MENTORING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: IMPERATIVE FOR NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract
This paper assessed the imperatives of mentoring in entrepreneurship in promoting economic development in Nigeria. Nigeria's educational practices were tailored towards the acquisition of white collar jobs. Studies and experiences have shown that there are people who are more oriented towards work than academics. A developing country like Nigeria, aspiring for improvement of living standards has to intensify effort in mentoring in entrepreneurship in order to polish human capital to have improved quality. The improved quality will encourage a better approach in the use of idle resources for economic development. Furthermore, payment for retraining are most often not easily afforded by individuals but here the young entrepreneur spends nothing but continually learning, and acquiring professional advice in varieties of ways and at minimal or no cost. The positive implication is usually reflected in the economic development of a nation. Considering the imperatives' of mentoring in entrepreneurship for Nigeria`s economic development, the papers made some recommendations on improvement, among which includes that mentoring in entrepreneurship should be incorporated in all levels of education in Nigeria so as to change the attitude of people in search of white – collar – job as a major source of good income and also government should equip the schools with the desired equipment that will enhance mentoring in entrepreneurship.
Keywords: mentoring, entrepreneurship, imperatives, and economic development

Introduction

Unemployment and political instability in Nigeria is currently a national concern. Youths and graduates from various institutions looking for employment opportunity increase on daily basis. It is important to note that during the period of colonialism that lasted for several decades, Nigeria lost the culture of self-reliant and self employment. It paid off initially as the few privileged Nigerians who went through the colonial system of education regarded and more importantly absorbed into enviable positions in the colonial administration and civil service as public servants. In those days, the Nigerian economy was large enough to absorb the educated into the prestigious "White collar jobs" (Gabadeen and Baimi, 2012). It is pertinent also to mention that, age – long formal education inherited from the imperialist turned out graduates with job-searching mindsets as opposed to job – creators. These graduates lacked entrepreneurial traits like self – motivation, drive and innovation needed by the world of work and employers of labour (Raimi and Towobola, 2011). However, with the population growing at geometric

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proportion relative to job placements that are growing at arithmetic progression, it became obvious that the nation`s formal education is fuelling unemployment, crime and cycle of poverty as graduates could not be absorbed, hence the introduction of entrepreneurship in our schools..

The introduction of entrepreneurship education in institutions of higher learning is not just a welcome development but also a major step towards solving the economic problems through employment generation. This is largely due to entrepreneurial skills development inculcated in the learners (Okoye, 2016). In today's world, entrepreneurship is seen as a vital source for economic growth and competitiveness, job creation as well as wealth creation and providing societal interests.

Given the critical nature of entrepreneurship, both academics and practitioners have increased their efforts in promoting an entrepreneurial mindset in the society. Education has been confirmed as a vital component in the creation and continuing development of entrepreneurship attitudes and successful firms. The successes of many individuals have in different ways contributed to positive changes in various sectors of the economy. Many achievers stand on the shoulders of great men through mentorship. In the same vain, many successful entrepreneurs were guided by experienced people. At this point, one may now ask what is mentoring and entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship can be understood as the mindset and process to create and develop economic activity (European Commission, 2003). It is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological and social risks, and relieving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence (Hisrich, Peter and Shepherd, 2008). Mentoring/mentorship has to do with personal developmental relationship in which a more exposed or experienced individual helps a less experienced person or a beginner to advance and acquire relevant knowledge that helps the less experienced to become better than he was. Mentoring is a part of many societal culture and way of life.

In this part of the country, it is common to see traders, farmers, politicians and educationists mentor people to become their successors. That is, somebody playing a significant role to make someone else a renowned person. At the end of it all, economic development is the resultant effect.

Economic development can be referred to as the positive changes in the various sectors of the economy of a country resulting from entrepreneurship and mentoring. However, this paper intends to examine the imperatives of mentoring in entrepreneurship on the development of Nigeria's economy, given the continual actions of man in this direction.

The Concept of Mentoring

Mentoring is a word derived from mentor which also got its base from the Greek word "men". The term mentor also came to have the dictionary meaning of "a wise and responsible tutor", a more experienced person who advises, guides, inspires, challenges, corrects and serves as a model. Mentoring is a term that can be used in a range of circumstances to relate to a variety of practices. There is not a single agreed definition of mentoring and the ways in which it works will depend upon a variety of factors such as how formal and structured the relationship is; the settings in which it takes place, the length of engagement between mentors and mentees and the issue that the support is based upon. People sometimes talk about somebody they admire and seek advice from as their mentor, even though there may be no agreed structures or form to the relationship. According to Odiorne (1985), mentoring is a personal departmental relationship in which a more experienced or knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or knowledgeable person. This always involves dialogue and challenge. Bozeman and Feeney (2007) defined mentoring as a process for the information transmission of knowledge, social capital and psycho – social support. Mentoring also refers to a relationship which gives people the opportunity to share their professional and personal skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process. It often involves a one to one relationship. It equally plays a major role in updating the competencies of beginning or subordinate entrepreneur.

Mentoring became common practice in the time of guides and trade apprenticeships when young people, having acquired technical skills often benefited from the patronage of more experienced and established professionals. Most successful people in various works of life probably have had one or more people over the years that have exerted a particularly strong influence over their lives and careers (Wrong & Premkumar, 2007). Dudman, Lowbrrigde and Stevens (2011) identified four types mentoring relationships to include

Face-to-face, One –to-one mentoring. The majorityof mentoring is done face- to- face and usually on one to one basis. This allows the mentor to focus 100% on the challenges and issues of the individual mentee. The advantage of the individual mentoring is that the mentor can gather enormous information from both verbal and non-verbal communication. This is most suitable for new entrants into business.

Face –to-face group mentoring (peer mentoring). This type is becoming more popular in enterprise mentoring and it is often delivered as action learning sets. In this format, a small group of between six and eight business owners come together to discuss their challenges and issues. The group acts as a sounding board, taking on the role of peer mentosr to help its individual members examine their issues from different perspectives.

The advantages of this type of mentoring are that the group of peers can provide a number of different experiences and view points to help and support its members.

Telephone mentoring. Telephone mentoring is usually part of a blended mentoring approach used in tandem with face-to-face mentoring. It is provided on a one-to-one basis, and has the advantage of being focused on the mentee`s specific issues. This method is also extremely flexible.

E-mentoring. Like telephone mentoring, e-mentoring is often part of a blended mentoring approach but it can also be used on its own. It is provided on a one-to-one basis and has the advantage of being able to focus on specific issues. The mentee can also provide a lot more written information than with other types of mentoring, which may allow the mentor more time to assimilate the information before deciding on potential options for a course of action. The above type of mentoring could be selected by a mentor or could be arranged depending on the need.

Mentoring Styles

Broadly, a mentoring style could be either "equipping' or "empowering". An equipping mentor is one whose approach is predominantly that of a teacher, telling the protégé what to do and giving one detailed directives on how to do it. Such a mentor tends to be domineering, giving to protégé little room to exercise initiative.s In this type of relationship, the protégé is dependent on the mentor, hardly takes risks and experiences relatively slow growth.

On the other hand, an empowering mentor is non-directive in his approach. He tends to give the protégé a broad outline of what need to be done, leaving it to the protégé to use his initiative to find an appropriate solution. The mentor is laissez-faire in his approach and does not insist on strict adherence to structures in his relationship with the protégé. The protégé in this kind of relationship tends to be more independent and self-reliant. He accepts advice from the mentor, but is able to make his own judgement as to whether to act on it.

The Concept of Entrepreneurship

Besides the very rapid growth of both the professional and academic entrepreneurship literature and entrepreneurial ventures worldwide, perhaps the most obvious evidence of this resurgent interest is the emergence of university course on entrepreneurship. The relevance of entrepreneurship became more prominent when the Federal Government of Nigeria mandated all higher education establishments in Nigeria to offer entrepreneurial studies as a compulsory module for all students irrespective of the ir discipline effective 2007/2008 academic session (Nwekeaku, 2013). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2011) argued the need to embrace entrepreneurship education

given the failure of the economy to generate increased employment opportunities and the alarming increase in the number of joblessness that poses a great threat to social stability of Nigerian economy.

Major international organizations including the United Nations, are involved in entrepreneurship development and several countries have encouraged entrepreneurship among their people. Most people often delve into production because of owning inputs of production. They do coordinate factors of production in various ways aimed at making goods and services available. These individuals are the agents of change and development of an area. Onioha (2008), opined that an entrepreneur is any person who coordinates other factors of production and bears the risks or uncertainty by investing scarce resources in business ventures, which makes him take all the managerial decisions about the business enterprise. However, entrepreneurship is a procedure involving the employment of personal or private inventiveness or resourcefulness to change a business situation into a new undertaking.

According to Badi and Badi in Oduma (2012) it could be the diversifying of an existing business in such a way as to have potentiality for increase in project generation. An entrepreneur usually discovers an area to capture for advancement and thereby channels money, and relevant resources to it. He is also known for risk taking because he often delves into new products and / or service delivery.

The continual emphasis on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is aimed at generating employment opportunities and reducing the incessant search for white collar jobs which is scarce to come by. Entrepreneurship development focuses on enhancing and encouraging entrepreneurial skills and competencies needed for self reliance. Oguz and Ayadin (2012) opined that motivating individuals to become entrepreneurs and equipping them with the appropriate skills is much needed for sustainable development. It is expected that the development of entrepreneurship should help tackle unemployment of resources in Nigeria and increase aggregate economic activities. It is imperative that entrepreneurship should be encouraged in schools in Nigeria so as to achieve economic development and growth.

The Concept of Economic Development

Development of a nation depends on the amiable technical know how, the rudiment of which is a function of the quantity and quality of available entrepreneurship trading (Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili 2014). Economic development which is synonymous with development can be seen as a process of prolonged and sustained growth in the real national income of a country, accompanied by positive changes in the economic, social and political structures of the economy with the result that the real income per capital of

the people increases over a long period of time subject to the stipulation that the number of people below the poverty line does not increase (Chigbu 2006; Osuka, 2006).

Nigeria's educational practices are tailored towards the acquisition of so called "white collar" job after graduation without considering the fact that there are people who are more oriented towards work than academics. Even though developments require a higher GNP and a faster rate of growth, the basic issue is who contributes to its growth. If it were only the rich or accruing there from would likely be appropriated by them; and poverty and inequality would continue to grow worse. But if wealth were generated by the many, then many would be beneficiaries and the fruits of economic development would be shared more evenly. Here lies the virtue of mentoring in entrepreneurship to generate mass employment and more evenly income spread.

Mentoring and entrepreneurship have to be increased if the expectation of reviving Nigeria's economy must be achieved. Badi and Badi (2005) also stated that one of the distinctive features of entrepreneurship is innovation and innovation consists of the introduction of a new producst, new methods of production, opening new markets; conquest of a new source of supply of raw materials. According to Schumpeter (1934), it is an entrepreneur who introduces something entirely new. Developing countries like Nigeria has to embrace entrepreneurship so as to reduce unemployment, increase average capacity utilization of resources which has the potential to increase aggregate economic activity and in turn bring all round development. It is pertinent to note that a peaceful atmosphere capable of ensuring smooth business operations by both domestic and foreign investors is needed.

Imperatives of Mentoring in Entrepreneurship for Economic Development of Nigeria

Mentoring in entrepreneurship has over the years contributed greatly to the overall economic development of societies.. This is because most entrepreneurs acquire their skills through apprenticeship, training, counseling and so on. Entrepreneurs bring more entrepreneurs in an economy and they generate wealth which can also be re-invested. They also pay taxes (both income and personal) and other levies which is a source of government revenue for development.

The act of mentorship is often done consciously or unconsciously. However, the outcome is always helpful to the protégé. Mentorship is always like a master/student relationship. A master has acquired the necessary knowledge, experience and skill. Out of love, he spends time and energy to teach, encourage, motivate, direct and lead others to come up and become mature to forge ahead. By so doing, the products often adopt the same procedure by being there for others. This is why mentoring is a continuous process. Mentoring facilitates entrepreneurship skills. In various sectors of human endeavour,

someone has selflessly assisted somebody to achieve his or her aspirations. It is more apparent in academic, politics, business, leadership and others.. It helps in improving productivity in individuals and brings about advancement of knowledge, availability of information, skill acquisition, increased ability, better management of resources, increase in sales, eradication of frustration and stress.. All these contribute in the economic development of a country.

In the same vein, mentoring has solved the problem of training and retraining of individuals which is capital intensive. Payments for retraining are most often not easily afforded by an organization or individual.. The young entrepreneur or the learner spends nothing but is continually learning, acquiring professional advice in a variety of ways and improving skill from mentors at minimal or no cost. The positive implication of this is usually reflected in the enhancement of production, distribution and consumption in an economy.

Mentoring plays major role in updating the competencies (that is knowledge, attitude and skills) of a beginning entrepreneur. It helps in creating insight into current practices and also in creating awareness of the different issues in the profession. A mentor must be on ground to supervise, co – ordinate, guide, counsel and direct young entrepreneurs. Hopkins Thompson (2000) in support of the above stressed that mentoring brings about an accelerated learning. Oguz and Aydin (2012) were of the opinion that rational decision by some leaders in industries and government are often made based on mentors` advice. Schooley, Mole and Vitti (2010), enumerated some of the benefits of mentoring, among which are: efficiency and professional growth. This is because mentors sharpen their coaching, leadership and communication skills as they advice and motivate their mentees, which they can in turn apply to their day – to – day work. Mentees gain more self confidence from mentoring and get advancement in their aspiration.

Mentoring as a matter of fact is like learning in the course of teaching and yet the learner acquires knowledge. Each of them in the actual fact is improving in the acquisition of skills and competencies which helps the society in general in repositioning production and service delivery thereby contributing in the over all development of the society.

Conclusion

It is a clear fact that mentoring in entrepreneurship is important to Nigeria's economic development considering the enormous activities of the scattered business ventures in Nigeria under the control of entrepreneurs. Menitoring creates room for more inter-personal relationship and interaction; it makes learning more practical, directional and focused. Given the current economic problems facing Nigeria, it is proper that the

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government should encourage mentoring in entrepreneurship. This invariably will play a greater role in raising the number of entrepreneurs to improve the economic development of the country.

Recommendations

In view of the imperative of monitoring in entrepreneurship, the following recommendations are made;

1 Mentoring is inter-personal in nature and calls for more individualistic approach. Therefore, more teachers should be employed to reduce the teacher-student rating in a class. This will make the class more interacting thereby boosting learning.

2 It is essential that this aspect of learning be incorporated in all level of education in Nigeria so as to waken awareness of people from the lazy mentality of engaging in white-collar-jobs as a major source of good income.

3 The role of guidance and counseling in schools and tertiary institutions should also include having frequent workshops where professionals will enlighten students on the need to subject themselves to mentorship and pay attention to entrepreneurship studies.

4 Government should equip the schools with the desired resources that will enhance mentoring services and activities. If this is done, it will reduce the quest for white-collar jobs and promote economic development in Nigeria.

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