

CHAPTER FIVE

VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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Abstract

The fluctuating labour market and the increasing rate of unemployment in the country today, has made it necessary for graduates and undergraduates to acquire vocational and entrepreneurial skills that will empower them to be job creators instead of job seekers. This paper discusses the essence of vocational technical education and entrepreneurial education in enhancing the employment opportunities of graduates and undergraduates as well as the various entrepreneurial options in VTE that graduates and undergraduates alike can undertake in order to be relevant in the present economic reality. These options include: vocational agriculture, vocational home economics, distributive education, vocational business and office occupation and technical education.

Introduction

Vocational technical education according to Nuru (2006) is the appropriate training in skills, abilities and knowledge both mental and physical given to an individual to enable him/her enter and progress in a chosen and trained occupation. Vocational technical education is comprehensive term referring to the educational process where it involves, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Vocational technical education encompasses training in general education and the development of vocational and technical skills in the formal setting (Ezeagu, 1999). It is a part of general education that focuses attention on the acquisition of skills that will fit the recipient into the world of work either as an entrepreneur or an employee. Thus, it implies vocational and technical training or retraining which is given in schools or classes under public supervision and control. The major occupational areas of vocational technical education are as follows:

- (a) Vocational agriculture
- (b) Vocational business and office occupation
- (c) Distributive education
- (d) Vocational home economics Education
- (e) Technical education (Osuala, 1987)

Oduma (2007) notes that vocational technical education in Nigeria in the 21st century shall prepare Nigerians regardless of gender, socio-economic status, creed and ethnic affiliation, to take control of their own destiny, liberating them from dependency and endowing them with initiative, creativity and critical thinking, entrepreneurial skills, democratic values and an appreciation of work and, the world of work. Vocational technical education has been the collective responsibility of government-federal state and local civil society and development partners; all working in concert to ensure harmonious development of the economy. Thus, the federal ministry of education blue print and master plan (2001-2010) on vocational technical education development in Nigeria notes the following as the pertinent objectives:

- ❖ To produce semi-skilled and technical manpower necessary to restore, revitalise, energise, operate and sustain the national economy and substantially reduce unemployment
- ❖ Provide vocational technical education that is broad based in nature, accommodating all at all periods of life without discriminating or bias on the grounds of sex, intellectual tenets and aptitudes, physical disabilities or culture, religion, or ideology.
- ❖ To reform the content of vocational education to make it more responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country.
- ❖ Serve as a means of national defence against poverty brought by lack of job skills
- ❖ Harmonise and inter-relate with industry and the labour market in terms of resources for training as well as occupational and production standard
- ❖ Raise and sustain a generation of job creators rather than job seekers.
- ❖ Enhance access to vocational technical education programmes at all levels of the education system
- ❖ Ensure equity of access, participation and completion rates.

Again, the national plan for vocational technical education in the Federal Republic of Nigeria notes the following as the objectives of vocational technical education in Nigeria (Osuala, 1987).

- i To provide technological literacy to all pupils, that is, to prepare every pupils for life in technological age.
- ii To help develop the right attitude towards work and the habits of mind conducive to the proper use of technology
- iii To stimulate and encourage creativity
- iv To develop adequate technological orientation and preparation for advanced professional education and training in technology.
- v Vocational technical education should provide orientation and basic skills, competencies, and occupational abilities for those wishing to open entrepreneurship to produce saleable goods or services desired by the public

Entrepreneurship education is a process of acquiring the knowledge, attitude and psycho-productive skills for self-reliance, job creation and other forms of independent living in the absence of paid employment. It should equip individuals with creative, problem-solving and innovative orientation skills (Igbo, 2009). Entrepreneurship implies the willingness and the ability of an individual to seek investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on identified opportunities.

The fluctuating job market and increasing awareness of the need for vocational graduates to become self-employed have necessitated the inclusion of entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of tertiary institutions (UNESCO, 1997).

By foregoing, entrepreneurship education is designed to prepare individuals to undertake the formation and or operation of small scale business enterprises. Consequently, students who lack the expected entrepreneurial skills upon graduation are bound to encounter difficulties in making a living. Oduwa (2007) asserts that entrepreneurship education has the overall objective of generating employment in small scale enterprises in the countries. Specifically, it aims at

- Developing a pool of potential entrepreneurs who are well equipped to start and successfully manage small and medium scale industries;
- Encouraging self employment as a conscious and pre-determined choice;
- Generating employment opportunities for others;

- Reduction of dependence on government and large firms for paid employment;
- Simulation of rural development and the achievement of a meaningful level of broad based economic and industrial development generally;
- Uplifting dignity of labour and the reward for hard work; and
- Upgrading the social status of the Nigeria youth.

Entrepreneurship education will, in the long run, help to reduce unemployment youth restiveness, social unrest and enhances economic growth as well as economic development.

Entrepreneurial Options in Vocational Technical Education

The major occupational areas of vocational technical education are: vocational agriculture, vocational business and office education, distributive education, vocational home economics education and trades and industrial technical education.

Vocational Agriculture

According to Boshorun and Uzochukwu (1999) the entrepreneurial options within vocational agriculture include:

- a Livestock Production: Poultry, goat, cow, pig, and fish production experts consult.
- b Agricultural supplies and distribution experts- chemical, feeds, seeds, fertilizers,
- c Farm equipment and machineries expert-supplies and maintenance
- d Agricultural extension services/farm management expert consult
- e Soil management, farm produce and specie expert
- f Agricultural resources management consult-forestry
- g Ornamental horticulture expert

Vocational Business: Vocational business education and office education equips its recipients with the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for them to gain entry level employment as well as advance in their chosen office career or occupation in the face of advanced technological changed in modern offices. Entrepreneurial options in this specialised area of vocational technical education are:

- i Establishment of private secretarial training centers
- ii Establishment of private business centers for the provision of secretarial services
- iii Establishment of post-primary business/commercial schools
- iv Office ergonomics expert consult
- v Establishment of account and auditing firms (Osuala, 2004)

Distributive Education: Distributive Education is preparation for employment in business engaged in the distribution of consumer goods and services. It encompass all activities involved in packaging, branding, advertising and distribution of general goods and services. Entrepreneurial opportunities here are numerous. few as may be identified here includes

- i Sales and distribution of computer/household goods
- ii Distribution of consumer/computer accessories
- iii Retail/ out-let operation e.g provisions and cosmetics
- iv Wholesale sales of identifies product line
- v Advertisement agent/expert consult
- vi General merchandise-departmental stores, supermarket operators etc

Vocational Home Economics: Dacosta (1999) notes that home economics as a vocational subject is widely recognised and acknowledged. The basic aims of vocational home economics

education is mainly the proper training of an individual to living a meaningful life and earn a living. Ogunjimi (1995) asserts the curriculum of vocational home economics education is concerned with improvement of the general environment of the family and society. The curriculum is now designed with the objective of developing in the recipients, an all round skill to live a useful and satisfying life.

The scope of vocational home economics education includes: Child development, home management, food, nutrition, and meal preparation, human relationship, home nursing/health, family living and parenthood. In vocational home economics, there exist wide varieties of entrepreneurial options. Some of these include:

- i Dress making/fashion designers, boutique expert producers/sales
- ii Child care and development centre operator
- iii Beverage production expert/dealer- snacks, Ice cream, popcorn etc
- iv Dieticians, food and nutrient, food counselling expert for hospitals and hotels.
- vi Interior decoration expert consult-offices, private, homes, hotels, ceremonies etc.

Trade and Industrial Technical

Osuala (1987) Notes that trade and industrial technical education provides instruction for the development of basic manipulative skills, safety judgement, technical knowledge and related occupational information for preparing persons for useful self or paid employment in vocational industrial pursuit. Entrepreneurial development options in this specialised area include:

- i Identify, repair and maintenance or servicing of air conditioners faults
- ii Identify, repair and maintenance or servicing of refrigerators faults
- ii Identify, repair and maintenance of electrical appliances, compressors, dryers, water heaters etc
- iv construction occupations- wood work, carpentry, and joinery
- v Fabrication occupation- Asbestos roofing sheets, metal works, electrical welding etc
- vi Builders-Building technology experts consul, building electrical works consults including architectural designers, expert consult

In agreement with the above descriptions of entrepreneurial opportunities in the various aspects of vocational technical education, Amaewhule (1998) notes that in the Nigeria business scene, vocational technical education finds expression in some substances of entrepreneurial activities in such areas as carpentry, auto mechanics, tailoring, typesetting, studios, shoe-making etc.

Relevance of Entrepreneurship in Vocational Technical Education

Theodore in Osuala (2004) contends that the entrepreneurs special attributes like intelligence, creativity, initiatives, innovativeness and resourcefulness should better the development through formal education in other to reduce the scourge of poverty. In this direction also, Ocho (2005) notes that central to the eradication of poverty is the initiation of a good education system. A good education system is a costly system, but no amount of expenditure is too much for the production of an enlightened citizenry, capable and willing to contribute to the growth and development of the nation. Similarly, the federal government of Nigeria (FRN, 2005) stresses that in order to pursue excellence in skill acquisition and achieve the desire for job creation, and poverty reduction, the Federal Government introduced the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The essences for the introduction of NEEDS is to ensure that graduates acquire sufficient technical/entrepreneurial skill and competencies to be self employed through job creation.

The relevance of entrepreneurship development on vocational technical education is implicit in the ideas of Ohaegbulem cited in Oduma (2007) thus:

- (a) Production of goods and services that is important to the well being, comfort and happiness of individuals and the society as a whole
- (b) Creation of self-employment: This helps to reduce the problem of unemployment and other social vices and further provides employment for others.
- (c) Through entrepreneur, the entrepreneur's standard of living and that of the entire society are improved upon.
- (d) Entrepreneurs determine or identify the specific wants of the people and what type of goods and services to be produced.
- (e) Entrepreneurs stimulate rural economic and industrial growth and development of any society.

Challenges of Vocational Technical Education in Nigeria

Vocational technical education in Nigeria today is faced with numerous problems. Thus, Hubert (2006:8) highlighted the following as the major problems of vocational technical education in Nigeria

- ❖ There is abject low level of attrition to vocational technical education
- ❖ Parents mostly encourage or have preference for courses that would enable their wards gain white collar jobs on graduation
- ❖ The majority of private sector enterprises are not technically or skilfully driven
- ❖ Vocational and technical education offerings are more "theoretical" rather than "technical"
- ❖ Supply of high quality technical and vocational personnel are still lacking despite reforms and strides by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE)
- ❖ Equipment and Infrastructure are still lacking in vocational and technical institutions and training centres

Conclusion

The need to provide a functional education which is dedicated to the acquisition of specific skill for self employment and the desire to equip graduates with marketable skill rather than searching for non-existent paid employment necessitated the introduction of entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurial education is the process of acquiring the knowledge, attitude and productive skills for self-reliance, job creation and other forms of independent living in the absence of paid employment. Thus, it is one of the surest strategies for escaping the socio-economic problem of unemployment and poverty.

Recommendations

1. Government should supply adequate instructional materials and workshop facilities to ensure realisation of the objectives of vocational technical private sector and the education and entrepreneurship education at all levels.
2. Programmes and curriculum of vocational technical education and entrepreneurship education should be reviewed, enriched and updated regularly in consonance with the changes/innovations that are occurring in the world of work.
3. There should be constant development and retraining of personnel who are assigned the responsibility of implementing the objectives of vocational technical education and entrepreneurship education
4. The government should increase the investment in technical and vocational education delivery system.

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