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**Curriculum Implementation of
Entrepreneurship Subjects at the Senior
Secondary School: A Paradigm Shift for
Result-Oriented Skill Acquisition and
Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

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Curriculum Implementation of Entrepreneurship Subjects at the Senior Secondary School: A Paradigm Shift for Result-Oriented Skill Acquisition and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The problem of a high rate of unemployment among school leavers has for a long time been a cause for concern to the successive governments. Sound education which equips students to challenge the status quo and proffer better alternatives is the way out of the present economic quagmire. The introduction of 'Trade Subjects' into the Senior Secondary (SS) Education Curriculum is equally a welcome innovation in the Nigerian Education System. Every student must offer at least one trade/entrepreneurship subject. This paper examines the concept and objectives of entrepreneurship education, prospects of the restructured curriculum, challenges of implementation of the trade/entrepreneurship subjects at the SSS level, way forward for successful implementation and conclusion and recommendations.

Introduction

Unemployment is one of the social problems plaguing the Nigerian nation. There is no gainsaying in the fact that this high rate of unemployment and its attendant poverty have resulted in youths' negative behaviour in society. This is because most antisocial acts including thuggery, armed robbery, militancy, restiveness, ethnic-political clashes, Boko haram insurgency and other social vices in Nigeria could be traced to the high rate of unemployment (Adeyoni & Carim-sanni, 2014). To this end, the Federal Government has formulated various policies to guide actions directed towards finding lasting solutions to these impediments. In this regard, Abgail, (2012) reported that among the strategies being adopted by Nigeria to redress the ugly situation was the reformation of the education sector. A qualitative education- be it formal or informal, plays a critical role in raising a generation that is willing to create wealth for sustainable development.

The role of education in society cannot be overemphasized. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), described education as a key instrument for bringing about changes in values and attitudes, skills, behaviours and lifestyles consistent with sustainable development within and among countries. It involves the acquisition of knowledge that is relevant and functional, not only to the beneficiary but also to the wider society (Agogo, 2010, in Agogo & Temgu, 2011). Education for sustainable development is geared to the needs of the people and the country. The new Senior Secondary School curriculum structure developed by Nigeria Education Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2008) and approved by the National Council on Education (NCE), in which interrelated subjects are organized into four clear groups of Science and Mathematics, Business Studies, Humanities and Technology is a major reform in the right direction towards achieving the National Education Goals.

The introduction of 'Trade Subjects' into the Senior Secondary (SS) Education Curriculum is equally a welcome innovation in the Nigerian Education System. The restructuring of the SS curriculum is no doubt aimed at meeting emerging educational needs and global competitiveness; as well as ensure that entrepreneurship and technical subjects are properly embedded in the curriculum. The implementation of the 6-3-3-4 education system in Nigeria began in 1982 and brought many reforms into the educational system in Nigeria. Among the innovations is the addition of vocational education to the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. At the junior secondary level, pre-vocational subjects were introduced into the curriculum while vocational subjects were introduced at the senior secondary level.

Three decades after the adoption of this laudable initiative, the majority of Nigerian youths are still idle, while some are involved in various vices due to unemployment. Consequently, the National Council on Education (NCE) approved a new curriculum structure for the three-year senior secondary education, as released by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), known as Curriculum 2007. However, the fact that despite all the previous educational programmes in the country, the rate of unemployment among school leavers is still very high. This calls for the evaluation of the current programme at this material time.

The Concept of Entrepreneurship is the act of being an entrepreneur. It is the view as a process through which individuals and/or government either on their own or jointly exploit available economic opportunities without being scared by associated risks or inadequate resources under their control (Adeyonu & Carim-sanni, 2014). They further defined entrepreneurship in other words as the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled. Adegboye (2015) however defined entrepreneurship education as a learning process, starting as early as elementary school and progressing through all levels of education. The standards and their supporting performance indicators constitute a framework for teachers to use in building or developing appropriate objectives, learning activities and assessments

From the foregoing, entrepreneurship education is the systematic development of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for an individual to perform adequately in a given business or occupational oriented opportunities for improved performance of a country's economy. The need for entrepreneurship education comes to the surface when societies have to improve on their effectiveness, efficiency and safety of their economy for greater economic development.

Prospects of the Restructured SS Curriculum

Education is the foundation for sustainable development and the newly structured SS curriculum holds a promising future for our youths. Education for sustainable development (ESD) has been described as a broad teaching and learning process that encourages an interdisciplinary and holistic approach and promotes critical and creative thinking in the education process (UNESCO, online). In line with this, therefore, the new SS education curriculum structure can be said to be a well-articulated and oriented effort towards sustainable development. The arrangement of the detailed subject combinations in the 5-compulsory core-crossing subjects and 3-4 subjects offered in the students' field of specialization with one elective (optional) is done in such a way that a child who has gone through the system has acquired education for self-reliance and economic independence. This is to say that the new structure has inherent opportunities to achieve the aims and objectives of educating for sustainable development.

According to UNESCO, if education is geared towards achieving the following: every person benefited from an education promoting development that is environmentally sound, socially equitable, culturally sensitive and economically just, learning was about knowledge and also about doing, being, interacting with others and changing the world, formal learning was enjoyable, hands-on and relevant to life outside school while addressing the problems of our world, every person benefited from genuine learning opportunities throughout life, in the workplace, and within the community, education systems prepared learners to enter the workplace as well as handle a crisis, be resilient, become responsible citizens, adapt to change, recognize and solve local problems with global roots, meet other cultures with respect, and create a peaceful and sustainable society, then, we would be educating for a more sustainable future. The new SS education curriculum structure has inherent great potentials for achieving all these.

The present curriculum structure touches all areas of human endeavour and centres on local and global needs. It provides for a wide choice of areas of concentration to cater for varied interests and abilities of individual learners as well as meet up with the global aspiration of making education relevant to the development of the individual and the society. The trades and entrepreneur subjects will enable the youths to develop creative skills for survival with the assurance of job creation and the resultant poverty reduction. The utilitarian values of the new structure can not be quantified. The restructuring of the curriculum will also provide an opportunity for authors and book publishers to develop new textbooks with contents that are relevant to the present-day aspirations of the nation. Another interesting aspect of the restructured curriculum that gives assurance of its future success and sustainability is that it is designed in such a way that if properly implemented, unemployment problems among our youths with their concomitant social vices will be reduced. The nation will be lifted into a scientifically and technologically developed and highly industrialized self-reliant nation.

The 3-year Junior Secondary Education

As stated above, the educational system of 6-3-3-4, that is 6-year primary, 3 years junior secondary, 3 years senior secondary and 4 years university education gave birth to the current 9-3-4 system, that is 9-year basic education (comprising of 6 years primary and 3-year junior secondary joined together), 3 years senior secondary and 4-year university. The senior secondary school in the 6-3-3-4 system formed a link between junior secondary and the university or tertiary institutions. The JSS curriculum structure encountered a lot of implementation problems. A reflection on some of these problems encountered will help us understand the challenges facing the implementation of the new senior secondary education curriculum. Abigail (2012) opined that the program for the Junior schools was implemented hastily and the facilities provided were not adequate for the new system. On a similar note, Gusau (2008) stated that the proposed 6-3-3-4 system 'was implemented with a military dispatch' without adequate planning and so the intended result was never achieved. Gusau further stated that the 5-year secondary education in the former 6-5-2-3 system was discounted as too academic and bookish and did not give room to those who were terminating their studies at the junior secondary level to be useful and productive members of the society. The 6-5-2-3 system was therefore changed to the 6-3-3-4 system which was intended to address and correct the anomaly. The 3-year junior secondary education curriculum was therefore a hybrid of pre-vocational and academic subjects to impart knowledge of science, arts and technology. As Igwe (1998) in Gusau (2008) noted, the advantage of breaking down the secondary education into two, i.e. 3-3 system was to equip the products of the 3 years junior secondary both intellectually and vocationally depending on their areas of interests, aptitude and capability. The products, therefore, were expected to be self-reliant at the end of the program and could opt out of school to get employment or be self-employed. Those who desired could then continue with the senior secondary for further training in academics.

The objective was never achieved because of poor planning and implementation problems. For instance, some of the equipment imported for use in teaching technology subjects requires a steady supply of electricity to function and electricity was not in supply. Likewise, there were no technicians or teachers trained to either operate the machines or teach the subjects. Most schools did not even have laboratories or workshops for keeping the equipment with the results that some of them were 'safely' packed away in people's warehouses. Thus, the machines were left to rust, stolen or wasted. The overall effect was that the products of the junior secondary schools were ill-equipped for the labour market. The philosophy of the new SSCE is that every senior secondary education graduate should have been well prepared for higher education as well as acquired relevant functional trade/entrepreneurship skills needed for poverty eradication, job creation and wealth generation; and in the process strengthened further the foundations for ethical, moral and civic values acquired at the basic education level. The 34 trade/entrepreneurial subjects identified as part of the reform of the Senior Secondary Education curriculum are:

- 1.Auto Body repair and spray painting
- 2.Auto Electrical work
- 3.Auto Mechanical work
- 4.Auto Parts merchandising
- 5.Air Conditioning Refrigerator
- 6.Welding and Fabrication Engineering Craft Practice
- 7.Electrical Installation and Maintenance Work
- 8.Radio, TV and electrical work
- 9.Block laying, Brick Laying and Concrete Work
- 10.Painting and Decoration
- 11.Plumbing and pipe fitting
- 12.Machine woodworking
- 13.Carpentry and Joinery
- 14.Furniture Making
- 15.Upholstery
- 16.Catering and Craft Practice
- 17.Garment Making
- 18.Textile Trade
- 19.Dyeing and Bleaching
- 20.Printing Craft Practice
- 21.Cosmetology
- 22.Leather Goods Manufacturing and Repair

23. Keyboarding
24. Data Processing
25. Store Keeping
26. Book Keeping
27. GSM maintenance
28. Photography
29. Tourism
30. Mining
31. Animal Husbandry
32. Fisheries
33. Marketing
34. Salesmanship

Challenges of Implementation of the New SS Education Curriculum Structure

Inadequate Qualified Teachers- Education brings about behavioural change and teachers are the change agents. Therefore, anything that affects teachers affects the entire education system. The new subjects that were introduced into the curriculum especially the trades and entrepreneur subjects as well as computer studies which are now compulsory need to be handled by teachers who are specialists in those areas. At the moment, there are not enough such specialized teachers. Studies show that most classroom teachers are not computer literate (Duguryil, Duguryil & Kainyon, 2006; Okeke, Okoli & Osuafor, 2008).

Lack of Infrastructure and Material Resources- For this program to succeed, emphasis must be placed on the acquisition of skills through learning and doing, which is hands-on-minds-on. Learning by doing or hands-on experience takes place in laboratories and workshops which are well equipped. These facilities are not functional in most schools of the federation. Most laboratories are empty rooms with little or no laboratory equipment (Osuafor & Okoli, 2010).

Lack of Textbooks- Mandate was that before the commencement of the new programme, which is the implementation of the new curriculum in September 2011, year one book of SS education, would have been in the market. The textbooks are not readily available until now.

Total Dependence on Examination as an Assessment Tool- Assessment of learning outcomes should lay more emphasis on psychomotor and affective behaviours of students rather than on cognitive behaviours as has been the case. It is the acquisition of skills and the right attitude that are more important in transforming the nation into an industrialized self-reliant nation (Adegboye, 2015). He further observed that much dependence on examination which most times concentrates on the assessment of cognitive learning has resulted in producing half-baked young graduates which can neither be self-employed nor fit into the labour market.

Incessant Strikes- Nigerian education system is bedevilled by incessant strikes by classroom teachers at all levels. It has become the norm. Strikes most times are associated with the poor condition of service. Sule (2008) associated the incessant strikes and unrest among teachers to conflict and disagreements between teachers and the managers of educational institutions as well as government arising from unpaid or poor salaries and allowances, inadequate and un conducive learning and teaching environment.

Way Forward For Successful Implementation of Trade Subjects

Employment of Specialized Teachers- Young graduates who have specialized in any of these trade subjects should be given automatic employment after their National Youth Service Corps. Those of them that did not graduate from education should be encouraged to go for in-serve training in education while at work to enable them to acquire the teaching methodology skills.

Team Teaching- Another way of achieving the aims and objectives of the restructured curriculum and enhance the performance of students is through team teaching. Agogo and Terngu (2011) defined team teaching as a teaching method whereby a group of talented teachers pull their intellectual resources together and jointly share the responsibility of preparing, teaching and evaluating a class of students. They see team teaching as a strategy to remedy a shortage of teachers in schools and a way to make effective use of the available teachers in schools for greater achievement. Team teaching avails the students the opportunity of getting the best teaching from a team of teachers with the various rich intellectual background.

Professional Development of Teachers- The serving teachers need to be abreast with global educational changes and innovations. There should be continuous in-service training of teachers both within and outside the country. There is a need to sponsor teachers to International Conferences for them to interact with their colleagues in other countries and acquaint themselves with developments elsewhere that will be of interest to the Nigerian educational system.

Remuneration of Teachers- Encouragement and special incentives should be given to teachers. Such encouragement can be in form of prompt and regular payment of salaries and promotion as and when due to avoid stagnation. It can also come as a bonus during festivities like Christmas (for Christians) and Idel Kabir (for Moslems) as it is sometimes done in some other parastatals. Outstanding performance by a teacher should be properly recognized and rewarded. If these are done, the incessant strikes will be reduced, teaching will become more attractive and the issue of brain drain to areas of greener pasture will be a thing of the past.

Provision of Textual Materials- Authors and interest groups should be encouraged to write books in the new 'trades' subjects. NERDC should also review the books and recommend the good ones to schools. School libraries need to be stocked with relevant textbooks and other literature while students are guided on how to make use of them.

Monitoring and Evaluation- Evaluation and monitoring systems are critical for ensuring sustained interest and commitment in the development of science and technology programme and indeed, education in general. Education is a business enterprise and like any other business, needs proper monitoring by the authorities that be. No business can progress without adequate checks and balances and education is not an exception. There must be adequate monitoring of the newly restructured SS curriculum at every stage of its implementation to ensure compliance by all concerned and that the available resources are properly managed.

Strategies for Teaching Trade/Entrepreneurship

Below are some selected best practices/skills which could assist teachers: be enthusiastic about the subject, plan skills; practice the skills before going to teach; share lesson objectives and procedure with students; adapt content to suit the needs of students; motivate the student and foster active participation, encourage teamwork and sharing of material, develop their keen sense of observation; use varieties of teaching methods and improvise relevant instructional materials and handling difficult concepts and invite local artisans/persons with specialized skills to teach, maximize the use of available facilities; explore the possibility of using community facilities; Incorporate excursion/field trip to workshops; encourage students to consult books/internet; allocate double or block periods for teaching; challenge students with problem-solving situations; and ensure gender mainstreaming in planning, implementation and evaluation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Senior Secondary education curriculum structure has all it takes to advance the country scientifically, technologically, industrially and socio-economically. Its effective implementation is expected to equip the students with the requisite handy skills and knowledge for job creation, wealth generation & Poverty alleviation. It, therefore, calls for a concerted effort of all the stakeholders – the government, teachers, students, parents, philanthropists, book writers and publishers, to tackle the challenges facing its implementation and create a conducive environment for its sustainable success.

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