

Entrepreneurial Based Curriculum: Strategic Lever For Repositioning Human Resource Development In Nigeria

Nwamaka P. Ibeme, Ph.D

Faculty of Management Sciences

National Open University of Nigeria

14/16, Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island, Lagos

e-mails: makspals@yahoo.comnibeme@noun.edu.ng

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Abstract

The emergence of Human Resource Development and entrepreneurship is spreading around the world at an ever-increasing pace. Entrepreneurship is a catalyst for economic growth both in industrialized and developing countries. No doubt, entrepreneurs establish new businesses, create employment and provide services and products to boost sustainable development. The importance of small business and private enterprise in any economy is now widely recognized as well as the role of human resource management in stimulating these processes. This paper examines the meaning of the key concepts. Why the nation should worry about or encourage entrepreneurship, and human resource development. Recommendations for the way forward and conclusions were made.

Key Words: human resource development, entrepreneurship, private enterprise, small business

Introduction

Human resource is a term that describes the combination of traditionally administrative personnel functions with performance management, employee relations and resource planning. The original usage refers to labour while the more common usage within corporations and business refers to individuals within the firm, and to the portion of the firm's organization that deals with hiring, firing, training and other personnel issues. (Wikipedia, 2006). Human resource could equally refer to the managerial, scientific, engineering, technical, crafts and other skills which are developed and employed in creating, designing and developing organizations and in managing and operating productive and service enterprises and economic institutions. Human resource has been said to be the most valuable asset that any organization possesses. (In terms of individual, families and trade) Madu (2006) stated that human resources imply the personal characteristics, capabilities, talents, skills traits, and physical appearances of the people in the people in an organization. The ability to deal promptly and effectively with problems, decision making style, knowledge, judgement, understanding, creativity, ambition, interest, attitudes, loyalty, and motivation are all attributes of human resources.

Some of these traits equally the characteristics of an entrepreneur. The performance of any organization or enterprise depends to a large extent on the quality of its human resources. This paper therefore looks at the concept of entrepreneurship and the need for it, criteria for successful entrepreneurship and human resource development and the role of education in achieving it.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship

This is seen as the process by which an individual or team identifies a business opportunity and acquires and deploys the necessary human or material resources required for its exploitation. Entrepreneurship builds a lasting and successful business that is bigger than just the founder. An entrepreneur grows the business by employing the right team to deal with the work, build the right team and the system that make up the business.

Lankford (2004) defined entrepreneurship as the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and assuring the

accompanying financial, psychic and social risks and reviewing the resulting rewards of most personal satisfactions. Thus, entrepreneurship is about self-reliance in employment, in creativity and in taking risk. Ihekoronye (2006) added that an entrepreneur should be self-confident, that is believe in him/her, be self-reliant, innovative and creative, hardworking, be a goal setter and be able to take risks, similarly, Iromaka (2005) saw an entrepreneur as the individual or person who undertakes the risk of investing in, creating, funding, establishing, managing and operating a business enterprise for the purpose of profitability and growth development. The above mentioned characteristics of entrepreneurship (taking initiative, making decision, making innovations, and risk taking) make it indispensable in a developing country like Nigeria with a myriad of problems ranging from youth restiveness, unemployment, poverty, food insecurity, population explosion, environmental degradation and other societal problems. The present state of the depressed economy with the accompanying measure of unemployment has resulted in the need for every Nigerian to become through self-employment.

Why should Nigeria Encourage Entrepreneurship?

- * Entrepreneurship provides means for achieving the level of diversity, innovation and independent decision making required for survival, development and freedom.
- * It has become a competent new economic strategy for fostering job creation, not only for the entrepreneurs, but for others also.
- * Both the government and the private sector have not been able to employ all the people they have trained.
- * There are so many brain drain as a result of both unemployment and underemployment.
- * Promotion of entrepreneurship can help to reduce rural urban migration which has given rise to urban congestion and high crime rate.

Criteria for Successful Entrepreneurship

There are several criteria for successful entrepreneurship, Johnson (1990) highlighted the following:

1. Conducive/enabling environment: Beside individual or group entrepreneurial initiative the enabling environment supporting these initiatives is

of utmost importance. The environment starts at the national level with foundation policies that support the initiatives down to the local community level. Capital, management, buildings communication and transportation infrastructure distribution channel and skilled labour are all part of the enabling environment needed.

2. Risk taking: No business can thrive without the entrepreneur taking risks. People who do not take risks make mistakes. Sometimes, not taking risk is a risk.

3. Change and uncertainty: Change will always occur and uncertainties surround every business venture.

4. Decision-making: making decision is a criterion for success. A person who cannot reach decisions promptly cannot carry through on decisions made.

5. Government Policies: Government should provide conducive/favourable and user friendly environment that will promote entrepreneurship. It should also enact policy to improve the conditions of SMEs in terms of supportive, implementation and funding.

Ways of Developing Human Resources

The development and utilization of human resources should be of any nation; people are the most valuable. The wealth of a nation, region or community is based on its ability to conserve, develop, and utilize its human resources. A nation's rate of economic progress depends heavily on the quality and quantity of available skilled manpower at all levels. Human resources can be developed through the use of interpersonal skills. Through interpersonal relationship, the goals of the family, the individuals and institutions are attained. (Richard and Felder 2001) The various areas to be considered in the task of developing human resources in a group include:

1. Knowledge level and perception of the group members

Richard and Felder (2001) opined that the knowledge and perception of every group vary. They stated that the attitude of members determines whether, a task is well or poorly done and the skills and knowledge which influence the end result, also vary from group to group. Knowledge and perception help to shape the attitude of the people to

work. When appropriate sensitivity, perception, knowledge organizational and interpersonal abilities are lacking decision may be pivoted on wrong premises or faulty calculations inevitably leading to faulty decisions result. The standard of interpersonal abilities or skills the group has, what will be transmitted to other members of the group. For instance, if group members that are in charge of decision making have high quality interpersonal skills in knowledge of tasks to be done, other members of the group will have same traits. For proper development of human resources, leaders should strive to acquire quality knowledge of the job/task to be carried out.

2. Use of mixed skills method

In the task of development human resource, Ogwo (2004) posited that mix skill can be applied to quicken understanding of the job to be accomplished. These skills include technical skill, human relationship skills, and managerial skills. An instructor can adopt any two or three of the above skills in the accomplishment of set goal. Monotony kills interest; therefore, variation of kills in job accomplishment is necessary to get the best in the man.

3. Turning group members into effective Team

Collaborative learning activities are very vital in attainment of goals. Here the instructor can turn group members into an effective team. This will facilitate the acquisition of greater communication and team work skills, and help them gain better understanding of the environment in which they work. This will help to develop all areas of human resources thereby enjoying the benefits associated with it.

4. Encouragement of dialogue among members

Felder & Kaufman (2000) stated that dialogue is vital in the group for the dialogic interaction among members. They opined that dialogue and its development are significant in influencing the participant differences in knowledge, power, social status, situational role, gender interpretive frameworks and other social factors which alliance the cognitive resources of the group members.

5. Encouraging learning by doing (Active Learning)

According to Felder, Richard and Brent (2003), in the challenge of developing human resources, learning by doing should be encouraged. The only

skills are developed is through looking, writing, critical thinking or solving thermodynamic problems through practice. They maintained that trying something, seeing how well or poorly it works, reflecting on how to do it differently, and then trying it again to see how it works better help group members to develop better in all areas of human potentials.

6. Dealing with problematic group members

Felder, Hawker and Gallagher (2000) posited that in the bid to develop human resources in the group, all and sundry will be involved. In the distribution of activities work or tasks should be assigned according to age of individuals. They pointed out that any sign of abandonment of task by any group member should be confronted by the leaders and the assignment should be reassigned to the person. This will curb the idea of abandonment of tasks thereby missing out in the areas it is meant to develop in the individual.

7. Minimizing interactional problems on cooperative learning

Felder and Kaufman (2000) stated that the process of developing human resources in a group is cooperative learning interaction. Standard references on cooperative learning advice leaders to form team that are heterogenous in abilities. However, they should be organized in such a way that will minimize the impact of such problems.

8. Communication

According to Anyakoha (2004), communication as a process is the most important skill to learn in interpersonal relationship and invariably human resource development. It is used to effect change in behaviour, acquire new skills and unlearn undesirable behaviour. It has the capacity of building up ones' knowledge, skills, values and interest. Effective communication is very important in group related work and other group activities that will contribute to the enhancement of human resources. Adele (1995) however noted that instructions should be step by step and on a clear tone of voice. The message also must be clear and understandable to the receiver; it is the basic requirement for human resource development.

9. Time Consciousness

In the task of developing human resources, leaders should be time conscious in assignment of job. Group members should be taught how to manage

related work together to save time and energy. Time management is very essential in resource management because any misuse of time can cause all other arrangement to be faulty or collapse.

The Role of Education In Entrepreneurial and Human Resource Development

Education according to Aminu (1992) is the most important, if not the only tool for human resources development. This implies education at all levels using different models. Education influences the world of work and often determines it. People pursue occupations which they have been trained for. Education trains people for socialization and vocation. The latter means that education in curriculum and concept is tailored to a vocation, to a job. An educated man has three options, to be self-employed, paid employed or not employed. Education is a social service and an economically productive investment. Several institutions of learning are meant to provide avenues for manpower development to satisfy both the general and the specific needs of the economy. These institutions provide formal and non-formal education for professional and technical skill development.

The institutions include primary and secondary levels of education which provide the basic fundamental education for the development of professional and technical skills. Adult and non-formal education is included. The universities, polytechnics, colleges of education that provide the bedrock for the tertiary education. They refine the product of secondary education and produce high and medium level manpower. Tertiary education is a major force of change, the last stage in formal education process. According to Mbat (1992), at the university level, the mind, consciousness, ability to think independently, the capacity to make rational choices etc. are equally developed. If the graduates cannot secure employment, they can acquire entrepreneurship skills through non formal education for specific skills development.

Conclusion

In Nigeria today, the rate of unemployment and underemployment has become alarming. Most industrious cannot absorb the surplus manpower and the unemployed cannot set up their own business. Our education system should be reviewed in line with finding ways of empowering people to become interested in setting up their own business, thus building up the nation's human resources.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will help promote human resource development through entrepreneurship education:

1. Institutionalization of entrepreneurship development programme (EDP) in tertiary institutions by the government.
2. Private sector active participation in public for education, training and employment programmes at the federal, state and local government levels is strongly advocated.
3. In line with Udo-Aka (1992), employer's obligation to develop employee is important. Employers should provide opportunities for the employees at junior, supervisory, and managerial levels to be exposed to a minimum number of days of occupation specific technical, professional and managerial training relevant to their work.
4. Dynamic curriculum development is a prerequisite. Our tertiary education should reflect in the curriculum the rapid changing socio-economic needs of the society to make the skills and knowledge of the graduates relevant to the needs of the society.
5. Link between the tertiary curriculum, industries and the needs of the nation. This will enhance the relevance of the output of the institutions and promote technological development.
6. Intensification of teacher education and development programmes in the nation. The nation should ensure that sufficient teachers of relevant professional course/subjects are produced for all levels of our educational system.
7. Industrial village policy: multinationals and indigenous entrepreneurs should be encouraged to invest in the development of on-campus industrial village of the concerned institutions to enhance the relevance of our technologists.
8. Education must be efficient and cost-effective at all levels.

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