

# Role of Entrepreneurship Education and Vocational Education in the Management of Education

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## Abstract

This paper reviewed the role of entrepreneurship and vocational education in sustainable development. Graduate unemployment is one of the greatest challenges that bedevil Nigeria, a nation endowed with enormous wealth in terms of human, mineral and natural resources. This paper stresses the importance of entrepreneurship and vocational education curriculum in solving unemployment problems and achieving sustainable development. This paper argues that entrepreneurship and vocational education will provide students who are leaders of tomorrow with skills with which they can be self-reliant because human resource through knowledge based capacity are the cornerstone for effective management and utilization of natural resources. The paper concludes that entrepreneurship and vocational education when engendered leads to employment generation, growth of the economy and promotes sustainable development. The paper recommended that educational institutions at all levels must inculcate and intensify the integration of entrepreneurship and vocational education into its curriculum systems.

**Keywords:** Role, Entrepreneurship, Vocation, Education, Sustainable Development.

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## INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is the stock of all those individuals who are not engaged in any productive activity and who are either unable to find work on the prevailing real wage rate or who are in the process of switching to a new job. Most of the graduates produced are for export purpose since Nigeria labour market is shrinking and not expanding to the extent that smaller Organisation who cannot afford to pay more are downsizing, right sizing or even outsourcing their employment agencies. Thus we continue to lose good size of our human capital to other nations, where they contribute in no small measure to the development of the host economies, while those who cannot go abroad remain frustrated, unemployed and underemployed (Brimah, Olanipekun and Ibikunle; 2014). There are over 140 tertiary institutions producing more than 300,000 graduates annually, hence the availability and platform for basic requirements for economic development (Otokiti 2012). There are however several challenges affecting Nigeria socioeconomic development. In a report by the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001, it shows that universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria

produce an average of 120,000 graduates each year while another 500,000 school leavers or college graduates are turned out each year without the hope of any job (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010). In Nigeria, the growing problem of unemployment in the country has contributed largely to the worsening problem of poverty among the populace. The problem of unemployment, he further stated, has worsened as millions of school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions have not secured gainful employment over the years. Unemployment has posed a serious problem not only to the welfare of individuals but also to that of their families. Many able-bodied and highly qualified persons who could not secure gainful employment have remained economically dependent on their parents because they lack the necessary occupational skills to be self-employed and to effectively function in today's world of work (Osolor, 2013).

Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) using the statistical records from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics as at year 2010 further showed that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country. That's a reasonable population that is bigger

than South Sudan, Ghana, Mali, Tahiti and some European countries, but that aside, the scholars went further to analyze that 64 million of the Nigerian Youths are unemployed, while 1.6 million are under-employed. Available statistics shows that the number of people living in poverty in Nigeria is increasing despite strong headline growth in figures. In February 2012, Nigerian Bureau of Statistics released what is today its most up to date survey on living standards which is often referred to as the “Harmonized Nigerian Living Standards Survey 2009/2010”, which found that at that time 61.2% of Nigerians lived on one dollar in a day or under. This indicated an increase of almost 10% since the last measurements were taken in 2004 which implies that at that time around 100 million Nigerians were living on less than a dollar a day. Absolute poverty which is the minimal requirements for food, water and shelter also increased between 2004 and 2010. Subjected poverty which is measured as those who feel themselves to be poor, had increased from 7.5% in 2004 to 93.9% in 2010 meaning that less Nigerians were happy with their lot. The world bank 2013 Nigerian economic report revealed that poverty reduction and job creation have not kept pace with population growth, implying that the number of underemployed and impoverished Nigeria continue to grow. It added that the country’s progress towards MDGs which aims to meet the basic social needs of the world’s poorest by 2015 has been disappointing with indicators in many areas resembling those in the poorest countries in Africa.

Osolor (2013) in describing the Nigerian education system opined that in light of current realities in the 21st century. A careful look of the current state of affairs in Nigeria reveals that we are in a 21st century economy with a 19th century education system. A system whereby much emphasis is still placed on the conventional classroom environment with much reverence for certificate for graduates who in most cases are trained to be job seekers as evidenced in present high unemployment rate in the land. Otokiti (2012) opined that the reason for this problem is that since independence, the country has failed to link education with enterprise development with repeated emphasis on self-repeated emphasis on self-employment in all her planning effort, but with nothing to show for it. She equally therefore failed to assign enterprise based education as well as identifying entrepreneurial education at higher institution as engine of growth and pivotal agent against shades of unemployment and associated challenges.

Given the challenges that bedevils Nigeria’s socio-economic development with particular reference to unemployment, it is the contentions of this paper to examine and emphasize on the importance of entrepreneurship and vocational education towards achieving a sustainable national development. Following this introduction, this paper reviews the

concept of entrepreneurship education and vocational education and education for sustainable development as a concept and argues that entrepreneurship and vocational education will equip students with the skills with which to be self-reliant. It concludes by calling those that believes in project Nigeria to play their part in strengthening and sustaining the current revolution on entrepreneurship and vocational education to unleash the wealth of human capital that Nigeria is endowed with so that we would not only be working towards achieving the present transformation agenda of this administration but the Vision 20:2020. This paper also recommends that educational programmes at all levels of education should be made relevant to provide the youth the needed entrepreneurial skills

### Conceptualization of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a learning process that requires from learners/students self-direction and self-management, unlike the traditional stereotype teaching. Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledgeable, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate university programmes (Wikipedia, 2011). Akinola (2012) defined entrepreneurship education as the willingness and ability of an individual to acquire educational skills to explore and exploit investment opportunities, establish and manage a successful business enterprise. Entrepreneurship education has also been described as a formal or informal structured learning that inculcates in students/trainees the ability to identify, screen and seize available opportunities in the environment in addition to skill acquisition (Jones and English (2004). In the words of Shane and Venkataraman (2000) the thrust of entrepreneurship training entails identifying “the sources of opportunities, the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate and exploit them. Conceptually, entrepreneurship education refers to a specialized knowledge that inculcates in learners the traits of risk-taking, innovation, arbitrage and co-ordination of factors of production for the purpose of creating new products or services for new and existing users within human communities (Storey 2004, Minniti and Lévesque 2008, Kanothi, 2009). Mauchi *et al.*, (2011) assert that entrepreneurship education can be defined “as the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act on them.”

Garayan and O’cinneide (1994) noted that the major objective of entrepreneurship education or training is to develop enterprising people and inculcate an attitude of self-reliance using appropriate; learning processes. In other words, entrepreneurship training programmes are aimed at stimulating independent small business ownership or the development of opportunity seeking managers within established companies.

Akinola (2012) opined that the need for entrepreneurship education cannot be overstressed in Nigeria because unemployment, poverty and the corresponding social problems are on the increase. He opined that the current education system is deficient in providing the necessary entrepreneurship skills for national transformation since the university curriculum is structured in a way that makes the Nigerian graduates unemployable.

### **Emergence and Justification and of Vocational Education**

The federal government in its document "Nigerian youth employment action plan, 2009 and 2011" stated that of the 6million Nigerian youths graduating annually from the educational system, only about 10% are often employed leaving about 4.5million unemployed. The government further stated that the need for developing entrepreneurs in Nigeria faces the challenge of inadequate conceptualization and depth. Most of the initiatives for developing and training entrepreneurs are essentially sensitization programmes that last for a few days or weeks. The country lacks rigorous institutional approach to entrepreneurship development. Thus entrepreneurship development needs to be introduced throughout the schools and training systems and the role of universities and other tertiary institutions is critical. This is so because the importance of higher education is central to increasingly knowledge based and technologically driven economy of developed countries (Otokiti, 2012).

The federal government in realization of the need to boost employment through the encouragement of micro enterprises has in the last twenty years worked hard to facilitate the development of a broader based indigenous entrepreneurial culture for the country and add value to domestic production. The Nigerian government has recognized the importance of entrepreneurship as one of the basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning, added to the low employability rating of Nigerian graduates who indeed have not been trained for self-employment. The government in order to enhance the employability of Nigerian youths developed a more labour market relevant curriculum. This was done in view of the obvious need to update the standard and relevance of higher education in the country, which will guarantee that all graduates from the system are equipped with appropriate skills, competence and disposition that will make them globally competitive and capable of contributing meaningfully to Nigeria socioeconomic development (Okojie, 2012). On the basis of the above statement, a presidential directive in 2006 was delivered through the federal ministry of education and this made entrepreneurship education compulsory for all higher education institutions in Nigeria, with effect from the 2007/2008 academic session.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) is the vehicle through which this directive was carried out in turn directed each university to introduce the programme as a general studies course. The general philosophy of developing the general studies entrepreneurship curriculum is to produce graduates with some value addition over and above their field of study for the purpose of self-reliance. The objective here is to redirect education and training for relevance and quality by developing in the students an entrepreneurial mindset (spirit) and equipping them with the skills necessary to start and run a business successfully. Furthermore the NUC mandated all universities to also establish and equip an entrepreneurship study centre with both human and material resources needed to inculcate the required practical skills in students. The centre is expected to encourage knowledge transfer by promoting the community service mandate of higher institutions of learning through the establishment of a desk to serve as contact for business in the catchment areas and also the country at large, so as to access research information, partnership and networking opportunities with the academic community.

### **Conceptualizing Vocational Education**

Vocational education or technical and vocational education is a term used comprehensively to refer to the educational process to which involves, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences skills and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (Victor-Igue, Inegbedion, Ekpenyong, 2009) . The concept of Vocational Education aims at equipping individuals to use their heads and hands in order to survive in a world that is essentially work-oriented. The philosophy of Technical and Vocational Education is basically to enhance human dignity and enthrone work and labour by making individuals acquire and/or develop enough saleable and employable skills, competencies, attitudes as well as knowledge to enable them gain and maintain basic employment or self-reliance for a comfortable living.

According to Abdullahi (1994) vocational and technical education is that aspect of education that involves the acquisition of techniques and application of the knowledge of science for the improvement of man's surrounding. Technical and vocational education prepares one for the world of work with which the individual becomes reliant and can make contributions to the development of the society. As employers look for new talents every year from new graduates, it is important to not only have a solid education but graduates that have features that stand out from the rest of the graduating students. With the economy being more globalized than ever, it is important to have a background and a skill set that allows graduates to become immersed in the global economy right from graduation (Cote, 2007). It is important for these

students or graduates to have skills in innovation in technology education and entrepreneurship to be ready to fit into the global market place on which today's economy depends on. Furthermore, the blueprint on education (1998, 2004) assert that the aims and objectives of technical and vocational education are to:

- i Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels;
- ii Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;
- iii Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically;
- iv Provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man;
- v Enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology;
- vi Give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies.

The philosophy of technical and vocational education in Nigeria emphasizes that any programme that will qualify as "education" in Nigeria should not just offer "certificates" but must be work-oriented. This will go a long way in solving under-employment/unemployment and the attendant problems. It will also empower the graduates to become relevant producers of goods and services as well as become sensible consumers of same. The Nigerian dream of building a truly egalitarian society can only be achieved through the effective use of Technical and Vocational Education. It offers life-long education to all types of learners and enables them realize and develop their self-potentials maximally (NPE, 2004).

### **Vocational Education for Sustainable Development**

Education is broadly defined, by the dictionary, as the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. Etymologically, the word education is derived from educare (Latin) "bring up", which is related to educere "bring out", "bring forth what is within", "bring out potential" and educere, "to lead". Encyclopedia Britannica defines education as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. Fafunwa (1974) defines education as the aggregate of the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behaviours that are of positive values to the society in which he lives. Talabi and Adebayo opined that education is a social mechanism designed to make one useful to himself, the society and humanity as a whole. Adoption of education as an instrument for the actualization of

national development objectives has always been the policy thrust of the federal governments of Nigeria in most of its economic development plans (Gabadeen and Raimi, 2010). The above assertion is supported by the guidance as stipulated in the national policy on education which states that education will continue to be highly rated in the national development plans, because education is the most important instruments of change, as any fundamental change in the intellectual social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an education revolution (Federal government of Nigeria, 1988). Education is central to economic growth and development through human development strategy as it prepares for employees that will be willing and able to work. This implies that a well-educated citizenry contributes to higher income and productivity. Thus, it can be concluded that education development is vital. The next generation is about learning to learn with the global agreement on the changing nature of education and learning.

World Commission on Environment and Development (1997) defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. It could also be equitable and balanced development in as it concerns the interests of different groups of people within the same generation and among generations and do so simultaneously in three major interrelated areas of economic, social and environment. Human beings are at the centre of concern for sustainable development because they are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. The concept of sustainable development requires balancing environmental, societal and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. One of the major essential tools for achieving sustainable development is improving the quality of basic education and reorienting existing education programmed to address sustainable development

Education for Sustainable Development is the focus or projection of education that seeks to equip people towards creating a sustainable future and this constitutes one of the germane objectives for the introduction of the entrepreneurship curriculum. One of the most significant indicators of social progress is education, which also plays a decisive role for a society to achieve self-sustainable and equal development. The concept of development, on societal level, involves multiple dimensions. While most attention and efforts provided by developed countries are focused on improving the economic development of local society, other long-term impacts are possible only when the essential driving force of social advancements is present: an educated generation of local people. Such advancements include democracy, humanity, equality, and other aspects that demonstrate the maturity of a country, typically following economic growth.

Education helps individuals fulfil and apply their abilities and talents. It increases productivity, improves health and nutrition, reduces family size, presents specific knowledge, develops general reasoning skills, causes values to change, increases receptivity to new ideas, and changes attitude toward work and society. Education has both consumer good and investment good component (Nafghizer, 2004).

Sustainable National development can be explained to mean progress, advancement, or qualitative changes that is evident in a nation over a period of time. These are the contributions of individuals who transmit desirable values, habits, wisdom from one generation to the other, so as to ensure continuity. What makes a nation to achieve greatness is the quality of contributions of her citizens in human and socio economic development. Effective education is a potent system which every society has being using to promote desired social, political and economic agenda.

### **Entrepreneurship Education, Vocational Education and Sustainable Development**

Entrepreneurship and vocational education are both learning process that requires from learners/students self-direction and self-management, unlike the traditional stereotype teaching. They both seek to provide students with the knowledgeable, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate university programmes (Wikipedia, 2011). Their importance to sustainable development cannot be over emphasized because both are lifelong learning processes that start as early as elementary school and progressing through all levels of education, including adult education. They focus on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit, of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes in widely different contexts. It can be portrayed as open to all and not exclusively the domain of the high-flying growth-seeking business person. The propensity to behave vocational and entrepreneurially is not exclusive to certain individuals. Different individuals will have a different mix of capabilities for demonstrating and acquiring entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes.

Sustainable development is all about allowing this present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of the next generations to meet theirs. As stated earlier, unemployment and poverty are among other socio economic development challenge that bedevils Nigeria which will hinder intergenerational equity, gender equity, just and peaceful societies, social tolerance, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation and natural resource conservation etc. thus, the importance of functional education that promotes self-reliance among graduates which entrepreneurship and

vocational education philosophy strives to achieve cannot be overemphasized

Effective education therefore should go beyond mere literacy - ability to read and write. It should incorporate ability to “do” and “apply” that is, it should equip the learners with some form of technical know-how. The number of unemployed graduates in Nigeria suggests that most of them do not possess relevant, saleable, employable or even entrepreneurial skills that are needed in the society. This partly explains why the nation has remained economically dependent till date. This is because most nations who are economic giants today, started by equipping their citizens with the right type of education - education that will enable them use both their heads and hands. The type of education that equips its recipients with such abilities to think is generally described to work as vocational education and entrepreneurship education which is aimed at equipping individuals to use their heads and hands in order to survive in a world that is essentially work-oriented. Akinola (2012) opined that the need for vocational and entrepreneurship education cannot be overstressed in Nigeria because unemployment, poverty and the corresponding social problems are on the increase. Nigeria adopted entrepreneurship education to accelerate economic growth and development. This reflect in Nigeria’s national policy on education which states that education is the most important instrument for propelling change, as no fundamental change can occur in any society except through educational revolution that impact on the intellects (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1998).

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Education is the most valuable treasure any nation can give to its citizens. Functional education should be geared towards the acquisition of knowledge and information as well as relevant competencies (skills, attitudes, aptitudes, etc). Effective education therefore should go beyond mere literacy - ability to read and write. It should incorporate ability to “do” and “apply” that is, it should equip the learners with some form of technical know-how. The number of unemployed graduates in Nigeria suggests that most of them do not possess relevant, saleable, employable or even entrepreneurial skills that are needed in the society. This partly explains why the nation has remained economically dependent till date. This is because most nations who are economic giants today, started by equipping their citizens with the right type of education - education that will enable them use both their heads and hands. It is therefore recommended that the current tempo of revolution in our education system which is a drastic change in ideas and methods should not only be maintained and sustained but improved upon. Thus, all stakeholders should cooperate and work with the government in achieving the philosophy and objectives behind the introduction of entrepreneurship and vocational education.

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