

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE SKILLS: A CONUNDRUM FOR FOOD SECURITY

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### Abstract

*The universalization of entrepreneurship development, inclusive (leadership) skills and food security will remain evasive in the absence of learning organizations. The application of modern leadership in every organization, through focus on result, collaboration, commitment to continuous learning, employee empowerment and openness to change is vital. The paper was aimed at examining entrepreneurship development and inclusive skills: A conundrum for food security. The study was contextualized on Peter Sengel's theoretical framework of learning organizations. A qualitative approach was adopted to carry out the study. The main objective of the study was to determine the role of inclusive skills on entrepreneurship development process and their collaborative effect on food security. There was however a concomitant relationship between entrepreneurship development and inclusive (leadership) skills, and their significant effect on food security.*

**Key words:** Entrepreneurship development, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive (leadership) skills, Conundrum, Food security

### Introduction

The need to consistently ameliorate the decimating impact of unemployment on the young graduates, particularly in the African continent and the world at large, has made notable institutions, such as the World Bank, African Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) and other policy thrusts, such as, National Economic, Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) to persistently advocate for the entrenchment of entrepreneurship development and inclusive (leadership) skills in the tertiary education curricular, particularly the university curricular, to help reduce poverty, create employment opportunities and maximize national wealth. Beside the above, other critical strategies that will unlock industrialization cum inclusive entrepreneurship is partly by engendering actions beyond manufacturing and engagement of all sector employment generation strategies on the one hand and the encouragement and formulation of policy stimulation of potential entrepreneurs on the other hand (African Economic Outlook, 2014; Onyilofor, 2014; Alaref et al; 2014 and Okonjo-Iweala, 2012).

The developed economies and the emerging economies as demonstrated by the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and south Africa), pay adequate attentions to industrialization by systematically inculcating and engendering knowledge-based entrepreneurship curricular into their educational system. This no doubt has promoted these economies

far ahead of the African economies. Although the African economies are taking radical approaches to correct this anomaly; and if sustained would yield a threshold result.

Qualitative education is the bed rock of any nation and should be practically oriented by evolving value chains that would promote economic activities and reduce economic dependence. It is pertinent to note that, education is a virile tool to achieving all-purpose greatness if tenaciously deployed. Education fully immersed in entrepreneurial development and inclusive (leadership) skills would induce overall development. According to (Onyilofor, 2014), entrepreneurial education entails entrepreneurial skills such as team spirit skill, organization skill, communication skill, decision skill, manipulative skill, technical skill, planning skill and the likes. She further asserts that, if the above skills are fully integrated into graduates while schooling would turn out to be job creators and value enhancers in any society they find themselves.

Obviously speaking, (Aruma, 2018 and Onyilofor, 2014) are of the view that, entrepreneurship development and education embedded in inclusion and inclusive (leadership) skills would enunciate a roadmap to food security. The ecosystems of entrepreneurship are critical for entrepreneurial development. These include capital (finance), government policy, government entrepreneurship programmes, entrepreneurship education, research and development transfer, commercial and legal infrastructure, market openness,

physical infrastructure, and culture and social norms. The above thus facilitates economies of scale and scope due to its attendant cooperative entrepreneurship nature which further promotes skill initiative, employment generation, inclusive wealth and ultimately, food security (Ferreira, Fernande & Veiga, 2023; Aruma, 2018).

The paper is however discussed under the following headings: Introduction, objective of the study, methodology of the study, conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical review, conclusion and recommendations.

### **Objective of the Study**

The actual objective of the study is to bring to bear the relationship between entrepreneurship development and inclusive (leadership) skills on the one hand, and food security on the other hand, if any. Other objectives of the study are:

- To identify the role of tertiary institutions in Nigeria in promoting entrepreneurship development.
- To establish the principles of a learning organization.
- To bring to fore the qualities of inclusive leaders.
- To underscore government efforts in promoting entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.
- To identify typology of skills required for organizational performance.

### **Methodology of the Study**

The study was done using qualitative (theoretical) research approach, so as to allow for a critical review and analysis of related literature using secondary sources in the form of journals, newspapers, textbooks, magazines and others. This thus allows for an in-depth critical thinking, comprehension and deductive reasoning (Johnson-Laird 2010).

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Entrepreneurship Development**

According to (Barringer & Ireland, 2013), entrepreneurship development is a process that endears people to pursue emerging opportunities irrespective of the degree of assets and wealth in their possessions. People of different races, backgrounds and perceptions are often motivated to embark on entrepreneurship for different reasons but common to them all, is value creation drive. Similar to the above, is the exposition by (Idam, 2014), who assets that, entrepreneurship development is a process of effectively creating value and satisfaction in any society. Value creation promotes employment opportunities, income generation, outputs/services, skills, and the

likes. Sustained value creation promotes sustainable knowledge-based economy. Nawaser, et al (2011) opine that, entrepreneurship development is a strategy required for building a virile, coherent, productive and skill-based society ready to make developmental strides amongst countries. They further posit that, entrepreneurship is an enormous tool that could be used to remove constraints to economic development viz poverty, unemployment, ignorance, etc. Entrepreneurship development promotes inclusive (skills), innovation, creativity, team learning and discovery, crime reduction and virile society.

In a different but corroborative development, (Bogachov, et al; 2020) assert that entrepreneurship development is a decision making processes that take into consideration business uncertainties, environmental factors and other factors inclusive of government policies and actors. An attempt to underplay these factors could lead to non-realization of entrepreneurship objectives. Parvin, et al (2012) account that entrepreneurship development is a process of identifying constraints, challenging factors, risk inhibitions in order to promote empowerment of men and women in socio-economic activities. Constant engagement of individuals in the management know-how of socio-economic activities would promote entrepreneurial drive. Again, Diyoke (2014), states that, entrepreneurship is a gradual integration of industrialization through a systematic build-up of small and medium scale enterprises over time. He stresses that the emerging economies of the BRICS Countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are products of entrepreneurship development. Therefore, necessary programmes that will sharpen the skills and arouse the mind and drive the quest of the youths should be intensified as measures to enhance entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Afrim, et al (2010), affirms that entrepreneurship development is a systematic process of integrating rural dwellers into socio-economic framework of promoting economic activities by creating and sustaining values. They further define rural entrepreneurship as a process of identifying inherent peculiar needs of individuals through innovation, creativity and risk propensity in order to create value and promote human welfare and sustainable development.

Therefore, radical entrepreneurship development entails entrenchment of vision, foresight, drive, dynamism, boldness, flexibility, initiative, self-esteem, etc, into training programmes to sharpen individual curiosity, is not negotiable in achieving a virile industrialization and sustainable economy on the one hand, and food security on the other hand.

Entrepreneurship development is an incubation of innovation, creativity, risk taking, opportunity seeking, drive and vision as espoused by (Schumpeter, 1949). Although other initial take-off such as capital is critical but the above identified variables are sine qua non for an entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship development in any society. In a follow up to the above, (Parvin et al, 2012) assure that, entrepreneurship development is a moderation of social, cultural and religious activities that could impair entrepreneurial drive, skill, policy formulation, risk propensity, etc that would foster entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial development. They are of the view that entrepreneurship development would continue to yield the desired result of promoting a sustained micro, small and medium scale enterprises (MSMES) and its trickle down effects on food sufficiency in any economy as manifested by BRICS economies.

Significantly speaking, entrepreneurship development is a process of creating an enabling workforce imbued with the skill of spotting unprecedented opportunities, harnessing diverse potential entrepreneur and equipping them with inclusive (leadership) skills, technological drive, team spirit, swamp relationships and crave for innovation and creativity for sustainable development (Jafarnejad et al, 2013). In the world of today characterized by globalization, technological age, climate change, product obsolescence, inept leadership, war, terrorism and insecurity (culminated in poverty and unemployment) pervading every economy of the world, thereby culminating a tumultuous call/drive for entrepreneurship. This calls for caution so as to forestall evasive entrepreneurship as often the case in the developing countries, including Nigeria.

#### **Inclusive Leadership Skills**

Shiferaw, et al (2023) declare that learning, inclusive leadership skills, and competencies (personal, technical, task, functional, cross functional, team, leadership, relationship, communication, critical thinking, decision making, confidence, change agent, envisioning , etc) are critical elements that encourage and promote both entrepreneurship drive and entrepreneurship development. Entrepreneurship drive can only foster in an environment of learning infrastructure, culture of change, capacity building, leadership drive, inclusiveness, and empowerment. The qualities of leaders incubating prospective/potential entrepreneurs are critical to promoting entrepreneurship landscape and boosting entrepreneurial success. The world of today is characterized by knowledge-based economy, where knowledge, expertise, cunningness of skill, innovation, creativity, science and technology are

integrated to drive organizational products and services within a specified period.

Porter (1998) claims that an organization can only enjoy competitive advantage when such an organization understands and able to maneuver the three generic strategies (cost leadership differentiation and focus) usually employed in driving organizational success. It is therefore not sufficient for organizations to experience competitive advantage but critical to accentuate sustainable competitive advantage, if such organizations could meet the following three criteria viz: uniqueness, valuability and non-imitability (Hossain et al, 2020). It is therefore important to emphasize that in building leadership skill that would promote a virile entrepreneurship, the inclusion of uniqueness of one's business, valuability to customers and non-imitability and duplication of entrepreneurs' know-how by others are germane to a successful entrepreneurial drive /development.

Kotsios (2023) posits that inclusive (leadership) skills include such skills as reliability, integrity, work ethics and honesty. These skills are required for long run business success. Others are communication, early risk identification and assessment, planning, decision making, organizing, customer orientation, financial planning and management, etc are meant for short run business performance/survival. Kotsios however identified two broad areas of skills required for optimum performance in any business enterprise, be it entrepreneurs, managers, employees etc. These include:

- i. Hard skills: Technical skills, functional skills knowledge based/operational skills and resilience skills.
- ii. Soft skills: Interpersonal/people/human skill, behavioral/attitudinal skills and resilience skills

While hard skills are developed for formal operations, soft skills are evolved for informal relationships. According to (Cassidy, 2015), resilience though elusive in meaning but generally implies ability to remain focused amidst difficult situations. Hence, resilience skills enable individuals, both business owners and employees to be dodged in the face of any adversity. Without resilience skills, it will be pretty difficult for both entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs to succeed when adversity surfaces. Resilience culminates adaptability, flexibility and change in the face of uncertainties, stress, threats and other unfavourable dispositions.

Balaz, et al (2023) argues that innovative capacity is a leadership skill required for the day-to -day value creation and product life cycle management. Every stage of products life's cycles of an organization

requires different paradigm innovation strategies (introduction, growth, maturity and decline) and their attendant appeal to the consumers. The changing business external environment variables, such as social, technological, economic, environmental and political (STEEP) must be in harmony with the firm's innovative capacity so as to engender the spirit of competitive advantage. It is pertinent to note that STEEP are exogenous variables and taken as given. Hence, they cannot be manipulated but the innovation hub of the business enterprises.

### Theoretical Framework

#### Learning Organizations and Systems Thinking Theory

The study is contextualized on the learning organizations and systems thinking theory espoused by Peter Sengel. This is because of the inherent skills and inclusive (leadership) skills that permeate learning organizations and systems thinking. According to (Sengel, 1990) learning organizations are those organizations that inspire adaptive and reproductive learning, thereby inspiring their employees to think outside the box and collaborate with other employees to find the best alternative solutions to any identifiable problem. Learning organizations theory is anchored on the 'Principles of systems thinking.' Systems theory was earlier espoused by (Bertalanffy, 1968) to pave way for value integration in an organization. Learning organizations promote an inclusive approach called systems thinking. Systems thinking emanates from the assumptions of systems theory, whereby all the processes thus unified with one another. It is a framework for seeing the "Big picture" and other interrelated parts, which seem to be unrelated at the surface level.

#### The Five Principles of Learning Organizations: Sengels Approach Called the Fifth Discipline

Sengel (1990) optimizes learning organizations into five parts of interrelatedness, so that organizations could be conceptualized as whole having commonalities. It is called fifth discipline because of the adapt discipline required by organizations to practice these principles and its efficacies leave no one in doubt (Panagiotopoulos et al; 2018). The five principles of learning organizations are:

1. **Shared vision** – Collective interest of all staff in an organization with respect to vision, goal and aspirations. An organization would create a conducive environment for all staff to chart their future aspirations.
2. **Personal mastery** – People are made to be aware of their current positions and what they need to do to get to the next level. Hence,

discordant tensions are being created, which would accentuate a working conditions for improvement and continuous learning, which would engender better performance in the workplace.

3. **Mental models** – The workplace diversity helps to moderate personal thoughts, perceptions, tenets, cultures, backgrounds, etc and the adoption of inclusiveness for optimal organizational performance
4. **Team learning** – Every member of an organization engages in dialogues, idea sharing, knowledge debate, building an acceptable and working knowledge, and norms that would promote organizational productivity. Employees are empowered through initiatives, trial and errors, thereby promoting collective learning and intelligence.
5. **Systems thinking** – This is the bedrock of Sengel's five principles of learning organizations. Systems thinking integrates the other four principles viz: shared vision, personal mastery, mental models, and team learning. It analyses every part and develops a coherent approach to evaluating interdependencies and blend a composite situation through a unified communication channels.

#### Typology of Skills Required For Organizational Performance

Lintzeris and Karalis (2020) identify seven (7) typology of skills for organizational performance, viz:

1. **General knowledge** – Writing, reading, comprehension in mother tongue, basic mathematics, basic knowledge of technology, information technologies and communication, etc.
2. **General skills (Higher level skills)** – Critical thinking, creativity, self-management, empathy, analysis, continuous learning, problem solving, sociability, team work, adaptability, responsibility, planning and organization, negotiation, decision making, leadership etc.
3. **Vocational/professional skills (Specific skills)** – Compliance to institutional regulations, accuracy and speed of calculations, concentration and attention, memorization of information time management, customer orientation, target achievement orientation, physical strength, principles and practices of entrepreneurship,

- financial and economic management, supporting and guiding others, etc.
4. **Professional skills** – It vary from one occupation to another.
  5. **Broader social skills** – Intellectual awareness, environmental concerns and protection, health and safety at work, public health and consumer protection, respect and protection of personal data, etc.
  6. **Characteristics**, attitudes and values (personal attitudes/behaviours) reliability, dependability, initiative, receptiveness (openness),
  7. **Self-confidence**, values, integrity, understand and respect for diversity, work ethics etc.
  8. **Digital skills** – Data processing, communication, content creation, security

#### Qualities of Inclusive Leaders

Fagan and Guether (2022) affirm that inclusive leaders possess the following qualities:

1. **Active listening skills** – Inclusive leaders are ardent listeners. They comprehend salient issues and highly confident. They promote boldness and knowledgeability.
2. **Effective communication** – They talk with clarity and envisioning of the organizational prospects. They encourage team work, discussions and feedback.
3. **Creativity** – Inclusive leaders are broad minded and thus receptive to new ideas, strategies, innovations and change manstra.
4. **Empathy** – Inclusive leaders are empathic and compassionate. They consider all perspectives to an issue and allow others to express their views indiscriminately.
5. **Humility** – Inclusive leaders are humane, democratic, considerate, appraise and always aware of their limitations and imbue themselves with the strengths of others. They never see themselves as all knowing.
6. **Target driven** – Inclusive leaders focus on the big picture. They are result oriented. They are never bothered with obstacles. They are always possibility minded.
7. **Productive feedback** – Inclusive leaders are humorous. They communicate with team members effectively and efficiently. They never undermine their subordinates but hold them at high esteem.

#### The Role of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria in Promoting Entrepreneurship Development

The role of tertiary institutions all over the world is saddled with training in research and development,

acquisition of skills (basic and applied), intellectual grooming and character molding. The above efforts are symmetrically measured in “character and knowledge”, the basis of awarding degrees by universities. The awful stories about unemployed decimating rise of unemployment, poverty and crime in the late 1980s to 1990s and their successive rise in the millennium, thereby culminated a harmonization of “knowledge and character” to a “broad-based radical approach” of “knowledge-based entrepreneurship”.

Efi (2014) asserts that Nigerian government in 2006, mandated the tertiary institutions, especially the universities to change their curricular by integrating entrepreneurship development into all programmes. It is worthy to note that, though the introduction of entrepreneurship education into Nigerian universities has promoted endeared entrepreneurship development but has not reduced unemployment significantly. The above, according to (Aikor, 2022) can be ascribed to government policies with respect to inconsistencies, lack of adequate supervision, lack of accountability, corruption, lack of political will, underfunding and ineptitude on the part of some of the staff amongst others. As a followed up to the above, (Akinyemi and Adejumo 2018) opined that government policy implementation inconsistencies accounts for the colossal failures of entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian universities. In order to reverse this trend, (Seiyiabo, 2020) suggests that, government should collaborate with the university systems to fashion out robust policies, programmes and activities that can address the changing needs of the industry and society. Nevertheless tertiary institutions in Nigeria have contributed to entrepreneurship development in the following ways (Efi, 2014):

- i. Reorientation of students towards self-employment
- ii. Training on different vocations to acquiring needed skills, “knowledge and character” to a broad-based radical approach” of “knowledge – based entrepreneurship.”
- iii. Awareness creation on various types of business with low capital start up
- iv. Mentorship programmes for students
- v. Providing consultancy services to the startup businesses
- vi. Collaboration with industry(s) to engender practical based approach to learning.

#### Government Efforts in Promoting Entrepreneurship in Nigeria

Idam (2014) states various strategic efforts the Nigerian governments have garnered to promote entrepreneurship development since the introduction of

structural adjustment programme (SAP) in July, 1986 by the Military Administration of General Ibrahim Babaginda. These include but not limited to the following:

1. **Establishment of Bank of industry (BOI):** It was established by the Federal Government in Nigeria in 2000 as a result of the merger arrangement amongst the Nigeria Bank for Commerce and Industry (NBCI), Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB) and National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND). The objective was to provide both short and long terms credit to small and medium scale enterprises.
2. **Small and medium investment equity scale –** This was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria as recommended by the Bankers Committee in December, 1999. The banks in Nigeria were required to set aside 10% of their profit after tax to fund it.
3. **Microfinance Bank –** This was established in 2005 by the Central Bank of Nigeria to replace the former community banks. This was aimed to address the needs of the rural enterprises.
4. **The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) –** This was established by the Act, CAP 250, formally Decree No 34 of 1989 to develop programmes for the teaming unemployed graduates in order to ameliorate unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.
5. **Establishment of Entrepreneurship development centres (EDCs) –** This was established to provide support for entrepreneurs in the areas of training and skills acquisition. This was also to mid wife entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
5. **Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria YouWIN –** This was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria to create job

#### **Empirical Review**

An empirical research paper by (Alaref, Brodman & Premand, 2019), titled “The medium term impact of entrepreneurship education on labour market outcomes- Experimental evidence from University Graduates in Tunisia”, reveals that, the entrepreneurial education/knowledge/skill often disappears as soon as students graduate from the universities or schools. In other words, the medium term result demonstrates that barely two to four years of graduation, there will be no concrete evidence of self-employment, thereby making the entrepreneurial efforts in the form of training, skill, knowledge, etc, a more or less a waste. The authors

therefore advocate for an additional potent driver of entrepreneurship – capital, for a start-up of a business or to consolidate the business. This will no doubt encourage graduates to promote or venture into entrepreneurship with the needed courage to triumph. In a related development, (Afrin, et al, 2010) find a correlation between entrepreneurship development and inclusive (leadership) skills in their paper titled “Micro credit and rural women entrepreneurship development in Bangladesh: A multivariate model. Thus, inclusive (leadership) skills are found to be central to successful entrepreneurship development. Similarly, (Parvin, Jinrong & Rahman, 2012) assert that entrepreneurship education and inclusive skills are critical for the attainment of organizational uncommon goals: The BHAGs metaphor. This significantly impacts on entrepreneurship development and societal welfare. Hassain, et al (2020) discover that there is a positive and significant relationship between inclusive (leadership) skill and entrepreneurship development on the one hand, and their aggregate impact on food security, notably because of increased wealth creation, income generation, employment opportunities, inclusiveness of ecosystem of entrepreneurship and their trickle-down effects of economies of scale and scope.

Balaz, et al (2023), find that, inclusive skills of innovation strategy have a preponderance effect on entrepreneurship development (organizational success). If innovation strategies are appropriately designed and applied, would have a moderating effect on the external environment of the business and thus promote organizational performance. A different study by (Malebana & Mothibi, 2023), reveal that, there is positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial education and injunctive norms on the one hand, and the capacity of successful entrepreneur is significantly related to entrepreneurship education on the other hand.

The application of learning organizations and its five principles has positive and significant impact on educational institutions performance (Panayiotopoulos et al; 2018). It thus confirms that inclusive (leadership) skills promote entrepreneurship development, which in turn boosts food security.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study has painstakingly x-rayed the relationship between entrepreneurship development and inclusive (leadership) skills on the one hand and their impact on food security on the other hand. The various literature surveyed confirmed largely, positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurship development and inclusive skills and their overall significant and

positive influence on food security. The implication is that, the pursuit of entrepreneurship development should entail concomitant inclusive (leadership) skills, which would always promote food security in any economy.

Having surveyed the above study, it would suffice to recommend the following:

1. Nigerian tertiary institution should be further equipped with more tools and technological related materials to enhance entrepreneurship education
2. The curricular should be further reviewed to accommodate more practical skills and up-to-date learning.
3. Train the trainers' programme should be embedded in the tertiary institutions programmes in order to promote and sharpen the learning edge of trainers and instructors.
4. An enhanced micro credit scheme should be provided and the existing ones should be overhauled in order to engender more products virility into small and medium scale enterprises.
5. Bureaucratic tendencies that could cause delay in the implementation of government policies to promoting entrepreneurship development should be removed.
6. Start-up capital should be made easy and accessible to all comers of entrepreneurship.
7. Leadership institutes should be set up to mentor the up-coming entrepreneurs in the areas of skills acquisitions, resilience, confidence building, character, good will, etc.
8. Exchange programmes between tertiary institutions and other industries should be made compulsory and be monitored for full implementation.

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