Entrepreneurship Training For Sustainable Development In The Globalizing Nigerian Economy: The Roles Of Information Communication Technology

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ABSTRACT
In this new age where globalization has taken the centre stage, there is the constant need for effective resource mobilization and efficient allocation among nations with the right skills, values, ideas and attitudes. This paper contends that entrepreneurship offers these potentials. However, entrepreneurship training is yet to recess is still on a shaking ground even in the academic in the country. It is thus recommended that entrepreneurship education/training should be encourage and taught to all students across disciplines in its broadest sense with ICT made compulsory at all levels of education in Nigeria. Imperatives for increased funding for education in the country were equally emphasized. It was however recommended that Entrepreneurship education requires incentives for educators to try new things and invest time in the development of new modules. And with the changing global order, educators need to be trained and retrained to be able to provide quality academic leadership and guidance while evolving methods of coaching that meet the demand of the new age. This again, calls for the stepping up of funding of Nigerian schools.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Training, Development, ICT
INTRODUCTION
Globalization has become a buzzword in the 21st century that is building a strong platform of interdependence among people and countries around the world. This phenomenon has opened up a lot of investment opportunities as well as challenges with far reaching implications for the working of all economies of the world today. For instance, globalization along with deregulation has brought about phenomenal growth of many economies especially in most developing nations expanding them from local to global playing fields as strong organizations from Europe, Japan, China, America, Korea and other areas intensify efforts for enlarged market share thereby drawing up a new competitive order. This is further supported by improvement in communication and information processing coupled with rapid and wide spread technological changes. Indeed. Information and communication technology (ICT) has assumed a major role in the globalization process and not only facilitates business transaction but offers business opportunities.

In spite of this progress however, it is disappointing to note that most developing nations like Nigeria are yet to be fully integrated to tap into this web of opportunities as some of these economics still groan under the pangs of the phenomenon. While a modicum of progress could be said to have been registered in some areas such as the service sector, other sectors as manufacturing are worse off owing to the increasing intensive competition. Aina (2010) lamented that the continuous expansion of the service sector brought about by globalization had not been matched with the production of goods, which had rather been on the decline in the developing countries.

Various factors have been identified for this trend in the developing nations chief among them is the lack of basic infrastructure and technical capability. No doubt, technical capability such as entrepreneurship is highly needed to harness the vast natural resources in the region for economic prosperity. This underscores the necessity of a sound programme of entrepreneurship training/education in Nigeria in order to link into this super high-way of global opportunities. The focus of this paper is on the contribution of entrepreneurship in job creation and the development of a sustainable economy in Nigeria which should galvanize action in putting entrepreneurship training in its right place in the national scheme.

Theoretical Framework/ Background
Throughout the theoretical history of entrepreneurship, scholars from multiple disciplines in the social sciences have grappled with a diverse set of interpretations and definitions to conceptualize this abstract idea (Iguodala 2006). As a result, various theories have emerged from divergent backgrounds which now form the basis on which research in entrepreneurship is anchored. This paper is anchored on economic theory in which entrepreneurship has a long and rich tradition.

The economic theory generally see entrepreneurship as the forth factor of production apart from land, labour, and capital, which is only one of the limited consensus among economists on the defining characteristics of the concept. While one school of thought see entrepreneurs as risk bearers, and leaders, other look at them as innovators while other still, say they are gap fillers. Richard Castillo, a French economist was the first to introduce the term “entrepreneur” in the 18th century. According to him, an entrepreneur is the agent who buys means of production at certain prices in order to combine them into a new product. In the wake of the next century, later economists of British extraction such as David Ricardo, Adams Smith and John Mill discussed the concept of entrepreneurship under the broad English term of business management. Mill however went further to stress the significance of entrepreneurship for economic growth. He held the view that entrepreneurship requires no ordinary skills. In his famous treatise, principles of economics published in 1870 Alfred Marshal, as reported by Iguodala (2006), asserts that there are four factors of production: land, Labour, Capital, and organization. Organization is the co-coordinating factor which, according to him brings the other factors together and Marshall believed that entrepreneurship is the driving element behind organization. Entrepreneurship is therefore a focal force in the production process such that a creative organization by the entrepreneurship could create new products or improve the plan of producing an old commodity. Economists in this school of thought are of
the view that for entrepreneurs to be able to achieve that they must have thorough understanding about their industries and they must be natural leaders. Interestingly, Marshall postulated that entrepreneurship must have the ability to foresee changes in supply and demand and be willing to act on such risky forecast (Bates, James and Syks, 1962). By implication, Marshall means that people can be taught to acquire certain skills and abilities that are required to be entrepreneurs - entrepreneurship training.

In similar vein, another school of thought suggests that the role of the entrepreneur is that of an innovator. Economists in this school held that entrepreneurs have special skills that enable them to participate in the process of innovation they see the entrepreneurs as gap-fillers who have the ability to perceive where the market fails and to develop new goods or processes demanded in the market but which are not currently being supplied. Leitbenstein is one of the economists in this school of thought who posited that entrepreneurs have special ability to connect different markets and make up for market failures and deficiencies.

It is necessary to note in the light of the foregoing that by whatever concepts, characteristics, theory or discipline a definition is arrived at, it is enough to assert that entrepreneurship is a critical success factor in the social economic transformation of the Nigerian economy in line with the global order. Therefore by giving entrepreneurship training its right place and attention in the country, government can be sure of laying a sound foundation for an economic take off especially given her rich national endowment.

**Entrepreneurship, Job Creation and Economic Development in Nigeria**

A simple analogy of economics in the production process indicates that all other factors of production: Land, Labour and Capital require the acumen of an entrepreneur to turn things around for production to take place.

In other words, no matter how richly blessed a nation is with natural resources, it needs men with entrepreneurial skills, ability, ideas, and attitude to explore and harness such resources for prosperity. No wonder Onoriode and Odjegba (2009) observes that the increasing incidence of poverty, shrinking industrial landscape, Widening inequality between the rich and the poor, the embarrassing height of unemployment especially graduate unemployment, brain drain among others point to the fact that entrepreneurship training has not be given its right place in the Nigerian Education System. Indeed, with a vast deposit of natural resources and a growing population of over 125 million people, Nigeria offers a good example to explain the paradox of poverty in the African continent.

The country has an estimated population of 125 million people, about one quarter of sub-Sahara Africa’s population with more than 200 ethics groups and over 500 indigenous dialects. Nigeria spans an area of about 924,000 square kilometres with a topography ranging from mangrove swampland along the coast to tropical rain forest and savannah to the North. Some 10% of the land is covered with forest and Nigeria’s wood resources include large stands of mahogany, walnut and Obeche. The country is endowed with vast and largely untapped natural resources including such minerals as petroleum, limestone, tin, columbite, Kaolin, gold and silver, coal, lead, zine, gypsum, clay, shale, marble, graphite, iron-ore, stone, Zircon and natural gas. Apart from River Niger (the third largest in Africa), there is also the River Benue (major attribute of the Niger) apart from Anambra, Imo, Benin, Ogun e.t.c. rivers (Ayanwuj et al 1997). The country’s proven oil reserves located mainly in the South-East and South-South according to NEEDS (2004) amounts to an estimated proven 32billion barrels sufficient to last for about 37 years at the current rate of production. The NEEDS document put estimate of the proven natural gas reserves at 174 trillion cubic feet (equivalent to 30 billion barrels of crude oil) with energy content slightly higher than the country oil reserves. Nearly 80 percent of the Natural gas produced is presently being flared.

With this socio-cultural diversity, mineral deposits and biodiversity, a good foundation for wealth and job creation and sustainable national development in Nigeria was naturally laid. However, a perusal of the Nigerian socio-economic and political landscape, cascading down her experience of self rule and navigating towards development arena, presents a startling paradox (Onoriode and Eguegu 2009) As Daily Times (1985) puts it, inspite of these, the nation is still bedeviled by mass poverty and high income concentration among small groups of business man and politicians, unemployment and under-
employment, lack of executive capacity, over dependence on petroleum and imports of goods and services etc. Turnarounds of the situation call for the building of a critical mass of entrepreneurship to raise the level of productivity in the economy by harnessing and utilizing resources more efficiently. According to Inegbenebor (2006) entrepreneurs are the heroes and heroines in the economic sphere who in any market economy are the agents of social and economic transformation. They create job for themselves and for others by establishing new businesses. We need to recognise that employment prospects for graduates are changing fast, in line with the changing global order being driven by ICT which is reshaping our ways of thinking, ideas, and modes of working today. In collaboration, the Guardian (2009) asserted that the unemployment index is rising not just because there are no jobs, but essentially the skills available are not sufficiently relevant to the needs of industry. Besides, the available skills are not sufficiently dexterous to be able to undertake available job to be done. Besides, long term public sector and multinational co-operations employment is decreasing. Okojie, 2006 stated that since the structural adjustment programme in 1986 many Nigerians, men and women now have no choice but to opt for self-employment, many were retrenched, while thousands of graduates of tertiary institutions cannot get wage jobs. The creation of new knowledge based or social enterprises is therefore seem as vita to maintaining competitiveness in a globalizing world and to address social and environmental issues effectively (Small Business Services 2005). The critical mass entrepreneurial base when attained will therefore create handsome opportunity for small and medium scale enterprises to strive which will not only broaden the base of business ownership in the country, but create more jobs for the populace. By so doing the economy will be repositioned towards maximizing the benefits of the gains of globalization in a world characterized by new competitive forces. Unfortunately entrepreneurship training/education has not received the desired attention in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship Training/Education in the Nigerian Academia
Generally speaking, formal entrepreneurship training is relatively new in the academia all over the world. Volkmann (2004) reported that one of the first courses specifically addressing entrepreneurship was established at the Harvard Business School in 1947. In the United Kingdom (UK) the first courses were launched in the 1980’s together with the UK’s first initiative for Enterprises in Higher Education (Elton 1991). The economic reality in the 3rd world countries such as Nigeria brought to the fore the structural deficiency in the conventional university education without entrepreneurship training. Besides, the ideological wind of globalization, unemployability of some of our graduates and the limited absorbing capacity of the public sector in the face of increasing number of youths joining the employment market every year prompted policy makers, academics and international donors to advocate and promote formal entrepreneurship training in the university. Consequently some Nigeria universities (e.g. UNIBEN) adopted entrepreneurship training in their business Administration curriculum in 1997. Interestingly, the National Universities Commission (NUC) minimum standards recently adopted entrepreneurship as a course for all Faculties in Nigeria universities. NCCE and NBTE are equally squaring up for a similar adoption for Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. According to Frank (2005) entrepreneurship programmes differ significantly. He observed that while some programmes emphasis theoretical issues, i.e. research into the characteristics of entrepreneurship success, management models, and so forth, others focus on entrepreneurship practice, i.e. the necessary skills such as interpersonal skills, business planning, idea creation, negotiation e.t.c. The University of Benin entrepreneurship programme adopted both approaches with the establishment of a distinct unit in 2001 known as Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) responsible for training and support of entrepreneurial activities of all students in the university. The CED in University of Benin provides a bridge between theory and practice of entrepreneurship. The University of Ilorin, started what it called the Technical Entrepreneurship Centre (TEC) in 2008/2009 session. Babalola (2010) reported that though as far back as 2005, the university had agreed, in principle to create a directorate to handle entrepreneurship training in the university, this decision was only put into effect in June 2008 with the establishment of the
TEC under a director. In the University of Nigeria, NSUKKA, Babalola affirm that there is a Centre for Entrepreneurship and Development Research (CEDR) which was set up in 2010 to promote entrepreneurship culture and mindset, skills acquisition, self employment and self actualization. In Ibadan, Ademola and Tayo Olajubutu (2009) reported that the programme on entrepreneurship and Innovation commenced in 2003/2004 with the organization of two workshops that eventually transformed into the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. It is hoped that every institution of higher learning in Nigeria would design similar programme. Moreover, the growing concern for Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria has seen the springing up different agencies and institutions such as Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria. (SMEDAN), Industrial Development Centres e.t.c. which provide technical and financial support to small scale enterprises.

It is disappointing however, to note that despite these efforts in this direction, there still exist an embarrassing gap of failure between the economic reality (unemployment, poverty e.t.c) and the perceived benefits of entrepreneurship programme. This has generated considerable debate about the goals/targets of entrepreneurship education/training in this part of the world. This debate centres on: Are all our entrepreneurship training/education programmes sufficiently reflective of the Nigeria situation? Do all Nigerian trained entrepreneurs have the potentials and the enabling environment for start-up after graduation? Frank (2005) is of the view that the debate also centre on: is it to study entrepreneurship or to increase the number of start-ups after graduation. Or is it to equip students with the skills, attitude and behaviour enabling them to function effectively in the competitive atmosphere of the 21st century and become potential entrepreneurs? The ideal goals/target should, no doubt, constitute part of our research agenda in Nigeria in the new century.

Roles of Information Communication Technology

The 21st century is being characterized by technological sophistication, cultural dynamism, socio-economic transformation and a changing competitive order occasioned by the wind of globalization which is being driven by ICT. Consequently, Nkanu and Usang (2007) observed that arising from ‘the fact that the world is going through an information technology revolution, education in Nigeria is today faced with the challenge of globalization for the transformation of the academic system from the traditional role of teaching, learning, research and methodologies to those driven by information technology which is the latest revolution changing all aspects of the learning environment. Apart from in business, the pervasive influence of ICT has equally found application in Education bringing about changes in teaching/learning practices and improvement on what is learned. Lessons can now be taught in organized or programmed modules trainee follow the lecture at his own pace with difficult lessons repeated as he pleases. ICT has created avenue for teachers and students to share knowledge on contemporary issues and thinking with counterparts across border lines. Information is no longer a prerogative of the privilege few as the competition for information (knowledge) on the net among lecturers and students has become increasingly fierce. With every stakeholder on his tow in pursuit of latest information or issues in a subject, the quality of what is taught and learned is bound to improve. Suffice to say that Entrepreneurship Education/Training stand to benefit so much if the programmes are ICT. Unfortunately, ICT in Nigeria Education system is bedeviled with problems such as insufficient infrastructures including computer hardware and software, bandwidth and access, poor technical expertise to manage available system. Other challenges includes inadequate training facilities for ICT education at all level of education, poor funding unavailability of national ICT infrastructure and poor electric power supply.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship appears to be a critical success factor in the socio-economic transformation of the Nigerian economy. It holds the potentials for opening up new opportunities in our development drive and to create new jobs for the teeming population. Though formal entrepreneurship training / education is relatively new in the academia especially in Nigeria, we stand to benefit immensely if we could double
our efforts in the right direction. There is the need to institute entrepreneurship culture among students at all levels. This would involve curriculum adjustment, re-orientation, moral re-armament, leadership altruism; strive for excellence, creativity and commitment.

We accentuate the fact that ICT is the latest revolution that is driving the globalization process and as such Nigeria must brace up to the challenge in order to catch up with the train of progress and remain relevant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Entrepreneurship finds application in several disciplines and in view of the spread of capitalist ideology and practice coupled with the changing global orders, it is hereby recommended that entrepreneurship education/training be encouraged and taught in its broadcast sense to all students across disciplines. Teaching should explicitly establish the link between skills, knowledge, values, ideas and attitudes on one side and their application (entrepreneurship) on the other.

- Given that entrepreneurship education/training goes beyond the theoretical knowledge of the concept, there is the need for an enhanced collaboration among the department, institution and industrial concerns. This would create opportunity for internship and partnership projects Where students will actively have responsibility and release their enterprising creativity.

- There should be appropriate policy measures to make the use of ICT compulsory at all levels of education in Nigeria. This would have implication for the school curriculum and funding for the procurement of relevant resources and tools which will, no doubt, improve the quality of teaching and what is learned.

- Entrepreneurship education requires incentives for educators to try new things and invest time in the development of new modules. And with the changing global order, educators need to be trained and retrained to be able to provide quality academic leadership and guidance while evolving methods of coaching that meet the demand of the new age. This again, calls for the stepping up of funding of Nigerian schools.

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