

REPOSITIONING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The paper critically examined repositioning human resource management in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions for youth empowerment in Rivers State. The aim of entrepreneurship education is to equip the youths with appropriate skills needed in making them self-reliant in order to reduce the rate of unemployment as witnessed among the teeming youths of different states. The paper perused the concepts of management, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship education, human resource management and human resource management in entrepreneurship education. It further identified the challenges of entrepreneurship education and made the following recommendations; the government should carry out a pilot test using some selected institutions to prepare and arm them with vital information about the programme, instructional materials for the smooth running of the programme should be supplied to aid quality implementation of the programme, government should employ teachers who are vocationally and technically trained to handle entrepreneurship studies amongst others.

Keywords: Repositioning, Human resource management, Entrepreneurship education, Youth

Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Education of any state is said to be a veritable tool for the development of the state. This is because it unlocks the economic potentials of the people; empowers and equips individuals in society to participate in, and benefit from the economic potentials of the people; empowers and equips individuals in society to participation in, and benefit from their national economy. Gbamanja (2012) defined

education as the process of acquiring knowledge, special skills and experiences by an individual for effective conquering and adaptation to his environment. In corroboration, Elenwo, Ofuase and Julius (2023) averred that through education people acquire knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies for self-development. In furtherance, functional education aims at empowering learners to create employment

opportunities by equipping them with specific skills for self-employment and independence. It creates all kinds of skills and experiences that give learners the ability to access, as well as transform opportunities within and outside their society.

The Federal Government of Nigeria in 2006, announced the introduction of entrepreneurship education, as entrepreneurship studies, to be integrated in the University curriculum as a compulsory course for students irrespective of area of specialization. The effective implementation of the programme started in 2007/2008 academic session (Okojie, 2013). Entrepreneurship education is a process aimed at providing learners with entrepreneurship spirit, knowledge, skills, and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Aluwong (2015) opined that entrepreneurship education is part of the total educational system and the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for job creation. An entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seeking employment. The concept of

entrepreneurship education goes beyond business creation. It includes improving the ability of students to anticipate and respond to society changes. Entrepreneurship education is a functional education which can be used as a panacea for unemployment. Entrepreneurship is a tool for youth empowerment. And by making entrepreneurship studies compulsory, the government is aiming at producing opportunity or knowledge-based entrepreneurs who are expected to be critical growth drivers of our economy (Okojie, 2013).

Although, the Federal Government made entrepreneurship education compulsory, some universities are yet to commence it with a serious degree of seriousness. Hence, entrepreneurship education is still at infancy in Nigerian universities. Yellowe (2013) posited that implementing entrepreneurship education requires human resources and its effective management for impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. The success of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions depends on the functionality of the human resource. Armstrong (2016) defined human resource

management as the strategic and coherent approach to the management of the organizations most valued assets- the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives. The ability of tertiary institutions to manage human resources is the crucial factor in determining the growth and sustenance of entrepreneurship education in higher institutions of learning.

The absence of youth empowerment in Rivers State has been implicated in the increasing rate of restiveness amongst the youths. This is because the government and individual rest their hope on education because of its externalities. The tertiary education that students receive does not appear to equip them with salable skills beyond those required for passing examinations. The curricula content does not appear to prepare students to relate their studies to their challenges. This is evidenced by the magnitude of unemployed university graduates in the state. However, where these graduates are employed without training and re-training, they are found to be unproductive. This phenomenon has been linked to poor human resources management

and most importantly irrelevant curricula and inadequate or poor state of the art work experience. Hence, this has made it imperative that graduates be equipped with skills that are required to achieve self-reliance. With proper human resource management in entrepreneurship education, Rivers State youths will be empowered with appropriate skills. Thus, this study focused on repositioning human resource management in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions for youth empowerment in Rivers State.

Conceptualization of Human Resources Management

Human resource are all the people in the organizations whose services aid in the achievement of organizational goals. It cuts across the rank and file in the organization; that is from top management level down to the least worker in terms of skills and payment. In a wider perspective the human resources are not just the people that work in an organization, but it also refers to the skills, creative abilities, knowledge, competences, values, philosophies and ethics that affects or influence the extent of production of goods and services. In tertiary institutions, the

human resources are the administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff, etcetera. Jones and George (2013) defined human resource management as all the activities managers of organizations engage in to attract and retain employees and to ensure that they perform at a high level and contribute to the accomplishment of organizational goals. Human Resource Management (HRM) is a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an institution's most valued asset; the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objective (Armstrong, 2016).

Human Resources Management in education (including entrepreneurship education) is not only effective utilization of people per se at work but involves the harnessing of the totality of the people's skills, energies, talents, social characteristics like belief to achieve educational objectives and at the same time making people to be integral component of organization in fulfilling their life goals. Armstrong (2016) explicitly presented workers (people) as key resource that managers use to achieve competitive advantage for their companies. It is crucial to

manage human resources engaged in entrepreneurship education because without which its goals would not be achieved. Humans (the entrepreneurs) who possess these needed attributes are the foot soldiers who can do the work in the trenches today and lead the troops tomorrow for entrepreneurship education. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) underscores this when it says that no educational system (including entrepreneurship education) could rise above the quality of its teachers.

What is Entrepreneurship Education?

Entrepreneurship is the term used broadly in connection with innovative and creative modern industrial business leaders. It is often defined in respect to the functions of an entrepreneur as the man who perceives business opportunities and takes advantage of the scarce resources to use them profitably, which is why Adejimola and Olufumilayo (2019) defined it as the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled. It is a source of innovation and change, and as such spur's improvements in productivity and economic competitiveness. Entrepreneurship education is very vital for

entrepreneurship expansion because it is the engine that propels creativity and innovations into practical manifestations in form of business ventures and other investment opportunities. Ferej (2014) defined entrepreneurship education as any pedagogical programme or process of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, which involves developing certain personal qualities. It is therefore not exclusively focused on the immediate creation of new businesses. (Fayolle, Kyro & Ulijn, 2016) averred that entrepreneurship education is the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurship competencies which in turn refers to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures. Another view of entrepreneurship education is the term given to someone who has innovative ideas and transforms them to profitable activities (Omolayo, 2016). Nwalado (2012) structured the following as the main purpose of entrepreneurship education;

- Provide the young graduates adequate training that will enable them to be

creative and innovative in identifying great business opportunities.

- To offer functional education to the youths to enable them to be well empowered and self-reliant people in their own right.
- To offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management to make learning outcome feasible.
- To reduce the high rate of poverty and insecurity and violence.
- To create job and employment opportunities for its citizenry.
- To reduce the rural-urban migration.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education in Tertiary Institutions

Entrepreneurship Education has been receiving increasing recognition as a source of job creation, empowerment for the unemployed and economic dynamism in a rapidly globalizing world. But despite this, there are several factors that hinder entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions they include but not limited to the following:

Faulty Foundation: Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has been characterized

by faulty foundation. This educational programme did not progress through the different levels of Nigerian educational system which include primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. This then implies that the programme lacks proper foundation since it is only offered at the tertiary institutions, whereas education is supposed to be a continuous process which progresses through different stages. The far-reaching implication of this is that entrepreneurship education cannot be provided to the majority of Nigerians who do not have access to tertiary education (Oviawe, 2018).

Inadequate Qualified Manpower: Nigerian universities do not have adequate qualified lecturers and facilitators to successfully implement the entrepreneurship education curriculum. The lecturers that impart entrepreneurship knowledge and skills to students were drawn from pre-existing departments and faculties and they were not specially groomed for entrepreneurship education. This situation seems to have posed serious challenges to the successful implementation of the new entrepreneurship education curriculum as Ikediugwu (2018) observed that the success of any innovative

programme in the curriculum of any educational institution hinges on the ability of the teachers to implement the innovation.

Inadequacy of Infrastructural Facilities and Equipment: Basic infrastructural facilities and equipment in universities are grossly inadequate while the available ones are in poor and deplorable state thereby making the effective delivery of entrepreneurship education quite difficult. Abiodun-Oyebanji (2011) laid credence to this that the state of facilities in many Nigerian universities for effective teaching and learning is nothing to write home about. These infrastructural facilities and equipment include, among others, the fixed and mobile structures and materials in the school such as the classroom building, offices, laboratories and laboratory equipment, the school furniture, the interactive boards, tools and machines, audio and visual aids which are used to enhance teaching and learning processes. The availability and adequacy of infrastructural facilities and equipment would ensure effective and efficient delivery of any entrepreneurship education curriculum and these are positively related to the

achievement of its goals, indeed, learning takes place better and faster in a school environment with adequate provision of basic facilities and equipment than in a school environment where all these are lacking. Also, teachers tend to teach better in a school that is well equipped with basic infrastructural facilities and equipment than in a school where these facilities are equally missing.

Inadequate funding: Though the government directed for immediate commencement of entrepreneurship studies in all tertiary institutions, no special funds have been made to available to the universities despite the new responsibility. New classroom blocks, workshops, laboratories, books, academic journals, lecturers, computers, among other materials are required for successful implementation of the new programme (Obeleagu-Nzelibe & Moruku, 2014).

Human Resource Management in Entrepreneurship Education

Functional entrepreneurial education in schools is expected to produce high quality graduates who are competent in different skills. It is therefore important to consider

caliber of teachers that should handle the subject in different levels of education. Assigning of the subject to people who are not vocationally and technically trained is like a blind leading another blind man. Vocational and technical education which entrepreneurial education is part of should be handled by quality teachers with skill oriented educational background. The requisite for human resource management relevant to entrepreneurship education include planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and performance appraisal.

Human Resource Planning: Different people ascribe different meaning to the concept of human resource planning. It includes all the activities human resource managers engage in to forecast their present and future manpower needs. Human resources are employees available to the organization while future manpower are those people the organization will need to achieve its future long-term goals. Movitt (2012) describes human resource planning as an attempt to forecast how many and what type of employees will be required in the future and to what extent this demand is likely to be

achieved. Miner (2014) perceives it as the process which seeks to ensure that the right number and kinds of people will be at the right places and at the right time in the future and will be capable of doing those things that are needed so that organization can continue to achieve its goals. Mathis and Jackson (2019) also refer to it as consisting of estimating the number, type and sources of employees required by an organization to meet its overall objective. It attempts to march the organization-forecasted demand for manpower with the anticipated supply of available manpower.

Human resource planning, according to Bulla and Scott (2014), is the process of ensuring that the human resource requirements of an organization are identified and plans are made for satisfying these requirements. Conceptually, it is a process by which management determines how an organization should move from its present manpower position to its expected manpower position. It focuses on human resource needs both in quantitative and qualitative terms, which involves answering two basic questions namely; how many people and what sort of people?

Human Resource Recruitment and Selection:

Generally, recruitment is related to all those activities associated with the attraction of the right quality and quantity of staff needed for any system. It is the starting point for the appointment of staff to meet the requirements of manpower in a system. The major objective of the recruitment process is basically to provide a sufficiently large number of applicants so that qualified candidates can be selected (Nwibere, Emecheta & Chikwe, 2018). Thus, recruitment can be defined as the tasks and processes of generating a pool of qualified applicants for existing positions. The implication of this definition is that, if this process does not yield adequate number of candidates for selection, qualified candidates may not be hired and this may amount to loss of man-hour and wastage. And if the required number of candidates for employment equals the number achieved through recruitment, then there will be no effective selection. The concept of selection in human resource management has its major objectives as the marching of the right person to the right job. It is that stage when an administrator decides to fill existing vacancies with those who not

only mean the established qualifications but also appear to be in the best position to make adequate and maximum contributions towards the achievement of system's goals. This is a crusade to attract a handsome crop of prospective candidates to fill the existing vacancy. It is said to be a linking activity that brings together those with job and those who appear likely to do the job.

Human Resource Training and Development: These are human resource management functions that are relevant to entrepreneurship education. Training means an exploration of job-related skills, while development often denotes the broad scope of training. The primary focus of training is to teach workers how to perform their current jobs and helping them acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be effective performers (Jones and George, 2013). It is a means of altering a worker's behaviour and attitudes in order to increase the opportunities for improved work performance. Thus, development is a follow-up activity to training and is embarked upon at a higher level of management. Its main focus is to build on the knowledge and skills acquired through training in order to prepare members

to take on new responsibilities and challenges.

Compensation: Employee are generally rewarded on the basis of the value of the job, their personal contributions and their performance. Employee compensation refers to all work-related payments, including wages, commissions, insurance, and time-offs. Although, providing rewards based on the level of performance can increase an employer's motivation to perform, rewards are often given only according to the value of job. Other rewards (namely, indirect fringe benefits) are provided just for being a member of the organization. The compensating activity includes: administering direct compensation, providing performance-based pay and administering indirect benefits (Schuler, 2017).

Employee Performance Appraisal: The performance of employees must be appraised regularly. A performance appraisal is a formal, structured system designed to measure the actual job performance of an employee against designated performance standards. The essence is to determine how well employees are performing the job for

which they were hired. (Nags, 2015). Not all employees are good. Some may be continually absent; some may be alcoholic or some may be habitual late comers. With the rise of employee rights, the greater concern for social responsibility and the increasing cost of replacing employees, however, some organizations find it preferable to retain problem employees and improve their performance, rather than dismiss them. (Nwibere, Emecheta & Chikwe, 2018),

The Concept of Youth Empowerment

Youth is defined by Webster's New Oxford Dictionary in Adebayo (2012) as the time of life when one is young especially the period between childhood and maturity of the early period of existence, growth or development." The word "youth", "adolescent", "teenager" and "young person's" are often used interchangeably. Youth generally refers to a time of life that is neither childhood nor adulthood but rather somewhere in between. According to Ezeanu (2012) youth empowerment sprang from the need to enable young people to have a say in decisions which affect them and to have lower and heard voices. This would give young people

the economic, social and cultural advancement of theirs and to gain self-fulfillment. Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of implications of these choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of that action. Youth empowerment is an altitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including youths and adults (Sasaki, 2016). Empowering youth means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others. These enabling conditions includes, economic and social base, political will, adequate resources allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks, a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy, and access to knowledge, information and skills and a positive value system.

Repositioning Human Resource Management in Entrepreneurship Education for Youth Empowerment

Human resource management, as a discipline and practice in the management of people in an organization, has evolved and developed into different areas. These disciplines and practices have gone through a process of trial and error, theory building and testing various concepts by practicing managers and academics (Armstrong, 2016). The underlining forces behind the evolution and development of human resource management have been (and still are) mainly environmental, and the quest for knowledge of better ways of acquiring and utilizing labour. The changing organizational environment in the marketplace pushed managers to improve efficiently in the production and service delivery processes by increasing their ability to use the best practices of people management at the time.

That is, employee management techniques or methods that would improve production, reduce service delivery costs, and at the time ensure sustained availability of competent staff in the organization. According to Movitt (2012) human resource management happens everywhere there is more than one person. In tertiary institutions for example, every faculty and department practice human resource management where each staff take different roles and responsibilities for the accomplishment of the set objectives.

The Federal Government had in 2007/2008 academic session instructed all tertiary institutions to embrace entrepreneurship studies for students of all disciplines. This instruction was necessitated by the growing number of unskilled students coming out from various institutions into labour market and the increasing unemployment rate (Jega, 2012). At the wake of this call, some institutions created the faculty of entrepreneurial studies and transferred some lecturers with little or no experience in

entrepreneurship to man the faculty. This action was not in alliance with the instruction that only informed lecturers should be employed to teach and head entrepreneurial centers recently approved by NUC on university campuses. One of the aims of entrepreneurship education is providing functional skills which will empower youths to be creators and not seekers of jobs after graduation. To achieve this aim there is indeed the need to reposition human resource management in entrepreneurship education through human resource planning, recruitment and selection and training and development.

For entrepreneurship education therefore, human resource planning would as a matter of priority determine what sort of skills and other qualities in humans would be required to achieve the objectives of this education. This could be done through forecasting future (trend extrapolations) manpower requirements, making an inventory of existing manpower resources and future manpower profiles. There is no gainsaying that quality of education provided in any society and nature of change affected is determined by the quality of teachers and the

effectiveness of their teaching methods. Recruitment and assigning of this course to anybody should be based on performance. To achieve this, interviewers and management should base their judgement on pedagogical skills, knowledge and attitudinal competencies needed for effective teaching of entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions.

Recruitment for entrepreneurship education must adhere to the relevant recruitment policy of the organization providing the education. Students today increasingly recognize that in the current economic situation, jobs are rarely permanent. The policy must contain the organization's objectives and the criteria for selection and performances. The selection procedure for entrepreneurship education should stress possession of skills in at least one basic area of entrepreneurship. According to Bolton (2017), training is an experience or a regimen which causes people to acquire new, predetermined behaviour. Decision makers on training of entrepreneurship education should ask themselves some basic questions – Why do we train? What purpose will the training serve? Who do we train and when do we train? Those who facilitate

entrepreneurship education must be in constant touch with the state-of-the-art. When these human resource management functions achieve what it ought to, the institutions will have a robust manpower who will interpret the entrepreneurship education curriculum and inculcate the youths in River State tertiary institutions with quality skills which empowers them to be self-reliant and self-employed.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship Education has been viewed in this paper as a veritable tool to youth empowerment in Rivers State. When youth are trained, they explore opportunities in their immediate rural environment instead of chasing shadows and uncertainties in the urban centers. The development of entrepreneurship education will go a long way in creating employment, give young people the opportunity to develop their enterprising skills, empowering the young to be job creators and not job seekers and by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to raise their output; income and wealth. Entrepreneurship education would also contribute to improve the image and highlight the role of entrepreneurs in society.

Suggestions

Based on the reviewed literature, the following were suggested as the way forward:

1. There should be proper human resource planning which will enable employers identify lecturers with requisite skills to pilot the implementation of entrepreneurship education for youth empowerment.
2. Only lecturers with the technical-know-how should be recruitment and selected to man the programme in order to successfully train and empower youths.
3. Entrepreneurship education lecturers should be well trained and professionally equipped with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills which will aid them to successfully impart the students.

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