

ENTREPRENEURSHIP INSTITUTIONS IN AFRICA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL AND POSTMODERN CULTURES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The synergy between African traditional and postmodern entrepreneurship institutions could generate a pragmatic solution to the job insecurity that characterized the Nigerian societies. This calls for a critical review since Nigerian graduates find it difficult to gain employment. Hence, this study examines any similarities or continuity between African traditional and postmodern entrepreneurship. This study employs a historical research methodology through a descriptive approach. Findings reveal that traditional Nigerian entrepreneurship is not mutually exclusive of the famous postmodern entrepreneurial educational institution. This paper concludes that the amalgamation of the respective explicitly driven forces in the conventional and postmodern entrepreneurial programs is adequate for the job creation of Nigerian youths. It behoves the Non-Governmental Organizations, among others, to synergize traditional postmodern values as an innovative curriculum to enhance wholesome capacity building for the national and international workforce.

Keywords: Traditional, Postmodern, Entrepreneurship Institutions, Nigeria, Africa

Introduction

Before the coming of the colonial government in Nigeria, unemployment was a rare phenomenon; this is because both males and females were highly entrepreneurial and highly productive across the country (Ajekwu, 2017, Muogbo & John-Akamelu, 2018). The Igbo ethnic group has been recognized internationally for their entrepreneurship and enterprise development culture to date, and the Yoruba and Hausa are not exempted (Ajekwu, 2017; Ojiaku, 2015 Olakunle, Iseolorunkanmi and Segun, 2016). However, these days, most developing nations of the world like Nigeria and some African countries, in general, are threatened with myriad problems and realities, including sadness, frustration, poverty, unemployment, conflicts, and diseases. These situations pose great

challenges to the very existence of individuals in most developing nations and debilitating effects on the individuals in the society are unquantifiable (Chukwu & Igwe 2012), thereby, calling for the orientation and training of educated youths, men and women who can function effectively in the society in which they live.

The synergy of the traditional and postmodern entrepreneurship institutions calls for a review and redress based on the degenerative ratio between the young graduates and unemployment in Nigerian State. In Nigeria today, the rate of youth unemployment, hardship emanating from a low standard of living has led to a renewed interest in entrepreneurship development by the government and other stakeholders (Adebayo & Kolawole, 2013). After graduation, the youths find it challenging to find informal employment organizations. This scenario is so pathetic that Anyebe (2017) opines that tertiary institutions in Nigeria produce not less than 120,000 graduates every year. These graduates do not have any hope of finding white-collar jobs anywhere. This situation has led to many adverse outcomes such as high rates of heart disease, crime and violence, suicide cases and poverty (Nwaoga & Omeke, 2012).

This present situation is not peculiar to Nigeria. Globally, studies have shown that times are hard, hence the need to provide solutions to some of the nation's problems. This includes the economic recession, unemployment, poverty, inadequate and poor healthcare services, and insecurity (Anyebe, 2017), leading to the development of contemporary entrepreneurship institutions, especially in Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria in an attempt to ensure that her citizens are self-employed established the National Directorate of Employment in 1986 with the belief that this effort would go a long way in reducing unemployment, but Onifade (2001) deciphers that such efforts could not solve the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Ekpoh (2015) highlights the need for skills such as problem-solving, communication, and analytical skills to be included in Nigerian universities' curriculum to equip students with the necessary skills required for self-employment. As a result, entrepreneurship education attempts to prepare individuals to be skilled and autonomous rather than dependent, as well as to equip them to be innovative rather than rely on other people's ideas. I educate individuals to contribute to their country's economic prosperity (Kenton & Enwin, 2010). Entrepreneurship is about more than just educating people about establishing a business; it also promotes creativity and innovation.

Nigerian Youths, Employment Opportunities & Entrepreneurship Development

In today's world, the rise in youth unemployment has become a widespread worry. It is a challenge that most economies are facing under current economic conditions (Oppong & Sachs, 2015), and it has become even more difficult following the worldwide COVID-19

pandemic, which has resulted in more than 70% of start-ups having to terminate full-time employee contracts since the start of the pandemic (World Economic Forum, 2020), resulting in youth unemployment (Fabeil, Pazim, & Langgat, 2020) in Nigeria. Even the developed nations have not shown exception to this frightful social problem, although the up-surge is more pronounced in the developing countries. Oddly enough, Balogun (2016) opine that almost half of the 10million graduates from over 668 universities in Africa yearly do not get jobs. Statistically, in Nigeria, graduate unemployment has reached an alarming state. For instance, Akintoye (2008) indicated that graduate unemployment rose from 1% in 1974 to 4% in 1984. In less than a decade, between 1992 and 1997, it accounted for 32% (Dabalén, Oni & Adekola 2000). Conservatively, Eneji, Mai-Laifa & Weiping (2013) put the rate of unemployed graduates at about 60%. National Bureau of Statistics (2016) indicated that a total of 52million citizens within the economically active population of Nigeria is jobless, and this figure consisted mainly of newly qualified university graduates. Recent statistics show that out of the 1,950 households surveyed on a nationally representative sample, 42% of the respondents working before the outbreak were no longer working the week preceding the interview for reasons related to COVID-19 (Bamidele, 2020).

Furthermore, studies have shown that the poorest households (from the lowest consumption quintile) reported the highest share of Nigerians who stopped working (45%), while 35% of the wealthiest home also affected (Bamidele, 2020). This, by implication shows, youth unemployment is one of the most critical developmental problems facing the African continent. It has disallowed some countries to achieve their economic greatness and developmental aspirations but has also kept them as nations with jobless youth and a growing economy. Taking a critical intercultural examination and the distinctions between the traditional and western worldviews on the concepts of entrepreneurship and values, they have similarities and differences in values that need to be annexed to contribute to knowledge and approaches to postmodern entrepreneurship. In postmodern ideas, entrepreneurship institutions are primarily designed to help students become more creative, adaptable to opportunity, hands-on, and inventive, independent of their job choices (Taiwo, 1980). Mahieu (2006) posits that the concept is either described as enterprise education commonly used in the United Kingdom or entrepreneurship widely used in the United States. Entrepreneurial education aims to focus on human growth, mentality, skills, and competencies. On the other hand, the term entrepreneurship refers to starting a business or being self-employed. Mushi deduced that African traditional education focuses on hands-on education that may pass down inherited information, skills, cultural traditions, norms, and values from generation to generation to reduce poverty, famine, and diseases in traditional times.

Traditional entrepreneurship in West Africa was based on the informal apprenticeship with kin or early participation in the workforce such as medicine, music and crafts, to mention a few (Traditional Education, 2019). Nigerian traditional entrepreneurial education thrived at improving the socioeconomic standards of the indigenes through the inculcation of high moral standards into their students as they learnt from the already established experts, especially the elderly master's teachers (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002). Entrepreneurship means to own a company or start a business. The term "Entrepreneurship" could be grouped into different words, which may include an entrepreneur, which is an individual actor or businessman in the market; entrepreneurial, meaning behaviours that emanate in businesses and entrepreneurship involving the entrepreneurs, the market behaviours and the entrepreneurial process (Obasan, 2013). An entrepreneur was seen as someone engaged in production to make a profit in the past. In that sense, he combines all other factors of production like land, labour and capital to produce something. He takes risks and is innovative (Gupta & Khanka, 2006). In recent times, however, various authors have looked at the concept of entrepreneurship from another perspective.

According to Olawale (2018), entrepreneurship is producing goods and services to make a profit, and it is not limited to making a profit but is seen as thinking. It is a new way of solving a problem and creating value (Olawale, 2018). Mba (2008) sees an entrepreneur as not just a person who starts a new business but also one who finds new opportunities and then combines the factors of production to exploit the perceived opportunities. An entrepreneur combines his qualities and personality traits to carry out his business successfully. According to Robbins and Coulter (1999), an entrepreneur must have a drive, desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, intelligence and job-related knowledge. He must watch for an opportunity to carry out his purpose and be persistent. An entrepreneur runs the business by planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling the company. He performs the roles of innovation, risk-taking and organization of the business (Mbah, 2008). Based on this new vision of who an entrepreneur is, Mbah (2008), define entrepreneurship as the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing experience with high growth potential. Olagunju (2004) sees entrepreneurship as "an undertaking in which one is involved in the task of creating and managing an enterprise for a purpose".

Hisrich and Peters (2002), on the other hand, define it as "the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic, social risks, receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence". Obasan (2013) stresses that entrepreneurship

involves the creative process of bringing out something new, with the devotion of time and effort and assumption of necessary risk and reaping of rewards.

An Analysis of the Postmodern Entrepreneurship

The Nigerian geometric production of graduates has necessitated the development of various postmodern entrepreneurial institutions. The root of postmodern entrepreneurship could be traced to the coming of Christian missionaries in 1842. Christian missionaries arrived in the coastal area of the southern part of Nigeria and introduced western education. Western education was as well described as formal education, which was predominant to Nigerian elites. It began in 1842 at the primary level through Christian missionaries with certain distinctive philosophies upon which they were built. There were three missionary societies available during the colonial era; Chord missionary Society, Wesleyan Methodist and Catholic (Mahieu, 2006). Ayandele advanced that the Christian missionaries founded western-literary education as a device of attraction and penetrating the southern and Niger Delta sections of Nigeria. Therefore, when missionaries arrived at any community, they established a school and converted the indigenous people. This school method ahead of converts was to ensure the conviction of the children through which the hearts of the pagan adults especially would be reached. The pagans, at the arrival of the missionaries, discovered that to get the pagan adults would be difficult because they appeared to be unyielding compared to children. So the strategy was to get the children first and then through the children to the adults. Therefore, the missionaries concentrated on the enrolments of their children into school through whom they would quickly get converts. The missionary educational projects to reach the 'natives' were initially restricted to the limited objective of producing marginally literate Nigerians. This methodology had a targeted influence on making Christian converts (Ayandele, 1966). Secondly, the intention of Christian missionaries to establish Western educational institutions was to make out of the children graduates that would eventually turn catechists, deacons, and then priests. In comparison, girls who graduate were trained in the schools to be their wives and fiancées of their male workers. Summarily, the original intentions were to make converts and indigenous catechists, deacons and then priests for the continuity of the Christian faith (Ayandele, 1966).

After about two decades, they were followed by primary education, the secondary education in 1859. The primary education by this period had been evident as an instrument of development to the Nigerian societies. It was as well viewed as a great source of civilization to Nigerian people. Consequent to this, the first secondary school was established and named the CMS Grammar school in Lagos. Scholars have argued over the purpose or objectives of its introduction to Nigeria, which appeared not to have

been very clear at the conception. Some claimed that the British thought it would have probably induced some sense of critical thinking into the indigenous people if it was established earlier. If this had happened, Nigerians would have likely jeopardized their policies or private agendas to fulfil their religious and economic bigotry. The Christian missionaries succeeded for the first three decades from 1842 to 1872 from the intervention of the secular inductions (History of Education, 2018). The wind of change took over the missionary educational institutions as the British government in 1872 began to intervene in the academic affairs of the privately or missionary owned educational institutions. The described causative factors were on political and financial constraints. The government took over the schools through the setting of financial bates when they advocated a policy to make donations to support the running of the schools in Nigeria. This was labelled under the government financial support on education (History of Education, 2018). This methodology of the government going to bed with the missionary on through government grants. The government grants donated to the privately-owned schools was a means known as education ordinance. The education ordinance was then served to the missionary schools stating that all missionary schools should be handed over to the Nigerian government. The government, after that, classified the schools into government and private owned schools. The government designated schools were thence sponsored by the public funds while tokens were given to private as a form of aid (History of Education, 2004). Furthermore, the 1882 education ordinance brought another turn into the Niger area educational system. This new trend came with the introduction of another curriculum, approach, and communication medium, especially to the indigenous people in Lagos. At the same time, the first government ordinance was evident to have only been designed to be operational within Lagos metropolises, leaving out other parts of Nigeria. The implementation of the 1882 new government curriculum and methods, in all ramifications, led to the failure of the first ordinance. The latter led to the production of another government ordinance in 1887. It was reported that the second ordinance declared and encouraged the employment of more foreign teachers, more schools were established, missionary schools were funded, voluntary agencies and private individuals were encouraged to own schools (History of Education, 2018; Fafunwa, 2004).

In 1914, at about eight decades from the second ordinance, Lord Fredrick Lugard, the then Governor-General of Nigeria, set up new worldviews as the third ordinance to establish higher educational institutions. Consequently, the Yaba Higher College was firstly established in 1932, whereas the school did not take off until two years after in 1934. Fourteen years after in 1948, The University College Ibadan was created with one hundred and four students as the first intakes. In 1962, the number of universities rose from one to five in 1962. And in the 1970s and 1980s, an appreciable number of higher

institutions were established. Statistics showed that, in 1980, the number of students that gained admission into primary school was about 12 million, 1.2 million for secondary school, and 240,000 at the university level. Evidence showed accelerated growth in graduate students in the postmodern period beyond the available jobs either provided by the private or public establishment. To tackle the unpredictable increase in the development of graduates in a competitive workforce generated the emergence of entrepreneurial programs to alleviate the graduates with the opportunities to be gainfully employed as universities or colleges (History of Education, 2018) Osoba and Fajana asserted that the indigenous and western education co-existed during the 19th century. Still, the teaching of the west progressively gained the upper hand over indigenous education during the 20th century. The foreign and indigenous educational system's coexistence faced dangers and confrontations, which eventually brought changes in the Nigerian social, cultural, economic, political (Osoba & Fajana, 2004).

An Analysis of the Traditional and Postmodern Entrepreneurial Cultures in Nigeria

Before postmodern entrepreneurship, there was a Nigerian traditional educational institution. Though scholars have not described formal education as an entrepreneurship institution, the features do. Nonetheless, there does not appear to have been a significant discussion on the need of studying the disparities, which this study attempted to do. The traditional curriculum was informal, which comprises developing physical skills, character, and intellectual skills, inculcating a sense of belonging to the community, teaching respect for elders, giving specific vocational training, and understanding and appreciating the community's cultural heritage. In other words, this is the development that encompasses the capacity building, moral, mental, physical and social aspects (Lackeus, 2015). The postmodern entrepreneurial curriculum, however, was designed in a formal approach basically due to the discovery that there was a disconnection between the skills gained in the current educational curriculum and that required in the labour market, which has been one of the major reasons for alarming youth unemployment in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011). To bridge this gap, the federal government established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to create jobs and solve the problem of unemployment; the Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) to equip students with skills needed for the labour market while in school; Vocational and Technical Training Institutions contained in the National Policy of Education (NPE) to encourage the acquisition of practical skills and attitudes for employment in various sectors of the economy. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training to instil the use of electronic computers and software (Olorundare & Kayode, 2014) However, due to issues such as a lack of finance, insufficient infrastructure, political and

socioeconomic instability, and contradictory government policies, these federal government measures did not produce the expected results (Olawale, 2018).

The Federal Ministry of Education, to intensify its efforts in ensuring that the youths are engaged after graduation, introduced entrepreneurship education as part of the curriculum of tertiary institutions with the National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) as bodies responsible for supervision and regulation of the implementation of entrepreneurship education in higher institutions in the country. Entrepreneurship Education as a course was made compulsory beginning from 2007/2008 school year with the International Labour Organization (ILO) providing support in both technical and vocational education (Onuoha, 2011). With the introduction of entrepreneurship education in higher institutions in the country, a lot of private firms have been created and this is in line with the submission of Yahya (2011) who clearly stated that the objective of entrepreneurship education is to "continuously foster entrepreneurship culture amongst students and faculty with a view of not only educating them but also supporting graduates of the system towards establishing and also maintaining sustainable business ventures, including but not limited to those arising from research". The sole aim of postmodern entrepreneurship education is therefore aimed at equipping graduates with qualities such as initiative, drive, imagination, zest, courage and boldness to own businesses of their own, thereby becoming self-sufficient and job creators rather than job seekers (Raimi & Gabadeen, 2011). The curriculum is designed in such a way that students of tertiary institutions in the nation will graduate with skills in areas like soap making, bead making, fashion designing, poultry, hair weaving, graphic design, interior decoration, hairdressing, pottery, music, leatherwork, tie and dye etc in addition to their degrees (Anene & Imam, 2011). Be these as it may, the implementation of this curriculum has met several setbacks. For instance, Yahya (2011) underscores the inability to translate the entrepreneurship curriculum into reality as a significant setback. This is because there are few experts in this field, and few lecturers handling the course lack the needed expertise and sometimes cannot take the practical aspect of the course. In addition to this, the required textbooks are not always available, poor teaching methods are used, and the needed materials for practical are not provided.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has adequately addressed the varying developmental stages of entrepreneurship educational institutions from the Pre-colonial; it then critically examined and affirmed that the traditional educational system in Nigeria was a form of entrepreneurship institution not by practice but by values embedded in the processes. This study submitted that the postmodern entrepreneurship institution has basic similarities and

objectives with the traditional entrepreneurial institutions. Therefore, this study revealed the pertinent need to merge the distinctive values discovered for wholesome empowerment for national developmental goals. The essential importance in the traditional educational institution that should be imported into the postmodern entrepreneurial education is the morals these generational youths and society tend to lack. If this were added to the postmodern curriculum, socioeconomic, political, peaceful and national integrity will be reinstated. The Nigerian state lacks personnel without integrity because the essence of teaching morals is almost lacking in every stage of training and actual practice at every level of Nigerian societies. This gap in the postmodern entrepreneurial institution will create a vast avenue to make the present. Future generations have more robust opportunities for jobs security and the creation of personal, public and national integrity at both local and international spheres.

This paper thus recommends that the Federal Government of Nigeria train the citizenry through western educational institutionalized policies and teach the training of minds, hands, and character as predominant in the traditional Nigerian. The traditional institutions should not be neglected but should be learnt from, in every sphere of life, rather than sticking solely to the postmodern values against what had traditionally existed. If this is constantly neglected, it is further implied that we had no culture before post-modernism. The Federal Government of Nigeria should encourage researchers to find the values that have been missing in our traditional practices and merge them with the neo-developments that are Eurocentric oriented for collaborative efforts, originality, and preserving our national indigenous inheritance and identity. This approach will encourage the geometric growth of entrepreneurship and human capacity development that can easily promote even more non-government organizational investments that would create job opportunities and a sure sound economy because of the integration of integrity in capacity building of the citizenry. This study suggests that other researchers or scholars could do similar work in their various fields to enable avert complete the burial of the traditional Nigerian institutions.

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