

Organizational Culture and Creativity in Entrepreneurship Education: A Study of Secondary Education in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study was based on an ethnographic research of the culture of entrepreneurship teaching in 2nd Evangelical Church in West Africa (ECWA) Secondary School. Data was collated through the instrument of in depth interview and was analyzed through content analysis. The findings showed that there is positive relationship between organizational culture and creativity in entrepreneurship education. This is an indication that organizational culture impacts heavily on creativity in entrepreneurship teaching. The study concluded with the sections of recommendations for policy implications.

Key words: Organizational culture, creativity, entrepreneurship education, secondary education, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Most organizations are a reflection of one form of creativity or the other however, the expression of creativity by organizations is mostly a response to societal needs (Amabile and Mueller, 2008). Generally, creativity plays a pivotal and integral role as regards sustainability of any economy (Sternberg and Lubart, 1999) nevertheless various research view creativity from an individualized perspective. It is important to state that individual traits, experiences, abilities and thought patterns, are generally considered as pivotal to the concept of creativity. The context in which creativity is expressed by individuals is pertinent to the study and concept of creativity (Zhou and George, 2001). particularly because the context in which an individual functions largely determines the emergence and performance of creative behavior (Fleith, 2011). The development of an enterprise culture has become a subject of focus in Nigeria thus, a policy of entrepreneurship education at all levels has been adopted with the aim of motivating entrepreneurial activities (Garba, 2010).

Research question: The study examines one key research question: does organizational culture foster creativity in entrepreneurship education?

Research objective: The aim of this study is to underscore the relationship between organizational

culture and creativity in entrepreneurship education with particular focus on secondary education in Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was based on an Ethnographic research of the culture of entrepreneurship education in 2nd ECWA Secondary School in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, content analysis was used to analyze the data from the research and the findings helped the researchers to draw conclusion and make recommendations.

Population and sampling techniques: The population includes all subject teachers and principal of the school, the total number is given as 30 respondents and the sample size used was 10 respondents. Convenience approach was used in the selection of the school and purposive sampling was also used to select the sample size based on the number of teachers in the school involved in teaching business and entrepreneurship related subjects as well as the school principal.

Literature review and conceptual framework

Entrepreneurship education: Entrepreneurship education differs fundamentally from the conventional business education particularly because one of the main objectives of the former is to generate accelerated creative ideas targeted at the exploitation of a business opportunity and the ability to articulate a comparatively extensive and

systematic course of actions geared towards setting up a business. The conventional goal of education is often regarded as supporting the development of knowledge and the intellect. On the other hand entrepreneurship education focuses on the feelings, values, interests and the entire human nature (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2004).

Various studies have attempted to conceptualise the subject of entrepreneurship education however, there's no universal definition of the subject entrepreneurship education acts as machinery required to motivate entrepreneurial activities and performance (Sathorar, 2009) and it could also be regarded as the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies (Fiet). Entrepreneurial competencies in this context refer to concepts, skills and mental awareness employed by individuals during the process of setting up a growth oriented business. However, this study will adopt the definition of entrepreneurship education as a conscious and purposeful effort by an educator, geared towards inculcating entrepreneurial skills and attitudes to enhance the success of learners in the world of business (Sathorar, 2009).

Organizational culture and entrepreneurship education:

Numerous researches in the literature have attempted to define the concept of organizational culture from different perspectives, however there is a consensus perception that organizational culture is primarily a reflection of 'the way we do things here' (Lundy and Cowling, 1996). Organizational culture is regarded as the right way of doing things, understanding or solving problems in an organization. The culture of an organization is manifested in its predominant attributes (Sun, 2009). Organizational culture can be perceived as a pattern of conducting organizational functions that evolve over time and these practices reflect the shared knowledge and competence of the organization (Kostova, 1999). Organizational culture could also be considered as a shared perception of organizational work practices within organizational units that may be different from others.

However, this study adopts the definition of organizational culture as 'the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problem of external adaptation and internal integration and that have worked well to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members, as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems' (Schein, 1992). Most learning institutions where entrepreneurship is being taught reflect diversities in patterns, trends, strategies targeted at the achievement of set goals and objectives. Thus, this present study will conceptualize the

distinct pattern of entrepreneurship education adopted by a school as the culture of enterprise education of the institution.

Creativity and entrepreneurship education: There is a differing perception of what is recognized or regarded in various fields as creativity hence there is hardly a unified definition of the concept of creativity (Maher, 2008). Creativity is a concept conventionally associated with individual personality, motivation and expertise nonetheless most definitions border around new ideas, inventions and landmarks targeted at effective and efficient performance. Every expression of creativity is generally perceived as a reflection of three basic attributes; novelty, unexpectedness and value this informs why creativity is also conceptualized as 'the ability to perform mental work leading to an outcome that is both novel and applicable'. Creativity could also be perceived as 'the awareness, observation, imagination, conceptualization and rearrangement of existing elements to generate new ideas' this suggests that creativity defined concisely will mean the ability to produce work that is both novel and appropriate (Sternberg and Lubart, 1999). Generally, this study adopts the definition which summarizes creativity as 'the production and disclosure of new fact, law, relationship, device or product, process, or system based generally on available knowledge but not following directly, easily, simply or even by usual logical processes from the guiding information at hand' (Santamarina and Akhoundi, 1991). The arts such as music, dance, drama and so on have conventionally been associated with the concept of creativity which suggests that creativity is expressed in every form of human activity.

This means that even teachers have the ability to be creative in teaching as well as motivate creativity in learners.

The goal of entrepreneurship education is primarily to inculcate entrepreneurial skills in learners, geared towards motivating entrepreneurial activities in any economy which in turn creates value and foster economic growth and development (Isaacs *et al.*, 2007). Though entrepreneurial development is the ultimate goal of entrepreneurship teaching it is important to note that this objective is usually achieved by various learning institutions through diverse approaches (Gibb, 2002). This study therefore, regards entrepreneurship teaching as creative work as well as expression of creativity.

Organizational culture and creativity in enterprise teaching: Organizational culture is considered to be crucial and pivotal to the success of any

organization. The basic components of the culture of an organization namely; shared values, beliefs and expected behaviour exerts a predominant influence on creativity which is usually absorbed into the culture and management processes of successful organizations (Martins and Terblanche, 2003). Socialization is generally perceived as 'the process by which persons acquire the knowledge and skills and dispositions that makes them more or less effective members of society hence socialization is an on-going learning process of the norms and values of a culture hence individuals learn and perceive acceptable behaviours and trend of activities in an organization through the process of socialization (Weidman *et al.*, 2001). Thus, core values and norms peculiar to an organization are developed, shared and accepted by individuals. These norms and core values, shared by individuals form the basis of assumptions as regards acceptability or otherwise of creative behaviour in an organization (Weidman and Stein, 2003). Consequently, these assumptions, norms and core values, translate into a pattern of behaviour and activity formulated into structure, procedure, policy and management practices. These peculiar organizational patterns directly influence creativity at the workplace (Tierney, 1997). For instance, a production process in an organization given much priority as regards allocation of resources, suggests the value associated with such process by the organization thus from this standpoint, individuals in organizations learn and perceive what is regarded as valuable thus a determinant of their behaviour in the workplace.

The culture of entrepreneurship teaching in a school or any institution of learning is reflected in the beliefs, norms, values and strategies adopted consequently the acceptability or otherwise of creativity or creative behaviour as regards entrepreneurship teaching are perceived by an individual teacher based on the peculiarity of a school culture. For instance, a school culture of entrepreneurship teaching which creates an environment for the contributions of individual teachers or team work will motivate creativity and vice-versa. The importance attached to entrepreneurship teaching by a school and the priority given to the subject regarding the allocation of resources for instance, portrays how valuable entrepreneurship teaching is to the school this in turn motivates individual teachers to be creative in an attempt to achieve effectiveness and an acceptable level of performance.

The culture of entrepreneurship teaching in a school, affects the motivation and willingness of the educator this influences creativity, productivity and performance of the individual teacher (Camble *et al.*, 1999). An appropriate

school culture of entrepreneurship teaching facilitates continuous efforts by the educator towards improving and refining of teaching skills (Sun, 2009). An appropriate school culture is the key determinant of creativity in enterprise teaching which propels productivity and success. Without a school culture that recognizes the crucial role played by entrepreneurship education, the development of entrepreneurial attitudes in learners cannot be achieved. This study therefore stands on the premise that appropriate school culture of entrepreneurship teaching will motivate the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and increase the propensity for entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

Theory of organizational creativity: The theory underpinning this study is the theory of organizational creativity as propounded by Woodman *et al.* (1993). The relevance of the theory to this research is that it suggests that the presence of creativity within an organization is motivated by a dynamic social system such as the educational settings or institutions closely associated with the context of this research. It suggests that the dynamism of a social system largely motivates the presence of creativity expressed by individuals working in a social system. Hence, from this backdrop this study posits that creative approaches to teaching entrepreneurship particularly in secondary schools in Nigeria can be motivated by the dynamism of the organizational or institutional culture adopted in the various schools. The focus of creativity here is a drive towards effectiveness of entrepreneurship teaching in secondary education particularly in the Nigerian context geared towards reduction of unemployment particularly for graduates of secondary schools in Nigeria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2nd ECWA Secondary School is an 11-16 average size school situated at Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The school began business and entrepreneurship teaching in 2008, 3 years before a national policy of compulsory entrepreneurship education in Nigerian secondary schools was enacted by the government. The school is a reflection of a representation of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. All the students speak English as their first language. Following ten sessions of interview with the principal of the school, the business and entrepreneurship teacher and eight other teachers, the following is a descriptive summary of the culture of entrepreneurship teaching in the school.

The provision for entrepreneurship education in the school involves a 1 day seminar organised every term on

a Saturday for each year group. This is in addition to business and economics education lessons. Work related learning and entrepreneurship education is not particularly embedded in a coherent program or curriculum for all students. The policy of entrepreneurship education in the school developed as an initiative of the economics teacher, who also pioneered the customized curriculum for the school. The framework of the 1 day seminar for entrepreneurship teaching for each year group involves:

- A description of various career fields and relevant practices
- Identification of job and apprenticeship opportunities relevant to various career field
- Identification of various entrepreneurship opportunities relevant to diverse career fields
- A question and answer forum on the lessons learnt

Work related learning and entrepreneurship education are closely linked with career development. This ensures that students gain knowledge and increase information about careers and work/entrepreneurship opportunities. The students are usually encouraged to take up apprenticeship opportunities related to the career fields keen to their area of interest.

The 16 years group is usually mandated to present a paper at the close of their final year on the existing market gap in existing business ventures peculiar to the career field keen to their area of interest or choice. Following their final examinations, the best presentation is determined by a panel of judges which includes the principal of the school, entrepreneurship teacher and other members of the school management board. The student with the best presentation is usually recognized for achievement in entrepreneurship development and rewarded with literature (s) related to entrepreneurial development on the school's designated speech and prize giving day. The prize presentation is usually done following an explanation of the purpose of the award to parents and guests present. Entrepreneurship education and work related learning is not given a high profile in staff meetings. Staff development is also not given any priority. However, staff are provided with the opportunities to share ideas and discuss challenges. Two form tutors are split into two separate sections:

- A tutor for the 11-13 year group with focus on information on diverse career fields
- Supporting students to make right choices of subject combinations
- The other tutor for the 14-16 year group focuses on knowledge regarding the relationships between career fields and apprenticeship/entrepreneurship opportunities

Students usually give verbal feedbacks on their perception of the effectiveness of the program after each entrepreneurship seminar particularly because there is an indication that their views are valued and acted upon. Generally, there is an indication that students are beginning to consider entrepreneurship as a viable option in future.

This study was based on 5 open ended interview questions for teachers and the school principal on the culture of the school and entrepreneurship teaching. Inductive and deductive content analysis was used. The findings are as follows.

Entrepreneurship teaching is at a very early stage of development in the school. There were some evidences of good practices observed. For instance, there is an indication that students were being motivated by enterprise learning. There are also few evidences of the development of relevant enterprise skills by students. However, there is hardly an explicit or general perception of what is regarded as enterprise learning. A commonly adopted definition of entrepreneurship learning is visibly absent. A well defined management structure to support entrepreneurship learning is visibly absent. Entrepreneurship teaching is not particularly embedded in the curriculum but it's carried out as a one-day workshop for each year group per term. There is no link between entrepreneurship teaching in the school and the wider community. Particularly, there is no link between entrepreneurship teaching and local businesses to engage the students in real life business issues in support of entrepreneurship learning from a holistic perspective.

Entrepreneurship education in the school hardly pay cognizance to the implications for peculiar teaching and learning strategies. There are no clearly defined goals and objectives for entrepreneurship teaching and learning. Students hardly have room for problem solving activities or taking responsibilities for their actions with model business ventures. This does not give students the opportunity to evaluate the outcome of their decisions and reflect on specific learning objectives. There is no set target or objective as regards the desired outcome of entrepreneurship learning. Desired outcomes such as skills and attributes, enterprise knowledge and understanding are not obvious learning goals. Consequently, there is hardly any procedure in place for assessment or evaluation of students' entrepreneurship learning. There is no provision for investment in the professional development of staff targeted at the enhancement of entrepreneurship teaching skills and promotion of a common perception of the development of entrepreneurship learning.

To improve the quality of entrepreneurship teaching and learning in Nigerian secondary schools, the following are recommendations of good practices and appropriate school culture required to motivate performance of entrepreneurship educators with the ultimate goal of inculcating entrepreneurial attitudes and skills in learners. Skill development is not the sole objective of entrepreneurship education, the development of entrepreneurial attitudes is of utmost importance. Entrepreneurship education should be considered as a vital and integrated part of the formal curriculum for learners; hence the value placed on the subject will motivate creativity, performance and effectiveness of the educators.

A clear definition of what is regarded as entrepreneurship learning should be correctly perceived and understood by entrepreneurship educators, students and stakeholders in a school, particularly because a commonly understood definition of entrepreneurship learning will facilitate the identification of learning outcomes such as entrepreneurial knowledge, perception, skills and attributes expected from entrepreneurship education. This in turn will facilitate focus and motivate creative teaching strategies targeted at the achievement of the set goals of entrepreneurship learning.

The strategies for entrepreneurship teaching and learning adopted by schools, should reflect involvement of students in open ended problems, encouraging students to take responsibilities for their actions while taking independent decisions. This will enhance the development of creative approaches to entrepreneurship teaching targeted at motivating learners to develop entrepreneurship skills and attitudes.

Schools should develop effective and efficient systems for monitoring and evaluating the development of entrepreneurship learning. Evaluating and monitoring systems should reflect measurable targets with a focus on learning outcomes such as entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and perception. This will serve as an indication of success or otherwise of the educator thus a motivation for improved performance.

The leadership and management of schools should reflect a strong commitment for the development of entrepreneurship learning and clearly defined set plans for raising standards geared towards preparing young adults for real life challenges. This will enhance the perception of entrepreneurship educators on the value placed on entrepreneurship education thereby motivating improved performance and achievement.

CONCLUSION

Organizational culture is an image created to reflect the strength and achievements of an organization. It is

also a reflection of acceptable practices in a workplace. Thus it is of utmost importance for policy makers in Nigeria to channel efforts towards stimulating creativity in enterprise teaching in school cultures of secondary education, so that students can develop the intended learning outcomes of entrepreneurship education. Specifically, the design of performance measure in secondary schools in Nigeria should be one that closely motivates the entrepreneurship educator to encourage students to exhibit the attitudes and skills expected as learning outcomes of entrepreneurship education.

However, a step in the right direction is to do an assessment and critical analysis on the existing culture of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools in Nigeria, to ascertain the effectiveness or otherwise of the existing culture in facilitating creative approaches to entrepreneurship education. Therefore, it is suggested that subsequent educational policies should take into cognizance the linkage and inter-relationship between school culture and creative approaches to entrepreneurship education.

A school culture that is supportive of creative approaches to entrepreneurship teaching and learning appears to best flourish and be successful under appropriate environments of effective educational policies in secondary education in Nigeria. The extent to which elements of school culture encourage creative approaches to entrepreneurship teaching is much dependent on the values, norms, beliefs and perceptions shared by educators and stakeholders in secondary education in Nigeria.

Schools have their own unique culture of entrepreneurship teaching. Different schools have their own comprehension of culture of entrepreneurship education. School culture of entrepreneurship teaching are typically developed unconsciously, based on the values of the managers, founders and stakeholders of various schools.

Organizational culture of entrepreneurship education and its themes must not be ignored by school managers and stakeholders in order to achieve an effective culture of entrepreneurship teaching in Nigeria. School culture of entrepreneurship education can be used as a tool for competitive advantage of the development of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. This in line with view by Sun (2009) who is of the opinion that there is a positive correlation between organizational system, culture and achievement of organizational objective.

In conclusion, further empirical research may be required to validate the theoretical research findings on the elements of school culture that support creative approaches to entrepreneurship teaching in Nigerian secondary schools.

LIMITATIONS

The time frame for conducting the research was less than ideal for an ethnographic study. Being in the school for 2 h a day for only 2 days suggests that there are bound to be aspects of organizational culture, management practice and team communication as regards entrepreneurship teaching that will not be revealed during my observations. Being an outsider may also limit what is revealed to the researchers, management and members of staff may also be guarded in their conversation with me. The sample population for the research was limited to 2nd ECWA Secondary School in Kaduna State of Nigeria.

This may not be a representative sample of secondary schools in Nigeria hence further research is required to validate the findings and outcomes of this study. Data collection was carried out by self reported measures which can be inaccurate. Reliability of data is to the degree of honesty perception and level of knowledge and information of the respondents. This research is based on a sample population of a secondary school in Kaduna state of Nigeria. Even though multiple samples might have been valuable but a small sample was chosen in order to gain more depth of understanding on the group in focus. Open ended interviews were used to collect data to minimize researchers' obtrusiveness and influence on the respondents.

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