

Entrepreneurship Knowledge: The Core of Sustainable Economic Development

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Abstract

Capacity building and national sustainable development of any sort has to start with knowledge, and entrepreneurship is at the centre of such knowledge. Entrepreneurs are significant in economic and all other developments. Understanding how they do this is vital to understanding the role of entrepreneurship in development in general. This paper argues that economic development is not abstract; it is real and depends on how knowledgeable a society is and the capacity building mechanism. For sustainable development to take place, factors influencing economic development must be identified in order to ensure the regulation of those factors. The purpose of this study is to investigate how entrepreneurship can form part of a nation's capacity building to ensure sustainable economic development. Prior studies on economic development focus on international trade which equally takes a historical development of a nation and its cultural traditions as important factors in development; and if distorted and lost, economic development suffers. We should bear in mind that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs are conquerors of new resources for economic development and creators of new markets. Entrepreneurship knowledge produces many benefits for individuals, groups and society. Data for this study is gathered through face-face interview with selected policymakers, traditional rulers and literature. Data is analysed using descriptive statistics. The result is that entrepreneurship teaching will enable sustainable development through creative thinking and innovative spirit. The study has implications on sustainable development, further research and policies governing economic development. The study therefore, concludes that entrepreneurship teaching and entrepreneurs work closely together in formulating development policies.

Keywords: creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation, sustainable development, policy, education,

INTRODUCTION

The traditional economic theory is based strongly on the idea that the economy always tended towards equilibrium, and changes in that equilibrium can only occur through changes in underlying conditions such as population growth, savings or external shocks such as war. Schumpeter argued against this and explained that economic development is a process caused by enterprise, carried out by entrepreneurs. A constantly growing economy is one that is continually being disrupted by entrepreneurs through critical thinking, creativity and innovation.

Economic development and growth therefore requires constant economically distribution and use of resources. It is a process that envisions a desirable future state for human societies in which living conditions and resource-use continue to meet human needs without undermining the "integrity, stability and beauty" of nature. To meet this goal, we need a holistic approach in which entrepreneurship is at the centre; Entrepreneurship sets creativity-innovation in the context of an enterprise (business) which is according to Porter (1991) in Paul Burns (2005), something of recognised value.

A strong private sector that promises job creation, creativity and innovation is necessary. This approach

calls for a change in our educational system. People need to know their rights and responsibility. One of the major weaknesses in the economic development of many African countries, Cameroon in particular lacks sustainable business enterprises capable of supporting economic development. To prevent sudden and uncontrolled collapse in the move to satisfy the basic material requirements of future generation, people's knowledge on how to think critically and be innovative needs to be enhanced. There is need for sustainable innovation and for people to embrace competitiveness. The people need to encourage and expand the innovation opportunity pace. Entrepreneurship knowledge becomes almost imperative for economic development in a rapidly changing environment, and making development uncertain. Also, entrepreneurship and new venture creation flourish when an economy is in recession. According to Kirby (2003), under such circumstances entrepreneurship represents a means by which the economy and the population can break out of the downward spiral of unemployment and low economic growth. In the views of Andretsch and Link (2017) 'entrepreneurial ecosystems have emerged as one of the most dynamic forces shaping the economic performance of individuals, companies and regions.' The universities equally play a critical role in entrepreneurial ecosystems especially in the

domination of innovation and start-ups. (Andretsch B. David and Link N Albert (2017).

Talks about sustainable economic development have been around for a long time, yet it is not happening. Sustainable development in any form requires knowledge, not just any knowledge, knowledge that enables people to think critically. Africa is a continent having vast natural resources; surprisingly this continent of gold and diamond is among the poorest in the world. African countries have tried many economic development approaches to no avail. Examining the state of underdevelopment plaguing Africa from the resource-based view which emphasizes that a firm or a (country) utilizes its resources and capabilities, to create a competitive advantage that ultimately results in superior value creation Africa has been unable to do so? Sustainable development in all form should be a planned act. This suggests that having resources and planning it well can lead to sustainable economic development. Planning and sensible resource allocation requires knowledge, not just any knowledge, but knowledge that enables critical thinking and creative innovative ideas.

Prior studies, (Porter 1991; Smith's 1776) focused economic development on international trade Schumpeter, (1947, and 1934) but see entrepreneurship as having a knowledge base that cuts across all disciplines and walks of life. Sustainable economic development requires a knowledge base that is cross-sectional and not discipline specific. For economic development to be sustainable, a holistic knowledge is necessary. We find two levels of examining jobs and the whole economic development process, namely, the macro and micro.

Macro-Level

The macro-level is characterised by creativity that according to Seltzer and Bentley (1999) are knowledge, and creative new ideas are the primary source of economic productivity. There has been a shift from manual work to thinking jobs that emphasizes a new range of skills. The creative economy embraces economic and social change whilst maintaining the individual's creativity in the Centre. The holistic nature of approach to economic development, prepares to see business opportunities that exist internationally

As mentioned earlier, Africa is a continent with vast natural resources; surprisingly this continent of gold and diamond is among the poorest in the world. This suggests that natural resources alone is not enough to sustain economic development which is in line with Smith(1776) claim that natural resources is just manner from heaven, knowledge has to be added to it to be useful. Sustainable economic development is

the result of a combination of knowledge and efficient allocation of resources. Entrepreneurial knowledge and skills enables the effective and efficient allocation of resources, and also the creation of new resources.

African countries have tried many economic development approaches to no avail. Prior studies on economic development Smith (1776) focused on international trade, Schumpeter, (1934) as well. These authors also see entrepreneurship as having a knowledge base that cuts across all disciplines and walks of life.

1. Macro-Levels characterised by creativity that according to Seltzer and Bentley (1999) knowledge and creative new ideas are the primary source of economic productivity. There has been a shift from manual work to thinking jobs that emphasizes a new range of skills. The creative economy embraces economic and social change whilst maintaining the individual's creativity in the Centre. The concept of creativity depends upon two central characteristics both of which are linked to entrepreneurship. The first is:

- Novelty, the Generation of new ideas
- Individual talent or vision expressed through creative individuals. Allied to this is, creativity produces not just new ideas, but valuable ones.

2. Micro-Level is contextual, setting the creative conditions. Our openness to experience (Psychologist Carl Rogers) pushes us to new situations, and to learn new skills giving us

- The ability to judge whether our experience is valuable; and
- The ability to play with concepts, divergent thinking.

Sustainable economic development can be seen from these two views; "Macro" and "Micro" due to the fact that our creative era has changed. The new approach to sustainable development requires an educational system that emphasises creativeness and innovativeness. Entrepreneurship education enables the enhancement of an individual's ability to think creatively. The start of development is often confusing; therefore, a holistic approach is needed to ensure sustainability. Such holistic view adds more value and requirements to economic development's sustainability.

Sustainable development has been described in terms of three spheres, the environment, the economy and society. To these three, can be added culture. Culture identifies and it is by knowing who you are that independent thinking and reasoning can take place. Culture is derived from the environment or society. The structure of a society's economy depends on the nature of the environment and society. The level of education in a society determines the level of

economic development. From this perspective, it is no miracle that a society without the knowledge to think critically of what is going on within its environment cannot contribute to the sustainability of that environment. The culture of many African countries is not developed, and language which is the key to any culture is not also development. The issue on sustainability is questionable. European countries have a common dominant language. The use of Swahili in Eastern, Southern and parts of Central African sub-regions should provide a breakthrough in constructing a common language in accelerating the developmental process in Africa. Without such a move, the talk on sustainable development is questionable.

The Problem is that of understanding creativity. The central question here is what is creativity and how does it relate to language? How does it influence entrepreneurship and economic development's sustainability?

Objective

The objective of this study is to examine how entrepreneurship education can push economic development to sustainability. Factors influencing economic development sustainability are streamlined and discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) (WCED) defines sustainable development as, development that meets the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

We need an approach that enables us to create new resources as existing ones are being deployed. Porter (1991) discusses economic development using four facets: the existence of resources; a business environment that invest in innovation; a demanding local market; and the presence of supporting industries. Innovation to enable sustainability originates from individual businessperson's learning process of accumulative and incremental problem-solving activity. Schumpeter's (1942) includes entrepreneurship in economic development, and sees entrepreneurs as conquerors of new sources of raw material for economic developments. Kirby (2003) asserts that education system is recognised as a strong influence in the development of conformist, anti-entrepreneurial behaviour, and... students are unaware of it and its role in the economy and society, believing that the only alternative to employment is in large organisation or in the public sector. Entrepreneurial behaviour promotes efficiency in public sectors because it enables individual workers to become cost conscious as well as duty conscious in general. According to Spicer and Karreman (2009), in Kevin and Monder (2012) entrepreneurship

produces many benefits in society. Forje (2010) in an article "recreating government" claim that entrepreneurship education can bring about duty consciousness in all walks of life. In addition, Bathelt et al (eds.) (2017) digs into innovation as a concept, as institutions, as creativity, channelled through temporary and permanent organisations, shaping market and dialoguing with entrepreneurship, and as embedded in places and networks.

African countries are faced with daunting challenges, depleting resources, advances in technology and the aspiration of meeting the basic needs of the people. They have, to state the least, to 'catch-up' with these challenges. However, Lee (2016) argues that 'catch-up' is not about following the path of front-runners but rather thinking new paths to technologically 'leapfrog'. African entrepreneurship and innovators should bear in mind that any new thing introduces leads to improving the quality of the living standards of the people

The view of Penrose (1959 in Kevin Mole with Monder Ram, (2012). Perspective in Entrepreneurship) on Resource Based suggests that firms may diversify in a related manner based on excess firm specific resources, and argue that different firms would learn to extract different services from the same kind of resources. The idea of firms can be translated to countries. Entrepreneurship knowledge can empower citizens of a country with the ability to; from their stock of natural resources extract different types of services needed for their economic development. What to do with the bulk of natural resources own by most African countries should generate from within, but not limited to internal knowledge. Goransson et al. (2016) 'highlight the contradictions that each country faces when trying to 'close the loop' among researchers and policymakers' in transitional societies. Each country has its specific story to tell and development should not be tailored as to meet specific needs. African countries should learn from best practices from within and outside the continent.

METHODOLOGY

Data was gathered through the study of past economic development theories and face-to-face interview with youths, business people and selected policy makers, and Executive Master in Business students (EMBA). Questions focused on how entrepreneurship can be taught and used to promote economic development and sustainability. Data is analysed using Descriptive Statistical tool to determine the role of entrepreneurship in sustainable economic development.

According to Marshall (1842-1924) in Forje (2010), the success of a business requires more than just creating the business. It requires entrepreneurship, which embodies the following skills.

- Knowledge of the trade;
- Technical knowledge;
- The ability to forecast;
- The ability to identify opportunities
- Cautious judgement
- Leadership capability
- The desire to improve performance.

From the definition of entrepreneurship, it is certain that it cuts across all walks of life. Therefore its teaching is likely to lead to proper taping of the hidden skills and spirits among the people, because all the mentioned qualities cannot be achieved from entrepreneurial traits alone. Sustainability requires knowledge that enhances people's ability to think critically and move development far beyond just economic development.

There are a number of factors that militate against the use of statistical analyses in entrepreneurship studies. The beguiling simplicity of harnessing the reductionist methods that serves the natural sciences well as a danger of 'science envy'. He argues strongly against following the success of the scientific fraternity blindly, assuming that their success is transferable to the realm of entrepreneurship research. Bygrave and Hofer (1991) also list useful fallacies of using for example regression analysis for entrepreneurship analysis.

1. Statistical analysis is reductionist, while entrepreneurship is holistic;
2. Regression analysis generates smooth changes, entrepreneurship creates discontinuous change; and
3. Stable models with few variables are assumed for regression analysis; entrepreneurship is unstable and has many variables.
4. In analysing entrepreneurship success, we cannot say we start from where we stopped; it is at any time a continuous process that takes into account

a holistic view for example, (level of knowledge, environmental upheavals and other pressures). Having said these, we still need to have a sample population to gather opinions.

Data collection and Sample

A sample of 176 students drawn from a pool of 650 final year undergraduate students, 15 EMBA students and 70 non-management students using a ballot box draws, 50 entrepreneurs selected based on availability and 05 selected policy makers available at the time. Questions centred on whether entrepreneurship knowledge could contribute to sustain economic development, and how this contribution can be achieved. Parents were also asked how they think entrepreneurship teaching should be taught and at what level in order to best benefit the youth. Forje (2010 op.cit) applied this method and suggests that to be able to evaluate opinions free from biases, interviewees were assigned numbers. Interviewees were given one week to think through the questions and possible answers. The questionnaires provided invaluable information for evaluating the contribution of entrepreneurship to economic development's sustainability. The researcher had a tape recorder. The questions were:

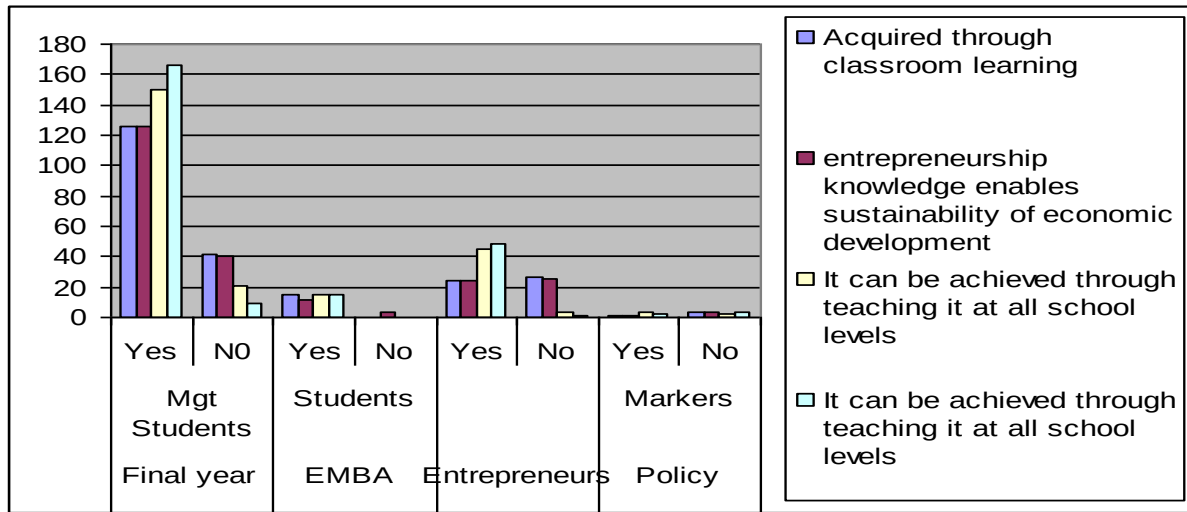
1. Do you have knowledge of entrepreneurship?
2. How did you acquire it?
3. Do you think entrepreneurship knowledge can enable the sustainability of economic development? If yes, how can it be achieved? Data is presented and analysed, as per Tables 1 (mixed Opinions) and 2 (Collated Responses) respectively.

Table 1: Mixed Opinions									
s/n	Interviewees/ Questions	total (176)		total (15)		total (50)		total (05)	
		Final Year Mgt. Students		EMBA Students		Entrepreneurs		Policy Markers	
	Do you have knowledge of Entrepreneurship?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		126	42	15	00	24	26	01	04
	How did you acquire it?	By learning in The classroom		By learning in the classroom		By learning In classroom		By learning In the classroom	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		126	40	04	01	24	25	01	03
	Do you think entrepreneurship knowledge can enable the sustainability of economic development?	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
		150	21	15	00	14	00	03	02
	If yes, how can it be achieved Through teaching at all schools Levels.	Through teaching at all school Levels.		Through teaching at school Levels		Through teaching at school Levels		Through teaching at all school Levels	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		166	09	15	00	48	01	02	03

Table 2: Collated Responses

Questions	Final year Mgt Students		EMBA Students		Entrepreneurs		Policy Markers	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you have knowledge of Entrepreneurship?	126	42	15	00	24	26	01	04
Acquired through classroom learning	126	40	11	04	24	25	01	04
entrepreneurship knowledge enables sustainability of economic development	150	21	15	00	45	03	03	02
It can be achieved through teaching it at all school levels	166	09	15	00	48	01	02	03
Total								

Bar Chat 1. Level of opinions



In every economic development, entrepreneurs must be included to ensure sustainability. Entrepreneurs, having entrepreneurship knowledge, not just to the 'byam-sellam', but constructively deepening the knowledge of students of the importance of entrepreneurship as a core subject of importance in economic growth and transformation of society. Support should be extended to entrepreneurs who in their operational experiences have discovered the difference between those having entrepreneurship knowledge and those who do not have such knowledge. Policy – makers score very low, and this exemplifies their weakness in economic development policy formation. Swann (2016) contends that innovation and wealth creation are not the monopoly of business but the contributions of ordinary people.

Students must be inculcated with the knowledge critical to innovation and responsible entrepreneurship driving towards socially desirable outcomes – the overall well-being of citizens. Geuna and Rossi (2015) points out the importance of the university teaching, research and technology transfer activities contribute to economic growth. De Cleyn and Festal (2016) point out key attributes of commercialising academic knowledge and focusing on spin-offs

Entrepreneurship is an alchemist of economic development, it enables the contribution of everybody in society and this is motivational. Sustainable economic development requires every body of knowledge that exist in a society, and entrepreneurship knowledge is an incredible hawk that cuts-across all disciplines. Entrepreneurship as a subject has not been in the syllabus of many African countries until recently. The situation of the African woman is most pathetic. Yet they have vested with vast skills and knowledge that go unexploited. Gender matters and African women should be encouraged and brought to the forefront of the development nexus. This knowledge gap which enables people to be creative and innovative projects sustainable economic development as a mystery only known by few persons. Entrepreneurship teaching creates a knowledge base society where everybody contributes – this contribution could be self-development, and this is an important element in both societal and economic development.

Growing importance is being attached to various aspects of sustainability in the context of economic policy. The private sector must also be integrated into economic policy articulation and strategic development. Entrepreneurship education is the corner stone of the private sector which is the creator of jobs and wealth. Until recently, sustainable development issues have not been sufficiently defined in the context of education policy. There is a need to enhance the knowledge of Africans with entrepreneurship knowledge if sustainability is to be ensured.

Entrepreneurship education enables opportunity identification within and outside the environment that can be randomly selected and used to sustain economic development. It also enables people to be careful in the use of resources. How resources are used. This also helps to cut down unemployment as students on graduating become job creators rather than being job seekers.

IMPLICATIONS

This study has implications to, educationists, the youth, policy makers and the society at large. As entrepreneurship is taught in the classroom, it privileges the weakening of through processes, encourages and stimulates the entrepreneurial imagination in the society. Policy makers will on their part be able to make sensible policies concerning economic development.

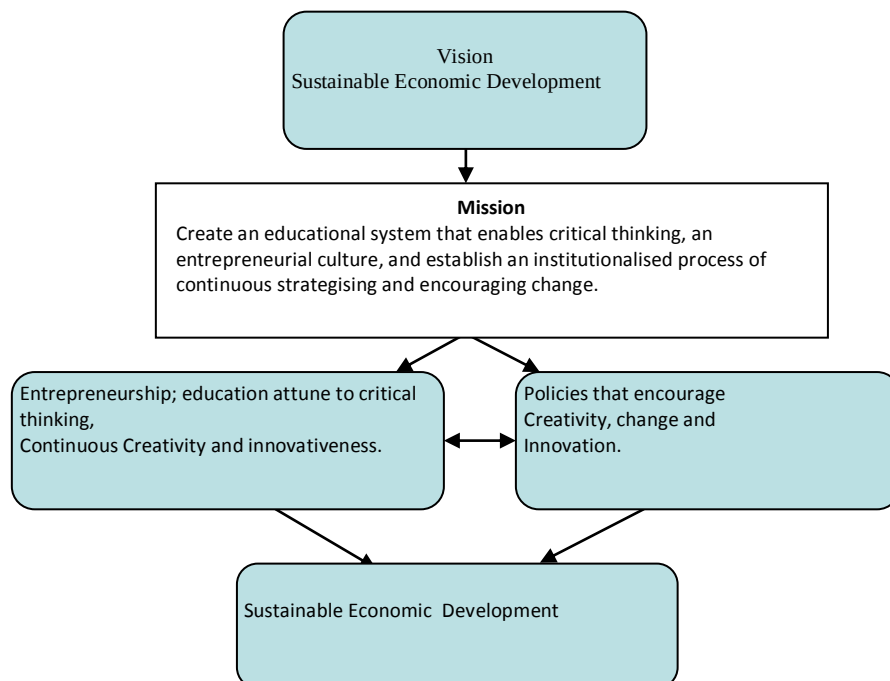
For the sake of discussion, imagine a society where your mother, father, siblings and all your relatives understand that you have a taxi on the road as your source of income, and it is appreciated and respected, The following will happen: they will not jump into that taxi and expect not to pay. They will know and understand that you pay the driver, fuel the car, maintain it, and se whatever to solve your problems and exist. The talk of, “it is my brother’s car and so on”, the chain is long would cease and there will be peace in the valley. People think and behave

reasonably rationally in an entrepreneurship knowledge based society. Again, there is the idea of garbage disposal in Cameroon; the garbage disposal project in Cameroon is not proving successful because people have not been educated on how to dispose their waste. From this, we find that education is still paramount to all development.

CONCLUSION

Economic development does not stand still, and sustainability is not a one-time process. There have to be continues creativity and innovation. The research suggests that entrepreneurship education constitute a powerful factor in economic development. Focus should not only be on labour, capital and services. Knowledge is needed to combine these factors in a way that brings about economic development. People need to be educated to think critically, be creative and innovative. There can be no sustainable economic development if society does not understand what it is all about. Entrepreneurship education empowers people with the knowledge necessary to know and understand what economic development entails. Table 2 (Collated Responses) presents the necessary factors that are likely to support sustainable economic development.

Figure 1 presents a situation how sustainable economic development can be achieved, everything being equal.



Source: Authors construction (Forje L.C 2018)

From this perspective, the study concludes that entrepreneurship be taught at all educational level in society. This will not only enable the creation of industries, but will also empower people with the

knowledge necessary to be duty conscious and make sensible economic development decisions, be creative and innovative. The knowledge will also enable the creation of new materials to support the available natural resources.

Sustainable economic development requires more than just natural resources. Fundamental human needs such as the availability and quality of air, water, food and shelter are also the ecological foundations for sustainable development. Many Africans are ignorant about the repercussion of the depletion of natural resources. This is the time to ensure the sustainability of our natural resources and work towards 'inclusive wealth' and natural capital, which is proving very influential within and beyond economics. Let us develop our human intellect to judiciously protect our resources for the good of present and future generations. African countries should be thinking in the lines of Hanley and Barbier (2009) of pricing nature; and in the views of Bergstrom and Randall (2016) resources economics.

The stability of human settlements is part of the relationship between humans and their natural environment, (cultural, social). This therefore suggests that for any solid and sustainable economic development to take place, the culture of that society must be considered. Culture provides primary knowledge about the use of any available resource. Economic development concerns first and foremost the allocation of the natural resources that exist in the environment to satisfy human's wellbeing. In planning economic development, culture must not be left out.

This reminds me of a case where Danish people built houses in Greenland without taking the culture of the people into consideration and it was a fiasco. Most often, economic development is imposed on African countries. Economic development factors are not restricted within the factors available within an individual country – innovation also precipitates economic development and even makes it faster given the rapidity in technological advances. Given appropriate education, entrepreneurship education in this case, people are enlightened to select what they need from outside, appreciate its contribution to economic growth, and sustainability

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