Entrepreneurship into Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) In Nigeria

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Abstract

Graduate unemployment in Nigeria is traced to lack of skills and innovation leading to poverty and foreign dependent economy. One sure way of redeeming the economy is taking Entrepreneurship into Technical and vocational education serious. Meaning, Skills, discoveries and innovations are converted into goods and services to the marketplace. Enormous benefits are derivable from this system of education including; self-employment, employer of labor, poverty eradication, and reduction of capital flight among others. For the purpose of this study, secondary data were used by reading documents. The aim of this paper is to persuade education authorities, policy makers, financial institutions and entrepreneurs to adopt an integrated approach. The paper posit that urgent steps are needed to ensure that Entrepreneurship into Technical and vocational education system is given its desired priority to accelerate economic development in Nigeria,

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, technical, vocational education, Entrepreneur, Nigeria

Introduction

Unemployment in Nigeria has reached an alarming rate due to lack of skills and innovation. A nation’s level of development depends on its innovation and competence based skills. One sure way of redeeming the economy is taking Entrepreneurship into Technical and vocational education serious. The objective of this paper is to persuade education authorities, policy makers, financial institutions and entrepreneurs to properly tackle Entrepreneurship in Technical and vocational education programmes for graduates to become employable, self-employed and create jobs.

The paper critically examines the current trend of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria as it relate to technical, vocational education and training (TVET), posit that there is urgent need to integrate these programmes in Nigeria as obtained in developed countries..
Entrepreneurship
An enterprise is a project, an undertaking, a company, a firm or an individual that is engaged in one form of economic activity or the other, with the aim of producing some goods or services for sale to others [1]. Entrepreneurship is a process of identifying and starting a business venture, sourcing and organizing the required resources and taking both the risks and rewards associated with the venture [2]. Entrepreneur is a loanword from French. It is defined as an individual, who organizes or operates a business or businesses [2]. An entrepreneur searches for change, responds to it and exploits opportunities. Thus, innovation is a specific tool of an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneur
This is the person who has the special ability to turn an opportunity into profit by assembling resources—finance, labor, 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 [3].

Education for entrepreneurship can be very effective into vocational training, as students will be preparing to go into the labor market. Entrepreneurship education is teaching students how to move discoveries and innovations from the skills, research or design into the marketplace.

Entrepreneurship education
Entrepreneurship education according to [4] seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Realizing the enormous benefits derivable from integrating entrepreneurship in technical and vocational training, the Federal government directed all higher education institutions in Nigeria to run entrepreneurship studies program as a compulsory course for all students irrespective of their disciplines with effect from 2007/2008 academic session [5]. This directive is yet to be fully implemented, hence, large majority of Nigerian graduates are still looking for jobs.

Technical Entrepreneurship or Technological Entrepreneurship
Engineers, technologists, technicians and craftsmen are experts in their various areas of studies. However, for these people to enjoy doing their own things, in their own way, in their own time (entrepreneur) require deep exposure to business ideas in order to exploit technology-driven market opportunities. This will lead to technical entrepreneurship or technopreneurship. In [6]
technopreneur is defined as the innovation of scientific and technical knowledge by one or several persons who start and operate business and financial risks to achieve their vision and goals.

**Importance Of Entrepreneurship into Technical and Vocational Education In Nigeria**

- To translate skills, knowledge, innovations into goods and services to the marketplace.
- Students are motivated with incentives for ingenuity and creativity.
- Students are involved in participatory efforts in anticipation of societal (economic) changes.
- Students or trainees may be encouraged to secure financial assistance from sponsor organizations or individuals.
- Reduction of capital flight, since, some goods and services shall be produced locally.
- Graduates will become self-employed, create jobs and employ others in some cases.
- Potentials in rural areas can easily be identified and provided for profit making.
- Alleviation of poverty, promote sustainable development and raise the standard of living.
- Form the foundation of industrial and manufacturing activities of a country.
- Facilitate, promote export and enhance national economic growth.
- Reduce influx of foreign professionals and promote foreign reserve.

**National Policy On Technical Education**

The first policy plan was in 1977, revised in 1981. In it, 1991 was the target date for technological take – off in Nigeria. The 6-3-3-4 system of education was the preferred one [6]. However, this system was badly planned, inadequately funded, badly implemented and ended in fiasco. Nigeria’s current plan to join some developed countries around the globe in improving technical expertise through national education policy is commendable. But, not much improvement has been recorded, hence, technical schools infrastructure and enrollment nationwide is still far below standard despite reformations.

Technical, vocational education and training (TVET) is practiced under the following sub-sections, namely; pre-vocational, vocational, technical colleges, colleges of education (technical), polytechnics and universities, [7]. In order to sustain the reform in the education sector, the Joint Admission and Matriculations Board (JAMB) accepted the National Technical Certificate (NTC) and National Business Certificate (NBC) as being adequate for admission into institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, all technical colleges were required to affiliate with National Business and
Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) for their examinations. Similarly, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) regulates Polytechnics/monotechnics’ programs.

Vocational and technical education is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

Implementation of Entrepreneurship into Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) differs among countries. In some countries, these programs commenced from Primary school though, more common at secondary school and tertiary education levels.

**Perceptions In Nigeria**

Peoples’ poor perception and mindset is that vocational education is second choice to academic education [8]. Most Nigerian parents prefer university education for their children. A large majority of students do not even want to hear technical, vocational education and training (TVET). They prefer to become lawyers, engineers, accountants, economist, architects, and medical doctors. Societal discrimination of technicians and craftsmen in Nigeria has become so pronounced and embarrassing, tagged them inferior and second or third class citizens. The ostentatious life style of Nigerians also favor foreign goods and services to the detriment of made in Nigeria goods.

**The Global Trend**

Globally, vocational and technical education is accepted as the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, knowledge that is applicable to various trades or occupations for the advancement of social and sound economic life of the citizens. The best legacy to bequeath to citizens is sound technical education skills, techniques and knowledge [9]. In many European nations, Universities and technical colleges trained students of science, economics and business management in skills that helps to build more sustainable societies [10], Some selected countries implementing entrepreneurship into technical and vocational education systems with success stories is highlighted below

**Austria:** Entrepreneurship education is part of the curricula of schools and colleges teaching technical subjects and business administration, and part-time vocational schools for apprentices.

**Belgium:** Both public and private sectors offer various entrepreneurship activities or projects to complement the traditional education and training system.
**Bulgaria:** For professions requiring a third-level vocational qualification, entrepreneurship is a compulsory subject for all students.

**Cyprus:** Entrepreneurship is included in the national curriculum for all schools of Technical and Vocational Education.

**Denmark:** In Denmark, vocational training courses typically combine teaching (1/3) with work experience (2/3). Entrepreneurship is required to be taught in all VET programmes.

**Estonia:** Entrepreneurship programmes are provided in all vocational education and training. Since 2006 entrepreneurship programmes have been included in all national curricula for vocational education.

**Germany:** All the framework curricula for VET set by the *Kultusministerkonferenz* (Standing Conference of Education Ministers) specify that vocational schools must provide an insight into various forms of employment including entrepreneurship, to support a career and life plan involving self-employment.

**Hungary:** Entrepreneurship is a basic competence in the Hungarian national curriculum.

**Lithuania:** National framework documents on vocational education states that entrepreneurship should be integrated into all programmes;

**Poland:** In Poland, curricula for all types of secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary schools include the subject ‘Basic Entrepreneurship’. Student participation is compulsory.

**Romania:** Entrepreneurship is included in secondary schools, technical and vocational education.

**Slovenia:** Entrepreneurship is a compulsory module in the national curriculum both in upper secondary vocational education and in upper secondary technical education.

**Spain:** In Spain, entrepreneurship education is included in the national framework curriculum and is compulsory for all VET fields (technical, industrial, commercial, etc)

**Slovakia:** Entrepreneurship is included in the national curriculum either as a compulsory or as an optional subject. Training firms are used in all types of Secondary Vocational Schools (SVS) and in Secondary Vocational Apprentice Schools (SVAS).

**UK:** All secondary schools are expected to provide opportunities for vocational training. In England it is a statutory requirement that all schools provide all students with work-related learning. Enterprise education is a key element, aiming to encourage young people to be more enterprising.

**Government Efforts towards Technical Education and Training in Nigeria**

In recent times, the Federal government realizes that technical education need to be revitalized for
Nigeria to attain the desired accelerated economic development, A critical review of her national Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation (SETI) system. The Federal and some State governments intensity renewed efforts by establishing new technical collages and vocational training institutions and centres.

Government agencies are also required to redouble efforts such as National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) participating in vocational training, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Skill acquisition centre’s, apprenticeship schemes, Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to mention a few.

**Compliance with entrepreneurship education directive**

Okojie in [5], the Federal Government directed all higher education institutions in the country to run entrepreneurship studies programme as a compulsory course with effect 2007/2008 academic session, the National University Commission (NUC) to coordinate and ensure compliance. However, level of compliance may be measured by first the number of institutions implementing the directive and secondly, the graduates practicing the ideals.

Setting of National standard for enterprise education is crucial, since; entrepreneurship education may even start from primary school, secondary and higher education institutions. Again, the desired impact can only be felt when appropriate facilities are provided including, training and retraining of trainers, motivating students, proper funding, provision of infrastructure, adequate framework and policy decisions, implementation, monitoring and supervision.

Professional bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also enjoined to accredit and or in collaboration with some companies, firms and organizations to train technicians and craftsmen through apprenticeship schemes and skill acquisition programs as well as entrepreneurship studies.

**Nigeria beyond Oil**

For Nigeria to join the rest of the developed countries beside oil is to intensity efforts by implementing entrepreneurship studies into technical and vocational training schemes vigorously. Over reliance on foreign goods (markets) and services, couple with over dependent on oil and currency devaluation is a pointer to the fact that it is high time to develop local craftsman and graduates to become entrepreneurs. According to UNESCO in [10] the way each nation, cultural group and individual views sustainable development will depend on its own values. Investing in entrepreneurship education is one of the highest return investments that Europe can make: research
shows that pupils and students who have participated are 3 to 6 times more likely to start a business at some point later in life than those who do not receive entrepreneurship education [11]. As noted in [12] before retirement years, half of all working men in the United States probably have a period of self-employment of one or more years. If Nigerians workers also want to enjoy life after retirement, they must also participate in entrepreneurship into technical and vocational programs.

**Collaboration among institutions**

Consortium to advance entrepreneurship studies into technical and vocational training (multidisciplinary programs) is important. Efforts so far made by six African countries that have formed a consortium disserve commendation. In [13] the countries and institutions participating are American University in Cairo, Egypt (AUC), University of Cape Town (UCT), Graduate School of Business (GSB), South Africa, University of Stellenbosch Business School, South Africa (USB), Esca Maroc Ecole De Management of Casablanca, Morocco (ESCA), the Lagos Business School, Nigeria (LBS) and Strathmore Business School of Nairobi, Kenya.

**Conclusion.**

Lack of skills required in industries lead to high rate of unemployment in Nigeria with associated consequences. For practical economic growth, the youths must imbibe entrepreneurship education, technical and vocational training, to produce goods and services locally. Government at all levels should create the enabling environment for integrating entrepreneurship, technical and vocational education (political will vital).

Only countries capable of developing her productive workforce couple with entrepreneurship skills can be termed truly developing, developed and independent. The creative minds, innovations, ingenuity, knowledge, skills, experience from technical, vocational and higher institutions be exploited maximally in conjunction with entrepreneurship education – the sure route to Nigeria’s greatness. Nigerians need to emulate the integrated approach adopted by those successful nations.

Finally, urgent implementation of the entrepreneurship education directives as the case with renewed efforts in technical and vocational training in Nigeria is considered a matter of national importance.
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