

Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education as a Component of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigerian Educational Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about the relevance of entrepreneurship education in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Curriculum. The paper looks at the concept of TVET, entrepreneurship, entrepreneur and the qualities of entrepreneur. The paper further looks at the benefits of entrepreneurship education in the TVET curriculum, the paper concludes that TVET gives technical skills to students or trainees but the students need entrepreneurship education to be self-reliant in the society and to be employers of labour as envisioned in the National Policy on Education. The paper therefore concludes that entrepreneurship is important, beneficial and very relevant in the TVET curriculum. The paper therefore recommends that; (i) Entrepreneurship education should be incorporated in the TVET curriculum, (ii) Government should provide adequate funds for TVET students using entrepreneurship to visit job centers and enterprises to broaden their knowledge while in schools, and (iii) Government should lessen tax policies to encourage individuals to own businesses.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Technical and Vocation Education and Training, Entrepreneur

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is faced with economic problems which among others have given rise to poverty, hunger and high rate of unemployment. This can be witnessed in the manner in which Nigerian Youths (skilled and unskilled) roam the streets in search for employment. Unemployment in Nigeria according to Akpoyibo (2015) has reached an alarming rate due

to lack of skills and innovation among graduates. This ever-increasing rate of unemployment is as a result of an over pouring of graduate youths into the labour market by education industry beyond the available job opportunities. One way to restoring the economy is taking entrepreneurship education into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) curriculum. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) in her National Policy on education lays emphasis on individuals to acquire physical, intellectual, technical and professional skills which will enable them to serve in the industries and also be self-employed or employers of labour. The emphasis by the FRN (2014) on the acquisition of practical, intellectual, technical and professional skills without the entrepreneurial skills cannot completely equip individuals with the total skills needed to be self-employed and self-reliant. No wonder, the work of Aliozor and Flojeme (2003) reveals that, what is taught in TVET programmes today does not in any way have direct impact on students' creativity and interest. This according to the authors has resulted in the production of graduates who are unwilling to begin business in their chosen vocation. This situation can improve if entrepreneurship education is incorporated into TVET curriculum.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a form of education that is primarily concerned with the development of occupational skills needed in an individual as a preparation for work (Olaitan, 1998). Okorie (2001) also notes that Technical and Vocational Education and Training is a type of education which develops mental and physical qualities of people leading to the increase in their skills, knowledge and attitudes required to utilize the natural resources needed for economic development of the nation and for their own self. This is to say that TVET is beneficial both to the individual and the society. Tiough and Agishi (2004) further asserts that TVET liberates the individuals and makes them achieve their life dreams and fulfillment in their chosen vocation, through acquired skills and habits inculcated by the training and also understanding of the environment. It is a type of

education which leads one to acquire both practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge which can help such an individual to establish an enterprise. TVET should incorporate entrepreneurship education into its curriculum so that it will offer the students the motivation for creative thinking about setting up enterprises in their chosen vocation.

Entrepreneurship education is a form of education given to an individual to enable him or her seek out investment opportunities, identify, establish and run an enterprise and make profit (Shitindi & Orova, 2012). According to Dera (2013), entrepreneurship education is a kind of education that teaches a person to acquire the skills to create and manage enterprises effectively. It is a type of education that can help in equipping individuals with skills and ideas which can be applied to mobilize, organized and direct labour, land and capital for the purpose of production and services.

It is important to note here that, Technical and Vocational Education and training (TVET) emphasizes on skills acquisition, while entrepreneurship education emphasizes on the ability to set up and manage enterprises effectively. According to Igweh (2005), the entrepreneurship ability will make it possible for the acquired technological skills to be saleable. The author further observed that, each year, new small enterprises are started in the country but only half of them are in existence for up to eighteen months or less while only very few of them last for twenty four months. This situation is attributed to lack of skills occasioned by lack of requisite training in entrepreneurship.

The rationale of this paper is to review the benefits of entrepreneurship education as a component of TVET curriculum with a view to persuade education authorities, policymakers, entrepreneurship organization, and financial institutions to properly tackle entrepreneurship in TVET programmes. This will enable individuals to become employable,

creators of jobs, be self-employed as well as be employers of labour, after graduation.

The Concept of Technical and Vocation Education and Training (TVET)

Fakae (2005) posits that Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) as entrenched in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013) is concerned with the development of qualitative, technologically conscious human resources aimed at producing a national pool of skilled and self-reliant craftsmen, technicians and technologists in technical and vocational fields whether in informal sector or academic institutions, outside the university system.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) according to Senwua (2006), is any form of education whose primary aim is to prepare individuals for employment in recognized occupations. It provides the skills, the knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in a specific occupation. Senwua (2006) further buttressed that, TVET makes an individual more employable in one group of occupations than in another. According to Denga (2010), TVET is regarded as essential for furnishing the youths and adults with saleable skills that will enable them secure jobs at appropriate levels when they leave school.

Olaitan (1998) defined TVET as a form of education that is primarily concerned with the development of occupational skills needed in an individual as a preparation for work. It is a form of education which promotes the dignity of labour by entrenching work as the goal of education. TVET is training or retraining programme given in schools or classes under supervision and control. The learning experiences according to Abubakar (2010) may occur in variety of learning context, including educational institutions and workplace. In Nigeria, the teaching of technical skills in the formal sector exists in Technical Colleges and Trade Centers (Oziegbe, 2009). In these institutions, individuals are provided with needed skills that will enable them become proficient in both the public workplace and private employment.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training is result oriented. It brings about technological advancement and aims to fit new manpower for employment and provide continuing training for those already qualified, so that they can keep pace with modern and emerging work environment. TVET programs are by design intended to develop skills that can be used in specific occupations or jobs (Olaitan, 1998). Technology changes constantly. Developments in technology have made Nigeria a dumping ground for obsolete materials – electronics, cars, computers, etc. TVET will train students to acquire skills that will ginger them into design and production ventures, in technology, so that we will become like the developed countries. Nigeria will therefore be producing her own appliances and not depending on discarded technologies. The effectiveness of these curricula can thus be measured by the extent to which trained beneficiaries can use their skills in employment.

The National Policy on Education describes Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as 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. This study must also include general education (FRN, 2014). The policy further states that goals of TVET include:

- i. Provision of technical manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advance craft and technical levels.
- ii. Provision of the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and
- iii. Give training and impart the necessary skills to individual for self-reliance economically.

All these objectives are geared towards equipping individuals with the needed skills to be self-employed and be able to employ others after graduation. However, it is difficult to set up and run a business successfully without managerial skills and managerial skills can only be accessed through entrepreneurship education.

The Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is viewed by Alao (2005), as a process of education through which citizens identify opportunities, allocate resources and create values. The creation of values is the identification of societal needs of opportunity to make a change for the better.

According to Egboh, (2009), entrepreneurship involves taking risk and exploiting opportunities to create product/services. Entrepreneurship is therefore a process of creating wealth by bringing together resources in new ways to start a venture that benefits customers and reward its founders. This shows that entrepreneurship is beneficial to both the founder and the society. In their view Abende and Wankar, (2012), sees entrepreneurship as the willingness and the ability of an individual or group of individuals to seek out investment opportunities and run the enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship incorporates not only the process of enterprise creation but also the process of managing the enterprise effectively. The above definitions point to the fact that entrepreneurship involves innovation, development, recognition of potentials, seizing of opportunities and converting opportunities to marketable ideas and values while bearing the risk of competition.

Entrepreneurship education is a type of education that teaches students how to move discoveries and innovations from the skills, research or design into the marketplace (Akpoiyibo, 2015). It is a kind of education that teaches an individual to acquire skills that will make him more employable either in self-employment or public or private employment. According to Onuma (2016), entrepreneurship education provides

individual with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities, insight, knowledge and skills to act on them. The author further opined that the study of entrepreneurship is essentially designed to inculcate entrepreneurial skills, insights and their continuous development in the individual to stimulate the drive for business establishment.

The major objectives of entrepreneurship education as cited by Enyi and Eru (2013) are to:

- i. Create employment.
- ii. Reduce high level of poverty
- iii. Create smooth transition on traditional to a modern industrial economy.
- iv. Serve as a catalyst for economic development and growth of the Gross Domestic Products (GDP).
- v. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish an occupation in small and medium sized business.
- vi. Inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
- vii. Reduce the high level of rural-urban migration.
- viii. Provide the youth with adequate training that will enable them to be more creative and innovation in identifying noble business opportunities.
- ix. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management.

The Concept of Entrepreneur

Entrepreneurs are innovators who use entrepreneurship process to shatter the status-quo through new combination of resources and new methods of commerce (Egboh, 2009). Thus resources are redirected from areas of low or diminishing results to areas of higher or increasing results.

When people exploit opportunities and take risks and succeed we admire them. Examples of renowned successful entrepreneurs includes Aliko Dangote of Dangote cement and Dangote foods, Leo Stan Ekeh, of Zinox computers, Bill Gates who developed software industry and established Microsoft company and Henry Ford of Ford Motors, just to mention a few. It should be noted that businesses do not fail; it is the individuals that fail, so we should take risks.

The entrepreneur is the operator and brain behind entrepreneurship development program (Eshiotse, 2012). He is an innovation person who organizes, manages and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise. He is a transformer and translator of goods and services. He is the person who has the special ability to turn an opportunity into profit by assembling resources (finance, labour, technology, facilities, machinery, and information) to produce products and services at a cost substantially below the price for which they can be sold in a competitive market. The entrepreneur sees the needs or opportunities as problems and takes actions to find solutions and the customers pay to have the problem solved.

Qualities of an Entrepreneur

Entrepreneurship is more than simply starting a business. It demands total commitment of the entrepreneur. It involves taking risks, being alert to identify and exploit opportunities and seizing such opportunities to prosper by them. It also involves value change in products. An entrepreneur must therefore possess certain qualities in order to achieve the demands of entrepreneurship. Several qualities of an entrepreneur exist, however, Eshiotse (2012) classifies them into two skills concepts and broad by refers to them as (a) fundamental skills and (b) personal and self-motivation skills, while Igbo (2005) identifies the third skill as the Business management skills. These skills are explained below.

According to Eshiotse (2012), an entrepreneur should possess the following attributes to enhance his/her success and aspirations, Eshiotse explains them thus:

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS

- i. **Goals setting skills:** Skills to explore and set attainable or achievable goals/objectives.
- ii. **Communication skills:** Skills to read and interpret information, write, speak, listen to others, sift and effectively apply meaningful discussion of others to business transactions.
- iii. **Charismatic and pragmatic skills:** These are charming, confident, optimistic and practical performance skills.
- iv. **Information gathering and pragmatic skills:** Skills to develop ability to gather different information, interpret them as they affect business and use them to advantage. Analytical skills help in forecasting the trend of business/investment uncertainly for effective decision making.
- v. **Risk management skills:** These are skills to minimize, avert and tolerate risks when they occur.

PERSONAL AND SELF-MOTIVATION SKILLS

In order to be successful an entrepreneur needs to possess the following attributes:

- i. **Self-discipline:** An entrepreneur need to be trustworthy, live a simple life and within one's mean. Avoid extreme compelling emotions.
- ii. **Self-confidence:** The entrepreneur should believe in himself and not on fate. He/she should be emotionally stable to withstand challenges and be bold in taking decision to conquer difficulties/obstacles in his/her way.
- iii. **Innovative:** The entrepreneur bridges the gap between science and the market place through discoveries, creation and development of ideas. He should possess high initiatives,

drives, critical thinking, resourceful, versatile, knowledgeable and creative.

- iv. **Independent:** The entrepreneur should be capable of holding independent thought and judgment. He should be able to put in a lot of physical and mental energy into a venture without waiting for anyone else.
- v. **Determination:** The entrepreneur should be determined to succeed in the face of all odds and be result-oriented.
- vi. **Leadership:** This entrepreneur motivates, directs and guides people to accomplish tasks. Lead by example and motivate his/her followers to high performance.
- vii. **Persistent:** The entrepreneur does not relent in pursuing his vision and business objectives through goal setting decision.
- viii. **Visionary:** The Entrepreneur should have foresight to predict the future of business and evolve actions that will bring about positive development. He should be capable of casting a vision and focusing on the mission of his vision.
- ix. **Risk-taking:** The entrepreneur should apply risk management skills to establish the possible risk involved in a business/project. This will enable him minimize the risks and tolerate only the reasonable ones. He should not be afraid of challenges/failure but ready to accept responsibility to the outcome of his decision.
- x. **God fearing:** The entrepreneur needs the divine providence of God for knowledge and wisdom to discover and develop the hidden treasures of God for man such as natural resources, confidence, labour power and competency.
- xi. **Flexible:** The entrepreneur should have potentials to adapt to change in the socio-economic and business environment.
- xii. **Smartness:** The entrepreneur must believe in his ideas and be confident that he can make it. He should not be timid or shy but be a self-starter, have clear goals, sense of humor and be smart knowing when to move and when to stop. He has to be

focused and hardworking, not giving room to distraction and irrelevancies.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Igbo, (2005), identifies the following essential business management skills of the entrepreneur which include:

- i. **Management Skills:** The entrepreneur should have the capability to plan, organize, staff, co-ordinate, budget, motivate, maintain good human relations and conduct meetings effectively. The entrepreneur should praise high when the workers perform well and blame low when mistakes are made to motivate them.
- ii. **Information:** The entrepreneur should be able to pass information effectively to give clear direction to subordinates or others. He should be aware of what is happening in the immediate environment and release all relevant information to the workers.
- iii. **Operational Skills:** The entrepreneur should be able to handle feasibility studies, assess facilities and equipment needed for production, build and utilize space, install facilities and determine the remuneration and placement of workers in their best skilled areas of operation.

SALES AND MARKETING SKILLS

The entrepreneur should be knowledgeable in consumer wants (utility), the demand situation, purchase, source of supply of raw materials, salesmanship techniques, storage plan, market research/forecasting, advert and sales promotion. He should reach out to a target audience that need his product and services and have ability for understanding people's wants via listening to their needs. He must not be timid or shy to get people to buy his products

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The entrepreneur should have ability to handle money, manage it, and evolve best pricing structure to get the best returns. The entrepreneur requires the knowledge of accounts: costing, banking, insurance transaction, valuation and inventing control for accurate and balance record keeping. A business without proper accounting records is like a building without a foundation and whose strength one cannot ascertain.

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The entrepreneur must manage time properly in his business to add value to it. Time for production-activities should not be used to discuss other matters that will not add value to one's business.

CREATIVE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

The entrepreneur requires unique skills and prowess in writing, engineering technology, environmental management monitoring, interpersonal relation, building, networking, coaching, organizing, art making and technical vocations.

BENEFITS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION TO TVET CURRICULUM

TVET provides students with skills in individual trade areas. However these skills need to be marketed through development of value chain. Knowledge for development of value chain comes from entrepreneurship education. Udiagbe and Ununma (2005) affirmed that, TVET is incomplete without entrepreneurship education hence, entrepreneurship education can be used as an integral part of TVET programme. The question now is – is entrepreneurship education important, beneficial or relevant in our schools, or TVET curriculum? Tiough (2011) answers this question in the affirmative and says that it is important, beneficial and very relevant if Nigerian students will be made to become employers of labour or be self-employed, and also if we aim at curbing crime through reduction of idleness. Tiough (2011) further affirms that entrepreneurship has the ability to raise production through various forms of innovation and to create jobs through small and medium scale enterprises.

Entrepreneurship is also known to accelerate the rate of development and creation of development opportunities by investing resources in those who have the potential of engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

According to Bettina (1991), entrepreneurship education in TVET will enable students learn job-specific skills and will be given opportunities to use these skills through work experience programmes that connect them with the business community. Entrepreneurship education in TVET programs will help students foresee and respond to change by providing students with opportunity to be aware 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; and because business opportunities are always changing workers need to find new ways to do a job or new ways to do a given job better. According to Bali (2009) as cited in Umeano and Adimora (2009), entrepreneurship improves self-esteem, enlightens individuals and works towards alleviating poverty.

Entrepreneurship education will also equipped TVET students with the needed knowledge to be able to start and manage their own business enterprises successfully and make them employers of labour rather than mere job seekers. By this, the increasing level of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria would have been drastically alleviated if not eradicated. It will provide the students with information as well as administrative and operational techniques for running enterprises.

According to Akpoyibo (2015), the relevance of entrepreneurship education includes:

- a. To translate skills, knowledge, innovations into goods and services to the marketplace.
- b. Motivation of students with incentives for ingenuity and creativity.

- c. Involvement of students in participatory efforts in anticipation of societal (economic) changes.
- d. Encouragement of students or trainees to secure financial assistance from sponsor organizations or individuals.
- e. Reduction of capital flight, since, some goods and services shall be produced locally.
- f. Graduates will become self-employed, create jobs and employ others in some cases.
- g. Provision and identification of potentials in rural areas for profit making.
- h. Alleviation of poverty, promote sustainable development and raise the standard of living.
- i. To form the foundation of industrial and manufacturing activities of a country.
- j. To facilitate, promote export and enhance national economic growth.
- k. To reduce influx of foreign professionals and promote foreign reserve.

CONCLUSION

It can be seen that, while Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is committed to equipping individuals with the basic managerial skills, entrepreneurship education is an immediate tool for translating the skills acquired from TVET into sustainable self-employment. Integrating entrepreneurship education in TVET curriculum will go a long way in equipping TVET education graduates with diversified knowledge and creative abilities to initiate, establish and run business enterprises that will significantly contribute to National and economic growth and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Entrepreneurship education should be integrated into school TVET curriculum to motivate TVET graduates to translate

- the skills acquired from TVET into sustainable self-employment.
- ii. Government should draw her attention to policy actions such as providing adequate funds for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, linking Entrepreneurship and Vocational training with job centers to ensure that the skills profiles supplied match demand.
 - iii. Government should lessen her policies on tax in order to encourage individuals to venture into business ventures.

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