



Enhancing Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Nigeria: The Green Office Concept

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Abstract: In Nigeria, where the devastating effects of climate change are already being felt, green offices can play a crucial role in driving sustainability and enhancing green entrepreneurship. This study identified the green office concept as a model for building a sustainable environmental management system across communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria. It further identified that the green office concept which involves the use of natural resources to create eco-friendly working conditions will enable the entrepreneurs to achieve sustainability in Nigeria. This study identified some benefits of green offices and how green finance can help enhance green entrepreneurship in Nigeria. It further identified that the green offices will play a major part in enhancing green entrepreneurship and mitigating the negative impacts of climate change in Nigeria. It also recommended green leadership, green creativity and green entrepreneurship as strategies to help enhance sustainable entrepreneurship in Nigeria. This study concluded by highlighting the need to enhance sustainable entrepreneurship through green offices for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Climate Change, Entrepreneurship, Green Finance, Green Offices, Sustainable Development

Introduction

A green office can be defined as a workplace that adopts environmentally responsible practices in its operations, design and materials used. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, "green offices focus on reducing the environmental impact of office operations by promoting energy efficiency, conserving natural resources, and reducing waste" (EPA, 2022). "Green and Sustainability Offices are special settings which assist initiatives within higher education institutions to coordinate their efforts and work in the field of sustainable development" (Filho et al, 2019).

In addition, a green office should encourage sustainable transportation options, such as public transit or biking. According to the Green Business Bureau (GBB), "a green office must be easily accessible through sustainable modes of transportation" (GBB, n.d.). Green offices have been shown to have numerous benefits for both the environment and employee well-being. As Forbes notes, "green offices can reduce energy costs, increase productivity, and improve employee health and satisfaction" (Forbes, 2013). The goal of a green office is to create healthy environments, conserve energy and reduce pollution which are necessary steps toward sustainable development and sustainable entrepreneurship in Nigeria. This study identified that the green office concept which involves the use of natural resources to create eco-friendly working conditions will enable the entrepreneurs to achieve sustainability in Nigeria. It also highlighted some benefits of green offices and how they can help enhance sustainable entrepreneurship in Nigeria. It further identified that the green offices will play a major part in enhancing green entrepreneurship and mitigating the negative impacts of climate change in Nigeria

The set-up of such offices is known to be an effective tool in supporting the implementation of sustainability initiatives on campuses, and in fostering awareness among students and staff on matters related to Sustainable Development (Filho et al, 2019). The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) emphasizes that a green office should aim to "maximize energy efficiency, minimize resource consumption, and reduce waste" (NRDC, n.d.). This can include measures such as using renewable energy sources, reducing water usage, using environmentally-friendly cleaning products, and implementing recycling and waste reduction programs

Methodology

Data used for this study is derived from published works including academic articles, journals, conference papers, textbooks, and internet materials. This paper examined

current progress with "Enhancing Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Nigeria via the Green Office Concept" through existing literature review and data collection from relevant agencies. The main purpose of this research work was to survey theoretical backgrounds and previous studies on the subject matter.

Literature Review

Understanding Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Green Entrepreneurship

The word 'entrepreneurship' became popular in business since 1980s (Majid and Koe, 2012). Deriving from the French word "entreprendre" meaning "to undertake or to do something", the term "entrepreneurship" itself has been redefined a dozen times in the last decades (Greco & Jong, 2017). Majid and Koe (2012) defined entrepreneurship as "A process of identifying, evaluating and pursuing opportunities through creativity, innovativeness and transformations to produce new products, processes and values that are beneficial" (p. 295). Venkataraman (2002) defined entrepreneurship as "the process of addressing uncertainty, innovation and resource allocation for the creation of personal wealth and social benefit." Weidinger (2014) also refers to "entrepreneurship as an open research process that comes up with unique solutions". There is tangible evidence that we are currently moving from a managed economy towards an entrepreneurial economy (Audretsch and Thurik, 2004; Uhlaner et al, 2010; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011). Entrepreneurs' primary objective is to satisfy an unfulfilled need or to improve the way this need is currently being satisfied. This promising and fundamental goal does not necessarily imply that positive environmental values are being created as a result (Greco & Jong, 2017). This fundamental goal of achieving sustainable entrepreneurship has put entrepreneurship research in the spotlight, incentivizing several scholars to explore patterns for entrepreneurial success (Greco & Jong, 2017). It has further highlighted the need for sustainable entrepreneurship across communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria. "Sustainable entrepreneurship is in essence the realization of sustainability innovations aimed at the mass market and providing benefit to the larger part of society. Actors or companies contributing substantially to sustainable development with their core businesses can be called sustainable entrepreneurs" (Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011). Sustainable entrepreneurship is opportunity oriented and aims at generating new products, services, production processes, techniques, and organizational modes which substantially reduce social and environmental impacts and which increase the quality of life (Greco & Jong, 2017). Green entrepreneurship refers to a special

subset of sustainable entrepreneurship that aims at creating and implementing solutions to environmental problems and to promote social change so that the environment is not harmed. It has also been suggested that green entrepreneurship could be a new business paradigm instead of a subset of entrepreneurship because green entrepreneurs have wider motivations than just launching eco-friendly products and services for a niche market (Kirkwood and Walton, 2010). Green entrepreneurship can be explained on the basis of theories on entrepreneurship, and environmental and welfare economics as a subset of sustainable entrepreneurship (Dean and McMullen, 2007). A green entrepreneur is someone who starts and runs an entrepreneurial venture that is designed to be green in its products and processes from the very moment it is set up (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Eriobu, 2019). The green business environment in Nigeria is moving at a very rapid rate. This can be seen in the number of green entrepreneurship business coming up. Recently, the National Power Training Institute of Nigeria (NAPTIN) partnered with a tech-based firm for the proposed development of a green innovation hub with the single goal of driving green business development within the Nigerian energy sector, while also improving relationship between public and private organizations (UN Habitat, 2017). Anabaraonye et al (2022) defined green entrepreneurship as that "entrepreneurship that seeks to solve environmental problems while generating income for sustainable economic growth". Green entrepreneurship education involves the strategic training and enlightening of individuals, communities and campuses on the role of green entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable development (Anabaraonye et al, 2022). Green entrepreneurship education across communities, cities and campuses is vital to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of entrepreneurs and systems for sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria. As Ogbonna and Anosike (2018) explain, "green entrepreneurship is not just about creating sustainable businesses, but also about fostering a culture of sustainability that can have a positive impact on the wider community" (p. 103). Green entrepreneurship education is therefore very important for establishing business support and laying a structure for entrepreneurs who desire to manage sound businesses with a special focus on environmental and social impact (Anabaraonye et al, 2022).

Discussion

1. THE ROLE OF GREEN FINANCE IN ENHANCING GREEN OFFICES IN NIGERIA

Green finance is a relatively new field that has emerged in response to the growing global awareness of the urgent need to mitigate climate change and other environmental challenges. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), green finance is "the financing of investments that provide environmental benefits in the broader context of environmentally sustainable development" (UNEP, 2016). This includes both financing for green projects and the development of financial products and instruments that support environmentally sustainable economic development. Green financing obviously will help to enhance the green offices projects in Nigeria. One of the main drivers of green finance is the need to shift global financial flows away from environmentally harmful activities and towards sustainable and green investments. As the European Investment Bank (EIB) explains, "Green finance aims to support the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and sustainable economy by shifting the flow of capital towards investments that are aligned with environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria" (EIB, 2019). Green finance is also seen as a means of unlocking new sources of capital for sustainable development. As the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes, "Green finance has the potential to mobilize significant amounts of private capital towards environmentally sustainable investments, which are crucial for meeting global sustainability goals and achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change" (OECD, 2016). Academic research has also highlighted the importance of green finance in addressing environmental challenges. For example, a study published in the Journal of Environmental Management notes that "green finance provides an innovative approach to mobilizing resources to mitigate environmental problems" (Chen et al., 2018). Another study published in the Journal of Cleaner Production emphasizes that "green finance offers an opportunity to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, and to achieve sustainable development goals" (Shen et al., 2020). Green finance plays a vital role in enhancing green offices and green entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Green finance is a vital tool in the fight against climate change, environmental degradation and poverty. By mobilizing private capital towards environmentally sustainable investments and promoting the development of green financial products and instruments, green finance has the potential to unlock new sources of capital for sustainable development and support the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and sustainable economy.

2. THE ROLE OF GREEN OFFICES IN ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NIGERIA

Green offices have the potential to play a significant role in enhancing sustainable entrepreneurship and mitigating the negative impacts of climate change in Nigeria. According to Ogbonna and Anosike (2018), "green entrepreneurship is a critical component of sustainable development that can drive economic growth while simultaneously promoting environmental protection" (p. 103). By adopting sustainable practices and policies, green offices can provide a platform for promoting and encouraging green entrepreneurship (Filho et al, 2019). Filho et al. (2019) further identified that green offices and similar governance structures may assist efforts within higher education institutions to work in the field of sustainable development. This can be achieved as the set-up of such offices can be an effective tool in supporting the implementation of sustainability initiatives on campuses, and in fostering awareness among students and staff on matters related to climate change and sustainable development. As Ogbu and Okonkwo (2017) explain, "green offices can serve as models for other businesses to follow, encouraging the adoption of sustainable practices and driving innovation in the green economy" (p. 30). This can involve adopting renewable energy sources, promoting the use of green products, and implementing efficient waste management systems. Green offices can also contribute to mitigating the negative impacts of climate change by reducing their carbon footprint and promoting sustainable practices among employees. As Oyebisi and Adeoti (2015) noted, "green entrepreneurship is a strategic response to the impacts of climate change on society and a tool for promoting environmental sustainability in developing countries such as Nigeria" (p. 259). By reducing energy consumption, encouraging sustainable transportation options, and promoting waste reduction and recycling programs, green offices can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to climate change mitigation efforts. In addition, green offices can serve as a means of raising awareness about the importance of sustainable practices and promoting environmental stewardship. Through green initiatives and sustainable practices, green offices can encourage employees to adopt more eco-friendly habits in their personal lives. In Nigeria, where the effects of climate change are already being felt, green offices can play a crucial role in driving sustainability and green entrepreneurship. By promoting sustainable practices, green offices can help to reduce environmental degradation and improve the quality of life for Nigerians. Furthermore, green offices can create job opportunities and contribute to economic

development while mitigating the negative impacts of climate change. According to Corporate Suites Staff (2019), "There are a wide range of benefits to following green office tips that businesses will enjoy after instituting green practices." "In an increasingly environmentally-conscious society, companies that make the effort to go green are likely to receive public acknowledgement from clients about the steps they've taken to protect the earth. This positive public attention can have a direct impact on your business, driving new customers to seek out your services" (Corporate Suites Staff, 2019).

CONCLUSION

"Despite the clear usefulness and proven effectiveness of governance structures such as Green or Sustainability Offices, their use is not as wide as it could -or should-be. Also, there is a limited amount of empirical international work performed to date, which have investigated the various barriers related to their works"(Filho et al, 2019). There is therefore great need for more intensive research on the green office concept and its role in enhancing sustainable entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Through this study, it is clearly seen that the green office is a veritable tool which can help to enhance sustainable entrepreneurship for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

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