

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS AS ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE SELF RELIANCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviewed how entrepreneurship and job skills are crucial resources for establishing long-term self-sufficiency. Given the severe economic difficulties Nigeria is currently experiencing, many Nigerians now prioritize putting more extensive entrepreneurial operations in jeopardy. In contrast to typical stereotype teaching, entrepreneurship education is an educational method that calls for learners'/students' self-direction and managing yourself. Entrepreneurship education aims to give students knowledge, skills, and drive. This paper highlight strategy for effective, sustainable entrepreneurship in achieving self-reliance. It also reviewed the Concept of vocational skills acquisition for self-reliance. The paper concludes that entrepreneurship and vocational education are essential tools when engendered, leading to employment generation, growth of the economy, and promoting sustainable development. The paper made recommendations such as Technical educators should convince lawmakers of the reasons and give priority attention to the Technical vocational education program in resource allocation. Technical vocational education programs should be effectively funded, planned, implemented, and managed by the government in technical institutions in Nigeria. Additionally, the Federal Ministry of Education and other stakeholders must launch initiatives emphasizing the advantages of training in developing vocational skills. This will encourage the interest of both parents and students in the program, among others.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Vocational Skills, Sustainable Development.*

INTRODUCTION

The development or exploitation of economic value is referred to as entrepreneurship. For the layperson, entrepreneurship is the method and process of merging and transforming other production elements into a finished good. Technical and vocational training is widely acknowledged as empowering individuals, particularly young people, for sustainable living and social and economic growth. Since entrepreneurship has several facets, it could be challenging to characterize an entrepreneur succinctly. Additionally, by fostering innovation, technical advancement, and economic expansion, entrepreneurship has been viewed as the spokes of an economy (Geverenova, 2015). Latif and Koe (2017) defined entrepreneurship as "a process of recognizing, analyzing and pursuing possibilities through innovative thinking and transformation that generate new products, processes, and standards that are beneficial." Alhasan and Abdulahi (2013) believe that technical and vocational education and training are crucial for enhancing the well-being of youth and communities. They also believe productivity growth allows people to become more independent and fosters entrepreneurship. As a result, high-quality TVET is a crucial



instrument for empowering kids more sustainably because it fosters the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and economic advancement. Improve technical vocational education and training in Nigeria to close the gap between education and schooling and prepares for the workforce.

CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS

The Concept of vocational-technical education is rooted in education for work; the essence of vocational is to train youths who can use their brains and hands due to their creative and acquired knowledge and skills (Samuel, 2018). A vocational and technical education program is made to prepare someone to learn skills and use scientific knowledge to solve technological challenges. It is for developing skills, attitudes, and knowledge in people ready for gainful employment. In contrast to conventional pattern instruction, education in entrepreneurship is an educational method that requires the learners'/students' self-management and independence. In various educational settings, from elementary or secondary schools to graduate university programs, entrepreneurial education aims to provide students with the information, skills, and drive to support entrepreneurial success. (Wikipedia, 2011).

Akinola (2012) said that because unemployment, poverty, and the associated societal issues are rising in Nigeria, the necessity for vocational and entrepreneurship education must be emphasized. Nigeria adopted entrepreneurship education to accelerate economic growth and development. This reflects Nigeria's national policy on education, which states that education is the most crucial instrument for propelling change, as no fundamental change can occur in any society except through an educational revolution that impacts the intellect (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1998).

Giving young people a chance to learn entrepreneurial and vocational skills is a crucial first step in strengthening any country's socioeconomic and political sectors. (Abisuga, Fillis, & Olaniran, 2017; 2018). The explanation is straightforward: Entrepreneurship and vocational education (TVE) enable young persons to launch a firm and participate actively in and make significant contributions to their country's economy.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Vocational and technical education generally includes instruction, training, and developing skills in a wide range of occupational domains, products, services, and lives. Technical and vocational education can be an element of lifetime learning at all educational levels, and it includes work-based learning, ongoing training, and professional development that could result in certifications. (Daniel UchennaChukwu *et al.*, 2019).

Vocational education offers training typically offered to those who require work in business, industry, or any venture that uses tools and other machines. Vocational training focuses on occupations like auto repair, welding, plumbing, fisheries, agricultural artisans, haircuts, sewing, and barbering, among others, and until lately, was thought to be the domain of people from lower social classes. As a result, it attracted a level of stigma in its past. However, with

economic advancement and the demand for higher levels of productivity and efficiency, the place of vocational education has become better appreciated (Marope et al.,2015).

Vocational and Technical Education is the sub-sector of the educational system widely recognized as the engine for a nation's economic and technological growth. Vocational and According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013), technical education refers to those elements of the educational process that include, in addition to basic education, the study of technology and associated sciences and the acquiring of practical skills, mentality, understanding, and skills relating to the profession in various sectors of society and the economy.

Four institutions are established primarily to provide vocational and technical education in Nigeria. These institutions in her national policy on education are:

- I. The pre-vocational and vocational schools at the post-primary level,
- II. the technical colleges, the polytechnics,
- III. colleges of education at the post-secondary level and
- IV. at the university level.

These institutions must issue certificates to deserving individuals who have met the requirements. Therefore, vocational training and education (VTE) provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and capacities to live successfully and positively impact society. (Osa-Edo, 2015).

OBJECTIVES OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Vocational and technical education is oriented toward different ways of realizing opportunities. This is what makes TVET distinctive in its focus on realizing opportunities and operating existing hierarchies Technical and vocational education has become one of the most successful methods for developing human resources, and it must be adopted if fast industrialization is to occur.

As a broad term, "vocational technical education" refers to all aspects of the educational process that include, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and associated sciences as well as the acquiring of practical abilities, mindsets, comprehension, and understanding related to occupations in various fields of economic and social life. Dimkpa, (2020) VTE is set up to accomplish the following goal.:

1. Recruit trained business, technology, and applied sciences workers, especially at the technical, advanced technical, and craft levels.
2. Give the technical know-how and practical abilities required to develop commerce, agriculture, and the economy.
3. Provide individuals with the required education and training to become economically independent.
4. To provide young people and those who struggle in school with employable skills to eliminate unemployment.
5. To boost economic growth since it elevates the labor force's standard of living and educational attainment.
6. To eradicate poverty by providing participants with access to higher-paying jobs.

7. To influence people's attitudes to select careers with bright employment prospects.
8. Enable our young people to understand the increasingly complicated nature of technology intelligently.
9. Provide an overview of professional engineering and other technological studies.

VOCATIONAL SKILL ACQUISITION FOR SELF-RELIANCE

Usoro (2015) noted that the failure of Nigeria's higher education institutions was primarily due to their graduates' lack of the skills demanded by the labor market and that this tendency had led to a large number of graduates being out of work because those skills would have helped them become independent. Since there are fewer job openings than graduates and high demand for skilled workers in the oil, industrial, and service sectors, the main challenge facing the country is providing graduates and youths with the necessary skills and competencies for self-employment and self-reliance. The youth can contribute the most to national growth and improve society's safety, wealth, quality of life, and prosperity by having the talents that the job market demands.

Self-reliance is fully utilizing a society's resources and autonomy in decision-making. Additionally, it refers to self-assurance, dependence on one's own natural and human resources, and the ability to determine one's own goals. Individuals who depend more on themselves or their abilities and resources and less on others to manage their human and material resources are said to be self-reliant. Okoye (2016) contends that people become independent when they can obtain and use life's necessities, including wholesome food, appropriate clothing, a safe place to live, access to healthcare, reliable transportation, and valuable education. Because most students from pre-tertiary to tertiary institutions typically leave school, missing the fundamental abilities for entrepreneurship, education has yet to achieve its intended goals for most people.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Vocational and technical education is a program that is designed to prepare the individual to acquire skills and apply scientific knowledge in solving technological problems. It aims to prepare people for profitable employment by developing their knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. (Ukoha & Usoro, 2014).

One cannot overstate the value of technical and vocational education in fostering a strong nation. Technical vocational education is now understood to be an essential component of Nigeria's educational system and human resource development program, creating the necessary skilled labor required for Nigeria's overall development. (Baah-Wiredu, 2008). Technical and vocational education is, in fact, a significant path toward industrial growth as well as the advancement of any nation's economy and society.

The necessary number of professionals, technical, and skilled labor force required for national growth is produced by technical vocational education. Technical development would come to a standstill without the competent technical workforce generated by vocational and technical institutes. One of the well-known and reliable methods used to prepare, teach, or retrain

exceptional, linguistically proficient, technologically savvy, and knowledgeable people globally is technical and vocational education. According to Park (2005), technical vocational education is the methodical and organized dissemination of information, abilities, and values to create workers that might increase output and maintain competence in the global economy.

To suggest that technical and vocational education is the driving force behind economic progress is not an exaggeration. Without an army, no nation can wage war. Similarly, technical and vocational institutions are essential for Nigeria's development. In Nigeria's development strategy, it is a gaping hole. (Dike, 2009). Because of this, the country has to make significant investments in education, paying close attention to vocational and technical education. As has been the case in numerous countries, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and local educators should lead the charge in the fight for increased funding for vocational education.

According to Akpom (2013), the following recommendations may be used to promote sustainable growth by encouraging sustainable entrepreneurs via technical and vocational education.

1. Certain studies should include real schoolwork-based learning as part of the national economic development initiatives. This implies enriching the curriculum to incorporate more vocational and technical training. Developing an apprenticeship scheme would give new graduates some work skills and experience.
2. Students should be able to develop, construct, and run small companies utilizing the school as a mini-incubator through school-based enterprises, which are firms that students recognize as possible ventures.

CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Michael (2022). state that Vocational Technical Education has yet to achieve its set aims and objectives, which, among others, were mainly for acquiring skills for self-reliance. The failures of Vocational Technical Education in Nigeria can be attributed to the following challenges it faces.

1. Poor Public Perception and Apathy of Vocational Technical Education: Technical vocational education in Nigeria has a shallow image, and there is a need for a turnaround in its perception for public acceptance. Observations have revealed that many parents—particularly the elite, the wealthy, and the political class—do not encourage their children to pursue technical vocational education as a career, and those who—likely accidentally or voluntarily—choose this path are not inspired or motivated because society accords the course so little weight or dignity.

2. Government lukewarm attitudes/poor funding: Although technical and vocational education is essential for combating unemployment and poverty in society, Nigeria's three levels of government still need to thoroughly understand the contributions it makes to national economic development.

3. Shortage of qualified Vocational Technical Education teachers: Many tertiary institutions nationwide need to be more adequately staffed qualitatively and quantitatively. In most departments, especially in Technical vocational education programs, the number of qualified

Vocational Technical Education teachers for each specialized area is in short supply. It is indisputable that with quality Technical vocational education teachers, practical work, an essential component of the Technical vocational education program, will be easier to implement. Acquisition of skills requires that strict attention and supervision should be given to every student.

The absence of motivated teachers is one of the issues with technical and vocational education in Nigeria, according to Ayonmike (2013), and the cause of this lack of motivation might be directly linked to the teachers' poor self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

This paper has addressed key entrepreneurial issues and challenges in Nigeria. The issue of Technical vocational education in any nation, especially a developing country like Nigeria, is undoubtedly of paramount importance. Government should also provide an enabling environment for public and private partnerships to achieve collective economic realities. Vocational Technical Education is a systematic learning experience designed to fit individuals to earn a living and self-reliance by using tools, equipment, machines, and other materials to translate theories into practice and employable skills. These skills could only be acquired in a well-equipped workshop with modern and functional facilities, with qualified vocational technical teachers for successful curriculum implementation.

RECOMMENDATION

The paper recommends practical vocational entrepreneurship and technical education in Nigeria based on the study findings and conclusions.

1. Technical educators should convince lawmakers of the reasons and prioritize the Technical vocational education program in resource allocation.
2. Technical vocational education courses at Nigerian technical institutions should be effectively funded, planned, implemented, and managed by the government.
3. Provision of adequate facilities, equipment, consumable materials, and hand tools; provision of qualified Technical vocational education personnel; adequate provision of instructional materials and in-service training for Technical vocational education personnel is crucial.
4. The introduction of competency-based Technical vocational education programs in Nigerian technical institutions.
5. The government, via the legislature, should formalize the promotion and funding of vocational skills acquisition.

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