

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND FUNCTIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: A CATALYST FOR THE REALIZATION OF NATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF VISION 2020 IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship and Vocational education are globally accepted as means of acquiring skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for employment; thus can be considered as a base for the actualization of vision 2020. For the objectives of vision 2020 to be realized, Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education must play a vital role. It is the type of education that can be described as the intellectual laboratory of any nation and the engine that propels the economy of any nation. This is because all aspects of the productive sector of the national economy must be carried along. This paper therefore attempts to discuss the objectives of entrepreneurship and vocational education, vision 2020 objectives, the role of entrepreneurship and vocational education in realization of vision 2020. This paper concludes by making recommendations that adequate funding be made available for the running of this type of education in our higher institutions.

Introduction

In a developing country like Nigeria, there is need for a well articulated scientific and technological education to enable us achieves meaningful development economically, socially and politically. In fact, it has been worldwide accepted worldwide that the growth of any nation depends largely on the advancement of science and technology education.

According to Mathias (1990) the concept of technology education includes vocational education, technical education, engineering education and all other branches of learning including entrepreneurship education that seek to find solution to societal seemingly insoluble socio-economic problems.

For vision 2020 to realize its objectives, an appropriate kind of education has to be explored. That is the kind of education that prepares individuals for lifelong learning by arming him or her mentally and physically with entrepreneurial skills for effective participation in the world of work thereby empowering him or her to contribute to environmentally sound and sustainable development through his occupation and other areas of his life. The kind of education which trains learners to acquire skills, ideas and the managerial abilities and capabilities for employment and the kind of education that is gainful and an asset to national development. Indubitably, entrepreneurship and functional vocational education are the type of education that can translate the vision into reality.

Oranu (1992) posited that technology education is globally seen as the means of ensuring the production of adequate and appropriate productive manpower. He concluded that in countries like Britain, Japan, the United states of America, Germany, France etc, the study, research, development and entrepreneurship in technology and vocational technical education have led to the creation of resource base development and empowerment.

Definition of Concepts

Entrepreneurship Education

Paul (2005) defined entrepreneurship education as a specialized training given to students of vocational and technical education to acquire the skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment rather than being employed for pay.

According to Akintola (2001) in Osuala (2002) quoting U.S. Colorado educators as defining entrepreneurship education as “a programme or part of the programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation and or operation of small-scale business which include franchise operations for the purpose of performing all business functions relating to a product or service, with emphasis given to the social responsibilities, legal requirements and risk for the sake of profit involved in the conduct of a private business.

Vocational Education

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (1998) defined vocational Education as “that form of education which is obtained at the technical Colleges. It is equivalent to senior Secondary education but designed to prepare individuals to acquire practical skills, basic and scientific knowledge and attitudes required as craftsmen and technicians at the sub-professional level”.

The American Vocational Association in Okorie and Ezeji (1988) define Vocational Education as “Education designed to develop skills, work habits and appreciations encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis”.

According to Osuala (1995) there are seven areas of specialization in vocational education. These are: Vocational agricultural education, vocational business education, vocational Health Occupational education, vocational Home economic education, vocational industrial education, vocational distributive (marketing) education and vocational technical education.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education

Entrepreneurship Education

According to Paul (2005) specific objectives of entrepreneurship are:

- i. To provide meaningful education for the youths to be self-reliant and encourage them to derive profit and to be self-independent or self-employed
- ii. To provide graduates with enough training that will make them to be creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities
- iii. To provide College graduates with enough training in risk management, to make uncertainty bearing more possible and easy.
- iv. To give the young graduates training and support to establish a career in small and medium size business
- v. To provide the graduate with training in skills that will enable them meet the manpower needs of the society
- vi. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas
- vii. To provide business enterprises 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 centres.

There is also another programme set up by the National Directorate for employment (NDE) known as Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) with the following objectives.

- i. Producing or training more entrepreneurs that are needed to accelerate industrial enterprise
- ii. Improving the health of small scale industries by training and selecting more competent entrepreneurs to reduce the proportion of sick unit
- iii. Stimulating self-employment for the unemployed
- iv. Expansion of economic activities to rural and less developed areas
- v. Diversification of ownership of business.

Vocational Education

According to the National Policy on Education (2004). The objectives of vocational education are as follows:

- i. to provide trained manpower in applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels
- ii. To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development
- iii. to give training and impart necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

Both the objectives of entrepreneurship and vocational education are geared towards realization of vision 2020.

Vision 2020

This is a master plan designed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to improve the National Economy which was tagged “the financial system strategy otherwise known as the FSS 2020”. This was informed by the fact that all the commercial banks in the country lacked the capital base to support the National Economy to grow. The implication here is that the productive sector where science and technology are involved was not encouraged.

On July 14, 2004 the Central Bank introduced a 13 point banking sector reform agenda which among other things mandated the banks in the country to recapitalize to the tune of N25 billion by December 31, 2005 or face liquidation. Twenty (20) active banks emerged as a result of the reform and the banking sector in Nigeria has since changed for the better. The big banks are now financing multi-billion naira mega projects in oil and gas, manufacturing, telecommunication and other productive sectors of the economy. Other sectors addressed by the reform are the capital market (though in crises), foreign exchange, pension, insurance and mortgage. All these are expected to stimulate activity in the economy for self-sustenance.

Vision 2020 Objectives for Education

The Federal Ministry of Education came up with a ten year strategic plan in 2007 where it outlined the vision 2020 statement for the future of education in support of the National vision that by 2020 Nigeria will be one of the top 20 economies in the world.

The vision statement thus “Our vision is to “Become an emerging economic model, delivering sound education policy and management for public good” (FME 10 year strategic plan).

According to Obioma (2007) the educational goals towards realization of vision 2020 are:

- i. ensuring and sustaining unfettered access to education for the total development of the individual
- ii. Improving the quality of life at all levels
- iii. Using education as a tool for functional skill acquisition and job creation leading to poverty eradication
- iv. Ensuring periodic review and effective implementation of curriculum to meet the requirement for higher education and world of work.
- v. Mobilizing and developing public-private partnership to support and fund education
- vi. Promoting ICT capabilities at all levels
- vii. Entrench a value system that develops the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen.

According to Wonang (2008) in carrying out the mission of vision 2020 the government is to be guided by the following principles and values:

- a. that every Nigerian shall have a right to equal educational opportunity irrespective of gender, social status, age, religion, ethnic background, geographical location and any peculiar
- b. identify, develop and respond to individual needs, talents and aspirations
- c. Nurture the mind and inculcate the right values and morals that provide life-long learning.
- d. Provide education that is relevant in terms of knowledge and skills to the needs of the Nigerian economy in the 21st century.
- e. Ensure the provision of learner-friendly environment.
- f. Motivates by promoting and providing incentives for students, teachers, education personnel and other stake-holders.
- g. Provides an excellent work environment, good working condition and continuous professional development for all concerned.
- h. Ensures the dissemination of educational data and information for good governance and provide opportunity for partnership with all stake-holders.

The Role of Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education in Realization of Vision 2020

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of our economy and therefore it plays the following roles in the development of any nation:

- i. Entrepreneurship education equips youths to be innovative and to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, community, business and work opportunities, including working for themselves thereby creating employment.
- ii. Entrepreneurship education fosters economic development of a nation by encouraging the production of more goods and services (Paul 2005).
- iii. Entrepreneurship education helps to create new technologies products and services and also increases productivity.
- iv. Entrepreneurship education changes and regenerates market competition and also help in utilization of resources that would have otherwise remained idle (Paul, 2005).
- v. Vocational education prepares individuals for gainful employment as semi-skilled or skilled workers.
- vi. Vocational education contributes immensely to the development of our industries
- vii. Vocational education enhances agriculture and contributes to sustainable development.

All these roles are geared towards the realization of the national objectives of vision 2020 which states that our vision is to “Become and emerging economic model, delivering sound educational policy and management for public good”.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education can lead to realization of vision 2020 if properly implemented in our educational institution. It is a kind of education that seeks to prepare people to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real life learning experiences where they can take risks, manage the results and learn from the outcomes.

In fact, education is a major catalyst for the actualization of vision 2020. This is further buttressed by the National Policy on Education (1998) which states that education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. Therefore, there is need for functional education for realization of the National Objectives of vision 2020 in Nigeria.

Recommendations

In the light of the context of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The government should make adequate provisions of learning materials to schools with vocational education programmes, that is, relevant books and fully equipped laboratories and workshops for practical learning.
- ii. The government should take pragmatic steps towards infusing entrepreneurship education into the national curriculum for all levels of education.
- iii. There should be significant improvement in the funding of all technology driven courses in our institutions.
- iv. The government should ensure that the welfare and remuneration of teachers are enhanced moreso that the National Policy on Education strongly emphasized on production of conscientious and highly motivated teachers.
- v. Awareness campaign should be intensified to enlighten parents and society on the necessity to encourage their wards to choose courses that will lead to acquisition of entrepreneurial skills.
- vi. There should be retraining of the trainer to be abreast with emerging global modern trends through seminars, workshops and symposia.
- vii. The government should construct and rehabilitate existing academic facilities in our educational institutions.

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