
The Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Promoting Maternal and Child Health: An Assessment of the Nigerian Situation

BY

Usoro Ekong HARRISON
Department of Physical and Health Education
Faculty of Education
University of Uyo, Uyo
Akwa Ibom State

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education is an instrument for empowerment to improve the standard of living thereby improving health. It is the starting point for advancement in different fields of human endeavour. Entrepreneurship education is a catalyst or spring board to every other form of empowerment. If women are educated they would have more self-confidence to take up position of authority and participate more meaningfully in national development. One of the major means of improving maternal and child health, reducing morbidity and mortality in the population and promoting public health is through meaningful entrepreneurship education to improve the standard of living of women, children and other family members in the communities by creating employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship education is a necessary tool for reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality, thus improving the maternal and child health, this is on the premise that a woman who is economically and educationally empowered is in a better position to make choice and decisions concerning her health and that of her children in health related circumstances or situation. This paper seeks to examine the role of entrepreneurship education in reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality in Nigeria. It is recommended that every woman should be encouraged to venture into small or medium scale enterprise that could improve her access to income.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship Education, Maternal and Child Health, Skill Development Areas, Nigeria

Introduction

It has consistently been argued that for developing nations such as Nigeria to grow and catch up with other developing nations, there is the urgent need for a viable entrepreneurship model that would help tackle hydra-headed poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, chronic disease, maternal morbidity and mortality, infant morbidity and mortality, crimes, conflict, terrorism, insurgency, while at the same time promote growth of small and medium scale enterprises, wealth creation, enhance value orientation, preserve the ecosystem from abuse, and promote public health and in the final analysis achieve sustainable economic development (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, 2004, and Department for International Development, 2009).

Today, Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge of indigenous entrepreneurship development. This period has also witnessed an improvement of economic programmes aimed at encouraging individuals to go into private business and be self-reliant. Even the nation's philosophy of education believes amongst others, that education fosters the worth

and development of the individual for the general development of the society (Agomuo, 2015). Hence, this paper seeks to examine the role of Entrepreneurship Education in promoting maternal and child health in Nigeria.

Concepts

The term entrepreneurship education is used interchangeably with entrepreneurship training and skill acquisition or skill development. Conceptually, entrepreneurship education refers to a specialized knowledge that inculcate in the learners the trait of risk taking, innovation, arbitrage and coordination of factors of production for the purpose of creating new products or services for new and existing users within human communities (Minniti and Levesque, 2008; Naikle, 2007; Kanothi, 2009). Also, entrepreneurship education can be defined as the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act on them as asserted by Masurchi, Karambakuwa, Gopo, Kosmas, Mangulende and Gombarumer (2011). Entrepreneurship Education has also been described as a formal or informal structured learning that inculcates in the learner or trainee the ability to identify, screen and seize available opportunities in the environment in addition to skill acquisition. Sexton and Smiler (1997); Jones and English (2004) in the words of Shane and Venkataraman (2000) the trust of entrepreneurship education entails identifying the sources of opportunities, the process of discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities, and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate and exploit them. The deliverables of entrepreneurship education when properly imbibed by learners are the ability to identify something happening in the environment (resources) and the ability to impact something new to the trainees, so that their creativity, innovative abilities, belief and recombination skills would be enhanced (Sofoluwe, 2007; Fudurie, 2008).

Entrepreneurship Education can be described as a training that stimulates learners to better their lives by generating value through the creation or expansion of economic activity, identification and exploiting new products, process or markets (Akhuemonkhar, Raimi, Sofolume, 2013). It is quite obvious that anything that can be taught is education. Since entrepreneurship education can be taught, entrepreneurship education refers to pragmatic and meaningful interaction between the learner and the instructor for the purpose of developing the ability of the learner to identify, evaluate and generate ideas and solving business related problems in a unique way (Towosbola and Raimi, 2011). Entrepreneurship education when effectively and efficiently taught has the likelihood to participate self-employment among learners and accelerating sustainable growth and development. This is evident in a number of developed nations such as Japan and America that utilize entrepreneurial or facilitative education for improving their human capacity as opposed to the traditional approach of teach and listen approach, which is prevalent in the developing or third world nation.

The Goals of Entrepreneurship Education

According to Karanfi (2015), the goals of entrepreneurship education include the following:

People empowerment: Teaching people innovative ways to make a living enables them to take control of their circumstances. Thus, education aims at improving their self-confidence and giving them a chance at becoming self-reliant so that they are not totally dependent on employment. This form of education also builds up self-awareness; it provides a dynamic platform on which an individual can explore his strength through practical application and not theoretical knowledge gained from basic education.

Diversification: Entrepreneurship education teaches learners to recognize and seize diverse opportunities for financial gain. Market diversification increases a consumer's option and allows for more dynamic competition.

Creation of Employment: Unemployment is a rampant problem in many societies. Entrepreneurship education aims at empowering people to create employment opportunities.

Individual Competence: Entrepreneurship education encourage innovations in the running of an organization, it also empowers people to adopt self-discipline, self motivation and financial responsibility.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

The objective of entrepreneurship education is designed to acquire the following:

- Offer functional education that will enable youths to be self-reliant and self-employed.
- Provide youths with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
- Serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
- Train youth in risk management.
- Reduce high rate of poverty.
- Facilitate employment generation.
- Reduce rural urban mitigation.
- Support youths to establish a career in small and medium sized business
- Inculcate the spirit of perseverance and enable youths persist in any business venture of their choice.
- Create smooth traditional transition to a modern industrial economy.
- Promote public health in general.

Types of Entrepreneurship Education

Schreiner (2012) listed some of the types of entrepreneurship to include the following:

Producing: Many entrepreneurs make their money through producing goods and bringing them to the market. Depending on the type of goods the individual is producing, he may physically make the goods himself or he may simply arrange to have them made by a manufacturing company, e.g. T-shirt production, soap making, detergent, etc.

Inventing: Some entrepreneurs produce novel items, creating new inventions and introducing them to the market place, hence you must inform people of the new invention the seek to sell it.

Servicing: Instead of selling goods some entrepreneurs offer services e.g. a person who opens a car wash business is selling services to buyers with dirty cars, while the mechanic or auto-electrician repairs faulty cars.

Caretaking: Entrepreneurs can also make fortunes creating for others. It is just like servicing. E.g. taking care of the elderly at home, child care or watching homes when the owners are away.

Investing: Some entrepreneurs don't make or sell anything. They invest their money seeking to multiply their funds.

Organizing: Some individuals make their money through setting up event or organizing a group of people, e.g event management team.

Modernizing: Some people make money through modernizing things already in existence e.g, modernizing a house.

Connecting: Entrepreneurs with strong skills and the ability to organize can earn their money through connecting groups of individual e.g. helping.

Helping inventors find potential manufacturers for the goods they create, finding potentials distributors or consumers, they work as agent, e.g house agent, travel agent, employment agent, land property agent, etc.

Importance of Entrepreneurship Education

Gangi (2014) stated that entrepreneurship education is important in many aspects. It is important for both individual and national economy. It helps individuals to understand business and its purposes structure, and interrelationship with different sectors of the economy and society. It encourages creative thinking and enhances the ability of learners to recognize opportunities. It enriches their capability to pursue opportunities by innovating new project ideas and raised the needed resources. It improves managerial skills and enables them to create and operate new firm. It also enable the learners to think and in a creative and critical manner. At the national level, entrepreneurship education generates employment opportunities, promote economic growth, contribute in eradicating poverty enhance economic and human development. Hasty and Reardon in Anyakoha (2009) explained that certain characteristics are essential for entrepreneurship to be achieved, these include:

Self-confidence: An entrepreneur must maintain high level of emotional stability in the face of difficulties and is not afraid of failure.

Task oriented: An entrepreneur must possess the ability to plan and manage people, money, materials, operation, information and other resources effectively.

Courage: An entrepreneur must be courageous to cope with risk of operating his own business. They may be challenges such as dwindling fortunes or risk of losing investment due to low patronage.

Hard Work: Entrepreneur must work hard no matter the situation without giving up.

Enterprise: An entrepreneur starts from nothing but creating and innovation make them successful.

Initiative: An entrepreneur initiates a business or project and executes new ideas which make him or her original and unique.

Dynamism: He must be dynamic because he creates new ideas.

Leadership role: The entrepreneur exercises leadership roles by initiating actions, direction, commenting, inspiring, and motivating employees to achieve organizational goals.

Risk taking: This means an entrepreneur takes calculated risk with the available resources and always target success.

Visionary: She must be visionary, and extremely confident in his vision.

Disciplined: Entrepreneurs need to be disciplined to get things done and to achieve set goals. Entrepreneurs sometimes make around the clock including weekends and vacations to ensure that the job is completed properly and to enable them meet their productivity and financial goals.

Creative: Entrepreneurs think creatively, they are open-minded and they utilize every event as an opportunity, they are dreamers at heart, they need to use their passion and creative energy to come up with innovative, new ideas for the consumers.

Determined: Entrepreneurs don't let small setback get them down. They are continuous learners that have adapted to the constraint flows in the economy and the market when the idea does not work out as they planned; they view it as a learning opportunity.

Fearless: Entrepreneurs are not afraid of failure and they are willing to take risk and embarrassment not allowing doubt to get in the way of their business.

Maternal and Child Health is the promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative health care for mothers and children.

Opportunities to address effect of income and wealth on health

The idea of enacting policies to lift people out of poverty is neither new nor revolutionary. What is new however is awareness of the health implication of reducing the extent of economic disadvantage? Policies intended to increase income and wealth, especially among vulnerable populations (women and children) have been enacted and they are specially designed to improve economic resources for low income families particularly those with children which in turn will have a major impact on their health. Among programmes design included are job training, job creation and entrepreneurship programmes. Ekpu and Uduk (2015) listed the causes of maternal mortality to include; poverty, illiteracy, low status, early marriage, gender issues, low contraceptive use. Also nutritional status, poor obstetric cares were implicated in maternal mortality. It was also noted that the child may suffer and die from preventable childhood diseases because of the mother's low economic base. However, Lorva (2013) in Ekpu and Uruk (2015) mentioned the education of mothers to enable them undertake these measures that will protect them and their younger ones from infectious disease, improve and maintain personal hygiene and environmental sanitation to prevent maternal and child morbidity and mortality.

It was in consideration of this that Ekpu and Uduk (2015) recommended that women should be empowered to enable them overcome social, economic and cultural factors that limit their ability to make fully informed choices potentially in areas affecting the most intimate aspect of their lives and their reproductive health. A woman that is economically buoyant and stable would make informed choices with or without the husband especially in cases of emergency. On the other hand, the poor woman will always wait and depend solely on the husband even at the point of death.

Entrepreneurial education aims at making the women self-sufficient, self-reliant and independent. It will expose the women of reproductive age to be gainfully employed with recourse to government jobs and of course she will not remain an idle house wife who will not help in providing basic needs for self and family members. With entrepreneurial education and its attendant benefit, children in families will be properly nourished whether the father supplies or not as the mother will always be capable of filling in the gaps where they exist. In essence the woman has financial independence as an entrepreneur will always take

the right step at the right time in order to avoid some of the avoidable causes of maternal, infant and child mortality thereby promoting health.

Also, Afser (2012) noted that entrepreneurship education is an instrument for empowering women to improve their standard of living thereby improving their health. It is the starting point for women advancement in different fields of human endeavour. In fact, entrepreneurship education is a catalyst or spring board to every other form of empowerment (including social, political or economic) if women are educated they would have more self-confidence to take up position of authority and participate more meaningfully in national development. Education enable women to access equal job opportunities with their male counterparts, such job opportunities will improve the standard of living and health seeking behaviour of the women and their children. Girl child education promote gender equitable society which builds the self-worth of women and women's health, it also promotes the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women such as decrease access to resources, increased demand on their labour and time, female gender oppression violence, male preference, domination and feminization of poverty.

It is also noted by Adesakan (2011) in Afser (2012) that education of women in health is geared at the reduction of women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections through counseling on the use of condom, reduction in risky sexually behaviour, etc. Udofia (2015) highlighted that information and education and communication technology is another toll for women empowerment educationally because it creates opportunities for women to exchange information, gain access to online education, engage in electronic health services, electronic commerce activities this will help them to gain power and ability to make strategic life choices that will improve their health and the health of other family members and the society in general.

Entrepreneurship education will help to improve and promote maternal and child health through the following ways:

- Provision of gainful employment.
- Self-reliant, self-sufficient and independent and self-employment
- Manpower development through training others
- It will make them good planners and hardworking
- Enable them take leadership roles, make them become innovative
- Help them become relevant in the society through their ability to identify and satisfy the need of the consumers.
- Help to improve their income thereby improving the standard of living
- Help to improve national income for the country through payment of taxes and levies
- Helps to encourage creativity
- Reduce intensity of poverty in communities, societies and the country
- Improves maternal and child health and as well as reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality rate in the population.
- Contributes to industrialization of the economy, wealth generation, job creation and poverty alleviation.
- Reduce rural-urban migration with attendant risk.

Entrepreneurship Education and Skill Development Areas

Some of the skills listed for entrepreneurship education include poultry, fish farming, hair dressing, barbing, tailoring, beadwork, leather work, mental/smiting work, textile work-

weaving, embroidery, fashion design, dyeing, basketry, raffia craft, beautification work, decoration, cake making, catering, hat making, make up art, driving, photography/video coverage, electrical engineering, ICT courses, T-shirt production, bags, tarpaulin, home economics-child care, food/nutrition, clothing, textile designs and home management skills, etc.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship Education can be described as a training that stimulates learners to better their lives by generating value through the creation or expansion of economic activity, identification and exploiting new products, process or markets. One of the major means of improving and promoting maternal and child health, reducing morbidity and mortality in the population and promoting public health in general is through meaningful entrepreneurship education to improve the standard of living of women, children and other family members in the communities by creating employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship education is a necessary tool for reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality, thus improving the maternal and child health, this is on the premise that a woman who is economically and educationally empowered is in better position to make choices and decisions concerning her health and that of her children in health related circumstances or situations.

Recommendations

1. Every woman should be encouraged to venture into small or medium scale enterprise that could improve her access to income.
2. Government should encourage women to venture into business through the provision of loan with no interest and collaterals.
3. Women should be encouraged to form and join cooperatives enable access to information, education and communication or related issues.
4. Entrepreneurship education in schools at all levels should be implemented.
5. Seminars and workshops by stake holders should be organized to provide information and education to women of reproductive age.

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