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## VOCATIONAL -TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

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### **ABSTRACT**

*To train Nigerians with identified entrepreneurial skills and in particular students in Vocational-Technical Education (VTE) courses. This can be done by including foundation business courses in the VTE curricula. Graduate would go into business more profitably than is currently practice. Poverty will be reduced and employment opportunities increase. This paper shows how Vocational-Technical Education (VTE) prepares a man ahead for a leaving after words.*

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### **Introduction**

Vocational education can be described to be a form of education meant to provide man with the necessary skills in his chosen carrier, whilst Technical Education refers to an after school trainings which exposes man to the practical aspect of his chosen carrier/job. However, Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) can be defined as the preparation of a man well ahead in the practical aspects/areas of his chosen profession.

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is that form of education emphasizing the development of occupational skills, need in preparation for a profession. Okoro (1993), in his own opinion, viewed Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) as the kind of education that provides the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude essential for effectiveness in specific occupations. While Uwameiye (1998) regards Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) as a medium of providing youths with employment in industries, commerce and other enterprises by exposing them to experiences that provide the manipulative, cognitive and attitudinal skills that makes them qualify for a job or career.

A more sustainable approach would be train Nigerians with identified entrepreneurial skills and in

particular, students and trainees in science, science related and technology courses because the disciplines have natural business potentials. This can be done by including foundation business courses in the science and technology curricula. Well educated and properly motivated graduate would go into private business or run public business organizations more profitably than currently the practice. In both cases, poverty will be reduced as employment opportunity increase while more goods and services are also produced to improve the supply side of economy.

### **The VTE Idea**

The Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) as an instrument of experiences for man to improve, nevertheless, develops man's natural gift of skills in a specialized profession. Thus Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) was developed to an extent that there is no area in Nigeria today wherein Craftsmen and Artisans are not indispensably sought after. Most especially when the whole essence of Education is not only to liberate but also to equip its recipients with the needed skills to prepare him/her to become useful elements within the society. Therefore, Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is no doubt a very vital factor in any nation, especially the Nigeria of today.

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

According to Oranu (1998), a universally accepted objective of education is that of self-reliance. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 1981) also emphasizes this. Business education can best do this. Business education in the opinion of Nannasy (1978) in Esene (1997) is that aspect of education which provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which learners require for effective performance in the business world.

Entrepreneurship education as an aspect of business education involves the identification of persons with entrepreneurial skills and developing such in them. Entrepreneurs have special characteristics, including innovativeness (Amaewhule and Eni, 1994), risk taking (Paul, Sculokis, J. C. & Levistky, J. 1989) and the profit drive (Encyclopedia Americana, 1995). Such persons can be identified at the various strata of the society and developed accordingly.

There is an urgent need therefore, to reform the curricula in Nigeria towards making graduates of schools and colleges to be self-reliant. This is more pressing in the case of scientists, technologists and engineers because apart from the fact that their disciplines are most adaptable to business development, Nigeria depends to a large extent on scientists, technologists and engineers for proper

participation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The present dwindling economic situation in Nigeria and the resultant measure of unemployment have emphasized the need for every Nigerian to be self-reliant through self-employment. This calls for entrepreneurship education as its major aim as to encourage and train university, polytechnic and secondary school graduates to take up self-employment. Motivation is also central to entrepreneurship. Shaperso (1975) observed that the characteristics common to entrepreneurship include: the desire to create a new business, the freedom to determine one's own destiny, the need for independence and the willingness to meet challenges.

It is against this background that this paper reappraises the nature of education and makes a case for entrepreneurial education in our curriculum.

What is Entrepreneurship?

In economics, all human resources involved in paid employment for the production of goods and services, are generally referred to as "labour". There is however, a form of human input which because of its special significance ranks differently and in superiority to labours. This is entrepreneurial ability found in an entrepreneur usually with the following characteristics.

1. The entrepreneurs take the initiative in combining the resources of land, capital and labour in the production of goods or services.
2. The entrepreneur has the choice of making basic business policy decisions, that is, those - routine decisions which is the course for a business enterprise.
3. The entrepreneur is obviously a risk bearer. The reward for his or her time, efforts, and abilities may be attractive profits, or loss and eventual bankruptcy. In short, the entrepreneur risk not only time, effort and business reputation but his invested funds and those of his associate or stockholders.

Nwaokolo (1977) defined entrepreneurship as the ability to set up a business enterprise as different from being employed. This should be acquired and should differ in some respects from the abilities acquired to enable a person obtain paid employment. It involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for personal self-reliance. Self-reliance on an individual relates to what Ikoki on Odozi (1991) opined as the "right and ability to set one's own goals realizing them as much as possible through one's efforts, using one's factors".

## **The Nature of Entrepreneurship Education in Vocational-Technical Education**

Vocational-Technical education is that vocational aspect of education that deals with the knowledge, skills competencies and aptitude that fits one wholly and entirely for work or business. A good Vocational-Technical education program should aim at the following -

1. Training present and prospect students for proficiency in a specific occupation.
2. Making students to acquire special skills that can make them to be self - reliant.

In every program of vocational-technical education, especially at the post-primary and post-secondary levels, a three credit course which may be titled “Entrepreneurship”, should be introduced and made compulsory for all vocational-technical education students. This course, which may run for one semester during the second year of an NCE Program, or the final year of an OND Program, or the final year of a degree programme

The following are important for entrepreneurship education in vocational-technical education to be successful.

1. Introduction of entrepreneurship education at various levels of education. Students in secondary schools, colleges of education, polytechnic and universities should be given opportunities for educating and training for self-employment. At the primary level the concept of owning and operating a small business should be introduced in career education programmes. This paper recommends a three credit unit load on “entrepreneurship” in all our school system.
2. Need for qualified educationist and instructors: These have to be reflected in both pre-service and in service training programmes of the teachers. Since people cannot teach what they do not know, these educators require in service training in entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes to make their trading more effective and efficient.
3. Provision of resource materials development and utilization. It has become exceedingly clear that the nation is not now in a position to build laboratories in all secondary schools and equip them with relevant machines. But the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education programmes calls for development and effective utilisation of necessary instructional materials, including text books. It is, therefore, necessary for text books and relevant instructional materials for effective instruction in entrepreneurship education within the vocational-technical education program.

The establishment of vocational centres in Nigeria as a way of solving the problem of lack of vocational workshops and machines. This means that within a geographical area,

say a local government area, a properly equipped area vocational centre should be established to serve different secondary schools located in that area. Whenever this idea is being implemented, there may be transport implications but usually the local government authority acquires a bus or two for the purpose of moving the students on rotational and school basis to the vocational centres.

4. Employing successful small business entrepreneurs. Local successful small business owners can be employed to help teach students on how to start and succeed in business. Various methods to capitalize on the practical business experiences of these individual and on pedagogic strengths of the educators must be developed. It is also necessary to develop ways of working with other agencies, institutions and organizations which are attempting to provide training and assistance to small business, such as the National Directorate of Employment.
5. Ensuring that students participate in industrial work experience scheme. It is important that colleges should take the issue of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) seriously. Colleges should ensure that students participate and are adequately supervised. Colleges should work closely with the industries and the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to ensure that students are posted to establishments where they can sufficiently be exposed to the necessary skills in real work situation prior to graduation.
6. Adequate funding of the entrepreneurship education: Central to these issues of enhancing entrepreneurship education in business education programmes is adequate funding. Since business education is capital - intensive, a deliberate intervention policy must be made into funding vocational-technical education programmes. One would expect that a reasonable sum is allocated by the government annually to business education. When operational, the Education Tax Fund must also spend a good proportion of its earnings on technological education of which business education is a subset, since it is rightly believed that technological development is crucial for the survival and development of the nation.

## **Culture of Good Entrepreneurship Programme**

A culture of good entrepreneurship for sustainable poverty alleviation is very essential and can only be achieved if the following are properly addressed by the management/business education economic planner's policy makers.

- Education - tertiary institutions, professional bodies and other agencies responsible should help in the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Emphasis should not only be on education for business, but also about business. The post-primary schools should be encouraged in this direction too.
- The National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Federal and States' agencies for poverty alleviation should seek the assistance of business educators to inculcate a culture of good entrepreneurship in the beneficiaries of their facilities.
- Management and business education should de-emphasise those western world's theories that are found not very relevant to our situation and bring to focus those that are very relevant to our peculiar situation.
- Private initiative - government should also as a way of promoting culture of good entrepreneurship, promote private initiative thereby enhancing the efficient working of the market forces.
- Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities will greatly enhance the development of a culture of good entrepreneurship, thereby assisting in the eradicating of the syndromes of poverty.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

A more sustained approach would be to make citizens to be self - reliance after a formal education, which grooms an individual into putting the skills acquired in earning a living. One way of achieving this is through entrepreneurial education which is an aspect of business education. Such is recommended for scientists, technologies and engineers because their disciplines more easily lend themselves to business development. Through VTE poverty will be reduced in the country, as it prepares man ahead regarding the future survival.

It is the suggestion of this paper that for our students to benefit from the educational system, the following are important:

- b. The curriculum should be diversified so as to cater for differences in talents and to anticipate the variety of opportunities open to the students after completing the course.

- c. The curriculum should be designed to equip the students to live effectively in this modern age of science and technology.

The objectives of this paper are therefore to:

- a. Show how the curriculum could be designed to make students self-employed after graduation.
- b. Show how entrepreneurship education in business can help to solve the problem of unemployment in our country.
- c. Show the nature of entrepreneurship education in business education.
- d. Show strategies for enhancing entrepreneurship education in business education.

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