

ESSENCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVING VISION 2020 IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:

Nigeria is endowed with vast human and economic potentials, but every concerted effort aimed at moving towards attainment of rightful position on functional educational perspectives that would eventually lead to the desired growth economically and technologically still remain a mirage. To merge this gap, the federal government has articulated a twenty years (1999-2020) development plan tagged “vision 2020”. Overtime, there was a belief that, the education sector with particular focus on vocational and technical education would solve the problem. However, in the current Nigeria with its problems of unemployment especially among the youths has made self-reliance to become imperative. This paper envisages that, the inclusion of entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education will play a complementary role in Nigeria, hence, the paper concludes and recommended among others that, adequate funding of entrepreneurship education is very essential.

Vision 2020 in Nigeria is a development agenda. Functional education is the most important factor in Nigeria’s quest to meet up these challenges by the year 2020. According to Mokweye (2009) “It has become a song in the mouth of human resource experts in the country and more serious nations of the world that no nation develops more than its human capital”. For this reason, countries all over the world invest a large portion of their budget on education. A nation that is not able to develop her people’s skills and knowledge and make them nationally conscious can hardly improve any other aspects of her life.

Vision 2020 more than any development plan in Nigeria has attracted so much attention from both within and outside the borders of Nigeria. It is not surprising that this project has gathered so much momentum because, Nigeria has a great economic potential that is well recognized, nevertheless, successive governments, did not acknowledged its essence. This can be witnessed in the existence of abject poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, population explosion that hinders technological break through. This situation has been considered unacceptable by the recent past and current administrations hence, they have decided to map out a development plan aimed at attaining its full economic potentials to stand out among 20 largest economics in the world by 2020. For this vision to become a clear mental picture of the future which will represent a significant improvement on the current state, there is need for increased awareness among Nigerians of obvious necessity for self employment and self-reliance. The type of educational pursuit that can be strategized to bring about the objectives of this move is Vocational and Technical Education, in practice.

Technological advancement is the requisite tool needed to enhance development because the purpose of education is not mere intellectual development, but the ability to put the intellect to work in practical terms. This has been the missing link in educational efforts. The earlier, explore the options that other nations like the Asian countries have used, the better for us. One of such key options has been the inclusion of entrepreneurial education in school system. This view is supported

by Ugwu (2007), when he stated that, education no doubt, is at the heart of development and that education develops an individual by equipping him both intellectually and vocationally to face the realities of life in the larger society, hence, the inclusion of entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education is a target to achieve vision 2020 in Nigeria.

Concept of Vision 2020

A vision is a clear mental picture of the future which must represent a significant improvement in the physical. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2006), defined vision as "the ability to see; the area that you can see from a particular position". This dictionary further envisaged that, "vision 20-20 is the ability to see perfectly". A vision therefore, is an idea of what you think something should be like. If the vision sees a brighter and better future, a concise direction must be drawn to follow with genuine and purposeful efforts for its attainment.

The Nigeria Vision 2020 postulates that, by the year 2020 Nigeria will be one of 20 largest economics in the world, that would be able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa and establish itself as a significant player in the global economic and political arena. According to Eje (2010), Vision 2020 is hinged on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nation which was a blue print containing the resolution of 189 countries and 147 head of state in September 2000. The aim of MDGs was centered on eradication of global poverty by 2015 (Scott, 2006). But in Nigeria, the federal government felt that the time was inadequate to meet up with the 2015 target before the emergence of the orchestrated year 2020 during which she hopes to be counted among the top 20 world economics. Meeting these national objectives, there is a dire by Nigerian government to transform and effectively plan towards the growth of the national economy. This will therefore means improving the educational sector especially Vocational and technical education to initiate the spirit of creativity in an individual which can enable him/her to become self-reliance.

The United Kingdom's department for international development had stressed the importance of education in national development in its 2002 annual report thus:

...Education is at the heart of development, the countries which made greatest progress in reducing poverty in recent decades are those which have combined effective and equitable investment in education with sound economic polities. Education enables people use and extend their capabilities, develop skills, improve their live hood and increase their earning potential (Eje 2010).

It is essential to realize that functional education is capable of improving an individual via all round review of objectives that are important to human life and development, hence these characteristics are seen as major factor that can catapult Nigeria to achieve the objectives of vision 2020.

Vocational and Technical Education and Entrepreneurship

Technological advancement is the tool for development, because the purpose of education is not mere intellectual development, but the ability to put the intellect into action. For a nation to become developed and great, it needs a good number of people in science, Technology and Vocational Education. According to Osuala (1981), the major vocational areas are Vocational Agriculture, Business education, Health occupation, Trade and Industrial education and Technical

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education. These are skillful courses that need adequate orientation on entrepreneurial education to improve economic and manpower development in Nigeria.

Vocational and Technical Education are like twins. Many educators use them interchangeably. This may be as a result of the fact that, Vocational education is usually obtained from technical institutions or that the line, of demarcation between the two is some how difficult to draw. In this line, Wisdom (2002) joined and defined the two concepts together. He further postulated that, "Technical and Vocational education is that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skilled as well as basic scientific knowledge". This definition is in line with Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) which defined Vocational and Technical Education as the educational process involving the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills: attitude and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

Eru (2007) maintained that Vocational and Technical Education is an education designed for experts in the field of education to prepare individuals to acquire practical skills, basic and scientific knowledge and attitude required as crafts men and technicians at sub-professional and even professional level.

These definitions clearly distinguished Vocational and Technical education from general education in the sense that, vocational education must be functional in nature, it should lead to skill acquisition in a vocational area. It is the aspect of education that aims at the development of human abilities in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding, so that the individual may serve happily and efficiently in carrying out the activities deemed fit in the vocational pursuits or choice.

Skill acquisition is very important among our youths, because it helps in developing intrinsic potentials in individuals. Skill is the ability to do something expertly and well. It is an organized sequence of actions, proficiency, executed and usually displays a flexible but systematic temporal patterning (Okorie 2000). The development of skill is an important function of educational institutions. To this effect, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) opined that there are roles Vocational and Technical education can play in individuals in satisfying the manpower needs of the nation. To attain this lofty aim, the tenet of the paper is envisaging on the inclusion of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship according to Inegbenebor as cited in Umamelye (1994) is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. This means that, an entrepreneur should have the ability to control a business through which he/she is self-reliant. An entrepreneur is a man or women of action, is an individual who undertakes self-directed initiatives and assumes personal risks in creating and operating a profit-oriented business. Anozie (2006) observed that an entrepreneur organizes the other factors of production such as land, labour and capital, He/she has the initiative, organizational and administrative ability.

The most important qualities of an entrepreneur as noted by Ogudo and Igbo (2004) are the ability to make correct judgment and the desire to be victorious.

Onah (2002) added that, an entrepreneur is a man or woman who dreams of an idea or issue, which have many dimensions of development. The personality has the expertise or the management capability to develop ideas into fruition. Meludu (1998) explained that, an entrepreneur is one who makes profit from his capacity to supply perceived needs. The particular area of activity according to him, depends on skills abilities and resources available to the individual.

In a nutshell, Vocational and Technical Education and entrepreneurship are inter-woven. Application of Vocational and Technical education in entrepreneurship serves as a tremendous advantage to increase the chances of success in our economic development, thus a target for achievement of the national objectives of vision 2020 in Nigeria.

Promoting Entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education

No meaningful development can exist without human development. According to Opata (1992), man occupies a great position in the environment and gives meaning and value to life either as it is lived or ought to be lived. Akipelu (1992) maintained that people are the subjects and objects of development. Nwosu (2005) pointed out that economic development has a lot to do with the technological level of the society. Without technologist, it is difficult for a society to develop. According to Haruna and Aliyu (2008).

...technology and vocational education includes trades and careers such as Building Construction, Wood Work, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Home economics, Hospitality, Auto Mechanical and engineering, Medical and Health Furniture, Garment and Designing, Business and Commercial, Construction and Manufacturing, Agriculture, Art and Crafts and all aspects of education that are occupation based and skill oriented.

Technology is very vital in achieving progress in a society, for it helps to modify the total person and changes him from a mere educated person to a cultured one with the skills and attitude to solve environmental economic and biological problems.

One of the socio-economic problems that exist in the Nigerian society is unemployment. Some of our youths who have graduated from schools, are seeking for paid jobs. Unemployment implies under utilization of human capital. It should be recalled that human resource is the most vital factor or resource in national development. This situation occasioned increase awareness in Nigerians of the need for self-employment and self-reliance (Analele, 2004). A means to self-reliance and self-employment is the existence of entrepreneurship. For entrepreneur to be an effective contributor to national development, his/her productivity needs to be enhanced through effective education. A definite link for promoting productivity of entrepreneurship is Vocational and Technical Education.

In most definitions of Vocational and Technical Education and entrepreneurship, there are some common aspects of behaviour that include creativity. Creative thinking according to Abe (2006) means, seeing ideas or objects in a different content either by recognizing their inherent potential to be used in a different or by putting previously unconnected ideas together to create something new.

It is obvious that, technological advancement is the tool to national development because the purpose of education is not just knowledge, but the ability to put what you learnt into practice. This has been the missing link in our educational pursuit. A technologist and Vocational Education graduate that are supposed to be self-reliant citizens, ready with all the potentials for dealings with virtually all developmental problems that can be defined and identified are also among unprofessional graduates seeking white-collar jobs. This is an aberration and it is one of the socio economic problems that hinders development. The inclusion of entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education reduces this.

Some years ago, we along with some countries like India and many other Asian countries were normally described as underdeveloped, but today the earlier realization of the inclusion of

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entrepreneurial spirit in their educational system catapulted them and they are much on the road to being described as developed country.

Idakwo (2008) explained that, economic models for development of yester years are being discarded in favour of entrepreneurship. If Nigeria wishes to achieve vision 2020, then the inclusion of entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education should be emphasized in our homes and schools to teach it and practice it. Vocational and Technical Education delivery systems are therefore, well placed to train the vocational skills and entrepreneurial work that Nigeria need, to create wealth in order to ameliorate the stigma of poverty.

One of the goals of Vocational and Technical Education is to provide employment. Individuals are trained to acquire entrepreneurial skills. Attainment of this will contribute to the enhancement of employment oriented skills training for Nigerian youths to access employment and income generating opportunities. This therefore means that Vocational Education promotes establishment of small and medium scale enterprises necessary for wealth creation and poverty reduction. It also fosters progress towards rendering equality and women's independence through the provision of skills training opportunities to the women. Similarly, Schwartz (1979) viewed entrepreneurship as an embodiment of different economy, different technology and different society characterized by ideas of wealth producing potentials and capacity expressed in a functional business action and behaviour.

Similarly, the challenge of globalization makes the adoption of entrepreneurial education very much imperative. Briggs (2008) opined that, globalization is a new historical reality that is propelled by knowledge and technological advancement. The rapid expansion of markets across national boundaries and socio-political effects it brings makes it vital for developing countries to prepare to take advantage of this by preparing our school children through entrepreneurial education and training to maximize their contribution. Thus, it is worthy of note that achieving vision 2020 objectives will remain a mirage unless the scheme is properly utilized in our educational sector.

Effects of Small Businesses in Economic Development

Small businesses have played substantial roles in socio economic development of many countries. Osuala (1995) and Nwachukwu (1990) observed that, small business have made significant contributions to the economic well being of Nigeria. According to Iheonunekwu (2003), the economic importance of entrepreneurship rests on the formation of small business units, and these businesses have high potentials for job creation. Osuala (1995) noted that small businesses account for about 50% of the employed work-force in Nigeria and about 45% of all goods sold.

In view of the percentage of work force employed by small business, Nwachukwu (1990) opined that small businesses employ about 70% of the work-force in the country. The variation in figures notwithstanding the underlying fact remains that small businesses are very important to the Nigerian economy. The situation is similar in several other countries. In the report of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris covering about 16 countries, small business accounted for 60% of the work-force in Ireland and 80% of the work-force in Japan (Lemchi 2005). Similarly, Venderhaff (1988) opined that small businesses employ more than 50% of all Americans work-force.

Small businesses give individuals opportunity to make wealth, thus attaining financial security, enhance status, job security, being the boss, independence, use of creative talents etc to reduce societal problems of poverty, armed robbery, vandalism, and other social vices that tend to hinder national development as well as other factors that poses a threat to vision 2020 in Nigeria.

However, for an entrepreneur to enhance this successfully, the following criterion are outlined by Oreh (2006) Conducive/Enabling Environment, risk taking, change and uncertainty, decision-making and human resource development.

Strategies for Enhancing Entrepreneurship in Vocational and Technical Education

For Nigeria to join the club of 20 leading world economies and attain the vision 2020 objectives, the following suggestions / recommendations are put forward thus:

1. Entrepreneurship education should be introduced at various levels of education. Students should be given opportunities for educating and training for self-employment.
2. The concept of operating small businesses should be introduced in careers education programme from primary school level, to enable the pupils have the fundamental principles of entrepreneurship.
3. Since effective implementation of entrepreneurship education calls for development and effective utilization of necessary instructional materials the institutions of learning should acquire relevant text books and instructional materials, for effective instructions in entrepreneurship education. This should be done by soliciting for financial assistance from government and non governmental organizations.
4. Vocational and Technical education teachers should be given adequate training in entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes which they are expected to transmit to the learners. Workshops and conferences should be organized for them at both state and federal levels to up grade their teaching/learning abilities.
5. Enlightenment and awareness can be stepped up if the next beneficiaries of our National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) members can be sensitized on the tenets of entrepreneurship ideas as the needed tool to economic emancipation. Many can be stimulated into action from such efforts.
6. Institutional management should ensure that, every Vocational and Technical Education student embarks on active participation in Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) seriously. The management should work closely with the various industrial establishment and Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to ensure that students are posted to establishments where they can be sufficiently exposed to the necessary skills in real work situation prior to graduation.
7. Successful small scale business owners can be employed to teach students on how to start and succeed in businesses.
8. Adequate funding of the entrepreneurship education is very essential. Government and institutional administrators should as a matter of policy, allocate reasonable sums of money for all Vocational and Technical Education oriented programmes.
9. On-campus small business ventures should be organized and students should be made stakeholders to participate in establishing and running such businesses.

Conclusion

Everyone in the nation has a part to play in the upliftment of the nation if their potentials are to be properly harnessed. Vocational and Technical education skills acquisition has played an indispensable role for harnessing a nation's natural resources and for promoting economic stability. However, this paper envisages that the form of education offered presently that has little to do with the students ability to cope with life after school must be corrected by adding entrepreneurship education. Reasons for this, proposition is because acquisition of skill reduces societal problems of

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unemployment. People that acquire good working skills are self-employed or are job entrepreneurs instead of job seekers hence, the need to equip individuals through entrepreneurship education. The effects will be better felt in the nation especially towards the realization of vision 2020 in Nigeria.

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