrock of economic empowerment and development which is urgently needed (Mgbonyebi and Olaniyi, 2019). Effective and efficient skills development systems which connect education to entrepreneurial skills acquisition can help a nation sustain productive growth and development and when improved upon, can lead to creation of good jobs which in turn enhances the people's standard of living. Information and communication technology which is one of the entrepreneurship skills is a veritable and essential tool in Entrepreneurship education all over the world. Okereke and Okoroafor (2011) assert that entrepreneurship skills have been acknowledged worldwide as the pertinent and rewarding tools for job creation, self-employment and economic survival of any nation of the world.

Entrepreneurship skill acquisition are said to be the necessary set of skills required to be an entrepreneur. Skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to environmental demands, with human being and external situation together forming a functional system (Adeyemo, 2009). Entrepreneurship skills are skills that help one establish and operate a venture successfully. These skills are acquired through entrepreneurial development programmes.

Ademiluyi (2007) sees entrepreneurial skills as business skills acquired by an individual to be able to function effectively as an entrepreneur in the unstable business environment or in self-employment. Demers (2014), Patel (2015), Ikeanyionwu and Ekwe (2013) identify some of the entrepreneurship skills required by students/graduates as ability to raise and manage money, communication with customers via e-mail, phone, websites, communication with staff as well as sales skills including connecting with social media networks. Entrepreneurial skills acquisition are said to be the necessary set of skills required in becoming an entrepreneur. Skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to environmental demands, with human being and external situation together forming a functional system (Adeyemo, 2009). Entrepreneurial skills are skills that help one establish and operate a venture successfully and these skills are acquired through entrepreneurial development programmes. Skill acquisition as further explained by Onyeaghala, Edema and Orji (2013) is a specific form of learning, which is the representation of information in memory concerning some environmental or cognitive event. Pteshetter, (2009) opines that the process of acquisition and development of entrepreneurial skill is concerned with four main stages as follows:

i. To objectively analyze and identify the current and foreseeable skill needed to do business, in terms of management, administrative and technical skills and the relative importance of them.
ii. To identify the entrepreneur's own personal goal and objectives and accurately analyze and evaluate his or her own skills and resources in relation to theme.
iii. To produce a realistic personal development plan for the potential entrepreneur.
iv. To monitor the on -going performance of the entrepreneur once the business has started and progress made towards developing the new skills that had been previously identified as necessary for the success of the business. This applies both to the entrepreneur's personal needs and to the process of assisting employees to develop new skills that will also benefit the business.

In the same vein, Jones, George, and Hill (2000) summarized entrepreneurial skills into the following:

a. **Technical Skills:** They refer to acquisition of job specific knowledge and techniques that are needed to function effectively in an organizatio. For instance, a principal of a private school may need accountants and bookkeeping clerks to keep records of school fees payment, receipt cost and the payroll. He/she may also need teachers and other staff to take care of students and keep the school environment tidy and attractive for learning.
b. **Human Skills:** They are skills that help the individual comprehend and regulate the behaviour of other individuals or groups with the intent to promote communication and motivation, while moulding behaviours towards greater individual and team productivity.
c. **Conceptual Skills**: These skills relate to the ability to examine and analyse a situation to differentiate between cause and effect. Conceptual skills are very much required for organizational planning and administration. It takes into account educational training and retraining to inculcate conceptual skills in workers/staff.

Sustainable National Development

Sustainable development is seen as a process of improving on the range of opportunities that will enable individuals, humans and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potentials over a sustainable period of time, while maintaining the resilience of the economic, social, and environmental system (Abubakar, 2014). Sustainable development can be measured in good road networks, enough and adequate hospitals and health facilities, equal access to functional development opportunities, adequate security of lives and properties, job creation and industrial uprise and social security support for the vulnerable ones. Sustainable development is also the state of having well balanced, steady and effective use of human, material and capital resources for total economic independence of a nation without compromising the future (Umezulike and Okoye, 2013).

Shaibu, Okpe and Mbaegbu (2019) see sustainable national development as progress, advancement or qualitative changes that are evident in a nation over a period of time. It has to do with the contributions of individuals who transmit desirable values, habits, wisdom from one generation to the other so as to ensure continuity. Development is a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced within a social system to higher per capita income and levels of living through more production methods and social organizations (Rogers, 2006) in (Shaibu, Okpe, Musa and Nwaka, 2019). Sustainable development is a system approach to growth and development and involves managing natural resources, production and social capital for welfare of their own and future generations (United Nations, 2012) in (Shaibu, Okpe, Musa and Nwaka, 2019).

The basic principles underlying sustainable development can be separated into social, economic, and ecological dimension. The social dimension points out the importance of resources, power and influence that are fairly distributed and that people can feel secured and can participate. The economical dimension refers to the fact that economic growth shall carry on with respect to the environment, growth of the people's health and education, and fair distribution of prosperity/wealth (SMIEIS, 2002). The economic dimension is seen as a requirement for development as no country can achieve a sustainable economic growth if the environment is worsened, if the prosperity/wealth is not fairly distributed, and if growth of the human resources has not taken place. The ecological dimension on its part means that consideration should be given to the social and economic development of the nation.

Benefits of Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition

Some of the benefits of skill acquisition include the fact that; it helps an individual to adjust to the realities of the labour market, acquire skills that meet immediate requirements, acquire the basis for adjusting to the future needs, this is flexible and teaches us to be flexible too, experts acquire knowledge through it, and then they acquire power, other people trust experts, and they will trust you, experts earn more and have broader career prospects etc (Johansson, 2015). Skill is like key used in opening door of fortune. As water is very essential to humans, so is skill needed in the life of every serious minded human being. Skills can do a lot of great work in the life of every living soul. Dearth of skills is a major cause of corruption. The importance of skill acquisition includes self employment, diverse job opportunities, employment generation, effective function, and crime reduction (Buwari, 2018). Buwari (2018) posited the following importance of skill acquisition:

1. **Employment Generation:** Many governments are still finding it difficult to provide jobs for the citizens because the citizens are lacking important skills they need. There will be a

lot of jobs generated for the citizens of every country if the citizens are well equipped with entrepreneurial skills. This is why it is necessary for government to organize skill acquisition programme for the masses as this will go a long way in providing jobs for them and others.

2. **Self-employment:** A person that has acquired the necessary entrepreneurial skills is a self-employed person. Successful businessmen and women whose names are heard in many parts of the world are self-employed. A self employed person can never go hungry because the skill acquired provides food on a daily basis, but one who lacks skill acquisition will find it difficult to be self employed because he/she has nothing to offer the public.
3. **Diverse Job Opportunities:** A person who acquires many skills is classified as someone who is up and doing. Those who have many skills stand the chance of gaining job from many establishments. Truly speaking, people who have many skills are being searched by many companies and investors for their wealth of experience.
4. **Crime Reduction:** Skill acquisition reduces the crime rate in many nations. People begin to think on many dirty activities they will do to make money when they do not have anything to call job of their own, but with acquired skill by an individual, he/she works and makes money from his/her acquired skills, which will lead to comfort in life and society.
5. **Effective Function:** Organizations that employ skilful workers to assist in their organizational duties lose nothing at all because there will always be effective functions performed by the employees. This is because the employees have acquired necessary skills needed for him/her to perform the work as desired by the organization. The knowledge gained from the training on that specific job makes him/her to do the organization's works as desired by the management of the organization/company.
6. **Meaningful Education for Youths:** The provision of meaningful education for youths which could make them self-reliant and consequently encourage them to deriving profit and being independent.
7. **Providing Graduates with Enough Training:** To provide graduates with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.
8. **Stimulating Industrial and Economic Growth**: To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
9. **Providing Graduates with Enough Training in Risk Management:** To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.
10. **Providing Graduates with Diverse Training Skills:** To provide graduates with training in skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.

Challenges of Entrepreneurial Skills and Sustainable National Development

Many developing nations of the world are faced with many challenges and harsh realities which include unemployment, poverty, conflicts and disease. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in most developing nations thereby calling for the training of educated men and women who can function effectively in the society in which they live in. Information by National Universities Commission (NUC 2007) reiterates the massive unemployment of Nigerian graduates of higher institutions in the country. These challenges are traceable to the disequilibrium between labour market requirement and lack of essential employment skills by the graduates. This obvious critical skills gap inhibits the development of

youths and entire development of the nation. More than half of the Nigerian populations are under the age of 30 (National Population Commission, 2001).

Consequently, it can be agreed that the economy of Nigeria is a youth economy. This reality leaves them without any meaningful means of sustainable livelihood.

To make ends meet, they simply indulge in prostitution (both male and female), armed robbery, occultism, etc. The youthful period which is a very critical one that has been noted as an essential time for training in entrepreneurship, provides a positive distractive alternative from the self destructive and aggressive behaviour that are frequently associated with adolescents and growing up (Wolfk, 1998).

According to Buwari (2018), the following are challenges that hinder entrepreneurial skill acquisition:

1. **High Cost of Doing Business in Nigeria:** Entrepreneurs in business take risk because they want to make profit. Where the expected return from a venture is lower than the opportunity costs, it will act as a disincentive for the entrepreneur. Due to collapsed infrastructural facilities and unbridled corruption, where entrepreneurs have to spend huge sums to provide some basic infrastructure and bribe government officials, thereby making the cost of doing business in the country to be too high with adverse implication for profitability.
2. **Lack of Knowledge in the Basic Science and Technology:** The role of entrepreneurship in economic development involves more than just increasing per capita output and income, it involves initiating and constructing change in the structure of business and society. This change is accompanied by growth and increased output which allow more wealth to be divided by the various participants. One theory of economic growth depicts innovation as the key, not only in developing new products or service for the market but also in stimulating investment interest in the new ventures being created. The critical point in the product evolution process is the intersection of knowledge and a recognized social need, which begins the product development phase. This point, called interactive synthesis often fails to evolve into marketable innovation and is where the entrepreneur needs to concentrate his/her efforts. The lack of expertise in this area matching the technology with the appropriate market and making the needed adjustment is the fundamental challenge of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria as it is regrettable that education is yet to be accorded the priority it deserves in the country.
3. **Lack of Strong Patent Law:** A serious challenge that entrepreneurs face in Nigeria is the level of competition from foreign producers. The local entrepreneurs are not protected as their situation is worsened by the apparent lack of faith in the Nigerian patent law which many entrepreneurs feel offers them little protection against piracy.
4. **Inappropriate Incentive Structure:** The oil boom has destroyed and distorted our attitude to work, and this has affected the psychological quotient of an average Nigerian who wants quick money. Policy instability also creates an atmosphere of uncertainty as the incentive structure is generally biased in favour of activities with relatively short transaction cycles and quick returns thereby discouraging innovation and entrepreneurship skill acquisition.
5. **Inadequate and Unqualified Personnel:** Most tertiary institutions are bedeviled with inadequate and unqualified staff. The staff strength in most departments in business education is undesirable and inadequate to maintain standard. An inexperienced teacher finds it difficult to carry the students along and this constitutes poor teaching quality,

thereby affecting skill acquisition (Aina, 2009).

6. **Inadequate Electricity Supply:** This is also a great challenge to skill acquisition in Business education. Where there is no power supply, it will be difficult to impart skills to students as frequent interception of power will cause the equipment to go off and may even cause damage to the equipment.
7. **Capital Injection Solution:** This is seen as a major challenge faced by many investors. The most popular argument to support the inadequate capital syndrome is that the banks' reluctance to give loan to entrepreneurs. This argument could be examined from the very essence and condition for the survival of banks. Given that every idle fund in the bank is a liability. It would be illogical to expect that a bank would refuse to fund a good business idea.

8. **Corruption and Mismanagement of Funds:** Corruption is now a recurring decimal in our country, as through corruption, public funds are looted heavily by corrupt officials. Elsewhere, school administrators and others responsible for managing educational funds mismanage them at the detriment of the students. All locations to schools are often diverted for social activities, personal aggrandizement, and political reasons, rather than educational purposes.
9. **Lack of Political Will and Interest in Vocational and Technical Education:** The government of the day has not shown serious political will towards investing in vocational and technical education which Business education also holds dear. Vocational and technical education is not well established in Nigeria as a result of poor infrastructure and government support in terms of finance. This affects skill acquisition in Business education and the quality of graduates being produced (Asonibare, 2016).

Ways Forward to Entrepreneurial Skill and Business Development

The ways forward to the challenges faced by entrepreneurs lie in both the hands of government and the upcoming and future entrepreneurs who wish to venture into business. The future entrepreneurs have a very serious role to play to see that the challenges faced by entrepreneurs are reduced or totally eliminated. Below however are ways forward to such challenges:

1. **Strong Patent Law Should be put in Place:** Strong patent law should be put in place by the government so that local entrepreneurs will be protected from foreign producers. Government should encourage the production and consumption of local products made in the country and in this way, the indigenous entrepreneurs will be encouraged to venture into businesses to invest.
2. **Concentration During Study:** Future and upcoming entrepreneurs should concentrate during their period of studies in higher institutions of learning so as to acquire the required technical skills which will help them to identify business opportunities, take advantage of such opportunities, venture into business and become successful entrepreneurs which will result to sustainable national development.
3. **Eschew Corruption Tribalism and Religious Bias**: Government officials should discourage corruption tribalism, religious bias and favoritism and ensure that every individual is treated with equal right and respect in terms of giving loan, issuing business certificate, signing of patent law as well as issuing certificate of incorporation to run a given business.

4. **Easy Access to Loan:** The government should give loan to entrepreneurs as at when needed. The interest rate of such loan should be such that it is affordable by the entrepreneurs and commensurate directives should be given by the C.B.N to commercial banks, the C.B.N should encourage the commercial banks to give loan to entrepreneurs at a lower interest rate.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is considered as a veritable tool for rapid development of businesses in developing economies as it creates the required manpower and skills necessary for business growth, reduction of unemployment, and poverty. It is therefore, strategic and wise for Nigeria to assign a significant and increasing role of entrepreneurs in their effort to revamp the economy. For the entrepreneurs to be effective in creating wealth and employment opportunities, the government needs to create an investor-friendly environment comprising stable macro-economic policies, government should address urgently the dilapidated infrastructural facilities in the country, starting with the power sector, roads and railways, provide adequate security and give every citizen the sense of belonging. The educational sector needs to be revamped with emphasis on science and technology and the need to change the orientation of our youths and graduates towards embracing blue collar jobs rather than becoming job seekers for white collar jobs.

Recommendations

The researchers made the following recommendations in line with the topic:

1. Entrepreneurs should endeavour to ensure that they play important role in the society through the goods and services they provide in order to give satisfaction to customers.
2. There should be a thorough knowledge of the pros and cons of business by prospective entrepreneurs before committing their financial resources and time on the business in order to avoid business failure/gate crashing.
3. Prospective entrepreneurs should ensure that necessary skills aimed at enhancing their businesses are acquired before venturing into their choice businesses.
4. Government should set up policies requesting multinational oil companies to support prospective entrepreneurs financially and materially in their communities of operation as part of their corporate social responsibility.

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