

Challenges of automobile technology in entrepreneurship development

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ABSTRACT

The desire of Federal Government of Nigeria and the world over is the building of a better world in the 21st century, where the economy of the nations would be seen to have developed by quality of high level manpower produced by higher institutions of learning. Therefore, educators of tertiary institutions must prepare for entrepreneurial training that will richly transform the economy. In discussing the challenges of Automobile Technology in entrepreneurship development, the paper examines the concept of entrepreneurship development, the roles of government and non-governmental organizations, challenges of Automobile Technology in entrepreneurship development such as lack of practical based curriculum and inadequate funding. The paper also offers suggestion that curriculum should be frequently reviewed and adequate funding be provided.

Keywords: Automobile Technology; Entrepreneurship Development; Economy; Practical Base Curriculum

1. INTRODUCTION

The entrepreneurship system of training helps in solving national economic problems by absorbing trainees and thus overcoming problems of poverty and unemployment in the society. This type of training is aimed at equipping individuals with skills, competence, knowledge and attitudes that are required in meeting societal needs or demands thereby making them self reliant, generators of wealth and even create employment opportunities for others.

Okomanyi (2008) one of the national objectives of development as circulated in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) revised is self reliance and self employment aimed at reducing poverty, unemployment and other social vices, hence, the need for entrepreneurship development.

The government believes that entrepreneurship remains a vital tool for the enhancement of the economy, the individual and the society. Technical education, of which Automobile Technology is a part, is that aspect of education which involves the acquisition of techniques and application of knowledge of science for the improvement of man's existence. While Automobile is a self propelled road vehicle designed to carry passengers and their loadgages especially one with four wheels that is propelled by an internal combustion engine. Automobile Technology is that aspect of technical and vocational education which deals with the construction, maintenance and repairs of motor vehicle. This is aimed at prolonging the life span of the vehicle, safety of its passengers and the convenience of man.

The aims and objectives of Automobile Technology do not differ from that of Vocational and Technical Education since Automobile Technology is one specialized area of Vocational and Technical Education.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF VOCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

The aims and objective of Vocational technology Education as stated in the National Policy of Education;

- To provide trained manpower in applied science technology and commerce, particularly at sub-professional levels.
- To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for Agricultural industry, commerce and economic development.
- To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution to environmental problems and for the use and convenience of man.
- To give training and impart necessary skills leading to the provision of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel whom will be enterprising and self reliant.
- To enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology (FRN, 2004).

It deals with training of manpower from professional category such as engineers and technologists as well as the technicians down to skilled category which includes craftsmen and artisans. At this level, most skill acquired is through the entrepreneurship system of training. Considering the large number of graduants from schools at different levels and the widespread of unemployment in the country, this could have been minimized if Nigerians of varying age groups and backgrounds were exposed to entrepreneurship training and development across levels. In the quest for producing great and dynamic economy in the 21st century. All hands must be utilized to provide entrepreneurship training and development for the general populace i.e. everybody must be an entrepreneurial crusader from the urban to the rural areas. Since entrepreneurship deals with attitude modification to create development and enterprising mindset to generate employment. While entrepreneurship development is a set of organized programs aimed at equipping an individual for self reliance.

3. MEANING AND THE NEED FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship deals with attitude modification to create and develop an enterprising mindset to generate models of wealth creation.

Izedonmi (2006) opines that only the fools down tools, he believes that if you choose to remain poor then be an employee only, an employee is always a servant and a servant cannot create wealth. In other words, people without entrepreneurial acumen or ability remain at the lower level of the ladder of wealth.

Paul (2005) defines entrepreneurship as a specialized training given to individuals or students of vocational and technical education to acquire skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for self employment rather than being employed for pay.

According to Akintola (2001) in Osuala (2002) quoting US Colorado Educators defines entrepreneurship as a programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation or

operation of small scale businesses which include; franchise operations for the purpose of performing all business functions relating to a product or service, with emphasis given to social responsibilities, legal requirement and risk for the sake of profit involved in the conduct of a private business.

Haligan (1989) described entrepreneurship as reform, innovation wealth creation and risk taking. Kourilsky (1995) argued that the true entrepreneurship is characterized by three attributes, which includes opportunity recognition, marshalling of resources and the creation of a productive venture. Timimons (1994) in his views described entrepreneurship as a human creative act involving the building of an enterprise or an organization. Entrepreneurship is generally defined as individual ability to cease opportunities and turning ideas into actions, the ability to plan and manage projects in other to achieve objectives. As engines of the economy, entrepreneurship education plays a critical role in shaping attitudes, skills and culture and by wide spread exposure of people to entrepreneurship will be more likely that they become entrepreneurs in future.

The government is however quick to realize the degree of joblessness and the hundreds of thousands school leavers at all levels to join the already over saturated labour market in search of gainful employment. More worrisome is the inability of the government to include these individuals in their payroll and other restructuring programme now in full swing as such the only way out is to initiate programmes that will strongly reposition entrepreneurship on our educational agenda, like the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Bank of Industry among others.

As Technical Colleges continue to produce graduates in specialized skills in areas of technical and vocational education, the colleges requires to adopt the entrepreneurship education programme of the government which shall be compulsory for all the students and specifically programmed to equip students with enterprising attitudes capable of turning them into self employees on completion of their course of study.

The new dispensation in entrepreneurship education as it concerns Automobile Technology is not necessarily aimed at making young people to become self-employed or entrepreneurs only but to provide the awareness in them after successful completion of entrepreneurship programmes and to increase productivity in them, it is rather to create awareness and some practice of the opportunities, challenges, procedures, characteristics, attitude and skill needed for entrepreneurship.

4. THE ROLES OF GOVERNMENT IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The government and donor agencies have in the past tries to put in place enabling environment that will reposition entrepreneurial development ranging from policies to funding (loans from Banks and NGOs). However, this is grossly inadequate. Entrepreneurship development in Automobile Technology should be given due attention as in Agriculture and other businesses since Nigerian strategy to plan human resources for economic development has in the past years been to formulate various policies which resulted in the establishment of institutions for manpower development at various levels. In addition to this, the present democratic governance has put in place result oriented policy objectives to promote entrepreneurial activities and to develop investor confidence, this include:

- Making the economy market driven and private sector led.
- Fighting crime rate to ensure safety of lives and property.

- Encouraging ventures that will create jobs and alleviate poverty.
- Rehabilitating collapse infrastructure like road, power supply, telecommunication etc.
- Setting up strategies for action against corruption.

5. THE ROLES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In the quest to compliment government effort in achieving its objectives of making individuals self reliance, non-governmental organizations have join this crusade and have made tremendous efforts in that direction. Though expectations are high from beneficiaries, the following are contributions of non-governmental organization in entrepreneurship development:

- Issuing loans with low interest rate.
- Training of individuals at little or no cost.
- Provision of working materials for trainees after successful completion of training.
- Training, seminars and workshops

6. ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Successive government in Nigeria has made tremendous effort in entrepreneurship development. The centre for management development whose mandate included entrepreneurship development. Williams (2003) attempted to develop a model to facilitate the identification, selection and training of potential entrepreneurs.

Institution such as National Directorate of employment (NDE), the Nigerian Bank of Commerce and Industry (NBCI), and the Nigerian youth Service Corps (NYSC) have at one time or the other initiated program for entrepreneurship development. These efforts have almost not yielded the desired result it has not impacted reasonably on the Nigerian economy as a result of poor implementation and shortage of funding related issues.

However, while these efforts have created awareness of the role of entrepreneurs in a private sector led economy the scope of the program is yet to reach the critical mass of the Nigerian population neither are they sufficient and create an entrepreneurial culture in the society and change the orientation of the youths from that of job seekers to that of job creators. Integrating entrepreneurship in the educational system has great potential in achieving these goals if properly delivered.

This paper believes that entrepreneurship can result in positive changes which can lead to a great and dynamic economy in the 21st century. A model of the process for the educational training and development program is expected to produce the desired change in the individual and groups behaviour which will lead to positive improvement in the society and eventually enhance pace of progress for national development is presented as follows; Micro level, Intermediate level, Macro level.

Micro Level: This level focuses on the personality and fundamental characteristics of the individual. These are partly based on the physical makeup and the mental capacity of the individual. This is expected to set some limits to the type of opportunities that could be exploited by the individual. Others are the individual attitudes, motivation and needs as

members of a family and the larger society training and development are expected to positively help in reducing areas of shortcoming which will lead to improved performance in entrepreneurship practice.

Intermediate Level: This level relates to supportive institutions and agencies that could further mould the entrepreneurs or individuals, by equipping them with more practically oriented skills and competencies for improved performance. If entrepreneurs are exposed to relevant education, training and development, the resultant effect is a better performance because deficiencies that are manifested in entrepreneurial practice may be corrected through on and off the job training, while the provision of financial support and training facilities could spur up new entrepreneurs. These calls for support from various institutions ranging from private institutions, government agencies and international organizations.

Macro Level: This level focuses on the individual's childhood and adolescence environment like the house, school, social groups, social values, religion political system, priorities etc. this micro level variables will determine the type of education, to which the entrepreneur are expose to which will consequently affect the process of emergence behaviour and performance of entrepreneurs.

7. TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AUTOMOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Vocational and Technical Education which Automobile Technology is a part has a chequered history. Giving its humble beginning, this aspect of education was misunderstood by educators in the larger society. Conceptually, educators could hardly differentiate between the terms Vocational and Technical Education, while society had been led to believe that Vocational and technical Education is for those who are incapable of pursuing academic programmes sufficiently. Against this background, Automobile Technology has made slow progress from its earliest time to date. However, the introduction of computers and its likes marked the beginning of a new era in Automobile Technology these includes safety airbags, anti-lock breaking system (ABS). All wheel driving system (AWD), all wheel steering system (AWS), on board detection and diagnostic system (OBDS). These systems are gradually becoming standards in most of the new automobile models particularly, the federal government new policy restricting the importation of fairly used motor vehicles to those within eight years from their date of manufacture, with the importing of brand new cars with modern technology by Nigerians. The vital responsibility of maintaining these brands of assorted motor vehicles on the Nigerian roads in good road worthy conditions however rest on the graduate of this entrepreneurship programmes. They are expected to test, diagnose, service or completely repair faults on motor vehicle to an acceptable standard (NBTE 2001 & 2005).

The responsibility for effective training and education of the apprentice or candidate on the other hand rest on the technical colleges authorities in providing all the necessary teaching and learning in Automobile Technology for the schools. They need to include learning content on the new technological development in automobile curriculum in other to make the skills acquired by the products of this programmes relevant to the market demands and the contemporary world of work.

8. CHALLENGES OF AUTOMOBILE TECHNOLOGY IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A number of development and long standing issues have combined to endanger entrepreneurship development in automobile technology In Nigeria. Some of these key challenges include: Technology dependence, deplorable state of training institutions, lack of dynamic curriculum, negative attitude, shortage of qualified personnel in automobile technology education and inadequate funding of technical education institutions.

Technology Dependence: Total dependence on imported technology has been one of the major challenges faced by entrepreneurial development. Dawodu (2001) lamented that the low patronage of indigenous and locally made products and the low productivity of manpower in Nigeria is due to over reliance on imported knowledge which in its real sense does not give room for entrepreneurial development. Most importantly, is the issue of marketability of locally made products after going through the entire process since most of such products are imported and readily available in the market.

Deplorable State of Training Institution: Institutions that are saddled with the responsibility of training manpower are faced with some major problems resulting from the quality of entrants, low level funding inadequate funding and training facilities as well as death of staff. These factors create setbacks in entrepreneurial development. More worrisome is the quality of students who gain entrance into technical training institutions most of which are without adequate requisite qualification grossly hampered the process.

Lack of Dynamic Curriculum: The curriculum at all is a major material for carrying out training in our institutions. Jibodu and Ude (1996) stated that curriculum must be updated or reviewed in other to update knowledge and skills to match development in science and technology. Gaius (2001) opined that there is need for the curriculum of technical institutions to be reviewed in favour of skill practical acquisition. The practical lesson needs more allocation and time, lack of curriculum review hampers keeping abreast with current issues of fast developing technology.

Negative Attitude: Public attitude towards Technical Education and Automobile Technology in particular. Technical education is seen as a profession for drop out for those who are unable to cope up academically in schools, it is also considered that the end point of this profession is likely to end up as roadside mechanics or as classroom teachers which according to them holds no better future. This is not true and very unfortunate for a state like ours who hopes to breed entrepreneurs and subsequently be self-reliance. However, a society with such notions about technical education will hardly accord any merit to the profession not to talk of giving a word of encouragement to those interest in the profession.

Shortage of Qualified Personnel in Automobile Technology Education: Most of our training institutions lack qualified manpower that will impact the skills needed for entrepreneurship development. Olalekan (2001) lamented that Nigeria has no enough manpower expertise to handle the machines, service and maintain them well. This factor hampers the acquisition of skill that can help in developing entrepreneurial development in Automobile Technology.

Inadequate Funding of Technical Education Institutions: Gana and Bodams (2004) lamented that while successive governments at all levels have given priority to the establishment of science and technology institutions. Improper funding of such institutions has seriously hampered the quality of graduate they produced.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Automobile technology cannot be separated from Vocational and Technical Education since they are part and major generators of skills and knowledge for the labour force. The quest for entrepreneurship education appears to be a long life journey, when fully integrated into tertiary institutions will go a long way to achieve desired goals. It can and thus influence attitude both positive and negative towards work and commitment to national development, it also create the capacity to reform individuals and create in them positive minds towards flexibility and adoptable disposition to change and equip the individual to become wealth creators and job providers. It can also serve as a basis and prospect for increase in economic growth, therefore the quality and quantity of manpower in any organization, nation or state determines how effectively other material resources are fully utilized. As such investment in Automobile Technology in all ramifications is a gateway to increase entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

It is the contents of the authors to recommend that:

- There should be intensive public awareness and sensitization on the dangers of neglecting Vocational and Technical Education
- Teaching pre-vocational subjects in primary and junior secondary schools should be taken more seriously to arouse the interest of students for vocational programmes.
- All stake holders especially those within the private sectors should provide more funds for the purchase of instructional facilities.
- The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) should as a matter of urgency consider vocational education a priority area of funding
- There should be less emphasis on certificates/examination in implementing the curricular content of the various programmes
- Acquisition of practical skill should be stressed on the final outcome.

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