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## THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING ENTERPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA.

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### ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship as a concept described an attitude modification to create and develop an enterprising mind of an individual to undertaken to militate, maintain a business for the production and distribution of economic goods and services. Is considered vis-à-vis the roles of Vocational and Technical Education. The paper looked at what VTE is all about, the concept of entrepreneurship, roles of vocational and technical education as a tool for achieving entrepreneurship education. It was concluded by calling for the acceleration of vocational and technical education into graduate programmes/course as well as integrating entrepreneurship education into primary and secondary school. Recommendations were made for enhanced entrepreneurship in vocational and technical education sectors.

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### INTRODUCTION

Every dynamic society responds to the challenges of accelerated pace of technological innovation and growth. Economic & technological changes engender corresponding changes in the world of work and the need for educators to provide preparatory and continuing educational experience that fit the youths for the world of work.

The desire of government the world over especially in developing countries like Nigeria is to build a better world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is in response to the world's main developmental challenges and to the call of a civil society that entrepreneurship programme was borne. The economy of the nations is developed by quality of higher level manpower produced by higher

institutions of learning. Educators of tertiary institutions must prepare for entrepreneurial training that will richly transform the economy, hopefully. Kolade in Oriola (2005), noted that Nigeria's problems of serious unemployment as rapidly becoming more severe on daily basis. Okwunaso and Isiney (1999) also observed Nigeria's lack of adequate self-reliant manpower as one contributing factor to the nation's employment problem. Chinyere (2004) similarly opined that unemployment breeds poverty is one of the greatest problems plaguing Nigeria today. According to her, no nation has ever survived successive high rates of unemployment in the event of the attendant waste of human resources it breed and the hardest hit among the unemployed are poor millions and the youths and graduates of tertiary institutions. If these observations are anything to go by the paper wants to contend that economic survival of Nigeria requires the breeding of people who will be able to organize their own entrepreneurial undertakings, produce goods and services for wants satisfaction, for self-employability purpose and even employ others. It is on this note that this paper attempts to present Vocational and Technical Education as a tool for entrepreneurship programme in Nigeria.

### **What is Vocational and Technical Education?**

Vocational and Technical Education can be described as the acquisition of skill, knowledge and attitude in any area of study to qualify one for gainful employment or self-employment. Adenuga in Adegbenjo (2007) 'sees it as an education geared towards skill acquisition in handwork for self-reliance. It is directed towards the world of work. Ekpeyong (1995) opined that vocational and technical education is education in career oriented courses offered in institution, which are meant to equip students with knowledge, understanding and skills of different occupational areas in industries. This means that VTE is tailored towards career – orientation which in turn leads to self-sustenance it is also an education which fits intricate experience of the real world of work through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, attitude and understanding for the world of work. United Nations Education Scientist and Cultural Organization (2007) also affirmed technical and vocational education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the 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 economy and social life. Since, technical and vocational education is often seen as a product of human resourcefulness. This is to say that the technical progress of any nation depends on the level of resourcefulness by her people which in turn is a direct reflection of the quality of training and meaningful development in education in that nation.

### **The concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is fast becoming the major focus of Nigeria education system as it is being embraced by most Nigerians as a way of life. People within and outside the institutions are finding it palatable and interesting as it offers them a vibrant vision of how to really attain their vision of being self-employed as well as being employers of labour rather than searching for inexistent employment. Emeruwa in Olumuyiwa (2006). Ubenyi (2007) saw entrepreneurship as attitude modification to create and develop an enterprising mind. An enterprising mind set generates models on wealth creation. No wonder Izedonmi in Ubenyi (2007) state that only fools down tools; if you want to remain a poor man, be an employee only; and employee is always a servant; and a servant cannot create wealth. In other words, people without entrepreneurial acumen or ability remain at the lower level of the ladder of wealth.

However, many authors have defined entrepreneurship in various ways for instance, Stevenson and Sahlman (1987) described entrepreneurship as the relentless pursuit of opportunity without regard to the resources currently controlled. Also Haligan (1989) saw it as a reform, innovation, wealth creation and risk taking. Therefore, entrepreneurship is generally sees as an individual's ability to seize opportunities and to turn ideas into action; ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives; and be creative, innovative and ready to take risks. It is believed that as engines of the economy, entrepreneurship education plays a critical role in shaping attitudes, skills and culture and by widespread exposure of students to entrepreneurship will make it more likely that they become entrepreneur in the future. No wonder former American President Ronald Reagan knowing the importance of entrepreneurship to a nation's economy once said while addressing American entrepreneurs in a speech he titled, "The greatest game in town we have lived through the age of big industry and the age of the entrepreneur, the age of the individual, that is where the nation's prosperity is coming from, and that is where it is going to come from in the future. Summon up courage and start business of your own. While some of you may fail. A surprising number will succeed and become financially independent, self-fulfilled and rich beyond your dreams.

The above assertion also holds true for Nigeria, with the effort the government is making in the area of job creation through entrepreneurship. Although, many Nigerians who have ventured into small scale business have been faced with one problem or another in time past but the federal government of Nigeria has been making efforts to encourage self-reliance and entrepreneurship in the society. For instance NDE that is, National Directorate of Employment was launched in 1987, this was meant to create employment for graduates and the society in general by teaching them vocational skills that would make them to be useful to themselves and the society they find themselves.

### **Roles of Vocational Technical Education as a Tool for Achieving Entrepreneurship.**

Since vocational and technical education is all about skill acquisition, manipulation and it is tailored towards career – orientation and it serves as the bedrock for development of any nation’s economy. It cannot be over emphasized, the roles it plays in achieving entrepreneurship programme in Nigeria.

### **Generation of Employment and Creation of Job Opportunities.**

Kolade in Oriola (2005) noted Nigeria’s problems of serious unemployment as rapidly becoming more severe on daily basis, but with the help of VTE individuals’ will be developed with the essential vocational skills that will make them useful to themselves and the society in general. Since a well-trained worker will be much more productive as an individual within the society; that is, the individual will be more of a producer of goods and services than a consumer of the available goods and services.

### **Alleviation of Poverty**

Chinere (2004) observed that unemployment breeds poverty and poverty is one of the greatest problems plaguing Nigeria today. Vocational technical education will help many graduates with entrepreneurial skills to survive in times of emergency . This has been proven right in recent time, when workers of various categories were retrenched in both public and private sectors due to the economic state of the country such workers who possessed skills other than that for which they are previously employed had something else to fall back on and better off financially than those who had no other skills.

Okwunaso and Isineyi in Oriola (2005) also observed that Nigeria’s lack of adequate self-reliance man-power is one of the contributing factor to the nations employment problem. VTE offers beneficiaries the ability to be self-reliant and to be employer of labour since, it trains appropriate number of personnel for capability in those area of the country’s present and future needs.

The desire of most developing countries, including Nigeria, is to have self-reliant and resilient economy capable of generating an internally self-sustaining growth. In so doing VTE leads to the taming of the environment or the maximization of the resources in the environment.

Vocational technical education helps to promote our culture and value what we have, for instance the skill of making Adire which are being used in most homes today, waving of basket etc these are all enterprising ventures.

### **Recommendations**

- There is a need for qualified educationist and instructors if vocational and technical education are to emphasize entrepreneurship programme in Nigeria. That is to say teachers should be given adequate training in entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes, they are expected to teach. These have to be reflected in both pre-service and in-service training programmes of the teachers. It has been pointed out that most of the pre-service programmes of vocational and technical educators are deficient as shown by Nwaokolo et'al in Ekwue (2002). 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.
- Successful small scale business entrepreneurs who have been successful owners in business for long time should be employed to help train students on how to start and succeed in business. 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 NDE.
- A special body should be set up by the government to monitor the implementation and supervision of entrepreneurship education already existing in various level of the educational system in Nigeria.
- Acceleration 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, Nelson and Leach (1981) suggested that the concept of owning and operating a small business should be introduced in career education programmes. This paper recommends an extra session for entrepreneurship education in all our school systems.
- Adequate and functional facilities and equipment should be distributed to all vocational and technical colleges for effective training in order to enhance learning and encourage full participation in entrepreneurship programme in Nigeria.

- Loan facilities with low interest rate should be made available to those who intend to start up a small scale business enterprise.

## **Conclusion**

Because of the present circumstance of unemployment in Nigeria, there is need to consider seriously the acceleration of entrepreneurship programme in our education system. For

vocational and technical education to be relevant to the educational and socio-economic advancement of the nation, graduates at various levels must be acquainted with entrepreneurship skills which will enable them select among the various occupational area of vocational and technical education such as establishing an automobile workshop, carpentry, welding and fabricating workshops just to mention a few.

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