



ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA: LEADERSHIP ROLE MODEL APPROACH

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Abstract

The rising trend of unemployment and poverty among the Nigerian youths in particular and the entire citizenry in general is increasing their aspiration to be self-employed through the formation of business enterprises to create jobs/ wealth not only for themselves but also for others. Unemployment and poverty are about the greatest problems confronting the Nigerian society today which unfortunately appears to be serving as the major driving forces of most crimes, conflict and insecurity threats associated with the nation's youths and young adults. Even though there are profuse works that fill the literature on the strategy of entrepreneurship development, there appears to be little work on the place of leadership role model and entrepreneurship development in the country. This work will therefore seek to examine the entrepreneurship development strategies in Nigeria through leadership role model approach. It adopts a survey approach methodology as its data collection technique while using control analysis as its analytical tool.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Development, Leadership, and Role Model.

Introduction

Unemployment and poverty especially among our young generation appears to be escalating every day in Nigeria. They are rising in a geometric progression to the extent that the country has of late been tagged the world capital of poverty. The negative trend unfortunately has been observed by many as the major driving forces of armed banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, insurgency and all kinds of crimes and conflicts in this nation.

The above view is corroborated by Maidoki and Ochi (2012); when they state that despite all the abundant natural and human resources bestowed upon Nigeria as a nation by God Almighty, her economy has in the past ten years continued to witness downward growth which is serving as the root causes that is triggering most crimes in the land. According to them, the country is endowed with rich agricultural, abundant mineral and human potentials that can position her as a world power economically but which are however being undermined by corruption and a lot of inconsistencies in policies of the government. The country therefore can rise above the prevailing economic downturn given the right leadership and direction. It is against the backdrop that this work seeks to examine the leadership model approach as an instrument in fostering entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship promotion appears to be the way forward in evolving a Nigeria that can rise above her ugly ranking as the world capital of the World. Maidoki and Ochi



(2012) put the above view pointedly when they posit that one of the ways to reduce the unemployment and poverty rate in Nigeria and invariably reduce the rate of crime and conflicts all over the nation is by promoting entrepreneurship. However, several approach by the government to foster entrepreneurship has not yielded the much desired result of breaking the poverty level in the land due to our lopsided educational system as well as leadership gap on the side of parents, government and non-governmental bodies. There is therefore a need for paradigmatic shift in evolving a leadership that would not only provide theoretical learning on entrepreneurial development but should also walk the talk by providing entrepreneurship footprint or mentorship which should serve as launching pad for future entrepreneurs. Parents, government and organizations should form a synergy in not only promoting entrepreneurship education they should equally partner in ensuring that a greater number of our people are led into entrepreneurship life by precepts and practice.

Theoretical Framework

This work is premised on the idea of an unknown author who states *inter alia*: “The poor do not need charity more than inspiration. Charity only sends them a loaf of bread to keep them alive in their wretchedness or give them an entertainment to make them forget for an hour or two but inspiration can cause them to rise out of their misery and take action to change their lives.” When people are inspired adequately divinely, parentally, politically or by society they can risk out to change or grow society by bringing about innovative and powerful entities into existence. Schumpeter puts the above view clearly when he states that the people that drive the society entrepreneurially are people of innovation and power. According to Schumpeter entrepreneurship are born through “Atavistic” will to achieve power. They are generation of people driven by the motivations which maybe intrinsically or extrinsically based. They are intrinsic when they are divinely endowed. Extrinsic motivation or inspirations comes from outside and are driven by the leadership force of the society, parentage, government, culture or institutions of learning.

Maidoki and Ochi (2002:21) are in agreement to the above view when they cited Deut. 8:18 as subscribing to the view that God is the one who gives people power to create wealth. By power to create wealth they describe same to mean creativity, divine illumination or ideas, special abilities, talent to manufacture or produce what God did not create originally but put inside you. It is therefore, the power to create product and services which can be exchanged for money as a reward. Developing creative and imaginative capacity that can be unleashed as entrepreneurial force in curbing poverty and unemployment in the country should therefore not be seen as the sole responsibility of universities and institutions of higher learning but as multi-sectoral and multi-institutional responsibility that should embrace government and non-governmental bodies.



Clarification of Concept

The key words that are relevant to better understanding of the above subject matter would be defined. Those words are entrepreneurship, development and leadership.

Entrepreneurship: The word entrepreneurship according to Hornby (2005) as cited in Onoh, Orga and Abraham (2015) is the ability to organize a business undertaking and assume the risk for the sake of profit. It relates to the art of bearing reasonable risks that are grounded in the motivation of establishing and managing an enterprise with the view of profit making. On the other hand Peter Drucker as cited by Haizkoeta (2020) defines an entrepreneur as one who always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity. Furthermore, he posits that it has to do with the exploitation of innovation as a platform for evolving a different business or service. It is therefore a change agent that employs the instrument of innovation and risk to create a profitable enterprise.

Development: According to Todaro and Smith (2003) the term development relates to “the whole gamut of changes by which an entire social system tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory towards a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better. In his own contribution Inmpey (2019 :106) defines the above term as relating to the degree of the quantitative and qualitative indices that drives society forward in modern times. Furthermore, he notes that those indices embrace but are not limited to the following: institutional, social and administrative structures as well as social behaviour and attitudes of people which are grounded in their customs and beliefs. The word development as used in this context has to do with continuous engagement in the deployment of those variables namely social, economic, educational, political, technological, cultural, religious and infrastructural resources that help to foster better living for both the individuals and the society. It is the positive evolution of individuals, groups and the societies in such a way that desirable and enriching growth are recorded in a sustainable way.

Leadership: The word leadership is defined by an on-line dictionary as the action of leading a group of people or an organization. Leadership according to Montgomery as cited in Leadership definitions by scholars is defined as the capacity and will to rally people to a common purpose together with the character that inspires confidence and trust. In his own contribution Harry Truman, the thirty third President of the United States, the term relates to an individual or group role is to persuade to do what they want to do, or what they are lazy to do, and like it. On its own the United States Air Force defines leadership as the art of influencing and directing people in such a way that will win their obedience, confidence, respect and loyal cooperation in achieving common objectives. Bill Gates



equally added his own perspective of the above term when he states that a leaders of the future are those who will be prepared to empower others. The word leadership from the foregoing relates to the creators of our collective and desirable future using the instruments of communication, control, competence, inspiration, reward and shared vision and objectives. They are the mid-wives that enable individuals and groups to unleash or give birth and tangibility to shared aspirations and dreams. It is against this backdrop that Parents, Schools, Churches, Government and Non- Governmental organizations are expected be vanguards or at the front burner position of evolving entrepreneurial future for the majority of our young and poverty driven Nigerians.

Parental leadership Model

Parental should form the bedrock on which children's lives evolves into social, spiritual, intellectual, political, economic, entrepreneurial and relational maturity. This truth is captured succinctly by the wise man Solomon when he states as follows:

“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it”. (Prov. 22)

The above view was equally echoed by Pauline theology when he submits that parents should bring their children up. (Ephesians 6:4). A bringing up which by implication demand all round training or education. Parents should therefore strive to fill the gap of entrepreneurship or innovative learning in their wards so as to release them to society and God creation of enterprise who would partner with other on expanding the wealth base of the earth.

To teach and model entrepreneurship culture in their young generation they must first learn same and applying their skills to their culture. This is necessary because Apostle Mark in summarizing the role of a Master Teacher states as follows “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1). A teacher must therefore practice what he teaches to be qualified as a good teacher. Parenting must not end at teaching our children morals and rules of good behaviour, they should evolve economic skills they should bequeath to their young ones so that with or without university education or certificate they can create wealth that would secure their economic future.

Unfortunately, today most Nigerian parent would pay millions to ensure their wards acquire highest educational certificates which in many cases cannot be deployed into self-employment or wealth creation outside government paid jobs. While formal education beyond the boundaries of informal learning provided by parents are vital in unveiling of one's gifts and potentials in destiny, parents must be made to recognize that the foundation



for the space their children occupies in the map of economic or wealth power in the life are laid early in life.

Early exposure and sensitization are therefore fundamental in evolving adults who have strong bent towards entrepreneurship and wealth creation. Parents no doubt should serve as the soil and manure upon which such lifestyle is built. They should do so by ensuring that they learn skills which are made very attractive to their children to the extent that they can easily take them up as profession to build their economic future. This is even very commendable as research has shown that no formal education is required to become an entrepreneur in most cases. The urge to ensure that their children acquire all known degrees and certificate should not serve as an impediment in positioning them to the environment or atmosphere where they develop entrepreneurial skill or capacities that can be converted by them to self-employable skill.

Family Leadership Role

According to Bindah (2017) studies have shown that families plays a fostering role in advancing growth in development of career in entrepreneurship. Dyer & Handler (1994) and Dyer (1992) are in agreement to the above view when they posits that there are various ways such as early experiences in the entrepreneur's family of origin, family support and involvement in the initial take of young entrepreneurs, engagement of family members as employees or part of the ownership or management team.

The above is corroborated by Union (2020) when he states that families exploit their entrepreneurial capacities to create economic value and social impact using their businesses and other ventures as vehicle. Furthermore, he posits that according to a report 75% of entrepreneurs in 48 economies around the world holds the view that their family was involved in starting their business either as co- managers or co-owners. What this means is that in addressing the problems of high level of poverty in Nigeria the family must be sensitized to play a frontline role in unleashing future entrepreneurs that would enlarge our wealth creating capacity.

The Church Leadership Model

The religious community should not limit itself to a moral propagating community. In as much as the church should serve as a light bearer to the world by promoting righteousness and condemning evil and wicked lifestyle it must rise above the temptation to preach only ethical gospel. It must embrace the whole gospel which is the gospel for the body, soul and spirit. While Jesus bidding followers to feed my sheep has to do with providing spiritual food for their soul, it was not meant to stop at level. They were equally demand to provide clothing for the naked, food for the hungry, shelter to the homeless and hope to the



hopeless. It was in the context of the above responsibility that Jesus once asked him to feed about four thousand hungry adults excluding their women and children in the desert after they had stayed for three days without food. In their amazement they stated that the crowd was too much in number to be feed and beside it was almost an impossibility raising money to buy enough food to feed them there and then. Yet in reacting to their lack of faith he demands for what they have so that it was serve as raw material to access what they didn't have. In divine economy preachers or the religious leaders should strive to care for both the body and the soul of their flock. This was the lesson of the feeding of the four thousand by Christ in the desert (Luke 8:1-9). People need than salvation from sin they equally need provision for the keeping of their bodies and souls together. This is where the church leadership must strive to provide economic or wealth creating capacities for her membership. They should provide entrepreneurship education that is not only in theory based but also is practice driven. The church must expand the world of her congregation by being wealth creating agents. One of the ways they could do this is by deploying her wealthy members and industrialists as partners in economic/entrepreneurial mentorship transformation of her young generation. They can be deployed to serve as mentor to train the young ones or serve as financial sponsors for loans with the church serving as guarantor.

3) Political Leadership Model

According to Shelton, political will or power plays very influential role in making or marring entrepreneurial development in a society depending on their commitment or otherwise to the role of creating a business-friendly environment. This is because in his opinion a business –friendly environment is one of the strongest incentives that a community can offer an existing or new business. In other words, political leadership plays vital role in attracting or repelling businesses and entrepreneurial growth of a society by ensuring that such critical cost such as the factors of production namely land, labour and capital as well as other costs such as social infrastructure are favourable to business community.

Unfortunately, Nigerian has continued to be run by the political class whose major focus in governance is greed and the shameless looting of public treasury for their selfish interests. The result is that instead of developing public infrastructures and institutions that foster economic growth they rather focus on money laundering and corrupt leadership that divert billions of naira into their personal account. Political leadership instead of engaging in their constitutionally assigned role of creating and sustaining enabling environment that promote wealth creation for the teaming majority they end up building empires for themselves and their children by ensuring that most people are perpetually trapped in the web of intellectual, political, economic and vocational poverty. unlike what obtains in highly developed nations where the engine of economic power are fuelled by private



entrepreneurship Nigerian government have continued to make it very difficult for ordinary citizen to see entrepreneurship as attractive route to economic power since access to political power instead of industry and hard work has been made the quickest route to money power in the country. The ugly scenario is captured by view that 10% of our citizenry which is occupied by our political class are controlling the 90% of our commonwealth leaving the remaining 10% to be shared by 90% of our people. Okuwobi (2021) makes the corroborates the above pointedly when he states that whereas it takes a minimum wage earner in United Kingdom 5 years to earn the same salary of a member of their parliament on the other hand it will take 82 years for the same person in Nigeria to earn the salary of a senator. No society develops when her leadership robs her people through institutions that denies and destroys their rightful stake in their collective patrimony.

4) Industrial Giants Leadership Model

Industrial giants in the country must show leadership role in the promotion of entrepreneurship in Nigeria by investing in the incubating fortune and innovators and entrepreneur, they can do this by regulating poorly their resource together to host talents hunt in the form of potential youth with promising entrepreneurship ideas and skill that can be developed or sponsored or researched further for assessment of its feasibility or viability. This becomes necessary as most leading industrial power of the world are known for wasting heavily on growing fresh marketable, ideas and services through emphasis on research and development instead of converting most of their revenue for sponsoring politician who in most cases add little or nothing to the economic growth of the nation, government should rather encourage or mandate industrial giants including multinational companies within the nation to reserve a certain percentage of their revenue as grants or soft loans viable young entrepreneurs. This would not only encourage competitive spirit among our youth it will equally help to take off their minds from criminal and unprofitable activities like drug trade, prostitution and armed banditry.

Conclusion

The work identified that poverty has remained a recurring decimal among the myriads of problems ravaging our country which unfortunately is expanding the coast insecurity and other social vices. Consequently, it has argued that in spite of various approach by the government drive the nation forward economically it has unfortunately remained on a cyclical motion instead. It is against this backdrop that this work called for a paradigm shift in our quest for economic turnaround by advocating for the adoption of leadership role model approach as our entrepreneurship development strategy. The following dimensions of leadership namely parental/family, church, political and industrial highlighted as possible anchors or arrow heads that could drive the model or foundation



for mobilizing a greater number of our citizenry into entrepreneurship ventures that would drive them out of poverty.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made as possible entrepreneurship development strategies in dealing with unending poverty challenges in Nigeria.

- 1) Family education and training of the young generation must be defined to embrace both ethical and moral education as well as vocational or entrepreneurship learning. Parents should prepare their children early to think entrepreneurially so that formal education becomes consolidator grounds for them.
- 2) Institutions of Higher Learning should develop such specialty courses as Family Values Education so to generate experts who will teach them as compulsory courses from the cradle to our tertiary level of education. This has become necessary as great economies are usually grounded on great core families needed for running and sustaining great family businesses.
- 3) Political leadership should set the pace in promoting family values as well as vocational or entrepreneurial culture by making it mandatory for the space to be filled with people who show strong evidence of the above qualities. To grow strong economy our political class must be groomed to develop family consciousness that transcends their immediate blood and ethnic lines to embrace the nation as one family whose role like our physical parents it is to provide for their children. They should repent from hating their God given children, the majority of Nigerian poor and unemployed and underemployed young population through dangerous looting of public treasury as well as the entrenchment of socio-political and economic structure that sentence the citizenry to everlasting poverty. Instead of making America, Britain and other advanced nations as their safety net or place of hiding and enjoying their ill-gotten wealth our leaders should invest African's wealth to develop Africa. They should invest our resources on industrial, technological educational, agricultural, communication, electricity, road network and health care services development amongst others.
- 4) Industrial giants must be compelled by government to invest entrepreneurship fund for indigent Nigerians from where government can generate fund to give grant on regular basis to selected upcoming entrepreneurs.



- 5) Government should encourage families to set up businesses by providing incentives and tax holidays for those who are engaging their family members as directors and co- owners. By so doing they will be helping to enhance the succession rates of such businesses even when their founders are no more.
- 6) Theological education should integrate vocational and entrepreneurship courses in their curriculum so that beyond being the moulders of moral values of her congregation the religious community should equally contribute in providing vocational direction to her citizenry.

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