
Entrepreneurship Development through Vocational Education Training: Issues and Roles in Skills Acquisition and Manpower Development in a Developing Economy

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Abstract

Institutions all over the world are being asked to organize their students for the jobs of tomorrow, make them to be creative, responsible citizens, contribute to economic growth and development of their nations and vocational education training has an important role to play in this process. The multidisciplinary nature of vocational education training and its evidently close links to the world of work make it one of the aspects of education that contribute most to the training of skilled labour and give both young people and adults the knowledge required to ply a trade. For many, it is a passport to employment and an opportunity for social development. However, this aspect of education, which supports entrepreneurship development, is facing many challenges to prepare a sufficient number of people with the right skills to meet the labour market demands. This paper therefore, presents entrepreneurship development through vocational education training. It also presented its roles in skills acquisition, manpower development in a developing economy. It discussed the concepts of skills acquisition, and manpower development. The paper also identified the major challenges facing vocational education training, which also affects entrepreneurship development and concludes by suggesting way forward.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Development, Skills Acquisition, Manpower Development

Introduction

Now that many developing nations suffer severe economic depression, the chief concerns of the populace have always been to get standard jobs that guarantee adequate incomes to cover the needs of their families. But how easy can it be when thousands of workers are being laid off? Now, if someone unexpectedly become unemployed, the greatest challenge would be; how to take vigorous actions to become either self-employed or to get another paid employment in a bigger, better establishment. But, becoming self-employed would not be easy if the individual has no saleable skills. When she/he has such skills, she/he is empowered and this brings the need for skills acquisition and manpower development. Skills acquisition and manpower development are the catchphrase of the vocational education training, which is that aspect of general education that aims at imparting skills to its recipients.

The developing economy refers to those countries with low level of material wellbeing. They are usually classified based on their per capital income, life expectancy, rate of literacy and human development index. Okonkwo (2006),

asserts that the key characteristics of a developing economy is the lack of significant industrialization relative to the population in addition to poor standards of living. Nimmyel (2013) stated that the low level of living hence are manifested qualitatively and quantitatively in form of low incomes, inadequate housing, poor-healthcare facilities with limited or no education, high infant mortality, low life and work expectancy and in many cases, a general sense of hopelessness. However, in this type of economy, acquisition of skills through technical and vocational education training, which will make the citizens self-reliant and productive, is imperative as it will reduce unemployment, hunger and poverty. Without available facilities in adequate and effective utilization of the adequate facilities by qualified technical teachers, the acquisition of needed skills, knowledge and experiences, which students can use in translating theoretical principles into practical design for problem solving in the society, remain an illusion (Nimmyel, 2013). This is why this book is prepared to give better understanding of technical and vocational education training as a sustainable instrument for manpower development in a developing economy.

The free encyclopaedia defines a developing economy as a nation with low level of material well-being. Internationally, there have not been an extensively accepted definition of the word and level of development may differ widely within the so called developing economy. The United Nations defines the developing economies (countries) as countries, which have not achieved significant degree of industrialization relative to their populations, which also have in most cases, a medium of low standard of living (Wikipedia.org).

There is need for every developing economy to take vocational education training and entrepreneurship education serious because, they will certainly direct the nation's technological/ industrial progression. This is true, because, vocational education training is a fundamental instrument that can be used to furnish individuals with profitable skills to be self-reliant, contribute to and benefit from the economic growth and development. The practical nature of technical and vocational education training and entrepreneurship makes them unique in content and approach, thereby requiring special care and attention. The inputs of vocational education training are so visible to the extent that even an illiterate could see when 'failures' occur. Technologists are supposed to solve societal problems in sustainable ways. For them to do so, they need to be sufficiently informed in vocational education training concepts and its application of the theoretical principles to practical problems. The desire of the stakeholders to achieve this has been met by lots of challenges. The inability to tackle the challenges over the years in many nations has put countries at a low level in technology and has perpetually made those nations developing economies. The difference between developed, developing and undeveloped countries rests on the ability of the developed countries to convert scientific ideas to useable technology while the developing and underdeveloped countries are yet to effectively do so.

Manpower Development

Manpower development on the other hand, is now commonly referred to as human resource or human capital development. Manpower development seeks to optimize an organization's usage of its human resource. It requires an incorporated approach and addresses multidimensional aspects of employees, ranging from enhancing technical and interpersonal skills to creative thinking and leadership. This means that any nation that has a high output level has made manpower development an essential part of its dealing. For developing economies to produce employees for workforce with high level of productivity, manpower development must not be left to chance. Ogbuanya (2013) noted that manpower development especially in developing economy demands conscious and deliberate planning with crystal clear vision and mission statement. It is pre-occupation of technical and vocational education training to prepare a country's technical manpower for transition from school to work and that is education for acquisition of saleable skills relevant for gainful employment. It is very clear that a developing nation can gain independence in production of its goods and services, investments, employment and rapid growth in business if that country has developed its manpower development through developing effective technical and vocational education training system.

Skills Acquisition

The developing economies are challenged with the problems of unemployment and youths involvement in criminal acts. The graduates roam the streets in search for the white collar jobs, which are not readily available either in the

public or the private sectors. Majority of these graduates do not have any form of vocational skills that can help them out of these situations. A worthwhile skill acquisition will enable the individual to perform meaningfully in the industrial world. People that have acquired useful skills can help themselves and as well live by it; they can at the same time help others by training them to acquire the same skill they have for money, thereby generating more income again. This then mean that skill acquisition is a means of providing oneself with requisite materials for a satisfactory living.

Every country in the world is faced with the challenges of improving the capacity of their workforce to respond to their national development needs and to the demands of a rapidly changing, more globally competitive world. Therefore, the future success of every nation, individual, enterprise and community is highly dependent on the existence and possession of transferable skills and ideas. The recognition that the indispensable role that technical and vocational education training plays in equipping individuals with relevant skills and knowledge hence enabling people to effectively participate in socio-economic and technological innovation process cannot be over emphasized. Through skills development, people can better their chances of securing productive and profitable employments thereby sustainably increase their income levels and access to a quality life (Umunadi, 2010).

There are assorted forms of skills students/graduates are expected to acquire through Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET);

- 1. Innovative Skills:** the graduates of TVET are expected to have acquired innovative/ creative skills to enable them introduce something new that may be capable of sustaining them and others in the society. This sort of skills allows the individual to delve deeper, think of products, goods and services that are of importance to the society, which are not yet introduced into the society. The vocational education trainers/teachers should endeavour to train their students on how to be creative so that they'll be able to inculcate the attitude of creativity in the students. Innovative skills involve integration of new ideas and/ or accumulation of new knowledge, casting a broader net for the discovery of potential opportunities. When the TVET students are trained to develop such skills, they'll contribute positively to their nation's economic growth and development through jobs creation. The main aim of development in a nation is to improve the living standards of the people through effective utilization of human and material resources; hence developing nations must be fully involved in the development of technical and vocational education training for self-reliance. This according to Olateju (2013) will contribute positively to reduce poverty and hunger thereby boasting the economical and social status of any nation.
- 2. Practical Skills:** when a graduate of TVET is able to handle tools, equipment and at same time know how to join one or two objects to produce another, she/he is able to transform materials into products and services. Practical skills are acquired only when the vocational teachers are practically sound to teach the students through practical methods. But surprisingly, many vocational education teachers uses lecture methods to teach the students and most times, the courses of study are theory based. Practical skills provide the TVET students with occupational/career abilities to ensure self-reliance.
- 3. Self-Motivation Skills:** Having acquired the innovative and practical skills, the student will be able to develop self motivation skills. Self-motivation skills deal with the ability to be moved such that the practical and innovative skills acquired can be put to production of goods and services. Self-motivation is the ability to be self confident with extra drive and commitment to make sure necessary steps are taken to make dreams of successful business a reality (Umunadi, 2010). Without the self-motivation skills, the vocational education graduates would not be able to establish themselves or be self-employed. In the world of struggle like ours, one must be motivated to be able to succeed. This is the role of the TVET teacher. She/he must inculcate the attitude of self-motivation in the students such that they can stand in the midst of others professionals.
- 4. Financial Resources Skills:** this is the skill that will enable the student to be able to handle money judiciously. This sort of skill includes knowing how to stretch the limit start up that you have, spending only when needed, identifying the best pricing structure for your business in order to get the best return for your products and services (Fasehun, 2013). For one to establish an enterprise, spending frivolously must

be avoided. Therefore the vocational teacher through teaching/training should be able to make the students develop this sort of skills. Onwuchekwa and Olatunji (2004) concluded that TVET graduates who may wish to be self-employed are deeply skeptical to establish on their own for lack of capital or financial resource skills. This situation inhibits the survival of the few existing enterprises around.

5. **Marketing Skill:** This sort of skill involves thinking about how to reach the targeted audience for product and services. This entails understanding what people want, listen to the people's needs and interacting well with other people. Any TVET graduates who acquire this sort of skill crossed the bar of unemployment because, with marketing skill, she/he can market him/herself to other established industries. For every goods and services/business, it must be well marketed. Therefore, when the students acquire this sort of skills, it is easy for them to stand alone and be independent of the governments' white collar jobs. To achieve this, the curriculum planners must make sure that opportunities are made available for the vocational teachers to impart such skills in the students.
6. **Time management skill:** this involves the ability to plan and manage time with a clear idea of the things to be done in a day. The graduates of TVET must be able to multi-task and prioritize the day's tasks to be successful in any form of business or trade.
7. **Administrative Skill:** the TVET trainers are expected to teach their students to acquire skills on how to fill, bill, print, make invoices, collect payments, manage receipts, keep proper accounts of goods and services, tools, materials and equipment. Studies has shown that why many vocational enterprises are not flourishing is because, majority of the owners of such enterprises lack administrative skills. Many of them do not have records of how much money realized from the enterprise, how much cash to reinvest and how much gain made from an existing enterprise. This is why many small scale businesses do not survive. The curriculum planners and the school administrators should adjust technical and vocational education training programme to accommodate administrative training such that students or graduates will be able to acquire such skill to be self-reliant.
8. **Professional skill:** Fasehun (2013) asserts that this sort of skill is very necessary for success in an enterprise. It is obtained in a cooperate arrangement between the school and the industries. It also involves the code of conduct, customer care technique and opportunity recognition. Ihekwoaba (2005) listed some skills that the TVET graduates must acquire to be self-reliant, enter the production business world to establish successful and thriving small scale enterprises in a developing economy.

Entrepreneurship Development

Many people thought that it is degrading for an intelligent or educated man to work with his hands; for this, school graduates now depends on Government's white-collar jobs, which are not readily available to absorb or employ them; they are visibly idle. Corbeff (2006) in his assertion noted that when people do not have work, they do not make money; thus, high unemployment leads to high level of poverty. Entrepreneurial studies and practice, however, can and should contribute to relieve modern day difficulties in a valuable way by injecting innovation into the mainstream management spectrum. But if this treatment is to be anything more than a nullifying fix, then the entrepreneurial discipline must develop some sound ideas which have relevance to practical concerns of contemporary societies. The study of entrepreneurship encompasses a great deal of ideologies and involves so many disciplines. For this reason it offers a challenge but at the same time rewards the researchers in this field potentially. Looking into entrepreneurial opportunities; one can derive such through the definitions.

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship training has several definitions but for the purpose of this study, entrepreneurship is defined as the pursuit of opportunity regardless of resource currently controlled (Ashmore, 1989). In other words, it is the pursuit of opportunities beyond the resources one can control. An opportunity in this regard as noted by Banjoko (2013) is first identified, labour is put in, and consequently, fruits of one's labour are harvested. Entrepreneurship can be described as imaginative, creative and innovative response to the environment. Such response can take place in any area of human endeavor such as in building, woodwork, agriculture, education, social work and services of all types on the formation of small scale business unit within the informal sector.

Okolie, Elom, Ituma, Opara, Ukwa, Inyiagu and Ndem (2014) defines Entrepreneurship education as that training, which prepare learners to be accountable and innovative persons who become entrepreneurs' thinkers and contribute to development and sustainable communities; it provides opportunities for youths to be experienced, acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes including opportunity recognition, idea creation and marshalling resources in face of risk to chase opportunities, venture creation and operation, creativity and critical thinking. A simple definition of an entrepreneur is someone or group of people who initiate and manages enterprising novel profitable ventures which have risks of profit and loss. Although, the corridor of profit and loss is only one channel of exploration leading to one lobby of debate, therefore, a more generalized definition is; An entrepreneur is someone or group of people who start and manages new enterprising business enterprise. Entrepreneurship also involves initiative, innovation, assuming risks in order to make a profit; it involves the organization of factors of production to transform a business idea into profitable reality. It is about value generation (Nweze, Okolie and Ituma, 2014).

From the above explanations so far, we wish to establish that entrepreneurship development is also possible through vocational education training; since both are aspects of training that aims to equip the learner with saleable skills to be responsible citizens, develop business and creative ideas to earn livelihoods. The two aspects of training are similar in many ways to each other. However, there are many challenges facing the progress of these aspects of education which if given the attentions deserved, will enhance jobs creation, economic growth and development on a nation.

The following challenges have been identified:

- **Lack of Modern Facilities:** it has been observed that many schools offering vocational education training programmes in Nigeria do not have enough laboratories or workshop space let alone usable equipment and facilities and where they exist, they are grossly inadequate, as the laboratories only have the items or equipment that were provided when the institutions were established. It is however most surprising to know that many of these schools still depend on theoretical works only to teach entrepreneurship/ vocational education training courses in this 21st century. This is a total shame and a high degree of irresponsibility on the part of the management of such school programme. The available facilities as at today in many technical and vocational education schools are inadequate quantitatively and qualitatively and besides they are obsolete (Daramola, 2005). The inadequacy in teaching and workshop facilities according to Inyiagu (2005), has contributed to the diminution of the quality of graduates in Nigeria.
- **Lack of Staff training:** The training of academic staff is ordinarily a continuous exercise to ensure consistent improvement in the quality of their outputs. The training is in two-fold: training to acquire minimum qualification to teach and continued professional training. Both types of training can be acquired either locally or overseas. According to Ekemede, (2005) usually, local training within the nation is cheaper than overseas training but more strenuous because of inadequate facilities, literature and distractions arising from the need to meet the necessary demands. Overseas training requires a lot of foreign exchange but the enabling environment exists to achieve success in a record time. However, over time it has always been difficult to get the trainees back to their respective countries after the completion of their study.
- **Low level of Vocational Education Training and Industrial Development:** The primary concern of entrepreneurship and vocational education is to prepare people for occupations in business and industry. However, in a country where business and industrial activities are at low rate, most products of vocational technical education end up in occupations for less than they bargained for; also, people trained as entrepreneurs often find it difficult to set-up their small scale businesses. They take up jobs as artisans, accept low paying jobs or occupy jobs that are un-related to what they are trained for. As a result of the low level of business and industrial activities, vocational education cannot prepare everyone for jobs and expect them to be employed even though they surely will be employable. This situation is challenging for vocational education in the sense that it must accept the added responsibility of producing individuals who

would prove to be the tonic needed for business and industrial development. When this is done, there will be a high demand for the products of vocational technical education to fill available vacancies. It is at this point that vocational education would become firmly entrenched in the Nigerian educational system. We must however admit that this is an onerous task for vocational education and one that would require the combined efforts of vocational educators, entrepreneurial development experts and governments to achieve (Inyiagu, 2005). The primary concern of vocational education training is to prepare people for occupations in business and industry. However, a country where business and industrial activities are low, most products of vocational education graduates end up in occupations for less than they bargained for. They either take up jobs that are not related to their field of works or roam the streets in search of white-collar jobs. The industry relation is highly needed so that the vocational education students will be able to visit the industries for their required and necessary practical under the guidance of the teacher.

- **Poor Learning Conditions:** The conditions under which vocational education training is imparted in many Nigerian institutions are experiencing poverty of training equipment, shortage of staff, inadequate funding, inability to provide variety of training programmes and equipment such that recipients turn out to both national development and the image of vocational education training.
- **Lack of Modern Equipment:** Many vocational education training institutions according to Ekpeyong, (2005), lack modern equipment relevant to societal needs. And these equipments should be supplied to them for effective training to take place. Most schools use obsolete materials while some do not have equipments at all. The students now depend only on the theoretical aspects of the training programme. Lack of practical works by the students due to lack of modern equipments will only leave the students in a state of confusion whenever they find themselves in any field of work after graduation.
- **Lack of funding of most activities in technical colleges:** Sometimes, the governments do not give proper attention to vocational education training departments and schools as required. Funds are given or provided latterly or sometimes not provided at all. This brings down the financial aspects of running the programmes.
- **Lack of Teachers Motivation:** Most a times, the teachers are not paid salaries on time. Some other times, they are not paid at all. This results in strike action by the teachers. This type of attitude by the government kills the interest of the vocational educators on imparting the required professional skills to the students.

The way forward

It is clear that there are many factors militating against the progress of entrepreneurship development through vocational education training. The identified challenges can be handled if the government and the policy makers are truly ready to implement all the written strategies and policies that support empowerment and jobs creation. Vocational education trainers and entrepreneurship center tutors/trainers as well need to be mobilized, motivated and re-trained to understand the impact of collective efforts and responsibilities in the running of such training programmes. This will enhance achieving the education goals of the vision 20:2020 of the Federal Government of Nigeria. Also, when the students are given the required vocational /entrepreneurial skills needed to be fit into the world of work, through effective teaching/training methods or techniques, they will become entrepreneurs; contribute towards the economic growth of the country.

Conclusion

There are various natural resource endowments in many developing countries some of which are yet to be identified. What is now needed is an effective system of vocational education training to be evolved so that manpower capable of using the entrepreneurship development programme to exploit the vast potential of the countries. The route to technological, industrial, economic development is an effective vocational education training, which will provide multiple opportunities for graduates to be entrepreneurs and self-reliant. However, Government should provide adequate fund in form of grants to vocational training graduates and entrepreneurs to set up their small scale enterprising. To get people out of poverty and hunger means reducing unemployment rate which requires giving them appropriate skills, attitudes and knowledge that are needed to be employed or self-reliant in the world of work.

Vocational education trainings if well funded and administered will surely go a long way in reducing unemployment and poverty problems within the timid populations of developing economies.

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