

# ENTREPRENEURIAL AND FUNCTIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF VISION 2020

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## **Abstract**

The importance of functional entrepreneurship and technical education towards achieving national objectives cannot be over emphasized. Looking at the curriculum of vocational and technical education, the objectives geared towards practical and applied skills acquisition and inclusion of entrepreneurial education. It is the bed-rock of national development in the area of science and technology, through which the entire populace will change to positive thinking. This type of education is an essential component for all round technological development in a developing economy. The paper tried to give various definitions of entrepreneurship, qualities, challenges and mapping strategies and offers some viable suggestions and conclusion were made.

## **Introduction**

Technical education is that type of education which deals with development of abilities, understanding attitudes, work habits and appreciation needed by a worker to enter into and progress in an employment in a useful and productive basis. The National Policy on Education (2004) defined Technical education as education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. It includes general education, scientific, technical studies and related skilled training. The components of technical education may vary considerably depending on the type of personnel to be prepared and the educational levels. Others have seen it as that type of education mean to a living in an occupation. Vocational – Technical Education is a generic term embracing all the experiences an individual needs to prepare for some useful occupation.

Hornby (2001) saw it as that education which has to do with the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for gainful employment which is designed to fit individuals for gainful employment in recognized occupation on semi-skilled workers or technicians or sub-professionals.

## **Who is an Entrepreneur?**

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (1993) defined entrepreneur as one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise. While Schumpeter (1999) defined entrepreneur as the prime mover in economic development; and an entrepreneur's function is to innovate, or carry out new combination. He is also very clear about what the entrepreneurship is. Casson (1982) defined entrepreneur as a person who organizes and manages a commercial undertaking. He further explained that land, labour, finance, material resources and technology have to be combined in a particular way in order to ensure optimum results. He also attempted to identify entrepreneur as someone who specializes in taking judgmental decision about the allocation of scarce resources.

### **What is Entrepreneurship?**

Entrepreneurship is the transformation of an innovation into a sustainable enterprises that generate values. Entrepreneurship is any entity, new or existing that provides a new product or service that develop, produce or deliver existing goods and services at lower cost. Entrepreneurs innovate new ways of manipulating nature, and new ways of assembling and co-ordinating people. The innovator shows that a product, a process, or a mode of organization can be efficient and profitable, and that it elevates the entire economy. Entrepreneurs take risk to develop a sustainable enterprises – a new or improved product, service or mode of organization that can exist independent of its originator that benefits the economy and society.

Gana (1995) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunity in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities.

The Entrepreneurship centre at Miami University, Ohio, 2003 in Usman (2006) gave a comprehensive definition to entrepreneurship as the process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision to life. The vision may be an innovative idea, an opportunity or simply a better way to do something.

### **Qualities of an Entrepreneur**

According to Madu (2000) as cited in Victor (2009) in order to be effective an entrepreneur should possess the following qualities:

1. **Intelligent:-** The individual should be able to identify viable investment opportunities, being properly equipped mentally and physically in order to cope with the demands of the business environment
2. **Creative and Innovative:-** The individual has to develop new ideas, programme and create new markets
3. **Discipline and Humble:-** The entrepreneur should be a role model in his business activities with people and those who work with him. Generally, a disciplined individual should be a humble person. Humility enables the individual to be receptive to ideas, suggestions and complains from those who work with them.
4. **Friendly Relationship:-** The individual should be able to develop friendly relationship with everybody since as an entrepreneur, his activities demand that he knows and interact with different people.

An entrepreneur with these qualities will function effectively in his business venture.

### **Entrepreneurship in Vocational/Technical Education towards Achieving Vision 2020**

The post colonial education was not leading to production of scientists and technologists capable of utilizing creative and productive force for national development. It is in response to this lapse that the Federal Government produced the National Policy on Education (NPE) to guide the development of a responsive and productive quality education in Nigeria.

One of the significant thrusts of this policy is the incorporation of entrepreneurship in science and technology segment to boost the nation's economic development. To support this strategy, the government and institutions began to build in entrepreneurship education in school curriculum.

According to Garba (2009), Entrepreneurship is and should remain as part of our education endeavour mainly because of the followings: it is critical to understanding the succeeding in the contemporary global economy; it is already an expanding area of learning, it is becoming a basic part of what universities and challenges education themselves do; it seeks to meet many of the goals of quality technical education. He further observed that to neglect entrepreneurship therefore, is to make learning and education generally worthless to the world it is supposed to help. Entrepreneurship has long been overlooked as a topic of economy study, but recent scholars have underscored its leading role as major generator of wealth in contemporary economy.

The continual creation of new enterprises is a fundamental reason for economic growth and technological innovation of the Nigeria economy.

Entrepreneurship education is the road map for Nigerian education sector.

The 2009 road map for the nation's educational sector focuses on four priority areas i.e. Access and equity, standards and quality Assurance, Technical and Vocational education and training and funding recognizes education as the vital transformational tool and formidable instrument for socio-economic empowerment. The document clearly states the roles of tertiary institutions in achieving socio-economic empowerment through provision of effective Vocational Technical Education.

### **Challenges and Mapping Strategies**

The 1988 United Nations Education, scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International education case studies of selected countries revealed that many developing countries have embarked on processes of curriculum diversification and integration as a way of tackling unemployment and poor economic performance. It was obvious that continuous curriculum reforms are needed to improve the quality of Technical education system and students capacity for self employment. Such reforms must focus on procurement of infrastructure and infrastructural system delivery. Since Vocational Technical Education has remained a powerful instrument for tackling unemployment and poor economic performance, the instruction environment in vocational Technical institution should be redesigned to provide the kind of empowerment ability, skills and managerial competence needed for entrepreneurship engagement.

In establishing a business unit whether on the basis of proprietorship, partnership, private or public limited liability, basic considerations such as capital, choice of business and location factors need definite attention "many small scale business have failed due to lack of business experience, insufficient finance, wrong choice of location, business line, investment attitude and judgment" (Pauda 2001).

According to Nwamonadi and Emele (1988), business organizations and industries in Nigeria are seriously affected by environmental factors. These factors include political, socio-cultural, economical, technological and infrastructural problems.

In a related development, Owo (1992) associated the concept of entrepreneurship with challenges of establishing and operation of business enterprises viz, identification of investments opportunities, correct decision making, promotion and establishment of business, provision of scarce resources, require for production and distribution. Others include management of human and material resources

for attainment of the basic objectives, risk bearing and involving innovations in science and technology.

At institutional level, the issue of inadequacy of infrastructural facilities, workshop experiences, pedagogical activities, curriculum review efforts, industrial work experience, career guidance, relevant projects orientation motivation, research and development continuity, articulation soon remain major challenges towards achieving vision 2020 entrepreneurship education.

### **Role of Entrepreneur in Development of technical Vocational Education**

An entrepreneur is someone who is a prime mover in the economic development, someone who specializes in taking judgmental decisions about the allocation of scarce resources. Entrepreneurship can be develop in the school system through the establishment of better connections to other training agencies to provide more opportunities for structured, supervised work experiences. This will help to teach young people effective good work habits needed in order to succeed in the labour market.

Also with the help of entrepreneur, there shall be a clear link to youngsters for mastery of basic skills and expended career opportunities. With his aid, entrepreneurship centres, job counseling and placement services and career counselling centres can be establish in all institutions offering Vocational and Technical education. This is to help in guiding and counseling students in entrepreneurship opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

In making of successful entrepreneurial and functional technical education, it is paramount to begin with the lesson in elementary science and technology. It is functional education that lays the foundation of technological development in any country. Both the effectiveness and pace of entrepreneurship advancement of a nation depends on the quality and efficiency of its educational system.

### **Recommendation**

To succeed in the implementation of entrepreneurship education towards vision 2020, Nigeria must therefore consider and take special note of the following policy implications:-

- a. Enhance general and entrepreneurship specified education.
- b. Lessen the regulatory burden on new and small firms.
- c. Strike a balance between the need to protect the unemployed with the need to encourage higher levels of individual self sufficiency.
- d. Facilitate greater levels of female participation in business ownership.
- e. Compensate for gaps in the population age structure incases where there are projected decline in some specified age group i.e the group with the highest propensity of becoming entrepreneurship and
- f. Encourage tolerance of diversity in personal income and wealth.

Universities as well as other institutions of higher learning have key roles to play, whereas the role of government at various levels is to act as catalyst. It is the main agent who must plan the strategy, build the vision, mobilize key players, and commit resources to promote the emergence and development of new entrepreneurs and new dynamic entrepreneurs.

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