

STRENGTHENING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION CONTENT IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (TVE) IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

One becomes an entrepreneur not only by birth but by education as well as experience. It has been observed that the greatest of human endowments are intelligence and entrepreneurship because it is the entrepreneurs and their activities that are the crucial determinants of the level of success, prosperity, growth and opportunity in any economy. This paper presents what is entrepreneurship education, goals of entrepreneurship education, characteristics of entrepreneurship, concept of vocational and technical education (VTE), benefits of strengthening entrepreneurship education in VTE programme and strategies for strengthening entrepreneurship education in VTE programme. The paper recommends that VTE curriculum should be redesigned for teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education. It concludes that federal government should make entrepreneurship education mandatory in primary tertiary institutions.

Introduction

For decades, unemployment has been a recurrent problem year in year out. Both the developed and the developing nations are not free from the predicament. However, it should be clearly understood that no government of any nation would be able to wipe out unemployment, since there are limited resources. This situation is let with no better ideas rather than to strengthening the entrepreneurship education content in technical and vocational education for more vibrant living. This is where entrepreneurship education finds expression in the academia. Graduates of technical and vocational education are not even spared, though have both salable and managerial skills, they lack resources that can guarantee the sustainability of their business in time of crisis. It is in the light of this that entrepreneurship education

content is needed to be strengthened in technical and vocational education.

What is Entrepreneurship Education?

Entrepreneurship is a process of contributing to the social and economic development of the society. It is the process of planning business organization in order to provide useful services needed by the society (Duru, 2008). Entrepreneurship is an activity which follows management process involving human reasoning, taken decision, take risk, evaluation of the quality of decision, opportunity recognition and exploitation. Entrepreneurship can also be defined as willingness and the ability of an individual to seek out and investment opportunity, establish an enterprise and make it successful. Entrepreneurship plays an important role in employment generation

and in development of the economy. It

serves as a foundation for the potential entrepreneurs who are always ready to explore new ideas at the slightest opportunity. It is obvious that the development of local small scale industries into viable production outfits seem to be the only way out of the problem of industrial backwardness, unemployment and mass poverty (Odah, 2003).

Nwaokolo (2004) defined entrepreneurship as the ability to set up a business enterprise as different from being employed. This ability he explained involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial competencies necessary for self employment. According to (Ilo, 1991), entrepreneurship education is an area of study that includes those attitudes and skills essential for responding to one's environment when conceiving starting and managing a business enterprise. However, Olateju (2003) stated that entrepreneurship education deals with the skills of business ownership and management while Oyenuga (2005) described it as a dynamic process of vision, change and creation. Stressing further, he stated that it requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions.

Entrepreneurship education may be thought of as the structured knowledge provided to empower the youth as a means to development of total man who is creative, confident, analytical, innovative, independent, self sufficient and capable of responding positively to starting, analytical, innovative, independent, self sufficient and capable of responding positively to starting and assuming the risk of a business enterprises

Entrepreneurship Education is valuable to

all students, including those who are taking courses other than business and Technical Education (Smith, Colins and Hannon, 2006). In their study, students were drawn from Fine Arts, Computing and Engineering Degree programmes, in the UK; many Universities already offer an impressive and sophisticated array of entrepreneurship development activities (Gibb, 2008). Scott and Twomey (1988), in their study, collected data from English students and reported than 25 per cent has a business idea and 41 per cent aspire to self employment. Several other studies by Harrison and Hart (1989) and Karr (1988) have also reported the zeal to own self business by non-business students.

Entrepreneurship Education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit, of entrepreneurial behaviors, skills and attributes in widely different contexts, it can be portrayed as open to all and not exclusively the domain to the high-flying growth seeking business person. The propensity to behave entrepreneurial is not exclusive to certain individuals. Different individuals will have different capabilities for demonstrating and acquiring entrepreneurial behaviors, skills and attributes. The behaviors' can be practiced, developed and learned; hence it is important to expose all students to entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship Education is the process of imparting knowledge and teaching skills to potential entrepreneurs on how to venture into business that is relatively small in nature for future advancement of business. The goal of entrepreneurship education is to teach young people to see business opportunities, ideals and act on them promptly in order to take advantage over others (Aminu, 2009). According to the Aminu, entrepreneurship education

did not stop at imparting knowledge alone but ability to teach entrepreneurs' skill acquisition in various discipline of study that an entrepreneur might need;

- Personnel Management (recruitment and selection)
- Industrial relations, joint consultation and negotiation
- Strategy management and business policy analysis
- Marketing
- Accounting and finance (financial records and tax)
- Communication
- Information management (computer)
- Organization planning and design
- Research and development
- Legal aspect of entrepreneurship
- Employment laws (firing of staff)

Some of the reasons advanced for entrepreneurship education are:

- To find solutions to problems or needs
- To accept or respond to change
- To adjust to and increasingly global, the past may be left behind
- To improve performance
- To stimulate new business and the economy (new job employment opportunities)
- To move to an information society where the strategic resources are information knowledge, and creativity.
- To help worker shift to a "service industry base" from manufacturing industrial base.
- To help reduced the number of failed business ventures
- To find new ways solve social problems as it affect entrepreneur ventures.

Goals of Entrepreneurship Education

The goals of entrepreneurship are in four folds which are:

1. To foster shared responsibility for the common good of society;
2. To inculcate values such as respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals
3. To accord respect for the dignity of labour; and
4. To build faith in man's ability to make rational decision.

Entrepreneurship education is a pivot in the economic development of the nation (Ehiamezor, 1990). It has three broad aims which include

1. Manpower development
2. Development of work habit and attitudes in individuals.
3. Economic development

Characteristics of Entrepreneurship

Technical change relative to traditional method of processing staple food has witnessed an increasingly level of productivity. Supplies of farm products are immensely high as it enhanced the fertilizers and mechanical farming and processing. Youths likewise find it encouraging and convenient to be involved in agricultural activities as the laborious processing of sowing and harvesting has been technological with mechanized implements.

With this new trend the numbers of unemployment have been reduce to some extent as a high number of youths who have ventured into agricultural investment, global communication of G.S.M., Internet and CD management found it worthwhile to remain and sustain the business. They testify of the returns earned by them, to extent that, they prefer this business to working with a company

or individual. By implication, the natural objectives of technology self-employed been achieved.

Global communication, which is recent development, has engendered youths to venture into the Internet to search for programmes that enhance their knowledge gained from the web site, which has considerably influenced their way of seeking for profitable jobs or business. On the net jobs and business ventures are advertised. It is just a matter of responding to the pre-requisite information so as to take advantage of the opened opportunity. These and many other legitimate opportunities that we can develop out entrepreneurial skills.

It is essential for improvement of the curriculum for student's academic attainment. It is important that vocational training curriculum, course content and teaching methods involve partnership with the industrial community in order to easily be adaptable to changes in environment and technology. NBTE, however must ensure that technical programme in Nigeria colleges of Education, Polytechnic/Universities must equip with necessary computer skills and not only computer theories by making computer available to all levels, teaching instructional and research. There is urgent need to expand the horizon of the vocational education professional graduates' n technical and leadership area. At this modern time the level of education and training of vocational studies are changing. The quality of equipment used in the office is also changing. Thus, there is now emphasis of efficient and effective management of information and communication in organizations as a

gateway to increased organizational productivity.

Concept of Vocational and Technical Educational

Vocational Technical Education (VTE), also called Career and Technical Education (CTE), is a specialized preparation for entry into employment or advancement on the job. It is about work (occupation) and preparation for work (FME, 2000). Vocational education is considered specialized because courses or programmes it offers are only for those individuals who have special interest in preparing for and /or progressing in a particular occupation of family of occupations (Wrench, 1988). Vocational technical education is a tool for socioeconomic and technological development. According to (Sangeeta and Ralcha, 2004 and 2005), vocational technical education and training has fuelled economic growth and development all over the world. The development of human capital that has appropriate skills, right attitude and good knowledge of how to retrieve, process and natural resources come within the preview of vocational technical education which is defined as those aspects of educational process involved, 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 (FGN, 2004; UNESCO and ILO, 2002). According to (Oranu, 2004) vocational technical education is that skill based programmed designed for sub-professional level of education and

based on a specific vocation. The programme includes numerous occupational areas, such as agriculture, various trades, health service and technical training (Brickmen, 2006). VTE is quite broad in scope and ranges from occupation requiring like skills to those requiring a high degree of skills and scientific knowledge. UNESCO and ILO (2002) viewed VTE to be:

- a. A means of preparing for occupational field and for effective participation in the world of work.;
- b. An aspect of lifelong learning and a preparing for responsible citizen;
- c. An instrument for promoting environmental sound sustainable; and
- d. A method of facilitating poverty alleviation.

The importance of VTE as a tool for economic and technological development is summarized in its objectives as stated in the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004) thus;

- To provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business, particularly of craft, advanced craft and technical levels;
- To provide technical knowledge and vocational skill for agricultural commercial and economic developments; and
- To give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be reliant economically.

On 31st October, 2001 His Excellency, President Olusegun Obasanjo noted that technical and vocational education with its relevant practical training component hold the key to Nigeria becoming technologically relevant and internationally competitive in the world market. It is also the most effective means of empowering the citizenry to

stimulate sustainable national development, enhanced employment, improve the quality of life, reduce poverty, limit the incidence of social vices due to joblessness, and promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy (FME, 2000). It is necessary to note that importance of skill training cannot be over-emphasized as no nation can develop or even survive without craftsmen and technicians (Kaduhur, 1997). Craftsmen and technicians are the sub-professionals that provide the needed link in the chain of industrial and economic development of any nation

Benefits of Strengthening Entrepreneurship Education in VTE

The economic success of a nation worldwide is the result of encouraging and rewarding the Entrepreneur who serves as the spark plug in the economy's engine, activating and stimulating all economic activities. This suggests that Entrepreneurship is a significant factor in the process of any country's economic development and occupies a central position in a market economy. The role of entrepreneurship in the economic development involves more than just increasing per capital output and income, it involves initiating and constituting change in the structure of business and society, which is accompanied by growth and increase output. Many theories have developed to indicate the link between entrepreneurship and economic growth and development of a nation, which make it relevant to examine the role of entrepreneurship and economic growth and development of a nation, which make it relevant to examine the role of entrepreneurship in the economic development of a nation. Entrepreneurship is very vital for the development of any nation and it has great attraction to most

people due to the freedom and independence associated with owning their business.

The rewards of entrepreneurship include the following:

1. They serve as suppliers to bigger enterprises. For example, Cadbury of Nigeria uses Cocoa as one of their raw materials in the production of beverages. Cocoa is planted by farmers who cannot mechanize their operations. They turn out large quantities of these productions, which are sold to bigger organizations. This is what the Federal Government is also encouraging in the case of rubber, cassava etc for export.
2. There is a less pressure on the limited foreign exchange earnings.
3. It is less dependent on imported inputs to their capital investment.
4. It nurtures indigenous raw materials and processing industries to support large enterprises. It helps in resources utilization.
5. It reduces rural to urban migration by engaging a large fraction of the rural population as employees.
6. It gives an opportunity to utilize one's potential.
7. It brings self-employment
8. It brings economic power.
9. It ensures rapid growth and development
10. It eradicates poverty alleviation
11. It leads to technological advancement etc.

With the help and co-operation of Government and individuals if entrepreneurship is well carried out in our nation, to all this we may add less societal ills, as more hands will be gainfully engaged and crime becomes less attracted.

Strategies for Strengthening Entrepreneurship Education in VTE Programme.

Entrepreneurship has been identified globally and national as a tool for generating a suitable economy, which is the core value of NEEDS (National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies). Buttressing this fact Alade(2004) explained that no country can move forward technologically, industrially and economically without strongly developing private of creative wealth, poverty reduction and employment generation, skills to include, managerial administrative skills, innovative, enterprising skills, comparative skills and special skills prospect the future hope.

Meanwhile, forming the strategy, aligning the strengths and weakness of the Entrepreneurial team to the environment in a way that builds competitive advantage for the venture is essential even if many think strategy is a complex matter that should be left to the big corporation that has the resources to venture. But there is more elaborate discussion of strategy in Entrepreneurship. If a nation plan properly for its economy by introducing and encouraging Entrepreneurship, that nation will be more development than any other nations, therefore, Entrepreneurship, that nation will be more developed than any other nation; therefore, Entrepreneur is a prerequisite for National development. Entrepreneur is bedrock of economic growth in any nation. For example, Entrepreneur education in vocational education provides among others:

1. Technical and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development.

2. Giving training and impact the necessary skills to individual to enable them become self-reliant/self employed and an employer of labour.

The realizations of the above goals for individual and national development are linked to the extent that the knowledge, skill and values are functional in relation to practical situation. Amaewhule (1998) opined that apart from the contribution of Entrepreneurship education, it offers the following benefits to the individuals and society:

- a. Opportunity to gain control over one's destiny.
- b. Opportunity to make profit maximally.
- c. Opportunity to contribute to the society and gain recognition.

Therefore, since Entrepreneurship is a strategy for national development, Federal Government should focus more attention on it, especially among the youths, those in higher institution should be trained about Entrepreneurship education in curriculum of tertiary institution has the potential to make its recipients self reliant of self-employed and employer of labours, thereby relieving Government the burden of creating job opportunities establishing a positive multiplier effort in the economy, which will reduce level of poverty and embrace development. This is premised on the fact that when students are adequately trained in their respective areas of specialization, they will be able to establish a profitable business venture for themselves. Adegoke (1999) described Entrepreneurship education as education that emphasis self employment; self reliance, positive nation building job

performance development of the total man, competence, and technological growth and resources utilization management. However, poverty level in Nigeria can be greatly reduced if Entrepreneurship being introduced, in tertiary institutions is designed and impacted according to situation needs.

Conclusion

There is high rate of unemployment in the country and every suggested solution proffered is not yielding positive result and according, there is need for urgent attention to avert social crisis. This predicament in anyway has increased the awareness that strengthened TVE through entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship education as indispensable towards producing a self reliant nation with dynamic economic. This could be possible through TVE programme which has its entrepreneurship education curriculum strengthened. Lastly federal government should make entrepreneurship education mandatory in secondary and tertiary institutions.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made to strengthening entrepreneurship education content in VTE programme.

1. The TVE curriculum should be redesigned for teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education.
2. Funds should be provided by government for the acquisition of necessary equipment for teaching/learning in entrepreneurship education courses.

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