Rejuvenation of Ceramics in Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Rivers State.

By

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Abstract

This article explores the critical initiative of integrating ceramics into entrepreneurship education within universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. It underscores the multifaceted benefits of this integration, ranging from economic revitalisation to cultural preservation. By tapping into the region's rich cultural heritage, ceramics education offers students practical skills aligned with contemporary demands while fostering entrepreneurship and job creation. Amid global economic upheavals, entrepreneurship education emerges as a vital catalyst for addressing challenges such as unemployment and economic instability. The article emphasises the importance of developing targeted entrepreneurship programs tailored to the ceramics industry, along with fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and government. It highlights the need to address challenges faced by local ceramics manufacturing businesses, such as access to raw materials and technical expertise, through collective action and support. Ultimately, prioritising entrepreneurship education and revitalising the ceramics industry can pave the way for inclusive growth and prosperity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Ceramics, Economic Development, Entrepreneurship and Rejuvenation

Introduction

The rejuvenation of ceramics in entrepreneurship education within universities in Rivers State is a critical initiative with multifaceted benefits. In recent years, entrepreneurship education has gained prominence as a catalyst for economic development and job creation. Integrating ceramics into this framework presents a unique opportunity to tap into the rich cultural heritage of the region, particularly in Rivers State. The state's diverse cultural tapestry provides a fertile ground for the revival of traditional pottery practices and the exploration of contemporary ceramic artistry. Ceramics, as a skill-based practice, aligns seamlessly with the objectives of

entrepreneurship education. Its inclusion can empower students with practical skills in clay modeling, glazing, and firing techniques. Moreover, the entrepreneurial aspect comes into play as students are equipped to explore career paths as professional ceramic artists, craftspeople, or entrepreneurs in the pottery and ceramics industry.

The current economic disorders that pervade both developing and developed nations have called for increase in entrepreneurial activities. Various governments are adopting entrepreneurship to cushion or mitigate the adverse effects which are showing through low economic activities, unemployment, youth restiveness, terrorism, kidnapping, and so many other social vices. Despite the various interventions by developing nations, the earnings and livelihoods of many unindustrialised countries citizens have been very low and lag behind the rest of the world. The impact caused by these vices is more pronounced in developing economies compared to developed nations where improved political and macroeconomic stability have been experienced in the past decade (Sevastapulo 2014). Though there are few dotted skirmishes of terrorists' activities in few of the developed countries, these are by no means caused by religious fanatics that spring up from unemployment and lack of entrepreneurial activities that can keep idle hands busy. Development of entrepreneurship remains a core component of economic development all over the world despite the daunting challenges faced by different nations of the world. The largest symbol for raising the tempo of entrepreneurship that will be effective and as a strategic economic development is the phenomenon termed entrepreneurial ecosystem. The formation of entrepreneurial ecosystem should be devoid of sentiments and myths and concrete steps should be taken by all stakeholders such as policymakers, corporate leaders, business owners, and civil society organizations to path the way for economic development through effective and supported entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Helping the economy with Entrepreneurship and Ceramic Education

Entrepreneurship as a cornerstone of development strategies for emerging economies has garnered support among a broad spectrum of scholars, policymakers and governments. Entrepreneurship theories and research is very important to the development of entrepreneurship and the economy at large. The functions of an entrepreneur include as an inventor, imitator, innovator, or more appropriately as a calculated risk taker. "Entrepreneurship is more than creating a business enterprise. M. J. Gottlieb, co-founder of consulting firm Hustle Branding and author of "How to Ruin a Business without Really Trying" (Morgan James Publishing, 2014), said it takes a special kind of person to become a successful entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial spirit is characterized by innovation and risk-taking; it is an essential part of a nation's ability to succeed in this ever changing and increasing competitive global market. Since the global oil price crash in 2014, Nigeria has been one of the hardest-hit economies due to its over-dependence on oil as its only source of revenue. The way out of this economic crisis is entrepreneurial revolution; entrepreneurship needs to take the fore front of the Nigerian economy. The problem now is how do to help start-ups and existing firms to achieve stronger competitiveness in the market sector involving knowledge of entrepreneurship towards economic development in Nigeria? That is the scale of the challenge facing the global community aesthetics country grapples with solutions to this seemingly intractable problem.

Functionalism theory.

Functionalism grew gradually over time through the help of several sociologists and anthropologists in diverse parts of the world. Structural functionalism is a theoretical empathy of society that postulates social structures are communal means to fill social requirements. In order for social life to continue and advance in society, there are numeral of accomplishments that

need to be approved to certify that definite needs are filled. In the structural functionalist model, individual crop essential goods, and services in countless organizations and roles that connect with the norms of the society. An English sociologist, Herbert Spencer, was a harbinger of the formalized structural functionalism. He is known for creating the phrase “survival of the fittest” in his book “principal of sociology” (1896). Spencer’s intent was to back a societal custom of natural collection in the late 19th century; French sociologist Emile Durkheim set the chief foundations of structural functionalism. Durkheim’s model was at least in part, a retort to evolutionary conjectures of theorists such as E.B. Taylor. Durkheim initially wanted to clarify social institutions as a communal way for individuals in the society to encounter their own organic needs; His primary aim was to understand the worth of cultural and social trait by elucidating them in regards to their impact to the operation of the global structure of society and life. Later, the emphasis for structural functionalism transformed to be more about the ways that social institutions in society bump into the social needs of the individual surrounded by that society.

Durkheim showed interest in four major aspects of society

(a) Why societies are formed and what binds them as one.

(b) Religion (c) suicide and (d) Neviance and crime (Nooter, 1980:143__158.). This sociologist observed that the division of labour was obvious through all societies and sought to know why - response to this query can be established in his impression of solidarity. In more simple societies, he maintained that mechanical solidity kept everyone together. Mechanical solidity in this contest, raises to everyone doing comparatively related tasks. Durkheim speculated that common values, common symbols and system of discussion functioned as tools

to consistency in the societies. Members of the societies accomplished similar tasks to keep the community successively.

Another drift in the expansion of structural functionalism came from England, were it began from the study of anthropology in the 20th century in the positing of Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. Malinowski disputed that cultural practices took physiological and a psychological function, such as the contentment for cravings. Radcliffe-Browns structural functionalism concentrated on social structure, He claimed that the social world instituted a distinct "level of reality'' separate from those of genetic forms (people) and inorganic forms. Radcliffe-Brown claimed that explanations of social singularities had to be constructed at the social level. To him, this means that people were simply disposable, impermanent inhabitants of social characters that were of no essential worth. Individuals are only important in relation to their positions in the general structure of social roles in the society. Nigerian Economy has been able to sustain the socio-political, religions and economy structures created right from the Ceramics education.

The basis of Parsons social system is the status-role intricacy, which comprises of structural rudiments or positions that individuals embrace in a system. These positions are stated as ranks and area occupied by individuals whose obligation is to carry out the roles in order to uphold the order of the system. Therefore, inside this social system individuals execute definite roles to justify the systems functions; these roles are a function of their statuses. As the society advances, there are new roles and ranks that occur, permitting individual to express their unique dispositions.

Functionalism theory has all the necessary and required attributes needed to holistically study the chieftaincy regalia which posit this African Art as art for life. This is because of its socio-cultural, religious, political and economic roles it plays toward the harmonization of the Economic growth. Malinowski talks about the needs of the society that everything should function to achieve the basic need.

Concept of Entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education is the training given to individuals or groups to develop their innate entrepreneurial tendencies to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed for lucrative business ventures in their immediate environment in order to earn a sustainable living. Osuala (2004) in his definition identified entrepreneurship education as a special training given to students to acquire skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for self-reliance. While entrepreneurship is the process of assuming risk of uncertainty in a business venture but entrepreneurship education will equip students with relevant competencies, skills and knowledge to assume the risk of uncertainty in business venture. This is to encourage self-employment that will enable them live a more productive and independent future lives after graduation. Okolocha and Ile (2011) defined entrepreneurship education as an educational programme designed to prepare young people to acquire appropriate business skills, ideas and knowledge that will help them to live a fulfilled life, increase their economic status and contribute to the development of the society. Entrepreneurship education is intended to equip graduates with entrepreneurial skills not only to make them to become self-reliant but to be more employable and to contribute their quota meaningfully to economic development.

The right skills and values could be inculcated into our youths to impel them for an enterprise culture through entrepreneurship education. Such training which should be objective driven must

be empowered with motivational strategy, appropriate guidance, reinforcement and active participation of the learners. In the view of Nnamdi (2010) entrepreneurship education is about learning skills needed to assume the risk of establishing and managing a business successfully. Nwankwo, Nwachukwu, and Chinedu (2010) posited that entrepreneurship education as a renewed process of achieving self-reliance is centrally focused on the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies. The training in entrepreneurship education could be viewed from the generic approach to teaching/learning which emphasizes the formation of optimal entrepreneurial actions based on existing market forces. The objectives of entrepreneurship education in any institution are geared towards proffering solution to societal needs, yearningsand aspiration. The government, individuals and corporate bodies' supportive services are crucial for it to thrive and attain the set objective. Graduates could acquire entrepreneurial competencies and skills to have value re-orientation and take advantage of the numerous business opportunities in their immediate environment; able to identify a viable and lucrative business opportunity, establish the business in an enabling environment and manage it successfully. They could be able to apply the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis to identify a viable business opportunities and make appropriate choice. This analysis will acquaint them with the appropriate knowledge to assume risk within their level of capabilities. The business can grow and expand with the supporting services of financial institutions and provide ultimate satisfaction to the society's needs. The Nigerian society is facing unemployment challenges of her young school graduates and economic quagmire. The training of her youths through a functional education such as entrepreneurship education to enable them look inward to the available opportunities in their environment and earn a sustainable living become worthwhile. This could go a long way to checkmate the prevailing

circumstances of unemployment challenges and economic quagmire in the society. Okoye (2007) posited that entrepreneurship education can fail among graduates if the educational system fails to turn outgraduates that are trained on the basis of the prevailing circumstances on the environment.

Entrepreneurship versus Ceramics

In spite of the available indigenous potential for ceramics manufacturing business, the Nigerian government and the citizens have not shown much interest in its development. The negligence is due to lack of clear understanding of the meaning of ceramics; lack of significant number of professionals with appropriate skills and expertise in ceramics manufacturing business, and absence of avenues for people interested in ceramics manufacturing business to pursue their ambitions. Now, no university or higher institution in Nigeria offers training in ceramics science/engineering/technology.

The few surviving ceramics manufacturing businesses in Nigeria are producing far below their installed capacity because of problems of having to do the processing of their feed raw materials. In developed countries, there are industries that are processing raw materials (.i.e. clays, feldspars, quartz/silica, etc, for the ceramics manufacturing businesses.

Our local ceramics manufacturing businesses are struggling to process their own raw materials. This they do without knowledge of the chemical and mineralogical compositions, physical and mechanical properties of these raw materials. The absence of these data has led to low qualities of their ceramic products. One way to assist ceramics manufacturing businesses in Nigeria is to bring them together under one roof. It is meant to foster interaction between diverse stakeholder

groups in the sub-sector, to receive updates on availability of ceramic raw materials locally and emerging technologies to grow Nigeria's ceramics industry.

As a way of addressing the issue of attracting young people into the ceramics industry, there is a need to develop a number of ceramics training programmes. These programmes should be designed to educate and engage young people in the world of process manufacturing and to raise awareness of the exciting and challenging career opportunities that are available within the ceramics industries. For employers, this will improve productivity and competitiveness by making sure people have the right skills for their jobs; motivating people through recognizing the skills that they have, provide relevant and high-quality training across whole industries. The private sector contributions will be developing people as part of expansion or succession planning for their businesses.

Reasons to rejuvenate ceramic in Entrepreneurship Education

Pottery development was fostered by the development of organized agriculture and a more settled existence (Ali, 2010). It involves the product of past civilization, present age of science and the space age (Igwilo, 2006). Potteries are made to serve many functions. Its functions are as diverse as there are diverse cultures in the world. Its usefulness spread from the old kingdoms of early civilization – Egypt, Mesopotamia. Greece, Rome, Aegean and extends to Europe, Africa and America. In the affirmative, Kenny (1974) declares "potteries are the most widespread of all utilitarian objects". It has been used in different climes and periods for storage and preservation of food, medicine and other items. In the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, the vessel and the figurative pottery traditions are identified. The vessel pottery tradition produces storage and serving utensils (Diakparomre, 2010).

Pottery is the surest index of a people's character, which are observable through the forms and decorations which eventually determine its usage (Cardew, 1986 cited in Nsentip, 2007). Since pottery are durable, and do not shrink they became very useful in archaeological research. The source adds that, pottery products show fewer signs of age. Similarly, Inyang (2003) observed that a conglomeration of pots dug in a particular area denotes an old residential or preservative area. It is of little wonder that Ekong (2002) observes that it is about the prime source of historical records, besides, it is the most prevalent cultural remain (Danburi, 2007).

The Greek amphoras were used as water and wine containers, storage and preserewvators. Fitzwilliam in confirmation of the use of pottery to preserve wine exhibited "the keg" in one of his exhibitions in 1981. According to him, Keg was popularly known as beer key in Roman-Coptic period (30 BC to AD 500). The Greeks drank their wine diluted with water; they therefore needed a wide mouthed mixing bowl called a crater into which they could pour the two liquids for use of the audience in a feast (Woodford, 1982). Etokakpan (2017) and Udofia (2017) identified abang itie, abang idim, abang inwang, mfan ukot, and abang isong as preservative vessels for water and wine in Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. According to them, abang itie was kept permanently in one place mostly in the corner of the room, so that water fetched in the stream was stored and used as occasion demands. Mfan, a special type of abang ukot was used for preserving wine and storing them for brewing of gin. These pots were chosen for specified purposes as determined by their sizes, shapes and forms.

In Ibibio land, pots like, Iduen (Ntibe), asid iduen, and Asid akpakpa were used for storing farm products and cash crops. Farm products preserved in these pots include ukan, ibaba, edomo, akpakpa and nsama. To store or preserve farm products, they were stored inside the pot and the rim of the pot completely sealed with mud, after which the pots were kept on bamboo racks

above the hearth. The things so preserved could remain safe for one year and above, rather than die, they could shrink and could swell up again when it is immersed in water or cooked (Inyang, 2003; Udoh, 2018).

King Ramesses II commenting on the water cooling characteristic of pottery observes in an address to his workmen, thus: I have supplied your necessities in every proper way, so that you may work for me with loving hearts … fishermen to bring fish … Gardeners to grow vines … I have fashioned large vases on the potter's wheel making vessels to cool water for you in the season of summer (Hamada, 1938 cited in Fitzwilliam, 1981). Inyang (2003), Udoh (2018) and Ekanem (2018) agree that water from the pots was and still is normally cool and pleasant to drink especially in the dry season. In addition to the cooling effect, it lends a special earthy aroma to the water, this keeps the water fresh all the time.

As Nigeria gradually recovers from the debilitating COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy, the government is beaming its searchlight on a number of areas hitherto neglected in its bid to revamp the national economy. One of the sectors that holds good prospect is the ceramic subsector said to have varying degrees of industrial activities that can raise any nation's level of development. The application and utilization of ceramic products holds great prospect for the nation's industrial development as the products have permeated the fabric of modern industrialized economies.

Conclusion

Rejuvenation of ceramics in entrepreneurship education within universities in Rivers State presents a compelling opportunity for economic revitalization and cultural preservation. By integrating ceramics into entrepreneurship education, students can acquire practical skills aligned

with contemporary demands while tapping into the rich cultural heritage of the region. The multifaceted benefits include job creation, economic diversification, and the promotion of indigenous craftsmanship in which entrepreneurship education emerges as a crucial tool in addressing the current economic challenges faced not only in Nigeria but across the globe.

Recommendations

To achieve this vision,

1. concerted efforts are needed from various stakeholders including policymakers, educational institutions, businesses, and civil society organizations. There is a pressing need to develop targeted entrepreneurship programs tailored to the ceramics industry, providing young people with the skills and awareness needed to thrive in this sector. Additionally, collaborations between academia, industry, and government can facilitate research, innovation, and the adoption of emerging technologies in ceramics manufacturing.
2. In addressing the challenges faced by local ceramics manufacturing businesses, such as access to raw materials and technical expertise, requires collective action and support. By fostering collaboration and providing necessary resources, including training programs and infrastructure, the ceramics industry can be revitalized, contributing significantly to Nigeria's economic growth and industrial development.
3. It is essential to prioritize entrepreneurship education as a catalyst for economic transformation, leveraging the inherent potential of sectors like ceramics to drive sustainable development and create opportunities for future generations. By investing in skills development, promoting innovation, and fostering a conducive entrepreneurial environment, Nigeria can chart a path towards inclusive growth and prosperity.

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