

Enhancing Creativity in Entrepreneurship through Home Economics Education in Nigeria

Achor Nnennia Chibuzor
Home Economics Department
School of Vocational Education
Federal College of Education, Yola
Adamawa State
Nigeria

Abstract

The concern of this paper is fostering creative entrepreneurship through the instrumentation of entrepreneurship education. This paper is of the view that entrepreneurship education should be the type that helps individuals develop the ability or disposition to be innovative and original entrepreneurs. The concepts of creativity, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education and home economics education are explored. Furthermore, the role of home economics education in fostering creative entrepreneurship is highlighted. Strategies as well as recommendations were made on curriculum, teachers' and student activities that would enhance creative entrepreneurship education. The submission of this paper is that entrepreneurship education is relevant to the extent it is creative. Home economics education, as a vocational course in Nigeria, is capable of empowering individuals to be great entrepreneurs. However, home economics education should be repositioned to train students to develop creative entrepreneurial tendencies.

Introduction

Unemployment and unemployable graduates have become a serious challenge to educators, educationist and the Nigerian government. Adegbenjo (2012) is of the view that this phenomenon constitutes a waste of resources in the manpower development of this nation. He further stated that the type of education that is needed for self employment and national development has changed to include general reasoning, creative problem solving and behavioural skills as well as positive cognitive styles as against the narrow cognitive and occupational skills sought in more directed work environment. This need explains why the Nigerian government stipulated in the national policy on education, the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies; both mental and physical, as a pre-requisite for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. (FRN, 2004). Entrepreneurship education, therefore, becomes imperative to help equip students with employable skills needed for self reliance, productive and functional life.

Entrepreneurship education according to Onu (2006) is the type of education which provides learners with the basic knowledge, skills, attitude, and ideas for self reliance. In other words, entrepreneurship education through the inculcation of entrepreneurial skills, should make recipients proficient in career related areas and so launch them into the business world with a view to overcoming the problem of unemployment and over-dependency on white-collar jobs.

Akunnaya,(2012) defines entrepreneurship skills as those skills that will enable the individual to maximise the resources around him within the limits of his capabilities (Akunnaya, 2012). If the ability of individuals to utilize resources around them is tied to their capacity, there is a need to build and enhance capacity towards resource utilization for job and wealth creation. Entrepreneurship education is an inevitable tool for this capacity building. There is need to match resource utilization with appropriate knowledge through entrepreneurship education.

Capacity building for job and wealth creation cannot be achieved if our educational institutions continue to turn out graduates who simply conform to the existing pattern of behaviour some of which have become dysfunctional and counterproductive. Education if is well planned, will help students to make new and original adaptations to changes in their environment.

Kanu (1995) opines that capacity building can be achieved by establishing organic links between students and their environment as they seek to make progress through the application of their creative energies. This statement is suggestive that entrepreneurship education should be able to equip students with creative entrepreneurial skills to bring something new, absolutely fresh ideas to the competitive nature of business in Nigeria.

From the foregoing, it is not enough to gain entrepreneurial knowledge and skills if such knowledge does not enable the recipient to be creative with knowledge, resources and the environment. Functional entrepreneurship education, therefore, is that which is geared towards capacity building through creativity. The question that arises is how can home economics education in Nigeria key into this structure of developing creative entrepreneurial skills in students to enable them become originally inventive and creative with knowledge and Skills gained?

Creativity and Entrepreneurship

Creativity has been identified as one of the most distinct of human attributes. It is indeed a special case of problem solving in which originality is emphasized.

According to Kanu (1995) creativity is the disposition to make and recognise valuable innovations. It manifests itself in the ability of the individual to create his own symbols of experience. A person is said to be creative if he has the ability to combine or rearrange established patterns of knowledge in a unique fashion. (P: 3)

Hence, novel ideas are indications of cognitive creativity. However, it is important to note that novel idea can only be creative if it is relevant as the basis for scientific and technological development. Onu, (2006) in his own opinion asserts that a creative person sees beyond the veil and brings back light and is able to perceive new relationships and constructions in which independence, spontaneity and originality are fused.

Entrepreneurship according to Utomi (2002) is concerned with the persistent pursuits of opportunities to create wealth through creation of products or services that meet customer's needs. Similarly, Igbo (1995) postulated that entrepreneurship occurs when an individual creates a new venture, a new approach to an old business idea, using resources in a new way under the condition of risk. Osuala (1999) in his own opinion, asserts that the processes of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and combining them with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby, create wealth is entrepreneurship. From the foregoing, it is not enough; therefore, to conceive a business idea. What makes the differences is the ability to be creative with ideas and develop something new and out of the ordinary. There is hardly any business idea that has not been conceived by entrepreneurs. What gives muscle to a new business in the competitive market is the ability to be creative so as to arrive at concepts, products, services slightly or completely different from the existing norm. Creativity in entrepreneurship, will help individuals to exploit business opportunities more effectively and efficiently.

Entrepreneurship and Creativity are part and parcel of the same phenomenon. Drucker,(1985) describes the former as the institution, that is the carrier of the latter, while the latter is the tool of the former. Therefore, creativity in entrepreneurship entails innovations, flexibility, resourcefulness, versatility and being knowledgeable it also includes new products and new strategies of production, improving the quality of labour force, the emergence of new skills and improvement in the quality of management.

Entrepreneurship education, therefore, must be the type which empowers recipients with creative entrepreneurial skills and abilities.

Home Economics Education and Entrepreneurship

Home economics education is inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary. It is a field of study with various marketable skills that can ensure self reliance and employment.

Mbah, (2001) labels home economics education as the people's profession because it is a multidiscipline functional delivery system.

Olaitan and Agusiobo (1981) define home economics as that field of study that is concerned with strengthening individual and family life by providing functional knowledge and skills.

Tupac (1980) opines that home economics education is a means through which the individual may be led to a stronger growth and development, thus enabling him to take responsibilities in the family and society. In the definitions of home economics above, functionality is emphasised.

This implies the ability of knowledge and skills gained to help individuals who has acquired them to be able to relate to real life situations and solve their needs.

Home economics education can be seen, therefore, as the solution to the many problems facing individuals, families, communities in Nigeria particularly in the areas of skill acquisition, inter-personal family relationship, healthy living, resource management, poverty reduction and job creation.

In Nigeria, time and trends have evolved over the years with regards to what functional and creative education should be. With the competitive global business world and the emergence of knowledge economy the challenge for home economics education is, therefore, to prepare graduates who can connect the body of knowledge, the practice of home economics and the contemporary competitive global market.

In line with the spirit of entrepreneurship, Onyido (2011) reported that the Federal Government of Nigeria has directed the establishment of entrepreneurship centers in the universities and other higher institutions of learning so as to enhance entrepreneurship education. These centres are to be funded by the education tax fund and student are expected to channel the knowledge and energies acquired at devising creative strategies and learning skills to function as entrepreneurs.

Home economics education and entrepreneurship are two sides of the same coin. Home economics education is a key player in entrepreneurship development process and so has important role to play in reducing massive graduate unemployment and the social menace which it represents. The question before us is how to address the weakness in the system and reposition home economics education for producing creative entrepreneurs who can survive the competitive business in Nigeria as well as contribute to family and national building. Home economics education must evolve to be in tune with current global business changes and challenges.

Strategies for Enhancing Creative Entrepreneurship through Home Economics Education

1. Re-branding of home economics. According to Molokwu (2010) re-branding can help home economics stand out and achieve professional goals through renewing what is taught, what methods are used to teach to ensure what is taught is transferable and has value for the new times
2. Nwabuona (2005) suggests the inclusion of entrepreneurship education content areas such as small scale business, managing business opportunity, global market, business plan, marketing analysis, risk management and record keeping will enhance the functionality of the course to the benefit of the students.
3. Kanu (1995) suggests teaching methods that can be used to enhance creativity in the individuals. These methods identified are laboratory, inquiry, activity, brainstorming, problem solving. These methods of teaching emphasis the development of initiative and independent thought and divergent thinking. The emphasis is on allowing pupils to explore and find out things for themselves as a basis for developing creative abilities.
4. Chidume and Emelue (2011) identified entrepreneur's networking, attendance of seminar on entrepreneurship, watching relevant television programmes, subscribing to relevant magazines, mentors providing practical guides to self employment as ways through which students can acquire creative entrepreneurship skills. Home economics education should provide opportunities for student to have this mentorship.
5. Home economics teachers should make effort to improve themselves in the area of entrepreneurship education since it is a new concept in home economics. This can be done through private studies, seminars, workshops and other relevant activities.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that creative entrepreneurship can be developed and enhanced through home economics education. The presenter opines that in the face of unemployment and unemployable graduates produced every year from our higher institutions of learning, developing creativity in students through entrepreneurship education is a way forward. Home economics education as a vocational course in Nigeria, should key in through promoting content of instruction, methodologies, that will enhance creative entrepreneurship capabilities in home economics graduates.

Recommendations

- There should be authentic collaboration between institutions of learning and small and medium scale business enterprises to enable students gain useful experience in skill acquisition.
- Internet services should be made available and accessible to students to enable them access to current information on entrepreneurship.
- Teachers should encourage creativity, originality in students; de-emphasis memorization and regurgitation of facts; encourage practical exploration and experimental methods.
- The provision of a well equipped laboratory is imperative for helping the students to develop creative talents.
- A functional library should be provided at all Home economics departments to serve as resource centre.
- Teachers should adapt methods of assessments that will encourage creativity in student. The idea of give it back to me as is given should be discouraged so that students will exercise freedom in communicating without fear of being marked down.

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