

# **INTEGRATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (TVE) CURRICULUM: A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE SELF-RELIANCE OF NIGERIAN YOUTH**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*With the high rate of unemployment among Nigerian youths, this review examined the need to integrate Entrepreneurship Education in Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) curriculum, to enhance the managerial skill of Nigerian youths in their quest to set up their own businesses after graduation. To achieve this, the study among other things examined TVE in the context of the National Policy on Education (NPE), Entrepreneurship Education and the rationale for its integration. It was revealed from the study that for every Nigerian youth to acquire basic technical and vocational skills and translate them into sustainable self employment, entrepreneurship education should be given immediate attention by all stakeholders. Consequently, the study concluded with recommendations that Entrepreneurship Education should be made mandatory to all Technical and vocational education students at all levels with proper funding by government and also with materials and financial support from other agencies like Educational Tax Fund (ETF) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs).*

*Keywords: Integration, entrepreneurship, education, self reliance, youth*

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the social responsibilities of government the world over is to provide employment to her citizenry. However, the experience of Nigerian youths has shown that government alone cannot guarantee paid jobs to the teeming Nigerian youths. Employment opportunities as provided by government cannot keep pace with the number of youths leaving school (secondary and tertiary institutions) to join the labour market each year. In the words of Onuegbu (2006) the rate of growth of students population may be described as being in geometric progression, while the growth of job opportunities have been in arithmetic progression.

Observing the manner in which Nigerian youths roam the streets (skilled and unskilled) in search for employment which are non-existent, it is an indication that the nation is facing economic problems which among others have given rise to high rate of unemployment, poverty and hunger. In other to make ends meet, many school graduates including those from technical and vocational institutions have become engaged in small scale businesses with

the little funds at their disposal and keep expanding as soon as adequate funds are available. As observed by Igweh (2005), if profit starts to flow in within a short time, such businesses are said to be successful. This assertion is not always true hence some of such investment may fail. These opposite situations of success or failure are common in business and that is why "business" can be described as a risk. Hence people should plan to succeed and not to fail in any business Igweh (2005).

On this premise, it becomes imperative for entrepreneurs to have some useful knowledge on how to succeed in business. This should be a prerequisite to floating any business venture especially if sustaining the business is the guiding principle. This is where entrepreneurship education comes in. Given the enabling environment, entrepreneurship education enlightens and equips the youth with modalities for operating and managing enterprises. Therefore, as a means of empowering Nigerian youths for sustainable self-employment and wealth creation, the integration of entrepreneurship education in technical and vocational education curriculum constitute the hub of this study.

#### **TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION (NPE)**

Onuegbu (2006) points out that the educational dispensation which the colonial masters set up was criticized on several grounds, and the neglect of vocational and technical education in that system was a major criticism. The National Policy on Education (2004) defines technical and vocational education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of education involving general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life. According to the policy, the goals of technical and vocational education are to:

- (a). Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly craft, advanced craft and technical levels;
- (b). Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;
- (c). Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be economically self-reliant.

Fakae (2005) posits that technical vocational education and training (TVET) as entrenched in the NPE, is concerned with the development of qualitative, technological human resources aimed at producing a nation pool of skilled and self-reliant craftsmen, technicians and technologists in technical and vocational fields taking place in informal sector and academic institutions, outside the university system. The emphasis is on skill acquisition and sound scientific knowledge, which gives the ability to the use of manual dexterity and machines for the purpose of production, maintenance and self-reliance. In Nigeria, according to Ibiok (2008), technical and vocational education constitutes two distinct educational sub-sectors which are characterized by

their purposes, level of institutions, courses offered, organization and control. Generally, the institutions in the technical educational sub-sector are of tertiary level but non university in status. The primary role is to produce middle level manpower for commerce, industry, agriculture, healthcare and teaching. The three types of institutions distinguishable in the technical education sub-sector include: Polytechnics or Colleges of Technology, monotronics and Colleges of Education. The Colleges of Education in this sub-sector are those which produce technical teachers. On the other hand, vocational education is regarded as an aspect of secondary education whose primary role is to produce low level manpower that is; operatives, artisans, craftsmen and master-craftsmen for commerce, industry, agriculture and ancillary services. The institutions in this sub-sector include Technical Colleges and Business and Engineering Skills Training (BEST) centres hitherto called Vocational Training Centres. BEST centres are lower in status than Technical Colleges. This is because their primary role is to produce operatives and artisans (Ibiok, 2008).

In pursuance of the above goals of TVE, the National Policy of Education (NPE) further stipulates among others, that the curriculum for each trade shall consist of four components:

- (i) General education
- (ii) Theory and related courses
- (iii) Workshop practice
- (iv) Industrial training/production work
- (v) Small business management and entrepreneurial training,

And that trainee completing technical college programmes shall have three options. One of the options is *SET UP THEIR OWN BUSINESS AND BECOME SELF EMPLOYED AND BE ABLE TO EMPLOY OTHERS*.

It is difficult to set up and run a business successfully without managerial skills. And managerial skills can only be accessed through entrepreneurship education.

### **ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION**

Igweh (2005) defines entrepreneurship as the ability to set up an enterprise as different from being employed. He reiterated that this ability involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial competencies necessary for self-employment. Entrepreneurship is derived from a French word "Entrepreneur" which means the one who undertakes "task", that is, the Tasks of production and that tasks in business include to plan, organize, market, finance recruit staff. Others are adequate information, research and development. Iyekekpolor (2006) defines an entrepreneur as the originator of a new business and a new organization for that venture. Also, as the act of exhibiting the skills in starting a business with a view of making profit and that, an entrepreneur perceives opportunities which others do not. He is always searching for change, responding to it and exploiting available business opportunities. Small business is any business that is locally owned and

managed, often with very few employees working at a single location. Small business plays a central role in human lives because much of personal economic activities are conducted with people running small business. Iyekekpolor (2006).

### **CURRICULUM CONTENTS AND RATIONALE FOR INTEGRATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION**

Entrepreneurship per se according to Nwaokolo (2005), is a business Administration/Education Programme which may not always involve workshop or studio or laboratory practice as with commercial entrepreneurship. Technical Entrepreneurship, however, will nearly always incorporate these for the production of goods and services. The skills, competencies, and ideas needed for a successful programme will, necessitate the teaching of sources of financing small-scale businesses, small business accounting, prospecting for business, feasibility surveys, breakeven analysis, human and public relations, elements of marketing, personnel administration and the modalities for registering business organization etc.

Given the urgent need to fight unemployment, reduce poverty and promote economic prosperity, the Nigerian government has embarked on reforms in various aspects of the economy. As part of the on-going reforms analyst like Nwaokolo (2005) suggests the promotion of entrepreneurship education at various levels of the tertiary education so that more and more graduates of the system can set up their own business, create employment and alleviate poverty in the society. Technology education emphasis skill acquisition, while entrepreneurship education emphasizes on the ability to set up and manage small business venture. The entrepreneurial ability will make it possible for the acquired technology skills to be salable Igweh (2005).

Ilioge and Anyanwu in Igweh (2005) observes that each year, generally new small business (including those related to technology) are started in the country but only half are in existence for up to eighteen months or less while only very few last after twenty four months. They thus attributed this situation to lack of skills occasioned by lack of requisite training in entrepreneurship.

### **THE BENEFITS AND FUNCTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Entrepreneurship foster economic growth, increase productivity, create new technologies, products, and services and also change and rejuvenate market competition. Therefore, the following, according to Iyekekpolor (2006) are the main functions of an entrepreneur.

***Identification of opportunity:*** This is the understanding of the needs and wants of potential customers, consumers etc. which are not being fulfilled and which the entrepreneur can convincingly satisfy by producing the goods or services. Nigerian youths and adult should possess the capacities and abilities to discern this.

**Evaluation of opportunities and choice making:** This is a situation whereby the entrepreneur may use a number of criteria to evaluate the alternative prospects in taking a decision. These include: portability index, personal interest or desire of the entrepreneur to mention a few of them.

**Decision on form of enterprise:** The factors are: the cost and procedures of starting the business/legal requirements in the formation and operation of the business, and continuity of the enterprises, talents and the skills needed, need for additional capital, attitude towards sharing of profits, and size of risk of the enterprises among others.

**Factors combination:** This include; decisions on what to produce, where, how, when by whom and machines and equipment with which the assignment is to be carried out.

**Business Directorship:** This also entails a determination of goals and objectives as well as strategies for achieving same, resources allocation and indeed putting in place the entire management structures and functions e.g organizing, planning, staffing, coordinating and controlling.

**Risk management:** this is the creative response to an investment opportunity through the development of new product, new technology of modifying the existing ones as ways of serving a better need.

Mbah in Iyekepolpr (2006) adds that an entrepreneur should be able to deal with failure, meaning that an entrepreneur should not see failure as an end, because it does not prevent future success.

### **FINANCING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION**

Since the major implication of the entrepreneurship spirit in TVE curriculum is that many technology students may wish to established their own business on graduation as paid jobs are now difficult to obtain, some students may start while still on the programme. On this basis, Igweh (2005) highlights the following sources of funding. Federal, state and local government should budget adequate fund backed up by legislation for these graduates to borrow. This initial fund is necessary for the purchase of tools, equipment, machine and other fixed assets and a special committee to monitor the funds.

Through the popular Education Tax Fund (ETF) or establishing technology tax fund where, banks, finance house, technology related companies will contribute a determined percentage of their net profit. This fund if properly monitored by government agency will help the TVE graduate, to have adequate funds by way of loan with little or no interest rate to start business. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) should also be encouraged to donate both funds and equipment to technology students and graduate to enable them established.

Finally, parents and guardian of technology students should encourage their wards through proper funding to enable them acquire basic tools during and after school.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For Nigerian youth to acquire basic managerial skills, technical and vocational education (TVE) is important. However, to translate the skills acquired into sustainable self employment, entrepreneurship education is an immediate tool. Therefore, the integration of entrepreneurship education into (TVE) curriculum will give Nigerian Youth the needed knowledge to be able to manage their own businesses and make them employers of labour rather than mere job seekers. By this, poverty would have been drastically alleviated if not eradicated. Government should, provide the enabling environment in terms of social amenities for businesses to thrive. Also, Entrepreneurship classes should be made mandatory to all TVE students. Entrepreneurship education should be encouraged and popularized through the electronic and print media, workshops, seminars and career talks. Education is capital intensive, therefore to solve the problem of funding, government at all levels should provide adequate funds to TVE in view of the "enlarge curriculum" to accommodate entrepreneurship education.

Other government agencies like the Education Tax Fund (ETF) and Nongovernmental Organization (NGO's) should also expand their contributions through a monitoring body, to support entrepreneurship activities being undertaken by TVE, so that tools, equipment, machines can be made available to trainees. Parents and guardian should endeavour to support their wards financially and otherwise while undergoing training and after training.

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