

# INTEGRATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION INTO THE VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES: AN INGREDIENT TO ENHANCE THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

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## **Abstract**

*The development of entrepreneurship/vocational and technical education in any society or country depends on the quality of human and material resources available. Unemployment and migration of youth from one place to another constitute great challenges to the nation's development and effective control of crime wave. Entrepreneurship/vocational and technical education in a society serves as a panacea to unemployment. Both types of education provide the much needed practical and entrepreneurial skills for self employment which contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction. The paper discusses how economic and technological advancement of a country depends on the development in science and vocational/technical/ technology education. Integration of entrepreneurship education with vocational and technical education as an instrument per excellence for equipping individuals with knowledge skills and to curb unemployment was discussed. Recommendations on measures and requirements to facilitate the integration of entrepreneurship education and vocational/technical education were proffered.*

## **Academic Excellence**

Entrepreneurship/vocational and Technical education are essential ingredients needed for the actualization of the transformation agenda of the present administration in Nigeria. Jinghan (2007) stated that entrepreneurship education, be it formal or non-informal is to prepare and equip the recipient to be useful to himself and his society. It is to give individuals the desired skills that would help them to be responsible citizens in order to develop themselves and their nation technologically. Whatever the form of economic and political set-up of the country, entrepreneurship education is essential for economic development.

The national policy on Education (2004) defines technical and vocational education as those aspects of education process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (FRN, 2004). It could be understood from this definition that vocational and technical education gives its recipients an opportunity to acquire practical

skills as well as some basic scientific knowledge. The emphasis is on attainment of practical skills and knowledge, and its application.

Products of Vocational and Technical education from schools, colleges, polytechnics or Universities in the past were almost certain to get one form of paid employment or the other immediately after graduation (Ekwue 2002). But on the contrary, the opportunity is no longer there for the present generation of graduates of these vocational/technical institutions. Because according to Odigbo and Owosey (2005), the labour market is over saturated and the private sector expected to be alternative job providers are downsizing. These are indicators which have proven that technical education graduates are in a state of dilemma. Entrepreneurship training in vocational and technical education could provide solution to this problem. It is therefore essential to integrate entrepreneurship education with vocational and technical education to provide the much needed practical skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial skills for self reliance and nation building.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

The term “entrepreneurship” has been defined variedly by scholars. Koa and Stevenson (1984) defined entrepreneurship as an attempt to create value through recognition of business opportunity, the management of risk taking appropriate to the opportunity and through the communicative and management skills to mobilize human, financial and material resources necessary to bring a project to function.

Kibly (as cited in Inegbenegbor, 1989) defined entrepreneurship in the simplest form as willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunity to establish and run an enterprise successfully. Similarly Histrich (2002) sees entrepreneurship as the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying ~~financial, psychological and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction.~~ *Integration of Entrepreneurship Education Into...* Till date, the definition of Koa and Stevenson (1984) seems to be the most elaborate and acceptable definition of entrepreneurship and it is most suited to the purpose of this paper. It focuses on creativity and the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction by an individual which is one important attribute required by the teeming population of the unemployed to survive in this era of saturated labour market.

The response of Nigeria government to youth unemployment has mostly been vocationalisation of school programmes thus building on the principle that if the youth are provided with skills they would find jobs. But this did not help matters much. Reports about the impact of the vocationalised programmes have been mixed with most of these reports indicating that unemployment continues to be high in spite of these initiatives.

In economics, all human resources involved in paid employment for the production of goods and services are generally referred to as “Labour”. These are however a form of human input which because of its special significance, ranks differently and in superiority to labour. This is “entrepreneurial ability” found in an entrepreneur usually with the following characteristics:

1. The entrepreneur takes the initiative in combining the resources of land, capital and Labour in the production of goods or services.
2. The entrepreneur has the choice of making basic business policy decisions, that is those non-routine decisions that set the course of a business enterprise.
3. The entrepreneur is an innovator- the person who attempts to introduce on a commercial basis new products, new productive techniques, or even new forms of business enterprises. It involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for personal self reliance on an “individual” level. Ikoku (as cited in Nwaokolo 1997) opined that entrepreneurship is the right and ability to serve one’s own goals and realizing them as much as possible through one’s efforts using

one's factors. The personal or individual self-reliance efforts when put together transforms into national self-reliance because when the individual is gainfully productive through self-employment, the Gross National Product (GNP) is enhanced and the income per capita is also enhanced.

### **The Concept of Vocational and Technical Education**

The National Policy on Education (1998) defines technical education as “that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge” Practical and applied skills have to do with the use of hands in doing and designing simple usable formats and constructions while scientific knowledge is the discovery of new things. It also involves invention and at the same time thinking of improving on the old system of invention to serve as manipulative scientific technique for daily use of man. ~~It is a system of education designed for the lower tertiary level to prepare middle level personnel for instance, technicians and middle level management personnel and up to university level to prepare engineers and technologists for higher management positions. Technical education includes general education, theoretical scientific and technical studies and related skills training. The components of technical education may vary considerably depending on the type of personnel to be prepared and the educational level involved. The National Policy on Education (1998) also defined vocational education as “that form of education which is obtained in the technical colleges”. However, the revised edition of the same document, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), viewed vocational education as a term referring to those aspects of education process in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills and attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. What is obvious from the above definition is the components of vocational education which include technical education, business education, home economics and computer education as well as many other trades such as printing and beauty culture as described in the policy document. It is therefore logical to assert that there exist relationships between vocational and technical education.~~

The major difference between the two terms is that whereas vocational education is designed for a particular vocation, technical education does not target any particular vocation, but gives general technical knowledge. Thus, while every vocational education programme is technical in nature, not all technical education programmes are vocational. The subtle relationship accounts for the interchangeable use of both terms in academic literature.

By these definitions therefore vocational and technical education seeks to empower the individual to be self reliant and in accordance with the goals of the National Policy on Education (1998), the objectives of vocational technical education are:

- (i) To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.
- (ii) To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- (iii) To give an introduction to professional studies in the field of engineering and other technologies.
- (iv) To give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant and;
- (v) To enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexities of technology.

It is pertinent to note that vocational and technical education as entrenched in the National Policy on Education is concerned with qualitative human resource development. This is directed towards formation of a national pool of skilled and self-reliant crafts people, technicians, and technologists in technical and vocational fields in academic institutions. The two key phrases which readily come to mind in this type of education are skills and sound scientific knowledge (Salihu, 2010). This type of education provides the ability to use ones hands and machines for production, maintenance and it guarantees self reliance.

### **The Purpose of Entrepreneurship/Vocational and Technical Education**

Vocational and technical education is a body of knowledge, skills and procedures for doing things. It incorporates the total learning experiences offered in our educational institutions and includes among other things, abilities, to make matured judgments and it creates goods and services in the area of business education, industrial technical education, home economics education, Agricultural education, fine and applied art education.

The training for entrepreneurship must be carried out in addition to the usual skills training in any of the vocational and technical areas. Perhaps it is important to stress that in a period of mass unemployment and declining economic fortunes, only the best individuals can survive. Therefore, there should be no compromise as far as skill acquisition is concerned (Nwaokolo 1997). Entrepreneurship is all about self-reliance which involves identification of a market and mobilizing necessary resources to serve the market through a business outfit (Aluwong, 2004). It also equips a person adequately to undertake business enterprises and therefore create employment for himself and for others. The essence of entrepreneurship education is to equip a man to be self employed rather than being a job seeker. The purpose of these types of education put together is to curb unemployment, promote economic and technological advancement, and to ensure self reliance of individual citizens in particular and the nation in general.

### **Integration of Entrepreneurship into Vocational Technical Education**

There are various agencies and organizations both national and international, governmental and non-governmental that aid and assist in vocational and technical training, and skills acquisition leading to the formation of vocational technical oriented enterprises. These mark the integration of entrepreneurship and vocational technical education all geared to massive production of goods and services and reduced unemployment among the teeming population of the Nigerian youth. Entrepreneurship provides a systematic framework to enhance the objective of vocational technical education. These involve information, management, opportunity, finding, creativity, financial or capital, environment, nature, personality etc. and all these are aimed at actualizing the objectives of vocational and technical education in the country and it guarantees self-reliance.

Curriculum planners and policy makers ought to move a step further by blending together concepts, principles, and content of entrepreneurship education with context, applications and skills from vocational areas such as industrial technical education. This approach exhibits the potential to reinforce the pupils acquisition of basic and higher-order entrepreneurial skills. The objective is to enhance the rigor and completeness of training in various technical occupations and also to renew the way in which ~~both entrepreneurship and vocational education are delivered. This strategy is therefore~~ in contrast with the current method of teaching entrepreneurship education as a separate subject in vocational and technical education programmes.

### **The Need for Entrepreneurship/Vocational and Technical Education**

Education in Nigeria is very vital especially that of technical and vocational education. The Nigeria system of education was modeled around the British system of education before and immediately after their departure to mark the end of colonialism. This system was latter discarded for the 6-3-3-4 system of education which is synonymous to American model or pragmatic style of education. The Nigerian government adopted the pragmatic model due to reasons such as:

- (i) The ability of the American or pragmatic style of education to empower its recipients by equipping them with a life-long career.
- (ii) The 6-3-3-4 system of education was seen as a remedy to the problem of dropouts: it is because this system of education has been broken down into four different categories, the first is six years primary school education, followed by three years junior secondary, three years senior secondary

and four years tertiary education. It provides opportunity for school pupils to acquire basic vocational and technical skills right from tender age.

- (iii) The need for trained manpower for job opportunities without having to train them a fresh due to the skills they have already acquired at an institution such as the technical college.

Although Vocational and Technical Education was meant for the betterment of our youth to acquire skills in order to be self-reliant, it is based on the above reasons advanced that 6-3-3-4 system of education was introduced into the school system. The introduction came with the inclusion of vocational and technical education programme in the curriculum. Although the programme was not a success in any way due to reasons advanced by Nkoni (as cited in Buba, 2005). The programme has failed due to the following reasons:

- (i) The low status accorded technical education was a major point of concern.
- (ii) Inferior status accorded to diploma courses in relation to other degree programmes.
- (iii) Lack of sensitization on the part of government to the people with regard to the importance of vocational/technical education makes them not to participate in the programme, thus making the programme an object of criticism.
- (iv) It lacked the needed supervision on the part of government
- (v) The education generally lacked adequate attention and the government still does not seem to adequately finance it and so many other adverse factors contributed to the failure of the programme.
- (vi) Although the National Board for Technical Education was established to supervise and coordinate ~~technical education among other things, it lacked the empowerment to perform its roles effectively.~~  
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However through the promotion of vocational and technical education, skills such as tailoring, hair dressing, carpentry, building, dyeing, welding, etc can be acquired and such services would be much needed in the present day society for self reliance.

## **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that Nigeria could attain sustainable development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through vocational and technical education. Therefore for effective and sound promotion of vocational and technical education, government should create an enabling environment for the integration of the two programmes so as to provide opportunity for the teeming population of younger generation of Nigerians to be self-reliant. This can be achieved if entrepreneurship and vocational/technical education is accorded the attention it deserves. The integration of both types of education will pave way for the inculcation of a higher order entrepreneurial skills thus promoting self-reliance and as well curtailing unemployment. Through these efforts Nigeria would achieve the desired development in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations were proffered.

- (i) Government should ensure that there is adequate trained manpower that would man the integration of the two programmes.
- (ii) Government should ensure that the programme is well implemented through constant supervision and monitoring.
- (iii) The National Board for Technical Education should ensure effective coordination, monitoring and supervision of all aspects of vocational and technical education at all levels of education in the country.
- (iv) The implementation of the integrated programme (entrepreneurship/ vocational and technical education) should be backed by a legislative act at the national level. This will make it binding on all stakeholders, which include, federal, state and local government administration.
- (v) There should be good incentives for both the trainers and trainees
- (vi) Soft loans should be provided for those that have successfully completed vocational and technical educational programmes to enable them establish on their own.

- (vii) The required facilities such as equipment and materials should be made available so that the needed skills can be effectively acquired by recipients of vocational and technical education programmes.

### Academic Excellence

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