



JOURNAL OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

*Official Journal of Centre for Technical Vocational Education,
Training and Research, University of Nigeria, Nsukka*



VOLUME 1, No. 2 June, 2016

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS IN MOTOR VEHICLE MECHANICS WORK PROGRAMME FOR ALLEVIATING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

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Abstract

The study was aimed at identifying the needed entrepreneurship skills in motor vehicle mechanic work programme at technical college level for alleviating youth unemployment in Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 30 Motor Vehicle Mechanics teachers in all the technical colleges in Niger State and Federal Capital Territory Abuja. The instrument for data collection for this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. A total of 30 Motor Vehicle Mechanics teachers that are working in all the technical colleges in the area of the study served as the respondents for the study. The data was analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed that: financial and budgeting skills, ability to network and make contacts, ability to determine when to introduce new products which the customers need, and competency in serving the greatest possible number of customers amongst others were very highly needed in motor vehicle mechanics programming at technical college level. Based on the findings conclusions were drawn and recommendations made concluded which are that: Government should develop entrepreneur internship programme by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly stated education programmes especially motor vehicle mechanics programme at technical colleges, teaching of entrepreneurship education should be taken seriously by the federal government. This can be achieved through increase in the budgetary allocation to educational sector is mention but a few.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship Education, Motor Vehicle Mechanics Programme, Youth Unemployment

Introduction

Motor Vehicle Mechanic (MVM) work is one of the Technical Vocational Education (TVE) programmes which involves the acquisition of scientific knowledge in design, selection of materials, construction, operation and maintenance of motor vehicles (Ayuba, Asadkhani, Yusuf, Muhammad and Inu, 2014). According to Doyin (2004) MVM is a vocational education programme, which is aimed at preparing individuals for a gainful employment in semi-skilled or skilled worker or technicians or sub-professional in recognized occupation and in new emerging occupations or to prepare individual for enrolment in advanced technical education programme (Ugwaja, 2010). The programme of MVM work in Nigeria technical colleges is designed to produce competent motor vehicle craftsmen for Nigeria's technical and industrial development (Aruku, 2007). Therefore, students of MVM programme at technical college level must acquire the right skills and competencies in order for them to be have employment or become self-employed which could be achieved through entrepreneurship education.

However, the objective of MVM work is to enable graduates to test, diagnose, adjust and repair any fault relating to conventional motor vehicle main assembly units and systems to the manufacturers specification. National Board for Technical Education (NBTE, 2005) and Manitoba Advance Education and Training (MAET, 2005) stressed that motor vehicle mechanic students need the following attributes: skills in mechanical/electronic systems of motor vehicle, good problem solving ability, good vision, hearing and sense of smell, manual dexterity and mechanical aptitude, ability to communicate well in English, physical fitness, strength, ability to drive a range of vehicles, ability to read technical diagrams and illustrations, have concern for safety and responsible work attitude; and in keeping up to date with technology. According to Abdulkadir and Olatun (2011) teachers teaching MVM work should equip the technical students with necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills that will enable them secure paid employment, be able to set up their workshops and be self-employed and even employ others through entrepreneurship education.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship generally can be described as the process of producing something new with value by creating enough time, effort with social risk and receiving a monetary reward and personal satisfaction (Duluba and Odiba, 2013). For this reason, good entrepreneurship skills is highly needed for youths to acquire skills to enable them to be gainfully employed and be able to employ others. The importance of entrepreneurship education in training institutions cannot be overemphasised. According to Nwabunni (2006), entrepreneurship education is the identification of the general characteristics of entrepreneurs and how potential entrepreneurs can be trained in management techniques needed for efficient performance of persons for long time survival of an organization after the acquisition of occupational skills. Olawolu and Kaegon (2012) confirms that entrepreneurship education prepares youths to be responsible and entering individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by exposing them in real life learning experiences where they will be required to think, take risks, manage circumstances and incidentally learn from the outcome. Ememe (2010) observes that entrepreneurship education enables youths to seek for success ventures through one's effort. To Ebele (2008) entrepreneurship education is the teaching of knowledge and a skill that enables the students to plan, start and run their own business.

Entrepreneurship education aims to stimulate creativity in students, enables them to identify opportunities for innovation and motivate them to transform the ideas into practical and targeted activities whether in a social, cultural or economic context. Amusan (2004) agrees that entrepreneurship education will provide opportunities for students to access their innate aptitude and skills relating to those necessary for developing and running business. Entrepreneurship education entails teaching students, learners and would-be businessmen, the essential skills required to build viable enterprises, equipping the trainees with skills needed for taking responsibility and developing initiatives of prospective trainees (Ezeani, 2012).

Abefe-Balogun and Nwankpa (2012) state that entrepreneurship education involves a dynamic process of creating wealth through the process of creating something new and in the process assumes both attendant risks and rewards. Izedonmi (Lucas, Alaka and Odun, 2004) states categorically that it is a process of preparing trainees for self-employment. Okereke and Okorofor (2011) asserted that entrepreneurship education has been acknowledged world wide as a potent and viable tool for self-empowerment, job and wealth creation. To Atakpa (2011) entrepreneurship education is an aspect of education which equips an individual and create in the person the mind-set to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in school. Fashua (2006) further stated that entrepreneurship education creates the willingness and ability in a person to seek out investment opportunities in the society and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities. Hence, the overall purpose of entrepreneurship education is to develop entrepreneurs as an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship education entails philosophy of self-reliance such as

...creating a new cultural and productive environment, promoting new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges (Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi, 2012; Lucas, Alaka and Odozi, 2014).

According to Beeka and Rimmington (2011) and Buang (2011), entrepreneurship education is one of the career options for youths and graduates. Sardeshmukh and Smith-Nelson (2011) pointed out that there is the need to provide the kind of education that is needed to develop an opportunity-oriented entrepreneurial mind set among students. In addition, employers want graduates that are entrepreneurially minded. Lourenco, Taylor and Taylor (2013) stated that the development of an entrepreneurial mind-set and/or enterprising skills is on the agenda for developing graduates in order to enhance their employability. Employers are looking for graduates equipped with skills that will enable them to act in enterprising ways so they can deal effectively with a difficult business environment, and a personal life that is increasingly full of uncertainties and complexities. Thus, integrating entrepreneurship education in schools curriculum is one of numerous solutions to reduce youth and graduate unemployment in Nigeria.

However, Nigeria like most developing nations of the world is faced with myriad of problems which include youth and graduate unemployment and high rate of poverty among others. Unemployment has become a major problem bedevilling the lives of Nigerian Youth causing frustration, dejection and depending on family members and friends. The high rate of unemployment among the youths in Nigeria has contributed to the high rate of poverty and insecurity in the country (Ajufo, 2013). Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) observed from the excerpts of statistics obtained from the National Manpower Board and Federal Bureau of statistics that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 Million representing 60 percent of the total population of the country. Over 64 Million of them are unemployed. This level of unemployment can only be alleviated through entrepreneurship education.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to determine the entrepreneurship skills needed in MVM programme at technical college level in order to alleviate the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Identify the general entrepreneurship skills needed in MVM programme at technical college level
2. Identify the marketing entrepreneurship skills needed in MVM programme at technical college level

Research Questions

1. What are the general entrepreneurship skills needed in MVM programme at technical college level?
2. What are the marketing entrepreneurship skills needed in MVM programme at technical college level?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was utilised to elicit information from MVM teachers in the technical colleges in Niger state and FCT Abuja Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design according to Nworgu (1995) is a design which aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The study was conducted in all the technical colleges in Niger State and FCT Abuja, Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 59 MVM teachers in all the technical colleges in the area of the study. The instrument for data collection for this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire items were formulated based on 5-point scale. The response categories are Very Highly Needed (VHN), Highly Needed (HN), Needed (N), Moderately Needed (MN) and Not Needed (NN). These responses categories were assigned numerical values based on real limits of numbers; VHN = 4.50 – 5.00; HN =

3.50 - 4.49; N = 2.50 - 3.49; MN = 1.50-2.49 and NN = 0.00-1.49 respectively. The instrument was validated by three automobile technology education lecturers in Department of Industrial Technology Education Federal University of Technology Minna, Niger State Nigeria. The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.86 using Cronbach Alpha statistic. Therefore, the instrument was considered appropriate for use by the researcher. The questionnaires were administered by the researchers and the entire instruments were retrieved and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation.

Results

The results of the data analysis for the study were presented based on the research questions posed in the study.

Research Question 1

What are the general entrepreneurship skills needed in MVM programme at technical college level?

Table 1

Mean Responses of MVM Teachers with Respect to General Entrepreneurship Skills Needed in MVM Programme at Technical College Level

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X} N= 59	SD	Remarks
1	Management skills - the ability to manage time and people (both oneself and others) successfully	3.43	0.65	Needed
2	Communication skills (e.g. the ability to sell ideas and persuade others)	4.40	0.63	Highly Needed
3	The ability to work both as part of a team and independently	3.42	0.51	Needed
4	Able to plan, coordinate and organise effectively	3.35	0.69	Needed
5	Financial and budgeting skills	4.47	0.59	Highly Needed
6	Able to research effectively (e.g. available markets, suppliers, customers and the competition)	4.48	0.62	Highly Needed
7	Self-motivated and disciplined	3.44	0.62	Needed
8	An Innovative and creative thinker	4.27	0.60	Highly Needed
9	The ability to carry out multi-task	3.33	0.67	Needed
10	Able to take responsibility and make decisions	3.35	0.61	Needed
11	The ability to work under pressure	3.63	0.48	Highly Needed
12	Perseverance	3.68	0.47	Highly Needed
13	Competitiveness	3.63	0.48	Highly Needed
14	Willingness to take risks (or at least not risk averse)	3.61	0.49	Highly Needed
15	Ability to network and make contacts	4.53	0.55	Very Highly Needed
16	Being able to draw up a business plan for a new venture	3.37	0.59	Needed
17	Being able to market and sell a new product or idea	4.47	0.71	Highly Needed

18	Financial skills, such as book-keeping and calculating tax	3.34	0.73	Needed
19	Awareness of intellectual property and possibly patent law	3.58	0.49	Highly Needed

The data necessary for answering research question 1 was based on the responses of MVM teachers to the 19 items generated in the Table. The analysis of the result in Table 1 revealed that the means for all items ranged from a high of 4.53 (Ability to network and make contacts) to a low of 3.33 (The ability to carry out multi-task). The standard deviations ranged from a high of 0.73 (Financial skills, such as book-keeping and calculating tax) to a low of 0.47 (Perseverance). Therefore, the respondents are of the view that all items in the Table are needed in the curriculum of MVM programme at technical college level in Nigeria. The standard deviation also indicates that the responses of the respondents do not differ significantly.

Research Question 2

What are the marketing entrepreneurship skills needed in MVM programme at technical college level?

Table 2
Mean Responses of MVM Teachers with Respect to Marketing Entrepreneurship Skills Needed in MVM Programme at Technical College Level

SN	Item Statement	\bar{X} N= 59	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to determine reasonable prices for the right products	3.50	0.60	Highly Needed
2	Competency in serving the greatest possible number of customers	4.57	0.60	Very Highly Needed
3	Ability to demonstrate effective sales promotion /advertising	3.98	0.35	Highly Needed
4	Ability to determine why existing products are selling well or poorly	3.37	0.71	Needed
5	Ability to determine when to introduce new products, which the customers need	4.61	0.54	Very Highly Needed
6	Skills to determine when to allow reasonable credit facilities to trusted customers	3.58	0.59	Highly Needed
7	Competency to set strategic plans to serve the identified market	3.50	0.60	Highly Needed
8	Ability to anticipate seasonal market fluctuations	3.37	0.54	Needed
9	Ability to provide for seasonal market fluctuations	4.34	0.68	Highly Needed
10	Ability to know when poor quality services affect sales volume	3.39	0.63	Needed
11	Ability to use good marketing mix	3.63	0.48	Highly Needed
12	Ability to maintain effective distribution network	3.68	0.47	Highly Needed
13	Ability to understand the interrelationships with products, place, price and promotion	3.63	0.48	Highly Needed
14	Ability to set market goals	4.61	0.49	Very Highly Needed

15	Skills to determine the customers' needs	3.53	0.55	Highly Needed
16	Ability to choose the markets to serve	3.37	0.94	Needed
17	Ability to identify advantages over other competitors	4.47	0.71	Highly Needed
18	The ability to implement strategy (develop programmes, budgets, procedures, evaluate performance)	3.34	0.73	Needed
19	Familiarity with the market	3.55	0.49	Highly Needed

The analysis of the results of the data necessary for answering research question 2 was also based on the responses of MVM teachers to the 19 items generated. Table 2 revealed that the means for all items ranged from a high of 4.61 (Ability to set market goals) to a low of 3.25 (The ability to implement strategy) develop programmes, budgets, procedures, evaluate performance). The standard deviations ranged from a high of 0.73 (The ability to implement strategy) develop programmes, budgets, procedures, evaluate performance) to a low of 0.25 (Ability to demonstrate effective sales promotion/advertising). Therefore, the respondents are of the view that all items in the Table are needed in the curriculum of MVM programme at technical college level in Nigeria. The standard deviation also indicates that the responses of the respondents do not differ significantly.

Discussion of Findings

The integration of entrepreneurship education especially through the competences and skills identified into the curriculum of technical colleges MVM programme will enable the students to acquire the competences and skills highlighted in the Tables. Therefore, there is the need to promote entrepreneurship education in order to alleviate the problem of youth unemployment. More importantly, Schnurr and Newing; Anyadike, Eneh-Ikuchukwu and Ukah, (2012) justified the need for promoting entrepreneurship culture on the ground that youth in all societies have sterling qualities such as resourcefulness, initiative, drive, imagination, enthusiasm, zest, dash, ambition, energy, boldness, audacity and courage which are all valuable traits for entrepreneurship development.

Supporting this assertion, Ogundele, Oluwalola and Adegbemi (2011) described entrepreneurship education as the process of training individual students to acquire one or more vocational and technical skills right from the secondary schools level. According to the authors, the skills acquired would aid job creation, youth empowerment and alleviate poverty among the youths and solve the social problems in the society. Ezeudu (2008), refers to entrepreneurship education as the process of organizing, managing and assuming risk in an enterprise. Ibrahim, Mandara and Soba (2008), stated that entrepreneurship education is the quality and characteristics normally expected from a successful entrepreneur. This includes the perception of new economic opportunities, taking initiative, creativity and innovation, ability to demonstrate effective sales promotion advertising, ability to determine why existing products are selling well or poorly, ability to determine when to introduce new products which the customers need, skills to determine when to allow reasonable credit facilities to loyal customers to mention but a few.

Anacle (1997) opined that educated entrepreneurs have the ability to spark new ideas and new products that create business, which in turn create the need for new jobs. The United Nations (1988), posit that entrepreneurs are people that bear risks of launching a new venture, developing a new product, commercializing an invention, adapting a technology and developing a new market place. He is a person who has chosen to assume risks, identifying business opportunities, gather resources to initiate action and establish organizations to meet market opportunities. Nelson and Leach in Onyia, (2011) stated that entrepreneurship education is a carefully planned process that leads to acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies, skills, aptitudes, knowledge and capacity for self employment, job-creation and self reliance. 1

equips the learner with skills on decision-making, the ability to manage time and people (both oneself and others) successfully, the ability to sell ideas and persuade others, ability to work both as part of a team and independently, acquisition of new ideas, methods of raising and establishing business relationships (Ikeme, 2006).

In Nigeria society today there are series of problems which call for national transformation of Nigeria education system through entrepreneurship education. The problems are youth unemployment and high level poverty. It was observed that the problems are attributed to the theoretical nature and non practical orientation that characterized Nigeria education system. Afolabi and Olorisade (2008) noted that most of Nigeria social ills and problems are caused by the unemployment and poverty that is biting high on Nigerians. Afolabi and Olorisade noted that idle hands are the devil's workshop. The authors, however called for the need to transform Nigeria education through entrepreneurship education in order to meet up with challenges facing Nigeria as a nation. The more entrepreneurs a nation has, the better are the chances for accelerated socio economic development.

Ogundele, Sofoluwe and kayode (2012) identified the importance of entrepreneurship education to the socio economic development of any nation as (1) source of employment or job creation for the youths (2) method of economic diversification, (3) sources of capital investment (4) it aids diversification of technical and vocational jobs (5) Entrepreneurship education aids effective utilization of local resources (6) it aids promotion of entrepreneurial culture technological development (7) technical college curriculum are made relevant to the societal needs. The benefit of entrepreneurship skills acquisition at technical college level would reduce Youth unemployment in the society. Youth employment will reduce poverty level and social crimes in the society. If the social crimes are reduced, technical college certificates in Nigeria will be accorded high respect at both national and international levels.

Conclusion

In Nigeria today, it is clear that the rate of unemployment among youth especially technical college graduates has been a challenge to government. The youths graduate from this institution without the requisite skills to set up and establish on their own. The study found out that most of the skills identified were needed by the MVM craft in order to be able to set up and establish on their own and become self-reliant

Recommendations

Based on the results of the findings of the study the following recommendations were made

- The National Board for Technical Education accreditation and curriculum development for technical colleges should integrate the entrepreneurship competencies and skills identified into the curriculum of technical college programme especially MVM
- There should be school-based enterprises where students identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business by using the school as mini-incubators
- Government should develop entrepreneur internship programme by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly stated education programmes especially in MVM programme at technical college level
- There should be some form of genuine school work based learning incorporated in some studies as part of the national economic development strategies. This implies enriching the curriculum to incorporate more entrepreneurship education in vocational and technical training at technical college level especially MVM programme. The development of apprenticeship scheme would give new graduates some work and experiences

- Funding of entrepreneurship education should be taken seriously by the federal government. This can be achieved through increase in the budgetary allocation to the educational sector.
- To empower youth, federal government should provide enabling environment and the necessary equipment and materials for easy teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education needed for economic enhancement and youth empowerment in Nigeria.

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