

ENHANCING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Institutions across the globe are built to prepare student's mindset for the betterment of their future, to make them to be creative, innovative, responsible citizens, contribute to rapid economic growth and development of their nations and vocational education training has an important role to play in this process. This is because unemployment rate in Nigeria has continued to be on the increase despite the abundant human and natural resources available in the country, it is no hidden fact that the available job opportunity is not enough for the continuously growing number of graduates from our tertiary institutions, hence , this study used documentary approach to gather data from journals, relevant research work, existing literature or materials which emphasizes on entrepreneurship and vocational education that will provide youths with the right skills that will foster change in their lives to become self-employed through building knowledge- based capacity which will serve as a channel for effective management and utilization of natural resources. The paper concludes that entrepreneurship and vocational education when it is effectively taught by exposing the students/learners with practical approach and convention will leads to the creation of jobs, rapid growth, and development of the economy, and promote sustainable development. It's recommended the integration of entrepreneurship and vocational education in all levels of our educational system with a view of creating sustainable economic development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Vocational Education, Sustainable Development, Economy Development

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a discipline that is usually recognized by every society as a way of creating jobs for the jobless and dropout of individuals from schools in Nigeria. It is used as an approach to determine societal difficulties of unemployment, poverty, and unbalanced technological development. Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new of value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial psychic and personal satisfaction and independence (Hisrich and Peter, 2002). Ifeanacho and Ifeanacho (2014) cited Adegun and Akomolafe (2013) explained the concept of entrepreneurship development as a gradual growth of the creative and economic and social venture. It involves setting up an individual to explore, opportunities successfully through making a profit or suffering loss of invested capital. The fundamental “principle” of entrepreneurship as a field of study is that it deals with the organization of knowledge in a particular subject in such a way that it commands more of the hidden potential in the subject in the area of self-employment and job creation. It has to do with the system of ideas and values that are now given attention recently as part of the tertiary institution curriculum (Mkpa, 2014).

The function of entrepreneurial studies at the schools in a conventional institution is to enable its students to determine, whilst undertaking their regular course of studies, what other relevant work experiences other than those in paid employment of government and other agencies are going on in society by the appropriate entrepreneurs to facilitate the direct exchange of information in the interest of students. In the light of the above, Entrepreneurship drives contributed extremely towards the development and its drive to provide job opportunities, hence, highlighting the significance and importance of entrepreneurship in the development of any given economy. The experiences of developed economies concerning the roles played by entrepreneurship buttresses, the fact that that the significance of entrepreneurship cannot be overstressed. Therefore, to highlight the significance of the entrepreneurship concept concerning a given economy, there is the need to conceptualize these opportunities that abound in entrepreneurship for the benefit of the citizens in our quest for sustainable economic development. It is not a hidden fact that entrepreneurship activities in Nigeria have evolved over-time, therefore creating

business enterprises in its all ramification of life. Such as in Agro-allied business, culture and tourism, information technology and manufacturing processes, etc. Those human and natural resources notwithstanding, Nigeria is still one of the poorest countries in the world and has one of the highest rates of unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa, and despite its alleged strong economic growth Chukwubuikem (2008). Many countries have been to motivate and convert entrepreneurship sub-sector to such an exciting one that they have been able to reduce to the barest minimum their unemployment and poverty level because of the enormous contribution of the sub-sector to their economic growth and development, but such cannot be said of Nigeria (Onugu, 2005). In respect of the above depressed and terrible situation, the government has done little to decrease the depression and hindrances of the populace. This has imposed a state of fruitlessness on the majority of young people who have resorted to any means including criminality to prosper in life. The remedy vices because they are not usefully involved. Thus, improvement of entrepreneurship and vocational education is the everlasting cure for thrilling deprivation and deficiency necessitated by unemployment hence economic dislodgment is one of the external forces that affect the development of entrepreneurship. It is against this circumstantial, that expedition for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria if effectively executed will take its pleasure of place in suppressing unemployment among the teeming youths and thus generating employment opportunities among Nigeria youths especially the graduates, and once again, places the economy on the right path for sustainable development. Thus, we continue to lose good the size of our human capital to other nations, where they contribute in no small measure to the development of the host economies, while those who cannot go abroad remain frustrated, unemployed, and Underemployed (Brimah, Olanipekun, and Ibikunle; 2014).

Osolor (2013) in describing the Nigerian education system opined that in light of current realities in the 21st - century. A careful look at the current state of affairs in Nigeria reveals that we are in a 21st - century economy with a 19th - century education system. A system whereby much emphasis is still placed on the conventional classroom environment with much reverence for a certificate for graduates who in most cases are trained to be job seekers as evidenced in the present high unemployment rate in the land. Otokiti (2012) opined that the reason for this problem is that since independence, the country has failed to link education with enterprise development with repeated

emphasis on self-repeated emphasis on self-employment in all her planning effort, but with nothing to show for it. She equally, therefore, failed to assign enterprise - based education as well as identifying entrepreneurial education the higher institutions as an engine of growth and pivotal agent against shades of unemployment and associated challenges.

Given the challenges that bedevil Nigeria's socio-economic development with particular reference to unemployment, it is the contentions of this paper to study and highlight the importance of entrepreneurship and vocational education towards achieving sustainable national development. Following this introduction, this paper reviews the concept of entrepreneurship and vocational education and education for sustainable developments a concept and argues that entrepreneurship and vocational education will provide students with the skills competencies to become independent. It concludes by calling those that believe in the development of Nigeria to play their part in strengthening and sustaining the current revolution on entrepreneurship and vocational education to unleash the wealth of human capital that Nigeria is endowed with so that we would not only be working towards achieving a robust and sustainable economic development. This paper also recommends that educational programmers at all levels of education should be made relevant to provide the youths with the needed entrepreneurial skills competencies.

CONCEPTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The term entrepreneurship is derived from the French word "entreprendre" meaning one who undertakes. This suggests that entrepreneurship is the process of undertaking activities concerned with identifying and exploiting business opportunities while assuming their associated risks.

Entrepreneurship involves taking chances, but new businesses do not emerge by accident (Egelhoff, 2005). They are usually founded as a result of a motivated entrepreneurs gaining access to resources and finding niches in opportunity structures. Hence, entrepreneurship could be seen as the process of identifying and exploiting unique business opportunities that stretch the creative capacities of both private and public organizations. Sue and Dan (2000) argued that entrepreneurship is influenced by genetic power, family background, and economic environment. The economic environment could support or suppress entrepreneurship, governments world over

undertake to develop macroeconomic policies that focus primarily on providing access to resources and support services to individuals and organizations that display a talent for expanding their business horizons.

Also, Entrepreneurship is the practice of starting new organizations or revitalizing mature organizations, particularly new businesses generally in response to identified opportunities. An

Entrepreneur according to Butler (2012) is someone who creates a new organization by generating resources to take an idea to market by utilizing the entrepreneurial process. This involves an understanding of legal, fund raising, and financial issues, marketing running the enterprise. Entrepreneurship is the act of identifying, initiating, organizing, and bringing a vision to life, be it a new product, service, process, organizational strategy, promotional strategy or a niche market (Akinwumi, 2012). Entrepreneurship creative force has spread across markets and industries, simultaneously creating new products and business models. Many high- value entrepreneurial ventures seek venture capital to raise capital to build the business (Ugwuda, 2014). An entrepreneur with basic technical education skills can manage him/herself or set up his own business and become self-employed and be able to employ others (FRN, 2004). The entrepreneur can establish a viable business enterprise and manage his entrepreneurial work efficiently a technical and vocational educator. This comparison of career goals of Entrepreneurship and vocational education had a meeting point statement of individual acquiring the necessary skill to be self-reliant in a chosen field in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004):

- a. The trained manpower will be equipped with scientific, technological, and business knowledge particularly at craft, advanced craft and at technical levels.
- b. Technical knowledge and vocational skills are necessary for agricultural, commercial, and economic development.
- c. Training and impart the necessary skill to an individual who shall be self-reliant economically.

The goals affirmed are all technical education skills required by an entrepreneur for survival as a business owner. Nonetheless, the importance of the subject in the world of business is such that most successful entrepreneurs are mostly technical educators by training. Entrepreneurs with a sound knowledge of technical education often perform better than their counterparts who are not proficient in the subject (Ugwuda, 2014).

Being able to acquire scientific knowledge, technological skills, business knowledge, technical knowledge, vocational skill necessary for agricultural products, commercial and economic emancipation and development in all ramifications, there is a strong belief the technical educator can perform the role of entrepreneur. The key to a successful entrepreneurial business is skill acquisition in technical education. It is high time in a country without white-collar jobs and government employment to embrace technical education for self-sufficient. An entrepreneur can be defined as innovating individuals who has developed an ongoing business activity where none existed before (Arogundade, 2011). Acs and Varga (2005) explained entrepreneurs as individual who constantly discover new markets and try to figure out how to supply those markets efficiently and make a profit. He is a person that searches for change, responds to change, and exploits change by converting change into business opportunity. An entrepreneur is someone who specializes in making judgmental decisions about the coordination of scarce resources (Casson, 2005). This means that the entrepreneur is an individual who can make effective decision on how his business venture can succeed. Also the term judgmental implies that the decisions cannot be simply a routine application of a standard rule because the perception of opportunities is subjective, while opportunities are objective (Acs, 2006). Entrepreneurship therefore can be defined as the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversity an existing venture or enterprise with high growth potential. Akonbowa (2005) opined that entrepreneurship is the creation of new organizations and that it is the process of creating new ideas through the devotion of time and efforts. Considering the definitions above, for one to qualify an entrepreneur he must be an originator of a profitable business idea.

CONCEPTS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The concept of Vocational Education aims at preparing individuals to use their heads and hands to survive in a world that is an essentially work-oriented. The philosophy of Technical and Vocational Education is basically to improve human dignity and install work and labor by making individuals acquire and/or develop enough saleable and employable skills, competencies, attitudes as well as knowledge to enable them to gain and continue basic employment or self-reliance for a contented living. Vocational education is a term used comprehensively to refer to the educational

process to which involves, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences skills and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (Victor-Igue, Inegbedion, Ekpenyong, 2009). Technical and vocational education prepares one for the world of work with which the individual becomes reliant and can make contributions to the development of society. As employers look for new talents every year from new graduates, it is important to not only have a solid education but graduates that have features that stand out from the rest of the graduating students. With the economy being more globalized than ever, it is important to have a background and a skill set that allows graduates to become immersed in the global economy right from graduation (Cote, 2007). These students or graduates need to have skills in innovation in technology education and entrepreneurship to be ready to fit into the global marketplace on which today's economy depends. Furthermore, the blueprint on education (1998, 2004) asserts that the aims and objectives of technical and vocational education are to:

- 1) Provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- 2) It enables our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology;
- 3) Give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies
- 4) Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology, and business particularly at craft, advanced craft, and technical levels;
- 5) Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial, and economic development.
- 6) It gives training and imparts the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

The Nigerian dream of building a truly egalitarian society can only be achieved through the effective use of Technical and Vocational Education. It offers life-long education to all types of learners and enables them to realize and develop their self-potentials maximally (NPE, 2004). Vocational education involves the mastery of practical skills and knowledge in any vocational and technical field of study. Skill acquisition in the Nigerian educational system could be through technical and vocational education. This is done through teaching, training, retraining, practical experience, and on-the-job training (Uzoka and Bayode, 2010). Vocational education is

the education that provides the skills, knowledge, and attitude that lead to the production of individuals who is resourceful and productive. Oladebo (1998) stated that the importance of vocational education cannot be over-emphasized as it enables the acquisition of skills and development of attitude and knowledge which will enable young people to play their part in the business community and help them to be self-reliant.

Skill acquisition can be attained in the following areas of vocational education:

- 1.) Industrial and trade
- 2.) Vocational agricultural education
- 3.) Home economics
- 4.) Business education
- 5.) Distributive education

Technical education empowers and prepares an individual to achieve its full potential for contribution to a better quality of life. Onwuka (2000) pointed out that through technical education an individual is empowered to develop capabilities and values for the benefit of the individual and that of the society. Entrepreneurial, technical, and vocational education can be acquired in a formal way of education. Formal education is the process of training and developing people in skill, mind, and knowledge, a character in a structured and certified program. It is mainly classroom-based and provided by trained teachers. Teaching materials and methods are advanced informal education as compared to informal or non-formal education. In this study, the researcher treated entrepreneurial, technical, and vocational skills in the formal education system to assist the unemployed personnel to acquire the required skills and knowledge to enable them perform in their assigned duties in the world of work. Hornby (2010) stated that individuals can acquire education through the process of teaching, training, and learning, especially in institutions to improve knowledge and develop skills. It follows therefore that every individual including the emotionally challenged needs acquisition of skills and knowledge to develop their potentials (Anike, 2014).

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Education is broadly defined, by the dictionary, as the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment,

and generally preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. Etymologically, the word education is derived from *educare* (Latin) "bring up", which is related to *educare* "bring out", "bring forth what is within", "bring out potential" and *educare*, "to lead". Encyclopedia Britannica defines education as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. Adoption of education as an instrument for the actualization of national development objectives has always been the policy thrust of the federal governments of Nigeria in most of its economic development plans (Gabadeen and Raimi, 2010). The above assertion is supported by the guidelines as stipulated in the national policy on education which states that education will continue to be highly rated in the national development plans, because education is the most important instrument of change, as any fundamental change in the intellectual social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an education revolution (Federal government of Nigeria, 1988).

Education is central to economic growth and development through human development strategy as it prepares for employees that will be willing and able to work. This implies that a well-educated citizenry contributes to higher income and productivity. Thus, it can be concluded that education development is vital. The next generation is about learning to learn with the global agreement on the changing nature of education and learning. The concept of sustainable development requires balancing environmental, societal, and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and improved quality of life. One of the major essential tools for achieving sustainable development is improving the quality of basic education and reorienting existing education programmed to address sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development is the focus or projection of education that seeks to equip people towards creating a sustainable future and this constitutes one of the germane objectives for the introduction of the entrepreneurship curriculum. One of the most significant indicators of social progress is education, which also plays a decisive role for a society to achieve self-sustainable and equal development. Education helps individuals fulfill and apply their abilities and talents. It increases productivity, improves health and nutrition, reduces family size, presents specific knowledge, develops general reasoning skills, causes values to change, increases receptivity to new ideas, and changes attitude toward work and society. Education has both consumer good and investment good components. (Nafghizer 2004)

Sustainable National development can be explained to mean progress, advancement, or qualitative changes that are evident in a nation over sometime. These are the contributions of individuals who transmit desirable values, habits, wisdom from one generation to the other, to ensure continuity. What makes a nation achieve greatness is the quality of contributions of its citizens in human and socio- economic development. Effective education is a potent system that every society has been using to promote desired social, political, and economic agenda.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship and vocational education are both learning process that requires from learners/students self-direction and self-management, unlike the traditional teaching approach. They both seek to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate university programs (Wikipedia, 2011). Their importance to sustainable development cannot be over- emphasized because both are lifelong learning processes that start as early as elementary school and progressing through all levels of education, including adult education. They focus on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit, of entrepreneurial behaviors, skills competencies, and attributes in broadly different contexts. It can be portrayed as open to all and not exclusively the domain of the high-flying growth-seeking business person. The tendency to behave vocationally and entrepreneurially is not exclusive to certain individuals.

Different individuals will have a different mix of capabilities for demonstrating and acquiring entrepreneurial behaviors, skills competencies, and attributes. Sustainable development is all about allowing these present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of the next generations to meet theirs. As stated earlier, unemployment and poverty are among other socio- economic development challenges that bedevils Nigeria which will hinder intergenerational equity, gender equity, just and peaceful societies, social tolerance, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation and natural resource conservation, etc. thus, the importance of functional education that promotes self-reliance among graduates which

entrepreneurship and vocational education philosophy strive to achieve cannot be overemphasized. Effective and efficient education therefore should go beyond mere literacy - the ability to read and write. It should incorporate the ability to “do” and “apply” that is, it should equip the learners with some form of technical know-how. The number of unemployed graduates in Nigeria suggests that most of them do not possess relevant, saleable, employable or, even entrepreneurial skills that are needed in society. This partly explains why the nation has remained economically dependent to date. This is because most nations who are economic giants today, started by equipping their citizens with the right type of education - education that will enable them to use both their head and hands. The type of education that equips its recipients with such abilities to think is generally described to work as vocational education and entrepreneurship education which is aimed at equipping individuals to use their heads and hands to survive in a world that is essentially work-oriented. Akinola (2012) opined that the need for entrepreneurship and vocational education cannot be overstressed in Nigeria because unemployment, poverty, and the corresponding social problems are on the increase. Nigeria adopted entrepreneurship education to accelerate economic growth and development. This reflects in Nigeria’s national policy on education which states that education is the most important instrument for propelling change, as no fundamental change can occur in any society except through educational revolution that impacts the intellects (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1998).

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship and Vocational education are very important, that there is an urgent need for all levels of education to key into teaching and practice of entrepreneurship and vocational education with stronger determination and commitment of entrepreneurship drive and vocational education to achieve rapid and sustainable economic development of the nation, because education is the most valuable treasure any nation can give to its citizens. Functional education should be geared towards the realization of knowledge capacity and information as well as relevant competencies (skills, attitudes, aptitudes, etc). The number of jobless graduates in Nigeria suggests that most of them do not have appropriate, viable, employable, or even entrepreneurial skills that are needed in society. Therefore, Education is essential to economic growth and development through human development strategy as it prepares for employees

that will be willing and able to work. This implies that a well-educated citizenry contributes to higher income and productivity. This is because most nations who are economic giants today, started by equipping their citizens with the right type of education -education that will enable them to use both their heads and hands to perform some duties effectively and efficiently to ensure sustainable economic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

- 1) Government should create conducive environments by providing adequate infrastructural facilities, by giving emphasis on stable electricity supply and special credit facility that will encourage active participation of citizens.
- 2) Entrepreneurial development centers in our institutions in Nigeria must be well equipped and utilized to assist the university and other institution to connect the missing link created by the theoretical nature of our entrepreneurial technical and vocational education program in our institutions.
- 3) Practical oriented activities should be taught with relevant tools and equipment in well equipped workshops.
- 4) Students/Learners must be ready to imbibe the culture of entrepreneurship and vocational skills as a remedy to mitigate the challenges of unemployment.
- 5) Teachers of entrepreneurship and vocational education should be trained in innovative methodologies that will enable them to effectively equip the learners necessary set of entrepreneurial skills.

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