
Entrepreneurial Skills As The Vehicle For Nation Building: The Nigeria's Perspective

Barnabas Gogo Pepple¹, Kingsley Ala Wilcox², & Boma Orumbie³

¹Department of Petroleum Marketing and Business Studies, Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas Bonny, **Nigeria.**

²Mathematics Department, RA International School Bonny-Island, **Nigeria**

³School of Business Studies and Management Technology, Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas Bonny, **Nigeria.**

DOI - <http://doi.org/10.37502/IJSMR.2021.4807>

Abstract

This study was carried out on entrepreneurial skills as the vehicle for nation building: The Nigeria's perspective. The importance of entrepreneurship in the enhancement of economic functionality in recent times, cannot be overemphasized. This has made many nations of the world to consider entrepreneurship as one of the major drivers of their economy. Nigeria precisely is not excluded from the list. However, the impact of entrepreneurial programmes by the government has not yielded the desired result that is commensurate with the heavy investments, the government has made over the years. Training people on different businesses to understand the nature of such business and how such businesses can be traded is very important. However, failure to further train the entrepreneurs on the necessary skills needed to function and succeed in such business, especially in a dynamic business environment, will bring about little or no change in the state of the economy before the training was carried out. This study therefore, considered the basic skills that the government must make effort to incorporate into the training scheme, in addition to the business knowledge, in other to enhance the needed result. Finally, the study made some recommendations that will further help to correct previous mistakes and thereby providing better pace for the entrepreneurs to succeed.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Skill, Nation Building, Entrepreneurship skills, Creative thinking.

1. Background of the study

From time immemorial, man had desired to make ends meet by venturing into many different activities. Some of these activities they engaged in are skillful while others they carried out, were based on trial and error, thereby, possibly learning on the job. These activities involve one form of risk or the other and clearly depict the practice of entrepreneurship. The aforementioned therefore suggest that the practice of entrepreneurship is as old as man. Before the discovery of oil in Nigeria in 1956, the nation had depended on agriculture and did

survive greatly and during this period the skills and training given to people made the nation to be near food independent and great exporter of agricultural produce. However, following the discovery of oil in Nigeria in late 1950s, the joining of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1971 and the oil boom in late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a paradigm shift in the mindset of Nigerians from agriculture to oil, thereby establishing in the minds of Nigerians the phenomenon- white-collar-job. As noted by Yu (2021), crude price doubled from \$14 in 1978 to \$35 per barrel in 1981 following the Iran/Iraq war. This phenomenon- white-collar-job, has eaten deep that an average Nigerian up till few decades ago, desire to seek for employment, especially in the oil industry rather than seeking for ways to creating jobs. The above actions, eliminated the entrepreneurial spirit and skills in many Nigerians. Following the rapid increase in population, crises in the oil and gas industry and consequently, the inability of the oil industry and its like to accommodate the rising population and the resultant increase in social vices, the government has more than ever, taken steps to initiate, enhance, promote and sustain entrepreneurial programmes. The importance of entrepreneurship in the life, functioning and survival of any nation cannot be undermined. As noted by Cooney (2012), given the current economic challenges facing many countries across the globe, the notion of engendering greater entrepreneurial activity has become a prominent goal for many national governments. Consequently, according to Davidsson et al, (2006) the relevance of entrepreneurship to economic development has been highlighted by many researchers.

Statement of the problem

Economic development and sustainability has been the desire of every nation, especially developing nations and Nigeria inclusive. While the national government and local government in their different efforts and at different times, had initiated many different entrepreneurial programmes targeted at making her citizens job providers rather than job seekers, had yielded only little results in some quarters and in some cases, no result. These poor or no result is not in the initiation of the programme, but in the failure of the programme to inculcate in the recipient, the required practical skills necessary skills that will expose them to real world situations and not just paper and projector teaching. Hence this study, to stress the need for skills and to recommend such skills.

Significance of the Study

The following, constitute the significance of the current study

1. It will contribute to general knowledge
2. It will make government (both national and local) to understand that it is not just about initiating entrepreneurial programmes, but also, ensuring that the recipients are exposed to the required skills. Especially, practical skills.
3. It will also serve as encouragement to individuals and groups to understand the essence of necessary skills requires as entrepreneur.

2. Literature Review

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship as a concept has metamorphosed from what it used to be to what it is today. And yet keep changing and bringing many things to bear. As noted by Holt (1998) the concept of entrepreneurship over the years as it were, has evolved naturally. Entrepreneurship has improved from what use to be source of livelihood to individual and groups, to what nations greatly encourage for economic development. In terms of definition, many authorities have attempted providing insight to the meaning of the concept. For instance, Penrose (1963) viewed entrepreneurship as the activity that involves identifying opportunities within the economic system. According to Hisrich (1996), Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction. Furthermore, entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently Controlled (Stevenson, et al.1989; Barringer & Ireland, 2006). This clearly showed that there are many definitions of entrepreneurship. As stated by Dollinger (2008), there have been almost as many definitions of entrepreneurship as there have been writers on the subject. These different definitions also suggest that the approaches to the concept will also vary from party to part. This must have made Drucker (2002) to promulgate that “Entrepreneurship is neither a science nor an art. It is a practice”.

Entrepreneurship skills

In recent time, mostly in developing nations. Many activities are carried out based on trial and errors, without attempting to first acquire the requisite skills required to carry out such task. Skill refer to the competence needed to carry out a task in the best manner expected. While Entrepreneurship skill, refers to the competences an entrepreneur needs to be effective in the business world. And different skills have been identified by researchers as necessary for entrepreneurial success. In this section, however, the necessary skill to be successful as an entrepreneur, especially in the context of Nigeria are considered.

Creative thinking

The business world is rapidly changing on a regular basis and any one or business that must survive in such world must equally change, either accordingly or even to change positively faster than the changing business world. One of such tool of adapting to this changing business world is to be creative. According to Ward, et al. (1995), creativity is the development of right and new solutions. Further, creativity was described as the capacity to produce new or unique work that fits with some assignment restraints (Lubart, 1994; Sternberg and Lubart, 2014). Creativity describes a novel and valuable ideas (Omolara, 2018). In this study however, creativity is seen as the art of establishing new ideas and methods. As noted by Omolara, (2018) the debate over the definition of creativity and the link between creativity and entrepreneurship is limited. Therefore, training people on entrepreneurship and not exposing the recipients of such training on how to be creative, especially in a changing business world, will yield little or no result. While creativity and

innovation work hand in hand, Omolara (2018), concluded that, creativity conceals ideas and innovation implement the ideas. Following the rapid change in everything including consumers taste and fashion, it becomes imperative for entrepreneurs to learn and implement new ideas and method as any attempt to operate old methods in new system will end up fruitless. This must have prompted Omolara (2018) to promulgate that ‘through creative thinking, an entrepreneur does not just have ideas but assess the requirement of how to execute and establish the success of those ideas. Thus, an entrepreneur demonstrates the difference between creative intellect and old-style business method’.

Communication skills

Industrial revolution and rapid technological advancement have not only changed the ways businesses were done previously, but have caused people to work together as team in order to meet with increasing demands. And to achieve the purpose of any team, it means that information must be communicated, therefore making communication very vital. Communication is the act of transferring ideas to ensure a clear meaning (Barret, 2006) while, Hergie (2007) argue that communication is a social skill that is essential for business growth. Despite the training that has been given to any entrepreneur, if such a fellow lack communication skill, the impact will be severe on the business. According to Omolara (2018), this skill will help entrepreneur pass information to their customers through the use of words, adverts, body language, reports and so on. Therefore, any entrepreneur that lacks communication skill, despite how knowledgeable the person is in business, it will affect such business productivity since information will not be passed accurately to the recipient. As asserted by Dollinger (2003) communication is the bedrock of entrepreneurship business

Teamwork skills

It is no longer news that no one can successfully exist in isolation, hence the need for relationship. In business, teams tend to achieve more than individuals can achieve. However, working with team and achieving success is not a thing of deliberate willingness or choice, as it requires skills, especially an entrepreneur.

Bass and Bass (2008), asserted that, growth of an organization is not recorded without the assistance of individual and collective efforts. Furthermore, Entrepreneurs are often encouraged to work with a team of other people so as to increase the possibility of idea commercialization (Marks and Richards, 2012). The concept of team here is used in its broadest form, to cut across financial partners, managers and the rest employees. As noted by Gardiner (2005) entrepreneur with high-quality projects need a partner for a financial assistant or idea development. In the course of developing ideas or implementing them, every entrepreneur is bound to face challenges and until such challenges are overcome, success remain questionable. Hence it becomes necessary for the entrepreneur to work with team. This was explicitly expressed by (Zehra & Faizan, 2017), that team work is effective to overcome challenges. Holmes and Schmitz (1990) denotes that individual has different abilities in developing ideas and opportunities, and concluded that, person with an advantage in entrepreneurship might find it best to specialize in the creation of business and the administrative to someone qualified in management.

Financial management skill

Every organization needs finance to fully function. However, the ability to ensure that available finance is put to its best use, has remained the challenge with many organizations. This is because financial management that is usually taken for granted is actually a skill of its own. According to Pandey (1995) financial management is the management activity which is concerned with planning and proper controlling of organization financial resources. Financial management is the ability of financial managers to procure, expend and give accurate accounts of funds provided for the implementation of programmes of an organization (Nwafukwa and Aja, 2015). In this study however, financial management is the deliberate and conscious activity carried out to source for fund and ensure that such funds are put to their best use to generate more funds. Poor management skill can even make an entrepreneur not to invest where he is supposed to invest. As noted by Enyi (2001) corruption and mediocrity of personnel pervaded many revenue generating activities. It is therefore important for every entrepreneur to have financial management skill, as this will help them to keep proper track of the movement of fund to ascertain the true financial state of the organization. As promulgated by Ogbonnaya (2012), no financial management would be complete without an audit.

3. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

Rapidly, entrepreneurial activities have characterized almost all nations of the world. However, while some nations see it as catalyst for development and consequently, invest heavily in it, some other nations see it as a thing of paper and discussion topic, without the adequate action necessary to actualize its impact on such nation. While entrepreneurial activities are not rocket science, novice will equally not do well, hence the need to acquire the needed skills that entrepreneurs need to overcome possible business failures. This study was carried out on 'entrepreneurial skills, as the vehicle for nation building: The Nigerian perspective. Nigeria is one of the countries of the world that is highly placed with entrepreneurship; however, many businesses still fail sooner after establishment. The government on their own has initiated several programmes, targeted at enhancing entrepreneurship, yet the volume of the investment has not achieved the expected multiplier effect on the economy. This study however, makes recommendation that can augment the effort of the government.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made

- i. While it is necessary training entrepreneurs to be exposed to having knowledge of a business, it is even more important that such trainees be trained on the necessary skills required by an entrepreneur. Such skills include creativity skill, communication skill, financial management skill and teamwork skills

- ii. Entrepreneurship is not just a paper thing that can just be taught on board and in the lecture halls and not something that requires improvising. At every major stage of the training, sound practical activities should be carried out to expose such trainees to real world situations.
- iii. There should be free meal and stipends, enough to cover their transportation. A trainee that is hungry and finds it difficult each time to get transportation to report to the training ground, will undoubtedly be filled with psychological trauma, that wouldn't allow such trainee understand much.
- iv. There should be awards of different categories to the trainees for outstanding performance at every stage of the training. This will serve as motivation.
- v. Every trainee at the end of the programme, should be provided with the materials and tools necessary for the establishment of the business. While little financial package can be added to address other operating expenses
- vi. The notion of giving trainees finance to cover all they need for their start-up should be discouraged, as many may end up diverting the fund to other things, thereby making the training not to enhance the intended impact.

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