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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE MISSING LINKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion toward creating and implementing new ideas and creative solutions. The importance of entrepreneurial development programs in higher education institutions cannot be over emphasized. They serve as ways of empowering the school graduates to generate employment opportunities; giving them a chance of being self-employed and employers of labor. Vocational education, on the other hand, is the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development and economic growth. The purpose of this article therefore, is to present vocational education for youth empowerment: entrepreneurial development and the missing links in higher education institutions. The paper identifies vocational education and entrepreneurial development as reliable sources for promoting human development and youth empowerment in Nigeria and beyond. The missing links on vocational education and entrepreneurial development in Nigerian higher institutions are highlighted and recommendations for program development are made.

Keyword: Entrepreneurship, Vocational Education, Entrepreneurial Development, Youth Empowerment, Job Creation, Economic Development, Higher Education



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INTRODUCTION

Many Nigerians thought that it is degrading for an educated man to work with his hands; for this, school graduates now depend on Government white-collar jobs which are not readily available to absorb or employ them; they are visibly idle. Corbeff (2006) noted that when people do not have work, they do not make money; thus, high unemployment leads to high level of poverty and youth involvement in criminal activities. In most cities where the majority of educated youths and women reside, the poverty level is sometimes high because they have little or no entrepreneurial skills for self-employment or skills to be gainfully employed in the public or private sectors; some of these graduates solely depend on their aged parents for their livelihood.

In a bid to earn livelihood, many of these graduates sometimes get involved in criminal activities. Miller (2005), noted that an unwholesome aspect of youth unemployment is visible 'idleness', whereby youths congregate at bars and eating places to drink, converse or smoke marijuana for substantial parts of the day. These types of meeting places promote development of street gangs and criminal activities such as making money through violence, armed robbery, drug trafficking, car snatching, illegal fuel sale, oil pipeline vandalism, kidnapping, and many more of which has reached alarming levels (Okolie, 2010). Okoro (2005) argued that graduates who are unable to secure legitimate and gainful employment set to acquire what they may consider their own share of their nation's wealth through illegal and criminal means. The majority of prison inmates in Nigeria are unemployed graduates; crime and drug abuse are on the increase among them due to lack of jobs and inability to channel their youthful energy into a productive and creative lifestyle after graduation (Okolie, 2010). This is where vocational education and entrepreneurial development programs, which must be practical oriented, play key roles.

Young people (students/graduates) possess strength and energy which must be channelled into a positive, creative and productive life to enable them to participate in developing their communities; otherwise, they can be destructive. The strength and energy of these young people can only be harnessed when they are engaged in other occupations (outside their courses of study) they have interests through vocational education and entrepreneurial development programs, which is practical oriented. When this is achieved, the majority of the graduates will become entrepreneurs, self-employed, employers of labor and contribute to socio-economic and human development in Nigeria. This is also a process of achieving inclusive growth in Nigeria.

This paper looks into vocational education and entrepreneurial developments programs in higher education institutions in Nigeria and discusses the missing links; it also suggests the way forward in such programs. If vocational education and entrepreneurial development is well funded and given the attention it deserves, it will empower and equip trainees with marketable skills to be self-reliant besides enabling them to become entrepreneurs capable of contributing to economic growth and development in the country after graduation.



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Meaning of Entrepreneurship Development

Nigeria is endowed with various natural resources, some of which are yet to be identified. What is now needed is an effective system of training so that manpower capable of using the Entrepreneurial Development Programme to exploit the vast potential of our land will be achieved. Gupta (2010) identified skills of special importance to the technological innovation process namely technical skills, marketing and managerial skills. Developing entrepreneurial skills among the persons with scientific and technical qualifications has been one possible approach for stimulating technological innovations for development in a developing economy.

Entrepreneurship development programs facilitate development of human resources for self-employment by setting up small scale industries. According to Farhat and Farah (2009), capital and output growth in an economy depends significantly on the entrepreneurs. The quality of performance of an entrepreneur determines whether capital would grow rapidly or slowly and whether the growth involves innovations where new products and production techniques are developed. The difference in economic growth rates of countries is largely due to the quality of their entrepreneurs. Production factors of land, labor and capital are said to be dormant without the entrepreneurs who organize them for productive ventures.

The route to technological, industrial, and economic development is an effective entrepreneurial development through proper practical training, which leads to skills acquisition for self-reliance. South Korea, Japan and China achieved inclusive growth because they have made a total shift from education focused on reading and writing to that which focuses on life skill-based entrepreneurial development (Paik, 2013). Entrepreneurial development studies is a course of study introduced in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions by the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed at reducing the number of graduates roaming the streets in search of government white-collar jobs which are no longer readily available. The innovative idea is to enable students to acquire skills in a particular trade and become entrepreneurs after graduation. Many institutions run the course as a general study, which is done once in an academic session. Most schools offer the course as a compulsory course of study during first and second academic sessions only.

Entrepreneurial development studies prepare young people to be responsible and enterprising individuals who will become entrepreneur thinkers and contribute to development and sustainable communities (Dollinger, 2006). Entrepreneurial development studies provide opportunities for youths to be competent, acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes including opportunity recognition, idea generation and marshalling resources in face of risk to pursue opportunities, venture creation and operation, creativity and critical thinking. Such courses must be practically oriented to produce self-reliant graduates who do not depend on government or private sector jobs (Okolie, 2013). Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. It bridges the gap between science, technology and markets. The purpose of an entrepreneurial development program is to support students' knowledge, skills and attitudes, of a kind needed in their studies and later in working life regardless of whether they are employed as private entrepreneurs or



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hired by another person or public sector (Okolie, 2010). Entrepreneurial development is achievable through technical and vocational education training, which is that aspect of training that leads to acquisition of practical and applied skills in technology as well as basic scientific knowledge. Entrepreneurial development is the most crucial instrument for empowering young people with knowledge and skills which in turn provide access to productive employment (Okoro, 2005).

Entrepreneurship on the other hand, is the process of using available capital in any form for business endeavours in an open and free- market economy for the sole purpose of making profits (Odusina, 1975). Mainkinen and Turpeinen (1999) stated that entrepreneurship is the act of creating a new combination that ends one economic order and clears the way for a new one. According to Udu, Udu, and Eze (2008), entrepreneurship is a process by which economic and commercial activities necessary for improving the standard of living in society are created by entrepreneurs- institutions, individuals, corporations and governments. Entrepreneurship bridges the gap between science, technology and markets.

An entrepreneur is a daring person with vision and originality who acts as the boss, who decides as to how business shall run, who co-ordinates the activities of different factors of production, who anticipates the future trends of demand and price, who invests and introduces new ideas, new commodities, new processes or some revolutionary machines; and who in general carries out new activities (Sundharam & Vaish, 1989). According to Imaga (2002), entrepreneurs are those who found their businesses from scratch and nurse them into successful ventures by dint of hard work and idea getting. An entrepreneur according to Ronstadt (1984) is an individual who assumes the major risks in terms of equity, time and/or career commitment or provides value for some product or service. The product or service may or may not be new or unique but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by receiving and locating the necessary skills and resources. Vesper (1980) also stated that an entrepreneur is an ally, a source of supply, a customer, or someone who creates wealth for others as well, who finds better ways to utilize resources and reduces waste and who produces jobs others are glad to get.

An entrepreneur is an individual who is able to use organized efforts to pursue opportunities, to create value and grow by fulfilling wants and needs through innovation and uniqueness and this should be our aim while training students in higher education institutions despite the faculty or school and the department of the student. The emphasis now is no longer what a student reads but what the student is capable of doing after graduation; this is to enable countries to solve problems of youth employment. Dollinger (2006) sees entrepreneurs as creative and innovative people, resource gathering and founding of an economic organization. Udu et al. (2008) stated that entrepreneurs are those who have insatiable desires for accomplishing goals or anything that fascinates their minds (ideas) which require single-mindedness and an obstinate refusal to give up, even when the situation looks impossible. Nwobasi (2005) opined that an entrepreneur is a person who makes plans for a business or a piece of work and gets it going against all odds.

Anyanwuocha (2001) noted that the entrepreneur is the chief co-ordinator, controller and organizer of the production process. The entrepreneur combines and organizes the other factors of production (land, capital etc.) in such a way as to obtain maximum production of goods and services at maximum costs. Entrepreneurs are those who see visions and can translate their visions into economic and commercial



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activities of benefit to society, without regard to the difficulties encountered. If the students are trained while in school to develop attitudes of translating their visions into economic and commercial activities, they will be part of the development processes in their various communities, help to channel the strengths of many idle youths into being productive citizens and make positive changes towards economy improvement; hence more youths will be involved in producing locally made goods and services they'll be able to sell to make money in exchange.

Meaning of Vocational Education

Vocational education refines a person's attitudes to work and promotes entrepreneurial skills. According to Fajimi (2005), development in a country requires a paradigm shift to vocational education towards technology and allied disciplines. Therefore, this form of education should be given adequate priority, as development of any country is dependent on it (Okolie, 2013). The major goal of the educational system was to gear the African system of education towards the production of technological competent citizens who would contribute to and benefit from the economic development of the continent. The full implementation of the National Policy on Education of Federal Republic of Nigeria in respect to vocational education will bring about effective promotion of self-reliance, which will hopefully direct the orientation of the people toward what they can produce by themselves than a consumer nation (Oke, 2004).

The roles vocational education plays in empowering the youths of any nation for sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic development cannot be over emphasized. According to Okoro (2005), vocational education is that aspect of total education process that focuses on individual occupation. He further stated that vocational education functions to provide knowledge, develop skills, and inculcate those attitudes necessary for entry into and progress in occupations. The central purpose of vocational education is to get people into occupations requiring specialized training. The skills and knowledge acquired while training for one occupation may be of little or no relevance in other occupations. Oranu (1992) views vocational education as that training enabling one to carry on successfully a socially useful occupation. He further stated that this definition refers to vocational education as training for useful employments in trade, Agriculture, Business and Home making. According to Okoro (1993), vocational education is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations. Olaitan (1996) views vocational education as that form of education which emphasizes the development of occupational skills needed as preparation for work. It is a form of education which promotes the dignity of labour by entrenching work as the goal of education.

According to Okonkwo (2006), vocational education like any other form of education, is the most potent instrument for poverty alleviation. He further stated that since vocational education emphasizes preparation for the world of work, its contributions to positive change of development are also related and sometimes derived from work. According to Awosome (2004), Vocational Education is that aspect of education that leads to skill acquisition as well as basic scientific knowledge. It is also that aspect of education which involves practical training. Orah (2002) stated that vocational education no doubt produces manpower with skills, competencies and knowledge needed to work in our private and public sector organizations in order to produce goods and services essential for the survival of individuals and the growth of the nation's economy in general. This is in line with paragraph 5 of the National Policy on



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Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), which states that vocational education is that form of education which equips individuals with appropriate skills, abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of society. It is that form of education which is essentially intended to provide saleable skills and manpower for industrial and economic development of a nation. National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) outlined the objectives of vocational education as follows;

1. To provide trained human resources in applied technology and commerce, particularly at the sub-professional level.
2. To provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for Agriculture, industry, commerce and economic development.
3. To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvements and solution of environmental problems for use and convenience of man.
4. To give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies.
5. To give training and impart the necessary skills and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.
6. To enable both young men and women to have and intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Vocational Education and Entrepreneurial Development Training

These forms of training offers teachers the opportunities to help the learners (students) acquire life skills by addressing entrepreneurship and creative issues through vocational training. The teacher uses the best teaching techniques and easiest language for the learner to benefit during the training. Vocational education focuses on developing knowledge, attitudes and skills that support people in taking a greater responsibility for their own lives. It helps people to develop and strengthen their general interpersonal and psycho-social capabilities.

Vocational education and entrepreneurial development training combines all the participatory learning experiences that aim to develop the knowledge, attitudes and especially skills needed to take positive actions to create and become an entrepreneur. All these knowledge, attitudes, skills and practices help the individual to participate in economic development. In Vocational education and entrepreneurial development training, the learners do not learn only from the teacher, but also from their fellow students, for examples through working in small groups. Use of interactive and participatory methods, which address skills, values and attitudes as well as information transfer, is not only useful for the learners in the academic sense, but also helps the learner to have better lives. Most effective and relevant learning outcomes are likely to be the result (Leonie, Renate & Christine, 2004).

This does not mean that the traditional method of teaching is useless, but rather that when the range of methods is expanded, both teachers and students benefit. Effective vocational education and entrepreneurship development inculcate in the learner the skills to critically analyze local conditions and find solutions that fit local means and culture (Fajimi, 2005). This is the right method of imparting lifetime entrepreneurial skills in the students, to take action, be creative, independent of government white collar jobs and contribute to Nigeria's economy through employing and re-training others.



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Creating something new does not only call for knowledge, innovation and flexible disposition, it also requires good understanding of the relevant environment, resources and their availability, willingness to embrace change as an opportunity, readiness to make sustained efforts and ability to manage risk (Udu et al., 2008).

The Missing Links

Studies conducted by Okolie (2013), in three universities and two polytechnics in Southeast Nigeria proved that students offered entrepreneurial development studies as a general semester course are highly overloaded with business theories with little or no practical works that will equip them rightly to become entrepreneurs after graduation. It was also found that One (1) credit course load (1 hr) is only assigned to entrepreneurial development studies practical, which has no vocational training based approaches; students are mostly asked to design business plans as practical. This is in line with the findings of Udu et al. (2008) that entrepreneurial development programs in most Nigerian higher education institutions are not properly run the way they should be; hence the program curriculum needs to be re-adjusted to empower the learners to be entrepreneurs.

Okolie (2014) observed that there are no practical equipment and modern workshops for vocational education students in most Nigerian higher education institutions. This is in line with the findings of Inyiagu (2005) that most vocational education institutions in Nigeria do not have 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 that most of these institutions still depend on theoretical works only to teach courses in this 21st century. This is a total shame and a high degree of irresponsibility on the part of the operators of vocational education programs (Daramola, 2005). The inadequacy in teaching and workshop facilities, according to Inyiagu (2005), has contributed to the declining quality of vocational education graduates in Nigeria. Okolie (2014) stated that available facilities for vocational and entrepreneurial development program today are inadequate quantitatively and qualitatively.

Lack of modern equipment for vocational education and entrepreneurial development practical works in schools is responsible for graduates' lack of competence in the world of work. Facilities such as classrooms, workshops, laboratories, studios, equipment and materials are grossly inadequate in many schools and colleges (Department for International Development (DFID), 2007). The difficulty in facility procurement does not allow for practical skill acquisition by learners. The lack of facilities is related to the high cost of vocational and technical education and also high inflation rate in Nigeria (Imarhiagbe, 1992). The impact of inadequate educational facilities and modern equipment is that training becomes impeded and students end up not acquiring skills to go into the labour market. According to Odu (2006), the effect of limited workshop, materials, laboratories and studio activities can cause low productivity and result in ineffective and inefficient teaching (training).

Practical work is an essential component of technical education. It is obvious that without suitable workshop spaces, classrooms and laboratories, program implementation and structuring would be very difficult if not impossible. Some vocational education institutions in Nigeria have a number of



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uncompleted standard workshops, dilapidated classrooms and laboratories causing skill training really problematic towards acquisition of appropriate and marketable competencies for employability (Sara, 2001). Teachers sometimes borrow materials for practical work from the roadside carpenters. This sometimes affects teaching and learning activities in the woodwork workshops because, if the teacher is unable to borrow materials or equipment sometimes from the industry or roadside workshops, then the lessons for the day would be entirely theory based. But, we know that vocational education which no doubt is skill-based and practical oriented requires appropriate delivery, teaching or training method if instructors and trainees are to make any meaningful academic achievement (Okolie, 2014).

The majority of the Nigerian higher education institutions do not have entrepreneurial development directorate, which should be divided into management (theory), and technical/ vocational training (Production on-site based practical) Units. Rather the program is sometimes coordinated by higher education institutions' management departments. This should not be the case because experts in entrepreneurial development programs should be employed to handle such directorate if the goals of establishing the entrepreneurial development program are to be achieved. Also, qualified vocational teachers should also be employed to handle practical work in the directorate vocational training units. Inyiagu (2005) had noted that inadequacy of qualified technical and vocational teachers in Nigerian higher education institutions affects the graduates as many of them are not competent in the labor market. The unqualified lecturers who handle these courses are mainly interested in selling their inferiorly written lecture notes with no vocational education and entrepreneurial development practical ideas/works (Bankole, 2005; Okolie, 2013). The conditions under which vocational education and entrepreneurial development programs are imparted in many Nigerian higher education institutions are experiencing poverty of training equipment, staff shortage, inadequate funding, inability to provide variety of training programs and equipment such that recipients turn out to both national development and the image of vocational education (Inyiagu, 2005).

Okolie (2013) found out that the majority of students in entrepreneurial development courses in Nigerian higher education institutions have never been exposed to real life production exercises as part of requirements for being self-employed / entrepreneurs after graduation. They are usually taught business development and marketing skills with no practice-on-road marketing outing to enable them to acquire the skills which will give the opportunity to become productive and creative citizens capable of creating jobs for others. For example, over 80% of Industrial Chemistry graduates in Nigeria cannot produce paints, chalk, nail polish remover, lipsticks and so forth. Ekemode (2005) that practical exercise exposes the learners and it gives them the opportunity to acquire the know-how skills relevant for them to be self-employed after graduation. Entrepreneurial development studies, which should have been a one-on-one teaching affair or twenty students per lecturer, is offered as a general University wide course in Nigerian higher education institutions; classes sometimes have over five hundred to one thousand students per lecturer. This meant that students to simply attend the lectures just to pass the course and do not acquire entrepreneurial and vocational skills to enable them to become self-reliant and contribute to economic growth. And these are also the missing links of vocational and entrepreneurial development programs in Nigerian higher education institutions.



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The way forward in empowering the youths (students)

Youth empowerment therefore is developing competences needed to become successful contributing members of the communities. Empowerment means to give official authority or legal power to enable or promote self-actualization or influence. Empowerment is the most effective strategy for providing youth with opportunities to develop marketable skills which will not only be for employment but also bring about the much desired industrial and technological development in Nigeria as a nation. According to Fajimi (2005), looking at Nigerian youths today for instance, many are unemployed. The expected jobs are not available or the majority of graduates possess no marketable skills. If these unemployed youths are made to pass through entrepreneurial development training, probably things will improve for the nation. Empowering youths, according to Okoro (2003), is a process through which adults begin to share responsibility and power with young people. It is the same idea of teaching the youths skills that they will need to survive in life. However, it is important that youths are empowered as it will lead to competence and the competence will lead to self-esteem. Additionally, youths with increased competence can become a great resource for organizations, communities and nations because they will assure increasing responsibility within the day to day activities and running the overall programs of their nations (entrepreneurs).

Empowering Nigerian youths is indeed a great step in the right direction at this time of bad economy in the country as they should be equipped to contribute effectively to the welfare of the country. The highest possible welfare is achieved only when all individuals produce to the limit of their capacity. In view of this, the necessity for equipping each person for empowerment must be carefully studied by those responsible for developing educational programs. If schools will meet the needs of individual youths and the society at large, Nigerian youths must be ready to learn skills following proper work habits. In order to have entrepreneurial development training that will empower our youths, suit our situations and lead to self-sustenance and economic development, entrepreneurial development studies must be given more attention. One obvious means of meeting our manpower needs is by training school leavers and dropouts and giving them some industrial or commercial skills as a means of livelihood. In this way, the society will gain in two ways: correcting the social problems of unemployed youths and producing techniques necessary for industrial development.

For effective skills acquisition in entrepreneurial development programs in Nigerian higher education institutions, there must be a directorate of entrepreneurial development programs in each institution to supervise the entrepreneurial development programs of such institution. An entrepreneurial development program is incomplete without having its own directorate, unit or department, which must have business and technical/ vocational training.



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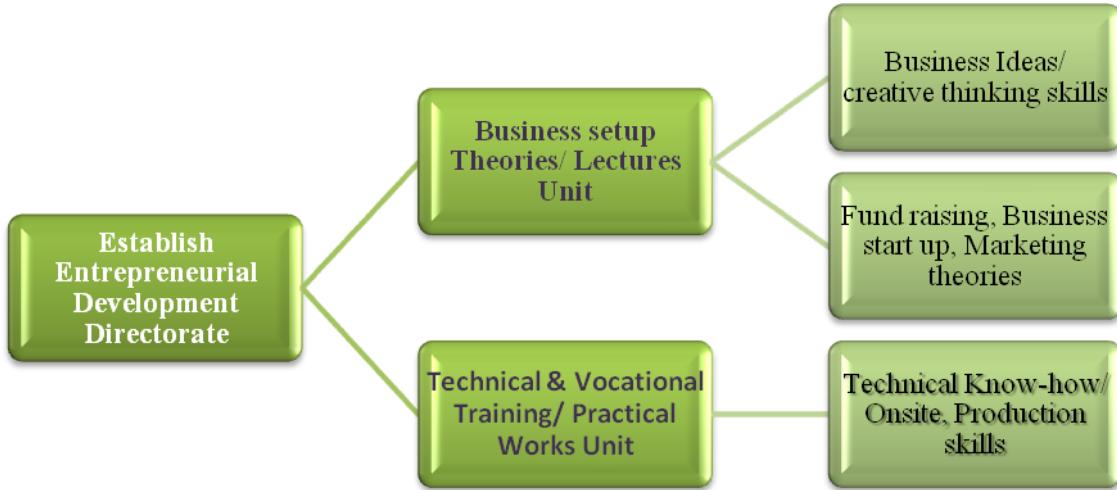


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the study.

Figure 1 suggests the importance of establishing an entrepreneurial development directorate in all the higher education institutions of Nigeria. Then, the directorate can be split into two: Business Unit and Technical/Vocational Training Unit. The business unit will be responsible for the business and marketing theories while the technical/vocational training unit will be responsible for imparting vocational and entrepreneurial skills in learners. The institutions can also build workshops for vocational education and entrepreneurial development practical where the students will be taken on real life production exercises. With proper supervision by qualified technical and vocational trainers (lecturers or technologists), entrepreneurial development practical which must be aimed at empowering the graduates will be of the requisite standard. The idea is not to have the practical work run like an industrial attachment program; it goes beyond such programs because students are meant to go through the business establishment processes through production of materials (goods) to marketing of such goods (services).

Vocational Education and Entrepreneurial Development Practical Trainings

The entrepreneurial development directorate can take students on production projects such as Chalk Making.



**Raw materials needed are simply: POP, Oil mixed with Kerosene & Water.
Equipment – Construct a Chalk Mould.**

Figure 2. Examples of vocational education and entrepreneurial development practical works students can do outside their curriculum for graduation.

Figure 2 shows that the entrepreneurial development directorate of Nigerian higher education institutions can expose students to the chalk making production practical; this type of skill acquisition program is outside the students' graduation curriculum. Participation in this type of vocational education and entrepreneurial practical will enable students to develop required skills to set up small scale chalk production factories employing people. This is in line with the words of Ekemode (2000) that science is "know-why" while technology is "know-how". He further adds that science provides knowledge while technology produces wealth. In other words, the entrepreneurial directorate should be able to equip students with both know-why and know-how to create successful entrepreneurs. Also, chalk produced during students' entrepreneurial development practical can be sold to nearby community nursery, primary and secondary schools; and money made can be used for running subsequent practical exercises.



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Physics Graduates are expected to be professionals in desktop computers, Laptops, Palmtops, Notebook and Phone repairs and maintenance through Entrepreneurial Development Studies' Life Skills-

Figure 3. Acquiring handsets, computer / laptop repairs and maintenance skills.

Business and marketing ideas should be made available by the business management scientists attached to the entrepreneurial development studies directorate. At the same time students can be grouped to compete in the production exercises as in the chalk production; the group with the best products can be given Federal Government sponsorship to establish small scale chalk making enterprises. According to Ahiakwo (2005), house-making business, mechanics and technological know-how are some of the occupational areas within which the schools can offer instruction needed by students, and within which individual boys and girls can acquire the training which best meets their needs.



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Mixtures of solvents required for such productions



polish and nails remover production



Entrepreneurial Development
Directorate of an institution can produce and market such cosmetics products at affordable rates. This can also serve as part of community development projects in Rural Areas of Nigeria.



Students can submit projects to foreign aid agencies for financial support to establish factories after graduation

Figure 4. Examples of areas to train /empower students.

Figure 4 shows that entrepreneurial development directorate's technical/vocational training unit with the chemistry department of any Nigerian higher education institution can take students on this type of production exercises. And such practical internships should be supervised by professionals in industrial chemistry departments. Graduates should acquire other skills outside the normal departmental course curriculum for them to be self-reliant after graduation; this will enable them to have sources of livelihood while awaiting employment in their own field of studies (Adenuga, 2005).

Collaborations can be made with other cosmetics companies to team with the directorate of entrepreneurial development programs of Nigerian higher education institutions and products produced during such practicals can be sold on the open markets at prices lower than market price. Exhibitions and trade fairs can be organized for students to showcase their products as this will give them practical business marketing ideas. Also, the Federal Government's attention can be drawn to such vocational training/ entrepreneurial development programs in the higher education institution through the media.



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These sorts of practical exercises will enable students to become entrepreneurs capable of contributing to economic growth in Nigeria. This is in line with words of Fasehun (2013) that entrepreneurs are therefore an important agent of growth of innovations and technical progress; development and utilization of their technical and commercial skills create growth potentials in micro, small and medium scale enterprises.

Department of Fine and Applied Arts should be motivated to ensure that students acquired skills in sculptural & painting technology

Students can learn sewing, tailoring, beading or knitting. Graduates can put foods on their table with any of these vocation while waiting for White-Collar Jobs.

Purchase clippers, brushes, and give students barbering skills, which will enable them to earn livelihood even while in school.

The era when graduates do not do hand work (craft) is gone. This time, an entrepreneur is one who must work with his/her hands.

Figure 5. Different crafts that can be learnt through vocational education and entrepreneurial development programs



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Figure 5 show that students can acquire other skills different from their courses of study; these skills ranges from carpentry, electric wiring, masonry, wood working and furniture making, brick laying, hair barbering, beading, knitting, decorating, sewing and tailoring and so forth; such skills make them capable of earning their livelihood while waiting for employment in their specialized fields of study.

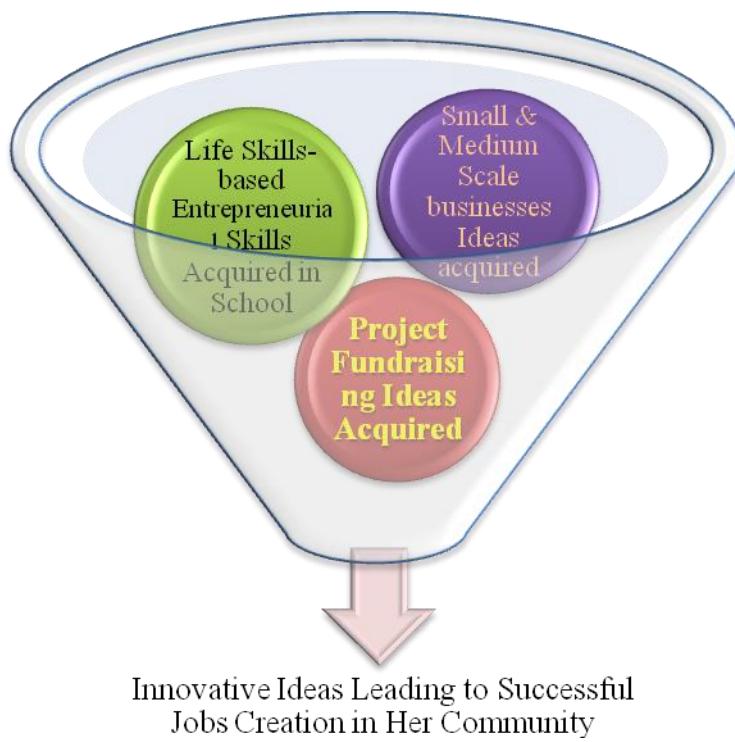


Figure 6. Illustration of the benefits of vocational education and entrepreneurial development program to Nigerian Students

Figure 6 shows that when vocational and entrepreneurial skills are acquired in schools with small and medium scale business ideas and project fundraising ideas; innovative ideas leading to successful jobs creation in the graduate's community is possible. According to Okonkwo (2006), empowering youths is a process through which adults begin to share responsibility and power with young people; it is the same idea of teaching the youths skills that they will need to survive in life. However, it is important that youth are empowered as it will lead to competence and the competence will lead to self-esteem. Additionally, youths with increased competence can become great resources for organizations, communities and the nation because they will assure increasing responsibility within the day to day activities and running the overall programs of the nation.



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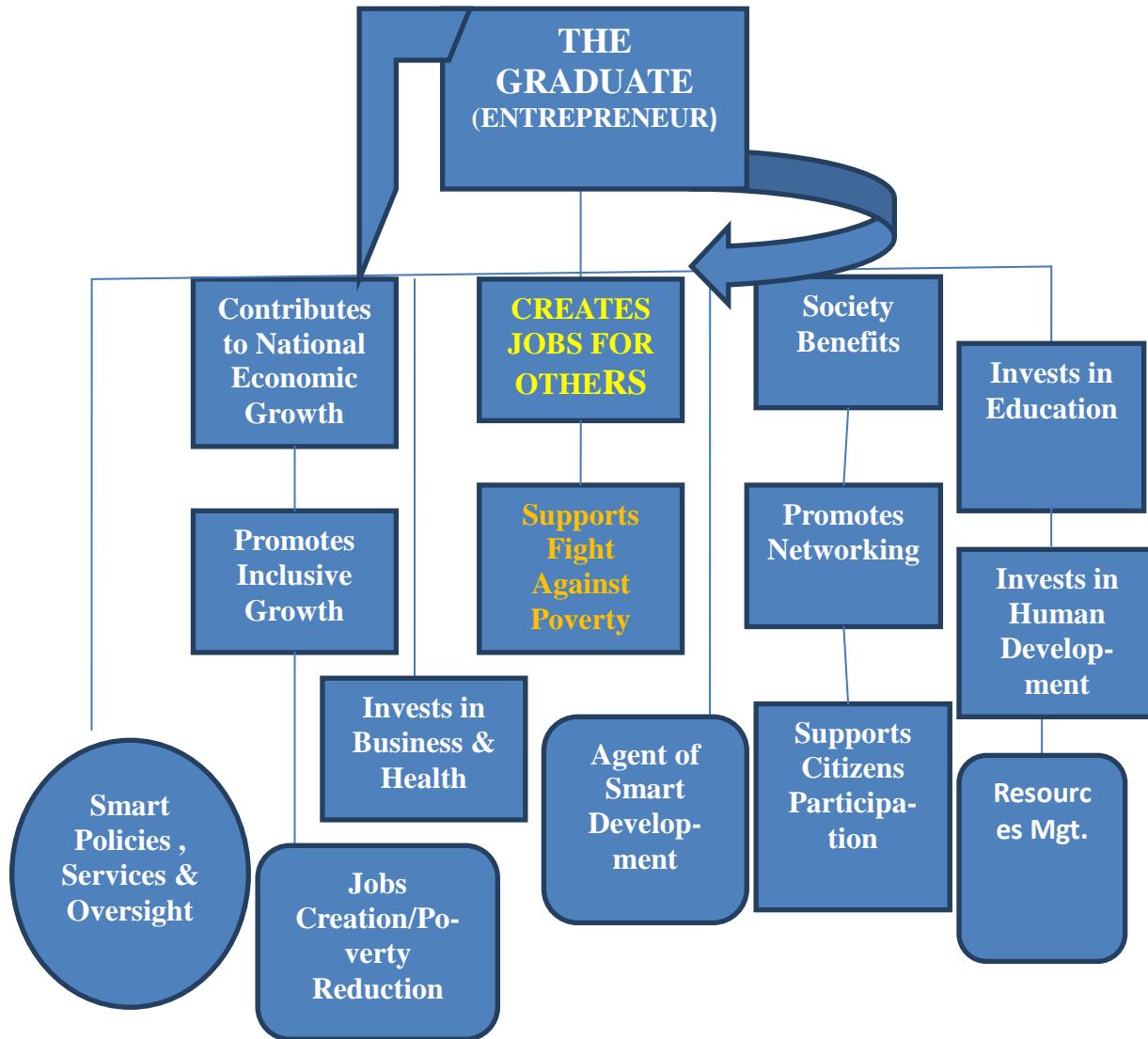


Figure 7. Benefits of graduate entrepreneur to the nation's economic growth and development.



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CONCLUSION

There are various natural resource endowments in Nigeria some of which are yet to be identified. What is now needed is an effective education system to produce so that manpower capable of using the vocational education and entrepreneurship development programs to exploit the vast potential of our land. Government should provide adequate funds to enable graduate entrepreneurs to set up small scale enterprises. To get people out of poverty and hunger means reducing the unemployment rate which requires giving people especially youths appropriate skills, attitudes and knowledge needed to be employed or self-reliant in the world of work. Entrepreneurial development programs, if well-funded and administered will surely go a long way in reducing youth unemployment and poverty problems within the timid populations of Nigerian people. The importance of the vocational education and entrepreneurial development program is enormous. They serve as ways of empowering the graduates to generate employment opportunities, be self-employed or employers of labor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Entrepreneurial development programs should be included in the education policy of many countries in the world to serve as a link between technology/technical education and the industries and those who want to establish their own businesses. The Government should strengthen its National Youth Development Policies to focus on empowering the youths at the grassroots level by providing entrepreneurial development through Vocational Education Training. Adequate funds for each graduate entrepreneur to take off his/her small scale enterprise should be made available by the government and other financial institutions. This article also recommends that adults and youths vocational training centers with modern equipment for functional literacy and acquisition of occupational skills should be provided by the governments and the private sectors nationwide to enable the school dropouts to benefit from such programs. Lastly, students should be encouraged to participate in entrepreneurial development courses in tertiary institutions, since such education will give them the skills to be self-reliant and be employers of labor.

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