

## ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFELONG AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: THE WAY FORWARD

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### **Abstract**

*Technical Education entails the acquisition of life long skills and knowledge needed in manpower training and development for sustainable economic growth and stability. The paper examined trend and development of entrepreneurial life-long technical education, its challenges and paradigm shift in individual and government entrepreneurial life-long technical education involvement in Nigeria. The paper concluded by pointing out the need for proper implementation of National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) curriculum in all technical colleges, mono-technics, polytechnics and college of technologies as well as adequate funding and training of technical personnel as the way forward.*

**Keywords:** Technical Education, Entrepreneurial, Life-long, Way-forward, Nigeria.

The entrepreneurial development is a process which could be considered to begin with knowledge and skill accumulated to sufficiently predispose the individual learner to entrepreneurial pursuit alongside with technical education for a lifelong development. The entrepreneurial spirit is a pre-requisite to an entrepreneurial society and culture. The spirit is required to the overall economic growth of any nation especially developing ones like Nigeria. This is in line with the view of Ojeifo (2013) that entrepreneurial is the willingness and the ability of an individual, a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such as opportunity to produce goods and

services for public consumption. FRN (2013) defined technical education as that aspect of education which equips individual with appropriate skills abilities and competences as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Technical education prepares one for the world of work with which the individual become 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 (Daluba, 2009). It is important for these students or graduates to have skills, innovation in technology education and entrepreneurship to be ready to fit into the global market place on which today's economy depends on. Technical education is designed to offer people the opportunity of improving themselves in their general proficiency, especially in relation to their present or future occupation. Bulus (2010) opined that changes in any nation's economy is required to prepare young people for the jobs of the future of which technical and vocational education have crucial roles to play. Uwaifo (2009) observed that technical education is very much still neglected in the aspect of adequate funding, personnel, modern facilities, staff motivation which consequently are robbing the country of the economic development to be contributed by graduates of technical education. It is quite obvious that education is the key to increased

productivity. In line with this view, Aliyu&Dabban (2009) stated that technical education is the bedrock of sustainable development of any nation. Technical education prepares the individual for lifelong learning of developing the necessary mental tools, technical and entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. It also develops individual's capacities for decision making qualities necessary for active and intelligent participation, teamwork, leadership both at work and in the community as a whole, technical education is necessary for the industrial development of a nation.

Technical education is the training of technically oriented personnel who are to be the initiators, facilitators and implementers of technological development of a nation. Uwaifo (2009) observed that technical education can serve as change agent not only for technical system but also for many other societal changes. Ojimba (2012) stated that two much emphases have been given on University education in Nigeria which reduced the economic opportunities of those who are more entrepreneurial oriented than academics therefore it is imperative to incorporate entrepreneurial lifelong scheme in technical education programme in the country for sustainable economic growth and development.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurial Lifelong Education**

Entrepreneurial education is a form of education that seeks to provide knowledge skills, ideas, basic initiation and motivation to learners for entrepreneurial success in business as well as providing enabling environment and ability to seek investment opportunities (Azonuche & Umeri, 2012). Entrepreneurial education is a special training giving to the youths to enable them acquire the skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment rather than salaries job or job seekers. It is an aspect of education that is geared towards

developing in the learner, the skills, ideas, and the managerial abilities necessary for self-reliance or self-employment. The concept of entrepreneurship is better understood in the context of its definition. An entrepreneur is an enterprising individual who builds through risk taking and initiative. It's all about the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities to established and to run an enterprise successfully. It involves dynamic process of creating wealth by individuals who assume the risks involved in providing value for some products and services and also the process of performing the roles of planning, operating and assuming the risk of a business venture. According to Uzoagulu&Uzoagulu (2013) entrepreneurship is a type of education that prepares an individual to become an entrepreneur by equipping him to be a manager of a business outfit as well as an employer. Obunadike (2013) opined that entrepreneurial education is a process of planning and organizing small business ventures, using people and resources to create, develop and implement solution to problems of the society. Again, according to Umunadi (2014) is a person who is willing to help launch a new venture or enterprise and accept full responsibility for the outcome. An entrepreneur is an economic agent who unite all factors of production to produce a product. Butler (2009) opined that an entrepreneur is someone who creates a new organization by generating resources to take an idea to market by utilizing the entrepreneurial process. Arogundade (2011) observed that an entrepreneur is an individual who has developed an on-going business activity where none existed before.

### **Trend and Development of Technical Education and Entrepreneurship in Nigeria**

According to Okoro (1999) technical education was slow until 1909 when two

institutions offering some form of technical education in Nigeria. The Hope Waddel Training Institute Calabar had developed a technical programme in tailoring, carpentry and some commercial subject and the government school Kefi in 1909 had courses in metal work, carpentry, weaving and Leather work. Okojie (2007) posited that the higher technical education institute was established in 1932 the Yaba college of technology as the first higher technical institution in Nigeria. Additional two Monotechnics were established in 19977 which are the Nautical College of Nigeria now Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron and College of Aviation Technology Kaduna. Nigeria was without a Federal University of Technology until in 1980s when four Federal University of Technology were established, they are: Federal University of Technology Minna, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Federal University of Technology Yola and Federal University of Technology Owerri. Nigeria is growing in arithmetic progression in technical education due to its poor perception by the people of Nigeria. According to Okoro (1999), before British intervention in Nigeria and the Establishment of formal educational institution in the later part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, education in Nigeria were mainly vocational and technical in nature. An important function of education was to teach people how to earn a living by becoming expert producers of goods and services. Young men acquired the rudiments of an occupation from their parents or from expert craftsmen whom they were apprenticed. Technical education ensured that foods services necessary for the survival of the society were produced. Technical education also insured that agricultural skills, building skills, medical knowledge and technical exports were passed from one generation to another and remained a part of the culture and way of life of the people. Also entrepreneurial education in Nigeria started in

1960s with the establishment of the industrial development centre (IDC) in 1962 in Owerri which begin to function in 1970 immediately after the circular. The Federal Government also established industrial training fund (ITF) in 1971, the centre for Management Development in 1973, the Administrative staff college of Nigeria (ASCON) in 1973. In 1990s several institutions for training and skills acquisition for the promotion of entrepreneurial development had been set-up by Government which gave rise to National Directorate for Employment (NDE), Poverty Alleviation Programme, Youth Empowerment and many others. Today entrepreneurial education has gain momentum from informal sector to formal education from primary to secondary to post-secondary level and University education. The Federal institutions provide formal entrepreneurial education. The skill acquisition courses offered by the institution included techno-managerial training machines, process of production product development, solution of production techniques, installation of machines and preparation of feasibility studies. The education for all (EFA) initiative of the Federal Government has mandated all University students in Nigeria irrespective of their course of study, be exposed to entrepreneurship development study.

### **Challenges Facing Entrepreneurial Lifelong Technical Education in Nigeria**

In recent times, there appears to be a paradigm shift of entrepreneurship technical education from practical application in factories, industries and work sites to theory in school. Learning start and end in classroom with no practical application for skills acquisition and job creation. There exists a paradigm shift in individual and government involvement in entrepreneurial lifelong technical education in Nigeria due to the advert of oil and gas individual and government are

not interested or considered investing in entrepreneurial ventures such as factories, industries construction firm, manufacturing sector and agriculture. The other challenges are as follows:

- Poor approaches to technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Technical and Vocational Education is the foundation of entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. According to Offiong, Usoro and Akpanobong (2014) since 1999 system of education was introduced, its ability to impart technical and vocational skills to student in practice has been in doubt. This is as a result of poor implementation which is not in consonant with curriculum expectations.

Lack of coordination between Research institutes and production enterprise. Most of the discoveries and inventions were never implemented. This is mainly because production enterprise operated independently with little or no exchange of information Wodi&Dokubo (2012) asserted that there were no clear goals for research and development and the importance of research and development for purely scientific purposes.

Inadequate funding of education: no nation can develop technical education and entrepreneurship when the formal education sector that drive technology and entrepreneurship is not adequately funded. Okoro (2014), observed that the Federal Government yearly allocation to the education sector has over years been far below expectation. Ekundayo (2006) submitted that Nigeria government over the years has not been meeting the United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended of the 26% of the total budget. Oseni (2012), posited that government budget to education is still very low, the apparent shortage of funds available to educational institutions have been responsible for declining infrastructure and laboratories in recent years.

Poorly equipped laboratories: The Nation's Technical Colleges, Monotechnics, Polytechnics and University that are supposed to train proficient entrepreneurs in technology are now filled with outdated and in most cases non-functional equipment. Sofolohan (2008) contended that shortage of workshops and laboratories in technological institutions hinders the realization of the goals and objectives of technical education curriculum.

Problem of funding entrepreneurial ventures: limited access to financial resources remains a perennial problem that affects entrepreneur. Oborah and Osazevbaru (2008) noted that the problem of small scale enterprises is not that of non-availability of finance but inability to access funds available particularly from banks and other financial institutions. Anolue (2011) asserted that the problem of small scale enterprises is not that of non-availability of finance but inability to access funds available particularly from banks and other financial institutions and that government financing effort through it financial institution has not yielded significant impact.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, entrepreneurial lifelong technical education should be given priority. Appropriate frameworks for inter and intra entrepreneurial technology transfer should be in place, there is need to repositioning entrepreneurial lifelong technical education for sustainable industrial and economic growth, this will be possible if government will entrepreneurial technical education proper budgetary allocation, proper funding and implementation of research findings improve infrastructure facilities, training and retraining of technical teachers equipped laboratories, proper funding of entrepreneurial ventures and libraries of technical institution. Today, nations are reassessing their mosaic of economic strategies for thriving, rather than surviving in a

global economy. At the core of this transformation is increasing deliberations among government and business leaders the need to create and attract a skilled and competitive workforce that contribution to national growth. If the government will provide enabling environment and entrepreneurs and technologist are patriotic enough to use their skills in creating wealth and improve our economy, then the vision 20:2020 and beyond would be achieved.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made to move technical education forward; they are:

- ✓ Proper funding of technical education programme in the country should be ensured. Adequate budgetary provision should be made to the technical education subsection for adequate procurement of teaching and training materials and provision of infrastructure for the success of the transformation agenda.
- ✓ Proper implementation of National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) curriculum in all technical colleges Monotechnics and polytechnics which has entrepreneurial lifelong scheme.
- ✓ Staff development programmes should be encouraged in all technical institution particularly in the area of entrepreneurship.
- ✓ The Federal government through National University Commission (NUC) and NBTE should embark on advocacy on the need for entrepreneurial technical education development.

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