
Entrepreneurial and Functional Vocational Education as a Means of Achieving the National Objectives of Vision 20:2020 in Nigeria

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Abstract

Vocational education if effectively managed will produce competent craftsmen and technicians capable of self employment but most often fail because of lack of entrepreneurship education. To be successful, such people need knowledge of business investment and operations (entrepreneurship education), not just the acquisition of functional vocational skills. This paper therefore presented the entrepreneurial and functional vocational education as a means of achieving the National objectives of vision 2020 in Nigeria. To achieve this, attempts were made to explain, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, sustenance of functional vocational education through entrepreneurship education; rationale for entrepreneurship education in functional vocational education, the complementary nature of entrepreneurship education and socio-economic effects of entrepreneurship education which in turn would lead to quality entrepreneurial and functional vocational education advancements in Nigeria will be guaranteed by the year 2020.

Introduction

Entrepreneur means different things to different people. Generally an entrepreneur is a person who takes the commercial risk of starting up and running a business enterprise.

Sirooplis (1982), saw entrepreneurs as men and women who create venture from the raw material of their own ideas and hard work. Osuala (1995), observed that what is unique about entrepreneurs is that they possess characteristics which give them fortitude to continue despite obstacles and ability to cope effectively in ever changing situations. Elizabeth (2005), stated that an entrepreneur is a person who is self employed, he is called the owner of small business firm because he has chosen to

assume risk, identify business opportunities, gather resources or initiate action and establish business organisation to meet some demand of the market opportunities.

Though each of these definitions view entrepreneur from a slightly different perspective, they all contain similar notion such as newness, organizing, creating wealth and risk bearing. It therefore, implies that an entrepreneur can be said to be a person that is determined to:-

- be self – employed instead of seeking for whom to employ him or her.
- combine other factors of production to create products and services.
- take the risk of loosing or succeeding in an enterprise.
- identify new business opportunities.
- be creative and innovative.

In as much as entrepreneur is describing the person, who takes the risk, entrepreneurship talks about the skills abilities, efforts, actions, processes or sometimes the enterprise itself. Ihekwoaba (2007), defined entrepreneurship as a process of contributing to the social and economic development of the society. Steinhoff and Burgess (1983), stated that entrepreneurship occurs when an individual develops a new business, or venture, a new approach to an old business idea or a unique way of giving the market place a product or service by using resource in a new way under conditions of risks. Meredith, Nelson and Nech (1991), stated that entrepreneurship involves the capabilities to find and evaluate opportunity, gather the necessary resources and implement action to take advantage of the opportunities.

Entrepreneurship education is therefore a specialized training given to individuals who acquire such knowledge to acquire the skills, ideas and the managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment rather than being employed by others. According to Akintola (1993), quoting U.S. Colorado Educators; entrepreneurship education is defined as a programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation and or operation of small-scale business.

From the point of view of the writers, entrepreneurship education is the type of education that seeks to prepare people especially youths, to be responsible enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. In entrepreneurship education, students are immersed in real life learning experiences where they have the opportunities to take risks, manage the results and learn from the outcomes. It therefore provides entrepreneur with the skills of entrepreneurship.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education. The objectives of entrepreneurship education are listed to include the following:-

- to provide graduates with enough training that will make them to be creative and innovate in identifying new business opportunities.
- to provide college graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing more possible and easy.

- to give the younger graduates training and support to establish a career in small and medium size businesses.
- to provide the graduates with training skills that will enable them meet the manpower needs of the society.
- to stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
- to provide meaningful education for the youth to be self-reliant and encourage them to derive profit and to be self dependent or self-employed.
- to provide business enterprise both small and medium the opportunity of recruiting graduates who will be trained and tutored in the skills relevant to the management of small business centers (Elizabeth, 2005).

Recently; there is explosion of knowledge in Entrepreneurial and functional Vocational Education. It exposes learners to some aspects of educational development which in turn, leads to realization of vision 2020 in Nigeria. What then is vision 2020?

The highlight of vision 2020 with respect to Nigeria is as follows:

- to make Nigeria one of top industrialized economy in the world by the year 2020.
- to have zero tolerant corruption
- to address tension in Niger Delta sub-region.
- to arrest power failure in Nigeria.
- to be father of all irrespective of political, ethnic groups you belong to.
- to make all political office holders servant leaders. To be a listening government.
- to have a clear separation of power without interfering in the activities of other arms of government.
- to make Nigeria the financial hub of Africa by the year 2020 with regards to the vision Functional Vocational Education is vital as a means of acquisition of different kinds of knowledge and skills.

Entrepreneurship Education and Sustenance of Functional Vocational Education

Vocational Education emphasizes acquisition of knowledge and skills and the application of scientific laws in solving business problems and providing services to the society. It thus has the potential to make people self-reliant.

Anyakaoha (1997) stated that today's educational policies highlight self employment, gainful employment etc and a person can be gainfully and self employed when he/she has acquired the necessary skills. There is therefore no gain saying that the entrepreneurship education based on it's competency tend to suggest that when adequately trained graduates are expected to perform at an acceptable level and provide such services for which people will be willing to benefit. Some of the choices open to such graduates may include self-employment which will enable them benefit from their hard work and creativity.

The goal of entrepreneurship is to take advantages of the national environment, the advancement and to engage individuals in profitable living and to defeat hunger and suffering. In essence, Vocational Education by this, acquires additional relevance when complemented with entrepreneurial education. Suffice it to say that the acquisition of vocational skills does not really achieve the objectives of vocational education; it therefore requires the skills of entrepreneurship to transform vocational dreams to reality in form of operational business enterprises.

Rationale for Entrepreneurship and Functional Vocational Education

The anticipated role of functional Vocational Education for Nigeria can best be understood by examining the content of the objectives of functional Vocational Education.

According to Osuala (1987); the following recommendations were made for a National plan for functional Vocational Education for Nigeria by the Comparative Vocational Education Committee in a seminar held in (1986) in the content and objectives of functional Vocational Education in Nigeria.

- to provide Vocational literacy to all pupils (preparing all pupils for life in a vocational age).
- to help develop the right attitude towards work and the habits of mind conducive to the proper use of functional vocational education.
- to provide adequate functional Vocational Education orientation and preparation for advanced professional education and training in functional vocational education.
- to equip school learners with skills to earn a living.
- to stimulate and encourage creativity and
- to provide the awareness that vocational does not only solve problems but creates some as well.

To achieve the above, the report stressed that:

- the need for Vocational Education to form part of general education for all secondary school students, irrespective of future career orientation.
- the Vocational Education should provide orientation and preparation for those having the aptitude and desire to pursue advanced Vocational Education in higher institutions of learning and
- that Vocational Education should provide orientation and basic skills to start life in the world of work.

Some of these objectives tend to suggest occupational endeavours outside paid employment. Since success in entrepreneurship very much depends on possession of necessary skills most of which may be vocational in nature, terms such as work, skill, productivity, employability and self-employment have become important features of entrepreneurship education.

Additionally, Vocational Education is for those who want it, who need it, and can profit from it. It is for the mature people who have definite choice in terms of what they want and are motivated by such endeavour. Since motivation is cardinal to entrepreneurship endeavours, vocational students need entrepreneurship more than those outside vocational education (Uzodinma, 1997). This can be demonstrated in the operations of some small-scale businesses. Their owners very much depend on their abilities, skills and creativity in producing things, or provision of service to people. In this regard, Vocational Education programme actually requires the incorporation of entrepreneurial education to offer a range of opportunities to its students.

The implication of the entrepreneurial education as part of functional vocational education programme is that it will not only expand the curriculum content of functional vocational education programme of various colleges and institutions of higher learning but will create more opportunities to the beneficiaries of the programme.

Functional Vocational Education and Entrepreneurship Education as Complementary Parts

To be effective in preparing student for changing society and workplace, functional vocational education must extend beyond delivery of occupational knowledge, job skills and work experience. It must offer students incentive for thinking creativity about an industry and broaden their understanding of the career opportunities afforded in the industry. Entrepreneurship education offers students such opportunities by helping them anticipate and responds to changes (Lankard 1991). Students learn that although a job may be successfully accomplished today by performing a given set of tasks, tomorrow an entirely different set of tasks (and skills) may be required because business are always changing, so workers need to find new ways to do a given job better.

Since entrepreneurship education affords students opportunity of helping them anticipate and respond to change, it implies that it complements the sustainability of functional vocational education and they are therefore complementary to each other.

Entrepreneurship Education in Functional Vocational Education (New Direction): Its Socio-Economic Effect

Functional Vocational Education has its major objective or effecting skill development in order to enable an individual secure employment in an occupation and to progress in it. The traditional emphasis has been to work for someone else, after graduation. This appears inhibitive to other life endeavours. Functional Vocational Education is oriented towards self sufficiency through endeavours associated with the acquisition of relevant and sufficient skills in other to become creative, logical and productive. When functional Vocational Education is integrated with entrepreneurial education, a new direction is established which will give utilitarian approach to education. Entrepreneurship as a vital ingredient in socio-economic development is

needed to rid Nigeria of its economic woes and attainment of vision 2020 will be a reality. Little wonder, Nzere in (1992), saw functional Vocational Education as playing the roles of training and imparting the necessary skills to produce craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who would be enterprising self reliant. Therefore, functional Vocational and Technical Education through entrepreneurship education will be the steps not only to produce job seekers but also job creators. This is very important especially in a situation where people after graduation fail to be employed. A case in point is the present day Nigeria where benefits derivable from some paid employment are on precarious decline. It is this ugly side of paid employment in Nigeria that has made Mr. Udoka to resign his job for self employment, Udoka (1991), in the National Concord newspaper stated that on Tuesday August 27 1991)

--- I have always wished to be able to do for myself what ever I do for my employer. I required some machines and employed one tailor. I have been able to prove myself despite the hard period I started with one machine: I use my home as office, but now I have a branch office apart from one here--- Government said we should look inwards and I did and provided employment for some people". (Osagie 1992).

There is no doubt that this new direction, "looking in words" is no other thing than thinking entrepreneurially which will not only sustain the functional vocational skills (tailoring) of the man but employed some other people. The multiplier effect of this will turn the economy positively.

From the illustration above, there is no gain saying the fact that there is need to attain vision 2020 in Nigeria through entrepreneurship and functional vocational education.

Entrepreneurship education is the type of training given to individuals to acquire skills, ideas and the managerial abilities and capabilities for self employment and skill acquisition. On the bases of this, entrepreneurship education could imperatively be seen as a major component of functional Vocational Education which lays emphasis on job skill acquisition and application.

It therefore implies that's entrepreneurship education gives more relevance and sustenance to Vocational Education. When these are appropriately applied they will reduce unemployment by making more people self employed or employable, thus improving their socio-economic status by making majority of Nigerians engage in meaningful businesses.

Conclusion

Functional Vocational Education is designed to produce competent crafts men, technicians and technologists who can contribute meaningfully to the socio economic development of the nation. There is, therefore, the need for such programmes to be well developed not only in terms of competency but also in terms of relevance in

meeting the needs of graduates whose disposition may include to self-employment. Entrepreneurship education moves graduates away from seekers of job to creators of jobs. Entrepreneurship education therefore gives more relevance and sustenance to functional Vocational Education and students who acquire such knowledge that is quantitative and qualitative should be able to develop business models that will yield to both public and private ventures for attainment of vision 2020

Recommendation

In view of the forgoing, it is hereby recommended that;

- the newly introduced entrepreneurship education in the school curriculum should be sustained by subsequent government to ensure that it achieves its desired objectives.
- entrepreneurship education can and should be integrated at all levels of our educational system not only at university level; but as a life-long learning process.
- teaching/learning environment and facilities should be made conducive and available to enable learners acquire saleable skills that can qualify them for self-employment.
- government should set up a soft loan scheme or grant (Entrepreneurship Education fund EEF) to assist entrepreneurship graduates who want to be self employed. This should be monitored to ensure its success and see that the loan is paid back in good time.
- teachers or facilitators should emphasize functionalism in their instruction on entrepreneurship training rather than certificate in order for Nigeria to attain vision 2020.

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