



Training in Technical and Vocational Education for Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria: The way Forward

Muhammad A. Uthman

Department of Metalwork

Niger State College of Education, Minna

E-mail: mauthman2@gmail.com

Abstract

The role of entrepreneurs is recognized to be of great significance in accelerating the pace of growth of economic development of a country. The developed countries owe much of their economic development to the entrepreneurs of their respective countries. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) can equip young people with skills that enable them to engage in productive livelihood. The problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria is rapidly becoming dangerous. TVET programmes have not led to increase employment opportunities due to dearth of wage employment. The graduates are also not able to set up their own enterprises despite the inclusion of entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurship in TVET programmes. The paper highlights the concept of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education and its objectives. It also discussed training in TVET in Nigeria and identified its challenges militating against entrepreneurship development. Appropriate recommendations that can help overcome the challenges are made which include initiating a five-year project to implement a new policy requiring all serving technical and vocational educators to complete a course in entrepreneurship education, exploring the power of entrepreneurship potentials in all TVET programmes and creating in the trainees enterprise culture among others.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Technical Education, Vocational Education.

Introduction

Entrepreneurs are recognized to be of great significance in accelerating the pace of growth of economic development of a country. The developed countries owe much of their economic development to the entrepreneurs of their respective countries. Undeveloped and developing countries having seen the history of development in developed countries are now conscious of the significance of entrepreneurship development.

Many countries, particularly in Africa, consider that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) can equip people with skills that can enable them to engage in productive livelihoods. Yet, TVET programmes have not led to increase employment, despite the obvious need in these countries for technical and vocational services. This has been due to a dearth of wage employment opportunities for technically trained workers (United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2013). Even, with the acquired skills, these youths are also not able to set up their own enterprises after graduation.

The problem of youth unemployment is rapidly becoming dangerous in many countries as their economies and educational systems are unable to accommodate this number of youths. Nigeria is facing serious unemployment problem coupled with a declining standard of living. According to the National Bureau of Statistic (2012), unemployment rate in Nigeria stood at 23.9 per cent.

Youth Employment Summit Secretariat (2002) observed that the majority of the world's unemployed live in countries with minimal welfare systems, no employment equates to no income and therefore no food, no shelter, no medicine and no other basic necessities of life. In countries where family represents the only safety net, the unemployment of those that should be key bread winners extends the negative financial impact of unemployment to entire families.

Youth unemployment has other national and global impacts notably increased violence, crime and political instability. Desperation can drive many people into living outside the law both to survive and as a means of expressing dissatisfaction at the apparent neglect of their very existence. Many of the most unstable countries are also those with very high youth unemployment rates.

In the past, a widespread approach to the problem of limited job opportunities was through the establishment of large industrial complexes that were expected to provide many jobs and enhance the economic situation of the local area (Charmes, 1990). This approach has been largely unsuccessful because it was overtly capital-intensive in countries that have limited capital. It actually provides few new employment opportunities and exacerbated the gap between the poor and rich. Because of the failure of this approach, formal development efforts are now emphasizing the creation of small enterprises in the informal sector that are operated by self-employed individuals.

Thus, the philosophy of Nigerian education system emphasizes self-reliance. Therefore, one of the objectives of education in the national policy of education is to produce individuals who are equipped with skills and competences to be self-reliant. Olorundere and Kayode in Mustapha (2013) noted that Nigeria's aspiration to use education to achieve both individual and national self-reliance and therefore, high level of socio-economic and technological/industrial development is however yet to be attained. The Nigerian education at all levels is described as academic, theoretical and certificate oriented. The education is devoid of entrepreneurship necessary for providing skills, competencies and orientation for self-employment. What Nigerian education, therefore, produces are school leavers and graduates that are academic in orientation and having little or no skills for vocational and entrepreneurial relevance.

The subject of entrepreneurship has thus become important and necessary for the educational sector which is directly responsible for the development of the economy of the country. One of the TVET methodologies to develop quality based TVET is the inclusion of entrepreneurship in the curricular of TVET institutions as part of the competencies to be acquired by the trainees. It is in the light of this, that the paper examines training in TVET and the way forward for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria

The Concept of Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education

In literature, there is a little consensus as to what constitutes entrepreneurship (Swedberg, 2000). Some writers identified entrepreneurship with the function of uncertainty, others with the coordination of productive resources while others with the

introduction of innovations and provision of capital. Gana (2001) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities.

More comprehensively, entrepreneurship is the ability to create and build a vision from practically nothing. Fundamentally, it is a human and creative act. It is the application of energy to initiating and building an enterprise or organization rather than just watching or analyzing. This vision requires a willingness to take calculated risks both personal and financial and then to do everything possible to reduce the chances of failure. Entrepreneurship also includes the ability to build an entrepreneurial or venture team to complement your (the entrepreneur) own skills and talents. It is the knack for sensing an opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion. It is possessing the know-how to find, marshal and control resources often owned by others (Abubakar, 2010).

Entrepreneurship education is an educational programme that provides the students with the knowledge, skills and motivation needed to start up a small scale business (Amoor, 2008). In other words, it promotes innovation or rather introduces new products or services and market strategies to the students to become outstanding entrepreneurs. Nelson and Johnson (1997) sees the entrepreneur as the key actor in the private enterprise sector and can be defined as a person who is able to look at the environment, identify opportunities for improvement, gather resources, and implement action to maximize those opportunities. The entrepreneur also is depicted as a role model in the community, a provider of employment opportunities for others, a stabilizing factor in society and a primary contributor to the development of natural and human resources within a nation.

Kenton and Ervin (2000) defined entrepreneurship education as an educational discipline that prepares people, especially youth to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers that contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. In other words, entrepreneurship education is a programme that provides discipline to an individual to assume the responsibility and the risk for a business operation with the expectation of making a profit. If this succeeds, the entrepreneur reaps profits; and if it fails, he takes the loss. There are different perspectives to providing or teaching entrepreneurship. Obioma (2012) identified the following approaches:

- Entrepreneurship as a general course involves teaching entrepreneurship to raise awareness of the students about self-employment and entrepreneurial attitudes that will prove useful in the lives of the students.
- Entrepreneurship as academic discipline involves making entrepreneurship to be integral part of other programmes. It offers the option to explore the power of entrepreneurial activities outside the realm of business and to explore the potential in every programme of study be it science, history, English, geography, etc.
- Entrepreneurship as training on how to create a business is basically a business plan approach. The students are to identify a business concept and are helped to develop the business plan.

- Entrepreneurship as practical hands on learning by doing involves training through practical approach and goes beyond the classroom.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

Paul (2005) has identified the following as the objectives of entrepreneurship education:

- To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
- Provide the youths with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
- To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development...
- Offer tertiary institutions graduates with adequate training in risk management to make certain bearings feasible.
- To reduce high rate of poverty.
- Create employment opportunities.
- Reduction in rural-urban migration.
- Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium scale businesses.
- To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
- Create smooth transition from school to world of work and from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

TVET Training in Nigeria

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)(2002) defined TVET as those aspects of educational process involving in addition to general 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 the economic and social life. The conceptual definition of TVET cut across educational levels (post-primary, secondary and even tertiary) and sectors (formal or school-based, non-formal or enterprise-based).

When used separately, each element of this composite term, TVET takes on a restricted meaning. For instance, Technical Education is that branch of education designed at upper secondary school and lower tertiary levels to prepare middle-level personnel (technicians, technologies, middle management, etc.), and at university level , to prepare engineers for higher management positions. Vocational Education, on the other hand, is designed to prepare skilled personnel at lower levels of qualification for one or a group of occupations, trades or jobs. Vocational education usually provided at upper secondary school level, would includes general education, practical training for the development of skills required by the chosen occupation and related theory. The proportions of these components may vary considerably but the emphasis is usually on practical training within the framework of lifelong education (Abubakar, 2010).

Apprenticeship was the method of vocational training prevalent in Nigeria before the establishment of vocational and technical schools. Even, today the apprenticeship system still produces the bulk of Nigeria's skilled and semi-skilled workers. This is because there are not enough technical and vocational schools to train the required manpower. Some big industries in Nigeria employ apprentices whom they subsequently train, the duration of training depending on the nature of the skills to be attained. Some industries even have special schools for the training of their workers (Okoro, 1993).

Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VEIs) and Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs) were institutions approved by Government in 2007 to provide a veritable alternative route to higher education. They are product of the recent reform initiatives of the Federal Ministry of Education with the major aim of widening access to TVET as well as serving the needs of the industry and self-empowerment of the nation's citizens. VEIs and IEIs are principally private institutions that offer vocational, technical, technology or professional education and other skills-based training at post-basic (VEIs) and post-secondary (IEIs) to equip our youths and working adults with employable skills and knowledge to meet the increasing demand for technical manpower by various sectors of the nation's economy (Abubakar,2010).

Originally, the direct preparation for work was the main goal of TVET, these remains prominent in many developing nations including Nigeria (Abubakar, 2010). Technical and vocational educators use teaching approaches that is emphasizing vocational skills development and prepare students for certification and employment in the formal sector. There is now dearth of wage employment opportunities for technically trained graduates. Despite the inclusion of entrepreneurship in the curricular of TVET institutions as part of the competencies to be acquired by the trainees, these trainees are not able to set up their own enterprises after graduation.

Challenges of TVET

The challenges besetting the TVET sector are multi-dimensional and more colossal. They include:

- Most technical educators lack the methodology of teaching entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurship.
- Technical and Vocational educators use teaching approaches that emphasize technical and vocational skills and neglect creating an enterprise culture in their trainees.

Kerre (2000) observed that one of the challenges facing education and training in Africa is the changing demands of the workplace. Technological changes occur often with new products and services appearing in the market. Employment trends, therefore, tend towards flexible and broad specialization. More emphasis is being laid on adaptive skills to new production environment. Burger (1986) expressed the view that young people who have undergone TVET programme acquire knowledge of particular subjects but are ill-equipped to use the knowledge in ways which are relevant to the world outside the educational system. This imbalance, he observed, is harmful to the industry and society. A well-balanced educational programme should enhance analysis and the acquisition of knowledge relevant to the world of work.

Singh (1998) observed that job specific training is most important for creating self employment as well as meeting new challenges in the world of work but TVET programmes have not accommodate the rapid changing work environment characterized by new technologies and work organizations that demand adaptive skills due to lack of appropriate training equipment and teachers. In the same vein, Gomwalk (2000) observed that in tertiary institutions, the teachings of science and technology courses are more of theory than practice due partly to acute shortage of equipment and materials. Availability of highly qualified staff in the right quantity is also a problem.

The Way Forward for Entrepreneurship Development in TVET

One approach to enhancing entrepreneurial activity and enterprise growth in developing countries is to create an enterprise culture among the youths of the country (Nelson & Mburugu, 1991). This can be achieved by focusing on youths while they are still in school. In the same vein, Adejimola & Olaufunmilayo in Mustapha (2013) and Garba (2010) are of the view that integrating educational programmes with entrepreneurship will help to create and enhance the spirit of entrepreneurship in students and to achieve the goal of entrepreneurship better.

TVET is an ideal vehicle for creating an enterprise culture. Creating a general culture to support the small enterprise community is likely to facilitate the establishment of new enterprises. Nelson and Johnson (1997) recommended that enterprise culture should include the following components to enhance entrepreneurship education:

- Exposure of trainees to successful small enterprises in their community;
- Opportunity to practice entrepreneurial attributes in technical and vocational training institutions during the formative years of trainees growth;
- Opportunity to become familiar with entrepreneurial and managerial task during their technical and vocational training;
- Utilizing small enterprises, family and community contacts to assist in implementing business opportunities.

Entrepreneurship education programmes should include work experience in small-scale enterprises, integration of entrepreneurial role models in the training, and active participation of trainees in idea generation and business planning. In addition, course materials should include undertaking case-studies, documenting and preparing them as supplementary teaching materials. They should describe variety of problems confronted and success stories by small scale entrepreneurs.

To enhance the performance of technical and vocational educators in teaching entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurship, the government should initiate a five-year project to implement a new policy requiring all serving technical and vocational educators to complete a course in entrepreneurship education. A course in methods of teaching entrepreneurship should be introduced in all teacher training institutions for pre-service teachers. The course should incorporate Competency Based Economies through Formation of Enterprises (CEFE) methodology. Competency Based Economies through Formation of Enterprises is a comprehensive set of training approach instruments using an action oriented and experiential learning methods to develop and enhance the business management and personal competencies of a wide range of target groups, mostly in the area of income and employment generation and economic development.

CEFE being a training concept is based on the assumption that the enrichment of society is essentially depending on its human resources and the more productive and accountable these people are the greater will be the wealth of that nation. It has evolved over the years from an approach training individuals who want to start their own enterprise to a far-reaching training methodology designed to evoke enterprising behaviour and competence in a wide variety of situations. The fundamental assumption is that people with a clearer vision of their goals and equipped with the skills to achieve them are far more likely to become productive individuals in society (Non-Governmental Organization, 2009).

Technical and vocational educators should be recruited, trained and retrained regularly. The educators at all levels of the education sector should be sponsored to attend local and international conferences so that they can acquire and effectively impart the entrepreneurial skills to their students. The educators should be given loans/grants to establish and run their own enterprises so as to acquire adequate practical experiences for onward transmission to their students and trainees. Technical and vocational educators should build confidence in their students through talk. Workshops should also be organized regularly for students with successful entrepreneurs invited as guest lecturers.

For the students to acquire the required technical and vocational skills for self-reliance, the institutions should be provided with up-to-date materials, tools and functional machines. The tools and machines should be regularly maintained. The students should be engaged in actual production of what they will do after graduation. The Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) should also be strengthened by providing enabling environment for industries and small enterprises to flourish, strive, and students posting should be done appropriately. Adequate allowances should be paid to both supervising lecturers and their students.

Conclusion

There has been dearth of wage employment for technically and vocationally trained graduates. Despite the inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in TVET programmes, the graduates are not able to set up their own enterprises. Therefore, there is the need to revisit the way entrepreneurship is taught in TVET institutions by exploring entrepreneurial potentials in all TVET programmes, creating in the trainees' enterprise culture during their training. Technical and vocational educators should be mandated to take a course in entrepreneurship, pre-service teachers should be taught the methodology of teaching entrepreneurship and provision of up-to-date materials, tools, and functional machines as a way forward for achieving entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

References

- Abubakar, M. S. (2010). Revitalizing TVET for Technology Entrepreneurship and Industrial Development: Measures, Design and Applicability. Paper Presented at the *National Workshop* of National Centre for Technology Management (NACETEM) in Minna, 16th-18th June,
- Amoor, S. S. (2008). Integrating Entrepreneurship Education into Business Education Curriculum in Nigerian Universities. *Zaria Journal of Liberal Arts*, 2(2), 3.
- Burger, T. (1986). *Education for Capacity*. London: Nfer-Nelson Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Charmes, J. (1990). *A Critical Review of Concepts. Definitions and Studies*. In D. Turnham, B. Salome, & A. Schwarz (EDs). *The informal Sector Revisited*. Paris: Development Centre of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development.



- Gana, J. S. S. (2001). *Entrepreneurship*. Canada: Jofegan Associate.
- Garba, A. S. (2010). Refocusing education system Toward Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria: A Tool for Poverty Eradication. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 15(1)
- Gomwalk, N. E. (2000). *Science and Technology in the Service of Humanity*. In B.B.O. Ogbonna, I.G. Datol, I.Y. Longdet, A.K.D. Dangpe (Eds). Science and Technology for Development. Jos: Zimex Communication.
- Kenton, B. W. and Ervin, L.B. (2000). Re-engineering the Undergraduate Business Core Curriculum: Aligning Business Schools with Business for Improved Performance. <http://www.emeraldinsight.com>. Retrieved May 20, 2013,
- Kerre, B.W. (2000). The Place of Technical Education in the School curriculum of the 21st Century. *A Paper Presented in the WOCATE/UNESCO Conference Technical University: Braunsweigh.*
- Mustapha, M. T. (2013). Evolving Entrepreneurship Science, Technical and Vocational Education Curriculum at the Pre- Service Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) Teacher Education. *A Lead Paper Presented at the 2nd National Conference of the School of Sciences, Niger State College of Education, Minna, 7th- 9th May,*
- National Bureau of Statistics, (2012). Unemployment Rate. <http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng>. Retrieved October 20, 2012.
- Nelson, R. E. & Mburugu, J. B. (1991). Exporting Entrepreneurship. *Vocational Education Journal*, 66(5), 34-55
- Nelson, R. E. and Johnson, S. D. (1997). Entrepreneurship Education as a Strategic Approach to Economic Growth in Kenya. *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education*, 35(1), 7-21
- Non Governmental Organizations (2009). Competency based Economies through Formation of Enterprises CEFE. <http://www.blog.world-citizen.org/wp-archve/2649>. Retrieved May 30, 2013.
- Obioma, P. A. (2012). Entrepreneurship Education: Curriculum Content and its Iterative for National Development. *Abuja Journal of International Education and Management Sciences*, 1(2), 39-58
- Okoro, O. M. (1993). *Principles and Methods in Vocational and Technical Education*. Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- Paul, E. O. (2005). *Entrepreneurship Education*. In E. N. Prescilla, O. P. Elizabeth, A. O., Beatrice, A. G., Okwuolise, A., Eheli, H. U. Anih (Eds). Entrepreneurship in Vocational Education. Enugu: Ozybel Publishers.



Singh, M. (1998). *School Enterprises: combining Vocational Learning with Production*. Berlin: UNEVOC/UNESCO.

Swedberg, R. (2000). *Entrepreneurship: The Social Science View*. New York: Oxford University Press.

UNESCO (2002). *Technical and Vocational Education and Training Report*. Paris: UNESCO

UNESCO (2013). Starting My Own Small Business: A Training Module on Entrepreneurship for students. <http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/image/0014/001449/1411928e.pdf>. Retrieved May 29, 2013.

Youth Employment Summit Secretariate (2002). Youth Unemployment: The Current Scenario. <http://www.yesweb.org/docs/issuestatement.pdf>. Retrieved from June 22, 2013.