

Entrepreneurship Education: A Vital Tool for Reducing Poverty through Technical Vocational Education and Training

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Abstract

This paper focused on entrepreneurship education as a stool for reducing poverty through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The paper attempts to discuss the concept of entrepreneurship education in different perspective and its basic characteristics. It also examines the role of TVET in job creation and poverty reduction. It further examines the method of developing entrepreneurship education through technical vocational education and training. Conclusions were made based on the focus of the paper and it was recommended that: Training must be focused toward strengthening and making one to be self-reliant, the curriculum of Technical Vocational Education and Training should constantly undergo review to accommodate technological changes, Government should encourage youths by awarding scholarship to engage them in entrepreneurship Education among others.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, education, poverty, training, technical, vocational,

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is riding the crest of a tidal wave of popularity. This worldwide trend toward self-employment is yet to capture the imagination of Nigerian youth (Siripolis 1998). Part of the problem is the nature of our educational system which tends to produce job seekers instead of job creators, a trend that is more evident among Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Nigeria constitutes an important part of the world human and non-human resources. This has called for human development in the area of entrepreneurship in order for individual to contribute effectively towards the reduction of the nation's poverty level. The idea of white collar job is no longer in vogue in Nigeria, but what individual can do in terms of establishing business enterprise. This serves as a means of creating employment and equally makes individual to be self-reliant.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) refers to education and training that prepares persons for gainful employment (Finch and Crunkilton 1999). In other words, TVET refers to deliberate interventions to bring about learning which would make people more productive (or simply adequately productive) in designated areas of economic activity (e.g. economic sectors, occupations, specific work tasks). TVET has the potential to enhance human capabilities and enlarge people's choices. UNESCO (2002) defined TVET as the education and training to acquire the practical skills know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation, trade or group of occupations or trades. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) defines Technical and Vocational Education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the education process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related science and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

TVET prepares learners for specific jobs or types of work, often including practical and/or procedural activities. According to Usman and Pascal (2010) the aim of TVET is to enable

learners to meet needs of employers for qualified labour and/or own needs related to production of goods and services. The fact remains that no Nation can rise or progress without technical and vocational skilled work force, as such, the acquisition of vocational and technical education skills constitutes the platform on which youths are empowered leading to poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship as defined by Nwokolo (2003) is the ability to set up and effectively manage an enterprise as different from being employed in paid employment. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for personal self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Entrepreneurship can be seen as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out an investment opportunity, establish an enterprise and run it successfully. Entrepreneurship is actually concerned with creating opportunities and meeting the needs of an individual. Such opportunities could only be created through entrepreneurship education. Therefore, Entrepreneurship education is the identification of general characteristics of entrepreneurs and how potential entrepreneurs can be trained in management techniques needed for effective performance of persons for long time survival of an organization. Technical and Vocational Education is geared towards the acquisition of technical Skills while Entrepreneurship Education deals with the skills of business ownership and management.

The definitions above implies that vocational and technical Education will enable graduates of the system to gain useful employment or be self-employed. There is need to include Entrepreneurship or small business management in every programme of Vocational and Technical Education and should be made compulsory at all levels of education (Nwokolo, 2003). According to Morrison (1998) entrepreneurship could also be any attempt at a venture-creation such as a new business startup, expansion of an existing business by an individual, or a team, or a corporate body. It is a process by which individuals or groups pursue opportunity, leverage resources and initiate change for purposes of creating values. He further said Entrepreneurship is often associated with functions of innovating and bearing risk. It involves the recognition of opportunities in terms of needs, wants, problems and challenges. It encompasses the efforts to use resources to implement innovative ideas for thoughtfully planned ventures. It is the assumption of risk and responsibility, in designing and implementing a business strategy or starting a business venture. Entrepreneurship is the art of combining various input factors of production in an innovation manner to generate value to the venture with the hope that this value will exceed the cost that result in wealth creation.

Nwoye, (2005) sees entrepreneurship as the sole activity that brings productive resources together to create an output whose value is hoped to exceed the cost of resources used, profit is made and wealth is created. The productive process is able to continue to employ those resources. The process survives and grows. That growth is economic development.

Characteristics of an Entrepreneurship

Business is a venture, whether it succeeds or fails. It depends on the ability of entrepreneur to judiciously use the certain positive characteristic. Some of these characteristics according to Ifeoma (2002) are:-

- **Initiative:** - The ability to begin a plan or task, enterprise or determination. An introductory step in bringing something new without prompting.
- **Management:** - Getting things done through other people the act of coordinating people together, making decision to accomplish a desired goal. It comprises planning, organizing, staffing, controlling, directing, motivating and evaluation.
- **Growth Potentials:** - Investment style that looks out for increased revenue, having possibility or capacity for growth and improvement and as well as expansion.

- **Business drive:** - Having an aspect of the business that effects a change on another aspect of the business. A drive is most commonly a factor that contributes to the growth of a particular business. It can be people, knowledge or conditions, such as market forces, that can initiate and support the activities for which the business was designed.
- **Decision making:** - One of the major tasks of Entrepreneurship is decision-making. Decisions reached by leader's lead to concrete actions. They have far-reaching effects on the effectiveness of the enterprise.
- **Opportunity recognition:** - A feasible profit seeking potential venture, that provides an innovative new product or services to the market, improves and existing one in a less than saturated market.
- **Risk Taking:** -Risk is the attributes in evaluating alternative causes of actions. It is embedded in a larger idea of choice as affected by the expected return or an alternative.
- **Creativity:** - Generating novel and useful ideas for business ventures as well as the originality of the newly generated ideas.
- **Innovation:** - A new way of doing things; could be radial or revolutionary changes in thinking, products design or manufacture, services or organization.
- **Facing challenges:** - Ability to remain motivated in the face of obstacles and persist in the effort towards the accomplishment of a desired goal. The ability to remain determined even when things get difficult.
- **Organization:** -A group of people intentionally brought together to accomplish a common goal a set of goals.

The Role of TVET in Job Creation and Poverty Reduction

The role of TVET in furnishing skills required to improve productivity, raise income levels and improve access to employment opportunities has been widely recognized (Bennell, 1999). Developments in the last three decades have made the role of TVET more decisive; the globalization process, technological change, and increased competition due to trade liberalization necessitates requirements of higher skills and productivity among workers in both modern sector firms and Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE). Skills development encompasses a broad range of core skills (entrepreneurial, communication, financial and leadership) so that individuals are equipped for productive activities and employment opportunities (wage employment, self-employment and income generation activities).

The second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in April 1999, agreed that: "Since education is considered the key to effective development Strategies, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) must be the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development".

The primary objective of all Technical and Vocation Education and Training (TVET) programmes is the acquisition of relevant knowledge, practical skills and attitudes for gainful employment in a particular trade or occupational is a direct means of providing workers with skills more relevant to the evolving needs of people. One of the most important features of TVET is its orientation towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills (Owodunmi, 2008). Owodunmi further observed that, TVET delivery systems are therefore well placed to train the skilled and entrepreneurial work force that Nigeria needs to create wealth and emerge out of poverty. Integrating Entrepreneurship Education with technical and vocational education and training.

TVET is a most effective means for society to develop its member's potentials to respond to the challenges of the future. The provision of relevant and appropriate skills which is the focus of TVET represents a significant element of the overall development pathway of the country. Skills development in all technical sectors takes on an increasingly important role in virtually all dialogue of national development. The present situation emphasizes the need for every citizen to aim for self-reliance. Integration is a means of combining two or more things so that they work together for a better result. It is a way of using adequate contents with other members to develop better habit and skills in an individual (Summer, 1999). In this regard the paper involves combining the Entrepreneurship Education Skills with the theoretical and practical contents in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Curriculum. According to Nelson and Leach (2001) Technical Vocational Education and Training should not merely produce the job seekers who come to work in time, do what they are told by the respected Authority. Technical and Vocational Education and Training has role to play in training potential entrepreneurs. Nelson and Leach (2001) further observed that potential entrepreneurs are rarely taught the basic knowledge of entrepreneurial Education skills from Secondary to Tertiary Level. This has far reaching implication for Technical and Vocational Education and Training should in the case of massive employment be the solution to joblessness.

The present efforts of Federal Government of Nigeria to reduce and eradicate poverty may not achieve the desired objectives (Olaniyi, 2009), unless with training and provision of good infrastructure. Acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills can only be obtained through Science and Technology Education. This type of Education encourages Invention, application of scientific and Technological principles, and promotion of the development and application of new sources of power and realistic industrial literacy (Taylor, 1992).

Strengthening and Empowering TVET through Entrepreneurship

Empowerment means strengthening something that lacks the ability to control its circumstances either socially, economically or politically with a relevant material, services, knowledge or opportunities so as to change or improve its situation (Alaka (2005). Funding of TVET and empowering it in Nigeria through Entrepreneurship Education is a very critical thing that will boost our National development. Technology Education should not be seen as just another form of education, because it aims in preparing people for the world of work with acquisition of skills in practical situations. As such it deserves much attention so as to accelerate National Growth and Development.

It is a fact that the amount of money needed to train an individual in technology education can be used for training more than twenty individuals in other forms of Education; the TVET Education is practically oriented and also applies theory in knowing its basic concepts, while other forms of education only educate. Bayode (1994) Stated that Technical and Vocational Education and training is geared towards the production of the educated man who can effectively work with his hands. The reduction of poverty and the crave for self-reliance and self-sustainability is the driving force for acquiring technical and vocational education. The national Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) states that the objective of vocational and technical education is expected:

- (i) To acquire vocational and Technical Skill
- (ii) To expose students to career awareness by exploring usable options in the world of work
- (iii) To enable youths to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.
- (iv) To stimulate creativity

To achieve the above stated objectives, a radical approach must be adopted by the government, this include but not limited to: Provision of scholarship awards for acquiring entrepreneurial education, training should be focused toward strengthening and making one to be self-reliant,

providing the needed financial and material resources needed by TVET institutions. Several researchers such as Umar, Audu and Idris (2009) are of the opinion that public private partnership schemes like: Built-Operate and Transfer (BOT), Built Own-Operate and Transfer (BOOT) and Rehabilitate-Operate and Transfer (ROT) are vital schemes that will strengthen TVET making the products job givers instead of job seekers.

Methods of Developing Entrepreneurial Education in TVET

In order to building achievement motivation in teaching/Learning situation, entrepreneurship education should seek to motivate students to focus for success and expertise in new ventures through one's effort. This could be develop through the following methods:

- **Career Education:** - Career education should seeks to orient young Nigerians particularly graduates toward creative and sustainable means of livelihood at all levels they find themselves.
- **Training in management efficiency:** - All Nigerians should be trained on how to manage effectively, which is a hallmark of entrepreneur enterprise.
- **Research and innovations:** - Most research should be adequately funded because it is an investment which is important, since it is through it that most knowledge are expanded.
- **Technical Skills and confidence:** - There is need to develop the teacher technical skills and build their confidence in the system. This will ensure effectiveness of the skills into the students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been an integral part of National development Strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and poverty alleviation. Entrepreneurship Education can be seen as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out an investment opportunity, establish an enterprise and run it successfully. Entrepreneurship is actually concerned with creating opportunities and meeting the need of an individual. Entrepreneurship Education is a vital tool for strengthening technical and Vocational Education and Training, this could be achieved through proper financing of TVET institutions. An encouraged TVET will makethe people to be self-reliant and technologically developed.

Recommendation

To achieve the reduction of poverty using Entrepreneurship Education, through Technical and Vocational Education Training, the following are hereby recommended.

1. Government should encourage youths by awarding scholarship to engage them in entrepreneurship Education
2. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) should be made compulsory from primary schools.
3. TVET should be given more attention by government both financially and materially.
4. The curriculum of Technical Vocational Education and Training should constantly undergo review to accommodate technological changes.
5. Training must be focused toward strengthening and making one to be self-reliant.
6. Public private partnership should be initiated as a strong pillar to support TVET

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