

ENTREPRENEURSHIP ICT AND THE HISTORY CURRICULUM IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS.

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Abstract

The world over and especially in Nigeria, the idea of entrepreneurship education is gaining prominence. This is largely due to the high level of graduate unemployment in the country and particularly, graduates of history as a discipline at all levels. Graduates of history are susceptible to lack of employment due to the society's apathy towards the subject, its lack of being taught in secondary schools and the like. The paper recommends the incorporation of entrepreneurial education through the use of ICT skills in the history curriculum in order to motivate interest in the discipline and also arrest the scourge of unemployment confronting the graduates of history at all levels of education in Nigeria by equipping them with entrepreneurial skills.

Introduction

The need for entrepreneurship education in Nigerian institutions of learning in the 21st century leaves much to be desired. This is largely attributed to the increasingly near absence of white-collar jobs that is always associated to graduates at whatever level of learning. Graduates of history in the Nigeria society are more often confronted with such challenges in view of the attitude of the society towards the discipline which underscores the need for such graduates to be self sustaining, self reliant and self employed such that studying history as a discipline does not constitute an albatross to their own personal growth and development.

It is in this regard that the paper will discuss the concept of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education, information communication technology as a panacea to making the history curriculum more reinvigorating and self reliant in the 21st century.

Conceptualizing Entrepreneurship Education

The earliest definition of entrepreneurship from the 18th century is that it is an economic term which describes the process of rise economy through buying at certain prices and selling at uncertain prices. As time progressed, other latter scholars incorporated the concept of bringing together the factors of production. However, in this 21st century, the concept of innovation was added to the definition of entrepreneurship to include process innovation, market innovation, product innovation, factor innovation and organizational innovation as involving the creation of new enterprises and that the founder is known as the entrepreneur. Based on the above definitions, entrepreneurship is the key driver to every economy because jobs and wealth are created through businesses orchestrated by entrepreneur minded individuals who are exposed to entrepreneurship and are better exposed to opportunities to exercise creative freedoms, higher self esteem and a greater sense of control over their lives. Thus, many experienced political leaders, business people, economists and educators believe that fostering a robust entrepreneurial culture will maximize individual and collective economic and social success on a local, national and global scale.

Entrepreneurship education on the other hand is a life long process of learning which starts from the elementary through all levels of education, Di-Masi (2009). In this regard, the standards and their performance indicators constitute a framework for teachers to use in building appropriate objectives and learning activities which will expose students, particularly history graduates, to progressively more challenging educational activities; the experiences

that will enable them develop the needed ability to create and develop entrepreneurial opportunities and also the expertise to successfully start and manage their own businesses.

Thus, entrepreneurship education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviors, skills and attributes in a variety of ways. It is not however restricted to high level business persons alone but rather, any person with the capacity to act entrepreneurially –hence different individuals have the propensity to show entrepreneurial skills and attributes. The basic features of entrepreneurs according to Dimasi (2009) include:

- Self –confident and multi- skilled: This refers to the person who can make the product, market it and count the money, but above all, he has the confidence.
- Confident in the face of difficulties and discouraging circumstances.
- Innovative skills. Not an inventor in the traditional sense but one who is able to carve out a new include in the market place often invisible to others.
- Results oriented: To be successful requires the drive that only comes from setting goals and targets and getting pleasure from achieving them.
- A risk- father: To succeed wears taking measured risks. Often the success means taking measured incremental approach to risk taking at each stage exposing him to any limited measured amount of personal risk and moving from one stage to another as each decision is proved.
- Total commitment: Hard work, energy and single mindedness are essential elements in the entrepreneurial process.

Therefore, the goal of entrepreneurship education is to teach young people and especially graduates of understanding that entrepreneurial education and spirit applies to everyone regardless of position, occupation and professionalism or area of specialization. Thus, aspira/Morgan Stanley entrepreneurial leadership initiative (2007) observed the reasons for entrepreneurship education to include:

- i. To find solutions to problems or needs
- ii. To accept and respond to change
- iii. To respond to an increasingly global competitive economy
- iv. To find new ways to solve social problems to improve performance
- v. To create new jobs and employment opportunities
- vi. To inspire and enhance opportunities for women, youth, elderly and minority groups.
- vii. To move to an information society where the strategic resources are information, knowledge and creativity.
- viii. To improve performance
- ix. To help workers shift to a service industry base from a manufacturing/industrial base
- x. To help reduce the number of failed business ventures

It is against this back drop that this article addresses the need for the infusion of I.C.T into the history curriculum in order to make the graduates of history at all levels self reliant which will also make the history curriculum more vibrant.

Challenges Confronting the History Curriculum

Every subject curriculum is bedeviled by one form of challenge or the other. However, that of history is more pronounced due to its marginal status. Some of these challenges according to Sanda and Maigoro (2007) and Macintyre(2009) include:

History as discipline is often entrusted to teachers who are not trained in the discipline. The problem is further aggravated by the limited attention given to history teaching and expertise in history. It is thus commonly and erroneously assumed that anyone can walk into the history classroom and teach it. Here, there is therefore the problem of both demand

and supply because employers of labour, both government and private are responsible for teacher training and employment which in most instances, is not both coming from them.

One of the immediate challenges confronting the history curriculum is its restriction to certain levels of education. In secondary schools for instance, it starts from SSS I. This policy has thus deprived the primary school students and JSS 1-3 students the complete knowledge of the history of their own country except for those who deliberately decide to pick history among subjects to be studied. The implications of this problem to the history curriculum are enormous. For one, as the curriculum is developed and implemented, a certain section of the society is deprived from studying it thereby making the prepared curriculum to be frustrated with paucity of information about how to be implemented and the category of people to study it.

The way and manner history is being taught by some teachers is also constituting serious problems to the history curriculum. Some incompetent history teachers have turned history into mere narratives or storytelling. Conversely, students need to know history and practice it hence factual knowledge is essential to historical thinking. This is largely because without knowledge of chronology, geography, institutional arrangements, material circumstances and belief systems, students will not be vast in the discipline.

The near absence of libraries in schools, especially secondary schools is a major problem of the history curriculum. A study conducted by Adeyinka (1989) discovered that in most secondary schools, the few libraries that exist are more dilapidated structures with adequate staff and poorly equipped, with some not even having the basic history books. This has thus subjected the implementation of the history curriculum to disrepute hence both teachers and students do not have adequate basic information in the discipline.

Information and Communication Technology and History Curriculum Development.

Technology has come to stay in the education sector. The most pronounced of these technologies that would help transform the history curriculum for the better is the information communication technology (ICT). ICT's provide the opportunity for overcoming historically intractable problems of isolation and lack of access to information and knowledge, which are crucial to the teaching and learning of history curriculum contents. In other words, the history curriculum should be re-designed for both teachers and students in order to improve their knowledge and skill in ICT. UNESCO/IFIP (2000) advocated four stages of ICT infusion into the curriculum which applies to history as a discipline too. These include:

- i. **ICT Literacy:** This involves ICT use in daily life activities to include basic concepts of ICT, social and ethical issues, using computers and managing files. word processing, spread sheets, data bases, creating presentations, finding information and communicating with ICT.
- ii. **Application of ICT in Subjects Areas (history):** This refers to the incorporation of ICT tools within specific subject areas such as languages, natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences, the arts and history. The topics include measurement, modeling and simulation, robots and feedback devices, statistics, creating graphics, spreadsheet, design and database design.
- iii. **Integration of ICT across the Curriculum:** This means the demonstration of the use of ICT to combine subject areas to work on real –world projects and solve real problems. Researches have shown that ICT can help students integrate several areas such as mathematics, sciences and arts in their learning process.
- iv. **ICT specialization:** In this regard, the idea is for students who plan to go into professions that use ICT such as engineering, business, computer sciences. These modules cover the use of advanced tools and techniques for ICT specialist. Topics here could include basic and advancing programming, planning information systems, designing process control systems and project management.

Conclusion

The incorporation of ICT into the history curriculum whether at the tertiary or secondary school level will inject new knowledge and skills required for a sustainable future in the discipline due to changes in values, behavior and re-newed interest in the subject. This will equip graduates of history at all levels with entrepreneurial skills that will make them self reliant after graduation. Thus, the notion of "low employment opportunities" for graduates of history will be curtailed to a very large extent.

Recommendations

1. Government should set a machinery on ground to review the history curriculum at all levels to include ICT in order to make it more entrepreneurial, interesting, self reliant and sustainable in the 21st century.
2. Teachers of history at all levels should equally be trained on the use of ICT for instruction in order to enable them implement ICT related components of the curriculum.
3. Schools should equally be provided with the requisite ICT facilities if the contents of the re-viewed curriculum must be implemented effectively.
4. Entrepreneurial aspects of ICT should be re-emphasized in the re-viewed curriculum in order to make history graduates self reliant by becoming their own entrepreneurs despite studying history.

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