



REPOSITIONING UNIVERSITY EDUCATION THROUGH INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Repositioning is the process by which transformation occurs in an organization through innovation. Repositioning university education is the process of changing the perspective of education at the university level. University education is an important contribution to the growth and development of a nation in terms of human resource development and boosting the nation's economy. The aim of it is to make their university products useful to themselves and society, be sellable in the labour market and be able to compete globally. The importance of repositioning university education is to remain relevant in a changing world, to show students that the university has something others do not have and are therefore irreplaceable. It seems that this notion is not taken seriously in improving Nigeria's economy. This paper focuses on identifying the means through which university education in Nigeria can be repositioned. The problems that work against achieving the repositioning of university education includes inadequate provision of financial assistance, non-existence of suitable technology to improve learning, lack of adequate planning, etc. The paper concluded that repositioning university education will lead to a great turn around for the university, the society, and the labour market, locally and internationally and to produce skilled manpower for desiring institutions and organizations. Out of burning innovative ideas and critical thinking, the university will be able to achieve its goals and objectives. It was suggested that improving research efforts for the development and repositioning of the university should be encouraged; team effort on the part of administrators, staff, and students to ensure repositioning is successful.

Keywords: *Repositioning, University Education, Innovation, Entrepreneurship*

Introduction

University education in Nigeria seems to have needed reformation and repositioning for a long while. This research aims at enlightening the public on the need for repositioning university education in Nigeria. Repositioning is the process by which transformation occurs in an organization through innovation. Repositioning university education is the process of changing the perspective of education at the university level. University education is an important contributing factor to the growth and development of a nation in terms of human resource development and boosting the nation's economy. The aim of it is to make their university products useful to themselves and society, be sellable in the labour market and be able to compete globally in the 21st century. Repositioning is the process of transforming a situation by bringing in changes in the norm. The repositioning process in universities involves changing the usual process that the university carries out its activities so that more effective results can be produced. The importance of repositioning university education is to remain relevant in a changing world, to show students that the university has something others do not have and are therefore irreplaceable. To ensure you surpass the competing universities' standards, to obtain recognition far and wide so more people will be interested in partnering with your university.

Concept of Education

Education is the fundamental factor for the development and as such, investing in human development through education cannot be overemphasized (Mbahan, 2021). Effective education is a learning experience that brings about an inherent and permanent change in a person's thinking and capacity to do things (Rumun, 2021). Education has often been described as the bedrock for the national development of every nation. It is also the process of teaching and training in schools for the development of knowledge and skills, preparing the individual for functional living in society. Nguper (2022) suggests that education is a process in which and by which the knowledge, characters and behaviour of human beings are shaped and moulded. Education makes man a

right thinker and a correct decision-maker, which means it exposes man to think extensively and critically. Fanen (2021) argues that education, as provided for in various constitutions and international conventions is supposed to be a fundamental human right that should be the responsibility of government. Nguseer (2022) maintains that education is the vehicle through which the human societies preserve, sustain and transfer their cultural values and ideals for the growth and development of the society; to improve the standard of living of the society. Ngo (2020) added that all forms of educational activities are geared towards ensuring the attainment of identified social goals. Education is the process of facilitating knowledge through the transfer of skills, values, beliefs, and habits under the guidance of educators through the learners may also educate themselves in a process called autodidactic training. Ngo also maintained that education is the acquisition of knowledge planned or unplanned which enhances the all-round development of human potentials for the good of the individuals and his general society.

Innovation

Innovation means improving on an existing situation using knowledge and research obtained from observing that situation. Innovation can be defined as a "new method, custom, or device – a change in the way of doing things"; in other words, a successful introduction of a new way or method. Ternenge (2021) cited in Hembafan (2022) said that innovation is derived from a Latin word: "innovatus" meaning „altered? (to make change). Educational innovation is a deliberate identification application of ideas, information, imagination, and initiative in deriving greater values and result. Kator (2021), Innovation is seen as "Implementation" of new and improved knowledge, ideas, methods, process tools, equipment, and machinery which leads to new, better products, services and processes. Ketura (2023) of Stanford thinks that innovation is the key because it involves design thinking - an approach to problem solving that combines insights, ideas, and tools from the fields of engineering, design, arts, and social sciences. It is the process whereby, a new product is made available, spread through the system and infused into other operating practices.

Entrepreneurship education encourages students to dig deep in their minds and create new ideas that will help them stick out in the workforce. Therefore, entrepreneurship brings about innovation. When innovation occurs in the field of education, it is referred to as educational innovation. This simply means a change in education. It includes all changes made in an educational system. Therefore, educational innovation is a change made in an established way of doing something in the field of education or education-related matters. In higher education, innovation helps to create new methods for learning in interdisciplinary faculties, to save time and make it easier for students and lecturers in a conducive environment. At present, innovation-driven development strategies place new demands on entrepreneurship education. An in-depth study of the mechanism of entrepreneurship education, which drives innovation and development, can further improve the research on entrepreneurship education (Seember, 2021; Iorwuese, 2022).

Importance of Innovation to Universities include the following

- (a) Encouraging self-dependence and creativity amongst students
- (b) Encouraging the use of technology and Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the university to develop existing manual practices
- (c) Introducing well-needed changes to the university education that benefits students and staff

Characteristics of an Innovative University

- i. Availability of well formulated plans that will accommodate the innovation and repositioning of the school.
- ii. The use of e-learning and the digital revolution of the university system to support entrepreneurship education.
- iii. Availability of different options of entrepreneurship practice so they can have diverse skills.
- iv. Innovated teaching tactics to influence student's creativity.
- v. Ability to organizing meetings with different schools, businesses, individuals, etc who can share their knowledge with students.

Entrepreneurship

An entrepreneur is an individual who creates and runs a business with the aim of making profit. The entrepreneur has to bear the risks of the business but will benefit from the profits he obtains. Entrepreneurship education is a tool for battling unemployment and poverty in a country. An entrepreneur is someone who starts a side-hustle that can eventually create a full-time sustainable business with employees: Entrepreneurs see possibilities and solutions where the average person only sees annoyances and problem (Tifini, 2021). Entrepreneurship is a process which is creating long lasting solutions to poverty alleviation since it is a key driver to economic growth and development (Mikiella, 2022). An environment that provides for entrepreneurship education must train the mind of students to use their creativity and acquired knowledge to adapt to the workforce after graduating. This human resource space is to have ideal educational environment for producing individuals with the mind-set of self-reliance, creativity, and high productivity in order to cope with the 21st century world of work. Entrepreneurial competence, which is important for success, mainly refers to the ability to identify opportunities and develop the necessary resources and capital (Gire, 2021), in addition to technical, financial, and legal knowledge (Ahua, 2021). Student entrepreneurs use multi-party interaction to achieve knowledge iteration in the learning network; the innovation process is the result of interactions among the environment, organization, and entrepreneurs. Academic entrepreneurship was originated in the second half of the 1950s. The founders of academic entrepreneurship are the USA. At the same time, this type of activity was not encouraged in the beginning. It was believed that academic entrepreneurship distracted academics from the main activity - education.

However, due to the reduction in public funding for education in the mid-1970s, this type of activity began to be viewed in the academic community as one of the ways to generate income and attract students. Pinga (2022) asserted that entrepreneurship embraces talents and skills that teachers in conventional classrooms might otherwise penalize. Such knowledge will adequately equip the students to be more effective

in the 21st century Nigeria characterized with science and technology and raise a generation of people who can think for themselves and respect the dignity of labour and equally propel its citizenry into blossom economic, Adzever (2021). An entrepreneur is one who with the motive of taking advantage of the financial opportunities, potential and personal fulfillment available, shape his / her own destiny in local, national, and global economy (Bua, 2021). Bua also asserts that it involves exploring, analyzing, evaluating exploiting business opportunities and rigorously pursuing such opportunities to a successful end which eventually culminates in the opening of a business enterprise. Entrepreneurship is a process of synthesizing and building something of value from nothing, creation and distribution of something of value and of great importance to individuals? persons, groups, organizations and the society at large.

Tor-anyiin (2021), believes that education should produce self-reliance, job creators and not job seekers; it equips the individual for creative problem solving and innovation. It involves creating something new with skills and ideas, such things must have quality, which leads to more wealth creation and human satisfaction. It is also the perception to change combination of initiatives, innovations, risky adventures and wealth creation, through business dreams, visions, and ideas to transform a dynamic process into an economic viable entity (Chiahemen, 2020).

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education involves teaching and learning of needed skills and knowledge to equip one to become self-reliant through being an effective and successful initiator, manager, innovator and risk-bearer of business undertaking (Obida, 2021). Entrepreneurship education is concerned with fostering creative skills that can be applied in practices, education, and environments supporting innovation. Ngo, (2020) argues that entrepreneurship education is aimed to achieve the qualitative knowledge. Ngo went further to say that entrepreneurship is the acquisition of necessary skills matched with innovativeness, creativity, boldness, confidence, drive, energy, and courage to be able to create employment for

self and for others. Entrepreneurship education is the kind of education given to people with a view to developing entrepreneurship qualities properly followed up with support services to take off and successful meaning of business (Suur, 2022). Entrepreneurship education if integrated into school's administration may create school environments which in the opinion of Ijingi (2020) can help in fostering the spirit of enterprise among students and in solving the difficulties experienced in securing jobs among young Nigerians. Also entrepreneurship education is the process of professional application of knowledge, attitude, skills and competences; it seeks to provide students especially those in tertiary school(s) with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneur studies in a variety of setting.

Entrepreneurship education refers to all activities aimed at fostering entrepreneurial mind sets, attitudes as well as covering a range of aspects such as idea generation, start up, growth and innovation, it is learning directed towards developing in young people those skills, competencies, understandings, and attributes which will equip them to be innovative, and training them to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal or community business and work opportunities, including working for themselves. Entrepreneurship education therefore is the education that provides training, experience and skills that prepare people with entrepreneurship knowledge, competence, and skills needed to be self-reliant, (Pinky, 2022).

Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education to Nigeria Economy

A number of benefits in entrepreneurship education have been advanced; these include:

- (i) **Provision of employment opportunities:** Entrepreneurial activities boost employment opportunities and reduce the number of job seekers. Consequently, many idle youths are actively engaged undertaking one economic activity or the other.
- (ii) **Effective resource utilization:** In this regard, the entrepreneur utilizes natural resources thereby attracting resources from less productive sectors to more productive areas.
- (iii) **Equitable distribution of income and wealth:** Entrepreneurial activities in the rural

areas create new jobs thereby increasing local incomes and raising the quality of life in the rural communities. Such entrepreneurial activities effectively connect the rural communities to the larger urban dwellers.

- (iv) **Facilitation of technological transfer/adaptation:** Opportunities for developing and adapting appropriate technological approaches are provided by entrepreneurs. This facilitates the absorption of all kinds of workers- skill, semi-skilled and unskilled.
- (v) **Fostering entrepreneurship** As the world keeps growing and changing, new ideas are leading to new experiments that are revolutionizing the world as we know it. There is now a need to adopt entrepreneurship in universities so students will not be left behind in the changing world. The youth are the future of tomorrow and the university can be a guide as to how they use their knowledge to change the world. Universities should cooperate with private companies or individuals who can advance their knowledge or fund their research.
- (vi) **Building an environment where creative thinking is encouraged.** Promoting acceptance of diverse ideas and opinions. Doing away with nepotism and sectionalism. Improving the use of technology in practice and study

Importance of Entrepreneurship:

- (a) Entrepreneurship makes an employment opportunity which reduces the rate of unemployment in a county.
- (b) Entrepreneurship makes room for new ideas and creativity in business
- (c) It encourages job seekers to be self - dependent and start their own businesses
- (d) Increase in a country's economic growth as a result of more entrepreneurs
- (e) Entrepreneurship education helps students develop skills that help them become self - dependent.
- (f) It teaches students skills they can use on the side the workplace such as cooking, public speaking, fast typing, teamwork, punctuality, etc.
- (g) Teach students to adapt to a changing environment and help students change

society for the better.

Problems Nigerian Universities Face when Attempting to Achieve Repositioning

- i. Universities that lack adequate funding have a hard time providing facilities that students and staff need to learn effectively.
- ii. Universities do not train students on how to survive the workforce after graduating.
- iii. The non-existence of suitable technology to improve learning.
- iv. Lack of adequate planning in managing the university.
- v. Students are being admitted to a faculty they did not initially choose thus leading to difficulty in assimilation or disinterest in the study.
- vi. Lack of skilled academic staff and school administrators drive the university away from innovation.
- vii. Lack of teacher training programs, workshops or seminars that could help teachers be more innovative
- viii. Bribery and corruption in the university system
- ix. Some staffs are not willing to change as the university demands for innovative practices.
- x. Misallocation of resources to staff and activities that do not contribute to the innovation of the university.
- xi. Sectionalism and nepotism in the university.
- xii. Unqualified leaders in charge of managing the university.

Conclusion

This paper concluded that repositioning university education will lead to a great turn around for the university, the society and the labour market. It will produce skilled manpower for competition. Out of burning innovative ideas and critical thinking, the university will be able to achieve its goals and objectives.

Suggestions

It was suggested that improving research efforts for development and repositioning of the university should be encouraged; team effort on the part of administrators, staff and students to ensure repositioning is successful. The following measures can also be adopted:

- 1. The organization of seminars/ workshops,

meetings, webinars, etc that talk on the importance and necessity of entrepreneurship education to students and society.

2. Universities should promote the competitive spirit among the staff and students.
3. Universities should screen all lecturers to ensure they are qualified to teach students properly.
4. Development of the university's standard of teaching, infrastructure, and regular maintenance of facilities to attract high standard students and lectures
5. Universities should rid themselves of sectionalism and discrimination. They should promote teamwork, good sportsmanship, and unity even in competition.
6. Universities should focus on the needs of staff and students.
7. Universities should encourage students to study different areas of life to acquire knowledge that makes them different from the average students.
8. Set an objective for what the university wants to achieve per semester or academic

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