

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA AS A MEANS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper is aimed at showcasing an educational programme which is capable of reducing the socio-economic problems of the society. The problems among others, unemployment, poverty, collapsed industries, disease and lack of interest in investment promotion etc. To solve these problems functional and qualitative education system is necessary. One of the educational programmes is entrepreneurship. It is a programme capable of equipping graduates with requisite skills needed for self-reliance and employment. This paper highlights the objective of vocational and technical education and its occupational areas, prospects of incorporating entrepreneurship into vocational and technical education. This paper further highlights numerous challenges militating against effective implementation of entrepreneurship programme for acquisition of appropriate skills and also suggests strategies for the eradication of the problems. Based on this, conclusion and recommendations are made for the achievement of entrepreneurship education goals as a means of solving socio-economic problems in the society.

A society is prosperous to a level or degree if and only if, it rewards and encourages entrepreneurial activities because it is the entrepreneur and his activities that are the crucial determinant of the level of success, prosperity, growth and opportunity of the economy. The main focus of education and training is to impact into the citizens, the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them contribute effectively to the socio-economic development of the communities and the nation at large. Education is the transmission of the right type of attitudes,

norms, values and skills from the older to the younger generation (Chukwu, 2012).

Nigeria is a large and populated country. Usman (2012) asserted that, based on the National Population Commission (NPC) census figure of (2004), Nigeria is the most populous black nation endowed with huge untapped potential mainly found among people below 30 years of age called youths. The people in that category include the parents, leaders, armies and labour force of tomorrow. The present situation in Nigeria is different because the present youths are faced with realities of poverty, unemployment, disease and conflict. These youths are with distinct potentials, fruitful imagination, dreams, hard work, courage, innovative, creative and eager for experiences from a kind of training that would enable them actualized their dreams. This kind of training is otherwise called entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurship training is expected to lead them to explore and develop to their full potentials.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is conceived as the pursuit of opportunity regardless of resources currently controlled (Stevenson and Sahleman, 1989). According to Ojarikue (1999) in Isike and Ovekaemo (2008), entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability to identify business opportunities through creativity and innovation and establishing necessary machinery to run business enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship denotes creating and building something of value from practically nothing,

creation and distribution of something of value and of benefits to individuals, groups, organizations and society, an opportunity is first identified, labour is put in and consequently fruits of one's labour are harvested. Entrepreneurship is a creative and innovative response to the environment. It is a behaviour rather than personality trait and its foundation lies in concept and theory rather than in initiation. The term "entrepreneur" is seen as people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and initiate appropriate action to ensure success (Nwachukwu, 1990). An entrepreneur is a risk bearer or taker, a man who breaks uncertainty, strikes out on his own and through devotion to duty and singleness of purpose somehow creates a business and industrial activity where none existed before. Entrepreneurs undertake the function of carrying out new contributions named enterprises.

Furthermore, Amaewhule (1996) in Amesi, Wogboroma and Nwokocha (2008) explained that interest and profit arise from progressive change and would not exist in a static society. It implies that entrepreneur is an agent of change and risk bearer in the business he provides. He introduces projects that are new for him and his organizations. Any individual who creates a business, establishes it, and nourishes it to growth and profitability, or takes over an existing business, because the founder is dead or has sold it or who inherited it and continues to build and innovate on it, or runs a franchise qualifies as an entrepreneur on our usage. The training in entrepreneurship in higher institution is called entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education according to Onwuchekwa (1989) in Isike and Ovekaemo (2008) is the identification of the general characteristics of entrepreneurs and how potential entrepreneurs can be trained in the management techniques needed for effective performance of persons for long time survival of the

organization. It can also be seen as a highly leveraged strategy of development that shoulders the arduous responsibilities of success therein. Integrating entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of tertiary institutions will help to equip graduates of higher institutions with relevant skills, acute business knowledge, self confidence and other attributes necessary for self reliance and national survival.

Concept of Vocational and Technical Education

The term vocational and technical education is described as the instrument, which enables individuals to develop knowledge, skills and adopt new behaviours as well as become equipped to be able to survive in the society. It is a weapon that may be used to achieve quick and desirable changes or development of the nation's economic, political, sociological and human resources. Vocational and technical education is geared towards the development of new careers and occupation (Adenle and Olukayode 2007).

Vocational and Technical Education is classified into specific areas;

1. **Vocational Business Education:** This programme of study is also subdivided into areas of specialization such as accounting and secretarial education options. Learners are expected to acquire knowledge on the general operations of typical business ranging from the job of secretary, general administration and accounting activities.
2. **Vocational Technical Education:** This involves training students to develop an insight and understanding of specific occupation and acquisition of needed skills in the use of common industrial tools, machines etc.
3. **Vocational Agricultural Education:** Is a systematic course of instruction for school

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farmers, organized for the purpose of improving agricultural methods and rural living.

4. **Vocational Home Economics:** The emphasis is on professional and non-professional levels in industry, teaching and research. The opportunities could be in restaurants, tailoring, child-care services as well as home appliances manufacturing.
5. **Vocational Computer Education:** The emphasis is on repairs and operation of computer in the form of Microsoft word, excel and internet operation.

Importance of Vocational and Technical Education

1. It enables an individual to be self-reliant
2. Vocational and technical education helps to eradicate crime among people in the society
3. It provides employment opportunities for the unemployed youths
4. Vocational and technical education contributes to the growth and gross domestic product of the nation
5. It enables individuals to acquire necessary skills for agriculture, commerce and economic development (FGN, 2004)
6. It promotes the culture and value of the nation
7. It helps to eradicate poverty alleviation.

Entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education

The inclusion of entrepreneurship in curriculum was first distinctly noted by well-known management leader Peter Drucker, who addressed the value of teaching entrepreneurship in innovation and entrepreneurship in 1985. Drucker argued that everyone who can face up to decision making can learn to be an entrepreneur and to behave entrepreneurially. The entrepreneur needs specific skills to acquire

and technical education.

The skills necessary for every vocational and technical education graduate in various areas to possess according to Osuala (1995) include sales and marketing skills, financial know-how skills, self-motivation skills, time management skills, administrative skills, technical skills, human relation skills and conceptual skills. Amesi, Wogboroma & Nwokocha (2008) asserted that acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies to equip the individual to live, be self-reliant and contribute substantially to economic development of the society is conspicuously enshrined into the aims and objectives linked to Nigeria current philosophy of education. To realize these noble objectives is therefore the improvement of vocational and technical education curriculum to include entrepreneurship skills.

Prospects of Entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education

Osuala (1999) views entrepreneurship as a process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and combining them with managerial and organizational skills to create wealth. It fosters industrial and commercial development thereby promoting sustainable livelihood and national development. Entrepreneurship education is aimed at developing an enterprising mindset on the recipients of the education called students. Entrepreneurship education also infuses skills, competencies, knowledge, attitudes, values and ethics that enable the students leverage environment factors to build up a promising business after graduation. It also aims at empowering vocational and technical educators, eradicating unemployment and poverty as well as creating wealth.

Entrepreneurship education is designed to educate the students of vocational and

technical education on skills necessary to access all economic resources. It teaches how to recognize and evaluate business opportunities, business organization and management, financial planning and credit management, proper record keeping and marketing. It is also capable of transforming the lives of recipients as they bring the knowledge and skills they acquire to bear on their means of livelihood. The motivational effect of the higher economic status is capable of empowering the recipients to take their destiny in their hands and reduce the dependence on their parents and relatives. Isike and Ovekaemo (2008) summarized the prospects of entrepreneurship education to include:

- (a) It offers one opportunity to gain control over one's destiny.
- (b) Individual has opportunity to make profit maximally.
- (c) It gives one opportunity to contribute to the society and gain recognition.

Challenges facing Entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education

Although valuable lessons have been learned from best practices around the world, there is no formula for determining the optimal level of entrepreneurship education integration in the educational system and vocational and technical education in particular. Significant challenges that policymakers and planners, educators, education administrators and other stakeholders need to consider include:

1. **Problem of Quality and Adequate Personnel:** The quality of teaching entrepreneurship by the instructor is poor. This is because the quality is poor as well as being inadequate. This inadequacy has contributed to the poor quality of instruction which could not lead the recipients to acquire the entrepreneurship skills for employment and self-reliance.
2. **Instructional Facility Challenge:** The teaching and learning of entrepreneurship

should be carried out in the laboratory, where practical lessons could be enhanced. However, due to the poor instructional facilities, its incorporation in vocational and technical education program seems to yield no better result.

3. **Financial Challenge:** Any program requiring acquisition of practical skill is capital intensive. Poor finance of entrepreneurship teaching and training has dwindling effect on teaching of entrepreneurship.
4. **Assessment Procedures Challenge:** The assessment procedures adapted by teachers/lecturers do not really measure with the type of training received by the recipients.
5. **Large Class Size Challenge:** Due to large class size, effective entrepreneurship instruction could not be given since students are expected to carry out practical exercises for clearer and quick acquisition of skills for self-reliance in future.
6. **Awareness Creation Challenge:** Absence of awareness of the advantages of entrepreneurship in courses in higher institutions by students, teachers and institutional administrators is one of the major constraints to the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education
7. Inconsistency of government regulation and modern technological issues is unfavorable to the existing and potential entrepreneurs.
8. **Indigenous Teaching Material Challenge:** Incorporating entrepreneurship in vocational and technical education is an added advantage for students, since it equips students with saleable skills for self-reliance and employment. Absence of

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adequate indigenous teaching materials has caused ineffective instruction and poor skill acquisition by students.

Strategies for Effective Implementation of Entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education (VTE)

The following strategies are suggested for effective teaching and learning of entrepreneurship as being incorporated in vocational and technical education.

1. Decaying and obsolete facilities and equipment should be replaced and also repairs those ones requiring repairs.
2. Adequate and sufficient laboratories need to be set up and equipped for each of the areas of vocational and technical education for effective entrepreneurship instructions.
3. Supervision and monitoring services need to be strengthened in order to enhance effective entrepreneurial skills acquisition through attainment of vocational and technical education goals.
4. Financial supports enhance effective operation of the programme for the purpose of realizing the goal of VTE for self reliance and employment.
5. Management of the programme should be entrusted into the hands of competent and qualified persons for effectiveness in the implementation for entrepreneurship programme.
6. An administrator without administrative skills is a source of danger to the implementation of any programme. Therefore, administrators should be made to undergo additional training through workshop, seminars, part time to acquire necessary skills for effective administration.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship in vocational and technical education has the potential of equipping students with appropriate and acceptable skills which

could help in creating and generating employment opportunity. Since the present situation in Nigeria is full with numerous problems, it is vocational and technical education that could be adopted to redeem this country from the present predicament. Therefore, the effective implementation of the already integrated entrepreneurship in vocational and technical education is the answer. The unemployment in Nigeria would be solved if only the teachers employed to teach students for the acquisition of the requisite skills necessary for employment are committed to the development of the society.

Recommendations

In addition to the suggested strategies, the following recommendations are made to meet up with the challenges facing entrepreneurship in vocational and technical education.

1. The teachers should endeavour to teach and assist students in solving problems related to practical exercise in various departments of vocational and technical education programme.
2. There should be retraining of teachers in the various fields of vocational and technical education through retraining programmes particularly to those teachers embracing entrepreneurship education.
3. Students should be taught on how to become entrepreneurs and possess characteristics such as developing skills that may contribute to entrepreneurial behaviour; assessing the opportunities and ideas and planning the venture through using as many available tools as possible after graduation.
4. Content of entrepreneurship instruction in vocational and technical education at both NCE and degree programmes in higher institutions should be revived and expanded by the curriculum planners and designers.

5. Credit hours allocated to entrepreneurship instruction should be increased from present one contact hour to three contact hours per week.

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