

Topic 1: Entrepreneurship: Concept and Meaning

1. Who is an entrepreneur

The nature of entrepreneurship implies several images and meanings. An entrepreneur is a person who has possession of an enterprise, or venture, and assumes significant accountability for the inherent risks and the outcome of the enterprise. Entrepreneurs are individuals who notice opportunities and take responsibility for mobilizing the resources necessary to produce new and improved goods and services. In other words, entrepreneurs start new business venture and do all the planning, organising, leading and controlling necessary to meet organizational goals. Entrepreneurs are the owners of the business who contribute the capital and bear the risk of uncertainties in business life. He organizes, manages, assumes the risks and takes the decisions about the enterprise. The entrepreneur as one who creates a new business in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of achieving profit and growth by identifying significant opportunities and assembling the necessary resources to capitalize on them. An entrepreneur is someone who always searches for change, respond to it and exploits it as an opportunity.

2. The Concept of Entrepreneurship

The process of performing the roles of an entrepreneur is called entrepreneurship. Thus, we may define entrepreneurship as the process by which individuals pursue opportunities without regard to resources they currently control. It is also the art of turning an idea into a business. Kuratko (2008), defines entrepreneurship as a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion toward the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Essential ingredients include the willingness to take calculated risks in terms of time, equity or career, the ability to formulate an effective venture team; the creative skill to marshal needed resources; the fundamental skill of building a solid business plan; and finally, the vision to recognize opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion.

Entrepreneurship is the seemingly discontinuous process of combining resources to produce new goods or services. It is the mobilization of resources to take advantage of an opportunity to provide customers with new or improved goods and services. Bateman and Snell (2011) define entrepreneurship as a situation when an enterprising individual pursues a lucrative opportunity. Entrepreneurship is defined as the willingness and ability of an individual (or a group of individuals) to seek out investment opportunities, especially through innovation, establish and run the enterprise successfully. While there are several definitions of entrepreneurship, the central ideas of the concept incorporates uncertainty and risk taking, innovation, perception and change. It is a process where an individual, solely or in cooperation with others, identify opportunities and transform them into the creation of a business venture. It is also the process of being self employed by owning a small business and managing it for growth. Entrepreneurship is also defined as "a process in which individuals pursue opportunities, fulfilling needs and wants through innovation together with the attendant risks". Entrepreneurship is an important means and strategy of creating jobs and improving livelihood and economic independence of young people. Entrepreneurship development is today identified as the panacea to the problem of high unemployment and poverty among young, educated people in Nigeria and many African countries.

Certainly, entrepreneurship is a vehicle through which individuals can channel their entrepreneurial capabilities such as knowledge creativity, innovation and resilience to enable them participate in economic activities by the establishment of their own businesses. It is also a process, a journey and not the destination; it is a means to an end. Entrepreneurship should therefore not be equated with new micro and small business development only because it also involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking and these must be part and parcel of an entrepreneurship development programme. Entrepreneurship is strategy therefore not synonymous with small business. It is not limited to persons starting or operating a small business. It is more than a functional: or creating new businesses, but a general attitude, a way of thinking, a concept of life that can be usefully applied by everyone in daily life.

3. Basic features of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is about innovation, creativity dynamism, resourcefulness, self-motivation, risk taking, endurance, ingenuity, etc. which can result in the creation of business ventures. The impact of entrepreneurship is not limited to start-up ventures; it can be applied by an individual as employee to innovate in the public, private and non-profit organizations, large firms and public agencies. Entrepreneurship involves the inculcation of a range of skills and attributes, including the ability to think creatively, work in teams, manage risks and handle uncertainty. It also involves changing mindsets which starts from being educated and runs through the running of enterprises. It is to help young people and of course students to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake. It increases the chances of start-ups towards self-employment and enhances individuals' economic reward and satisfaction. These features of entrepreneurship are what students who are taught entrepreneurship are expected to acquire.

Based on the various definitions and meanings of the concept of entrepreneurship provided above, there are certain features that can be identified as a guide in providing a clear appreciation of the requirements for successful entrepreneurship as an employment generation approach. Such features include:

- (i) Identification of unmet needs and wants.
- (ii) Idea conceptualization.
- (iii) Creativity and innovation.
- (iv) Risk-taking.
- (v) Ability to organize and coordinate resources.
- (vi) Team spirit and leadership.

All the above features must be built around entrepreneurship education for it to be successful and sustainable. Therefore, the focus of entrepreneurship must be that of encouraging or motivating individuals through the development of their entrepreneurial skills and competencies, thereby leading to the establishment of micro and small businesses as an approach to generating employment and alleviating poverty.

4. Characteristics of Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship is characterized by the following features, hence entrepreneurs are expected to display these characteristics

1. Drive and Energy: Entrepreneurs are more energetic than the average person. They possess the capacity to work for long hours of several days with less than a normal amount of sleep. Long hours and hard work are the rule rather than the exception, and the pace can be grueling.

2. Self-confidence: Entrepreneurs typically have an abundance of confidence in their abilities to achieve the goals they set and confident that they chose the correct career path. They also believe that events in their lives are mainly self-determined.

3. Long term involvement: Entrepreneurship is hard work, and launching a company successfully requires total commitment from an entrepreneur. They make a commitment to a long-term project and they work towards goals that may be quite distant in the future. Business founders often immerse themselves completely in their companies.

4. Innovation: Entrepreneurship involves a continuous search for new ideas. It also involves continuously evaluating existing modes of business operations so that more efficient and effective systems can be evolved and adopted. This brings about innovation.

5. Risk bearing: The essence of entrepreneurship is the willingness to bear risk arising out of the creation and implementation of new ideas. Between the period an idea is conceived and the implementation of the idea and its results, the entrepreneur has to assume some risks.

6. Profit potential: Profit is the likely compensation for the entrepreneur for taking the risk of investigating and developing an idea into an actual business venture.

7. Persistent problem solving: Entrepreneurs possess an intense level of determination and desire to overcome hurdles, solve a problem and complete the job while successfully building new enterprises. They are not intimidated by difficult situations.

8. Goal setting: Entrepreneurs have the ability and commitment to set goals that are both measurable and attainable for themselves. These goals tend to be high and challenging, but they are realistic and attainable. Entrepreneurs are doers, they are goal and action-oriented individuals. Entrepreneurs are motivated by a high need for achievement.

8. Dealing with failure: Entrepreneurs do not fear failure. Anybody who is afraid of failing will cancel whatever achievement motivation he or she possesses. From the point of view of entrepreneur, failing is an opportunity to learn from.

9. Desire for immediate feedback: Entrepreneurs like the challenge of doing a business and they want to know how far they are doing in terms of performance. The use of feedback enables entrepreneurs to assess/take stock of their performance with the aim of improving on it.

10. Taking initiative and seeking personal responsibility: Entrepreneurs feel a deep sense of personal responsibility for the outcome of businesses they start. They willingly put themselves in situations where they personally take responsibility for the success or failure of the business. They prefer to use available resources to achieve self-determined goals and also want to be in charge of their resources.

14. Tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty: Entrepreneurs tend to have a high tolerance for ambiguous ever-changing situations, the environment in which they most often operate. This ability to handle uncertainty is critical because these business builders constantly make decisions using new, sometimes conflicting information gleaned from a variety of unfamiliar sources.

The above characteristics are not by any means exhaustive.

5. Why Entrepreneurship Education in Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary education is the education given after secondary education. It is referred to as third level education which is the educational level following the completion of secondary education or an academic pursuit undertaken after secondary education. It is any type of education pursued beyond the high school level. The World Bank defined tertiary education as including universities, as well as institutions that teach specific capabilities of higher learning such as tertiary colleges, technical training institutes, nursing schools, research laboratories, centres of excellence and distant learning centres. Tertiary education generally leads to the receipt or award of certificates, diplomas or academic degrees. In Nigeria, tertiary education includes education received at universities, polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education. These institutions are commonly called higher institutions.

It is an urgent mechanism designed to inform youths about the world of business and opportunities to create their own businesses. It aims at helping youths to realistically consider the option of starting small businesses after higher education rather than waiting endlessly for paid employment which is now very limited and scarce. It is a way of introducing youths to the basic elements of business start-up and management.

Given the high unemployment rate, there is generally a commitment on the part of the government to promote entrepreneurship from secondary school to the tertiary level as a viable career option. This is to ensure that educated youths who are unable to secure paid employment can promptly consider the idea of self-employment as a way out. It is therefore necessary for students in tertiary institutions to appreciate the opportunity they have in being taught entrepreneurship along with their core courses.

The specific objectives of entrepreneurship education to students are to:

- (i) help students realistically consider the option of starting a small business or self-employment after graduation as a viable option for employment;
- (ii) make youths and of course students appreciate the essence of business, which is finding human needs and filling them;

(iii) inform students about the world of business and opportunities to create their own businesses now and after graduation;

(iv) stimulate students in adopting entrepreneurship as a career and making them to identify and exploit opportunities successfully for new ventures;

(v) enable students tap effectively on the entrepreneurial skills they are endowed with and the education and training they acquired to enable them muster the needed confidence and get prepared mentally and psychologically for the world of business

(vi) Introduce students to the basic elements and requirements for starting and managing a new business venture.