

**A REVIEW OF THE RELEVANCE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NIGERIA AND THE SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL WAY FORWARD.**

**BY**

**PHILLIPS OLUBIYI**

Department of General Studies

Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro

Ogun State, Nigeria

E-mail: [olubiyi.philips@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng](mailto:olubiyi.philips@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng)

Phone No: 08135985668

**And**

Ajibola Wahab Afolabi

Department of Welding and Fabrication

Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro

[Wahab.ajibola@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng](mailto:Wahab.ajibola@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng)

Phone No: 08039553113

Being a paper presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the School of Environmental Studies,  
Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Between 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, July, 2021.

***ABSTRACT***

*This paper attempted to review the socio-philosophical values of vocational education as a panacea for national development in Nigeria. Looking at the underlying philosophy of vocational technical education in the Nigerian educational system, it is not a secret that the philosophy's influence is not felt in the society. In the light of this scenario, this paper critiqued the various aspects of the philosophy of vocational and technical education, while it also examined the influence of the society on this form of education and subsequently made recommendations on how vocational education in Nigeria can best be improved in Nigeria. The paper canvassed the significance of vocational education in Nigeria's developmental projections with a view of ensuring the fulfillment of Nigeria's national potentials. The paper further argued that Nigeria, as a country, needs to invest more in vocational education if the country is to realize her millennium development goals (MDGs) and enter the technology-driven global connect. Currently, vocational and technical education is plagued by a slew of constraining challenges in Nigeria including but not limited to inadequate funding and lack of qualified and experienced staff. Therefore, this paper recommended that the governments at the federal, state, and local levels urgently need to rechannel resources and national interest towards vocational education and training in order to encourage young Nigerians graduates become self-reliant and also improve on their required employable skills.*

**KEYWORDS: Philosophy of Vocational and Technical Education, Access to Vocational Technical Education in Nigeria, Development.**

## **Introduction**

Scholars have described vocational technical education in various ways. Okoro (1999) described vocational education as "Those set of experiences through which a person learns to effectively carry out some useful occupation." These experiences can be orchestrated and institutionalized, or they could be unorganized and haphazard. Put differently vocational education can be described "as a set of supervised and orchestrated experiences designed to train an individual for socially useful jobs". According to this point of view, schooling should be vocational oriented in the sense that it trains individuals and also prepares them for a satisfactory life.

According to Thompson (2002), observed that vocational education helps to improve individual abilities in terms of intelligence, talents, and comprehension so that such individuals can carry out tasks in their chosen vocational pursuits effectively. In his contribution, Winer (2000) stated that vocational education is intended to improve talents, abilities, understanding behaviors, work patterns, and respect, as well as the expertise and information required by workers to join and advance in jobs on a useful and profitable basis. The upshot of these descriptions is that technical and vocational education training (TVET) is an essential component of the overall education program that leads to the growth of good people by developing their physical, social, civic, cultural, and economic skills.

However, vocational education cannot be self-sustaining and efficient if it is conducted in a vacuum because it must be linked to factors that will assist learners and other stakeholders in the vocational and technical education sector especially in Nigeria to be more realistic rather than being theoretical in their commitment to making vocational technical education effective. This approach is manifestable in the establishment of the Nigeria Skills Training and Vocational Education (STVE) Project that is targeted at fast-tracking Nigeria's poverty reduction initiatives which, among others, seek to expand access to basic, non-formal and vocational skills education for Nigerians.

Presently, Nigeria is a country currently undergoing economic reforms and therefore needs a productive, competent, and flexible workforce is a prerequisite for furthering her economic development even as the demand for skilled workers and technicians remain acute and will become continue to be more intense as Nigeria's ever more intense as the industrial sector becomes the dominant provider of employment.

## **Statement of Problem**

One of the major problems limiting Nigeria's governments implementation of TVET policies and also slow-tracking the achievements of the positives gain derivable from vocational and technical education in Nigeria is the lack of a scientific data base within an empirical framework for evaluating the degree of the success or failure of Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET).

Another major problem limiting the success of TVET in Nigeria, is that the current educational curricula in Nigeria are fundamentally unsuccessful, as they continue to limit young graduates' desire to put their theoretical skills into practice.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The first objective of this paper is to explore the causes and problems driving the downturn of technical and vocational education and training among Nigerian students at different levels of education.

The second objective of this paper is to propose strategies for the long-term retention of the importance of TVET training in Nigeria's educational system.

### **Literature Review**

The origins of vocational education may be traced back to the dawn of human society (Roberts, 1971). Traditional types of vocational education existed, and individuals had to labor for a living. It was done inside familial circles. The Nigerian child was taught various skills such as weaving, sculpturing, blacksmithing, carving, farming, fishing, cattle rearing, hair plaiting, dress making, bead weaving, leather work, pottery, brick making, basket weaving, raffia works, mat weaving, and others through the indigenous system or traditional vocational education (Nduka, 1982 and Fafunwa, 1995).

Even while vocational education has promise for national growth, it has also encountered severe restrictions in carrying out its goal. Some of the restrictions have historical roots, while others are the result of social, political, psychological, and philosophical factors working against it. Following independence in 1960, the colonial attitude about vocational education remained with post-independence Nigeria's educational planners and suppliers.

The majority of the impediments to the development of vocational education in Nigeria stem from the colonial past and have now been magnified into national concerns. The poor esteem for vocational education has had an impact on its image, student's enrollment in vocational technical programs, and insufficiently equipped workshops for occupational skill development. When it comes to the placement of persons into significant positions in government organizations, graduates of vocational education programs have faced prejudice.

Furthermore, during statutory transfers of funds to national government organizations, vocational education is usually given the short end of the stick. A variety of problems have hampered the effective implementation of TVET in the country. According to the NBTE, the fundamental difficulties of TVET include: low societal recognition, which translates to low enrollment and a skilled workforce shortage, obsolete instructional facilities, insufficient funding, poor staffing, poor linkages with industry, and a

general lack of quality. Furthermore, in most areas of our educational system, evaluation is done through traditional tests, which do not provide for enough time for practicals which are important in TVET.

### **Extent of the Implementation of Vocational and Technical Education (TVET) In Nigeria.**

Generally Learners of vocational and technical education in Nigeria currently undergo instructions that are very different from what they would likely encounter following completion in the Nigerian school system. Today, the focus in schools and colleges on ability training, which is the hallmark of technical education, is abysmal. For example, most vocational professional instructors are transforming the TVET programs into a poetic type of curriculum in which only the academic elements of vocational education are learnt at the expense of the realistic and practical aspects of the training program.

In addition, there is a shortage of trained and skilled TVET instructors, and those that are available are not perfectly taught about the realistic and practical dimensions of vocational and technical education in their school days thereby creating a vicious circle. woodwork, metal work, house design, tailoring and dress designing, dyeing, welding, electrical installation, block laying and concreting, carpentry and joinery, furniture making, motor vehicle mechanic works, computing, radio and television maintenance, and mechanical drawing are only a few of the subjects included in vocational professional training globally.

(Osuala, 2004), argued that the emphasis placed on the relevance and appropriateness of vocational training in developing countries including Nigeria stems from the low impact such training is believed to have on industrial development and growth especially when compared to countries like the Soviet Union where vocational education and training continue to attract a lot of attention from the government, training agencies, and private business operators.

Okorie (2001) attributed Nigeria's current inadequate technical and vocational training system to the absent of an industrial base in the country implying that most of the vocational training exercises taught are theoretical in nature. It's a whole different story when it comes to tools and machines. The instruments used in the school workshops differ from the tools used in the sectors where the graduates would live.

(Idirisu, 2007), argued that in Nigeria, classrooms, workshops, labs, studios, facilities, and supplies are woefully insufficient in Nigeria's vocational and training centers. The implication is that the challenge is that of obtaining adequate facilities that could allow for a realistic learning of skills by learners and as a result, the world in which the students are prepared differs greatly from that of the industries in which they will serve, since the industries are outfitted with new hand tools and machinery

### **Poor Access to Vocational Technical Education in Nigeria**

(Okorie, 2001), argued that the rate of enrollment in vocational technical education programs is still poor in Nigeria. Students often choose general education courses that will train them for careers such as law, medicine, pharmacy, nursing, architecture, and so on. He pointed out that parents bear a large share of the responsibility for this heinous injustice against vocational technical education since they inspire their children and wards to read courses that do not require practical skills. Today, most students in Nigeria's educational institutions chooses career based on their social standing and the reputation of such courses in the society, as well as their desire to impress their peers and associates

In terms of social acceptance, proper funding, and parental/child preference, vocational and technical education has remained a secondary discipline. It is not shocking, then, that the transition from junior secondary school to technical college was almost entirely in favor of general education (liberal education curriculum) in several Nigerian states in 1985, shortly after the National Policy on Education was implemented (Okoro, 1991). Slow movement from junior high schools to vocational technical education programs is also a frequent occurrence today. In terms of vocational technical education enrollment, little progress has been achieved. The explanation is not far-fetched. Vocational education has been dubbed "education for the handicapped, dropouts, and never-do-wells" since its conception (Odu and Brose, 2003). Students' lack of enthusiasm and apathy toward manual labor can be due to society's apathy toward manual labor. As a result, the findings confirmed Olaitan's (1996) statement that the Nigerian culture of today views vocational and technical education as an education for people who are academically backward, and as such, there is a general apathy towards manual labor, despite the fact that the current high rate of unemployment should teach otherwise.

## **Methodology**

This paper utilized a textual, secondary or desk research approach which involves the use of existing data in a systematic way; systematic in the sense that it entails the use of review methods to gather and assess the results of research publications which include but is not limited to summary, collation and or synthesis of existing information either in soft or hand form as against primary research. This study may eventually serve as a precursor to an elaborate primary research.

## **Discussion and Findings**

(Dike, 2009), noted that it is not an exaggeration to argue that technical and vocational education remains the driving force behind economic development. Without an army, no country will fight a war. Similarly, Nigeria cannot thrive without well-equipped technological and vocational institutions. This is a major gap in Nigeria's developmental strategy and trajectory. As a result, Nigeria must invest heavily in education, with a special emphasis on vocational and technical education. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and teachers in this field needs to spearhead a drive towards increasing funding for

vocational education and clean up its reputation in the society, as it has been done in other developed countries of the world (Ojimba, 2013).

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and The State Economic and Empowerment Development Strategies (SEEDS) initiatives and programs also need to urgently incorporate vocational education and in their various policies for sustainable growth and development that must be targeted at poverty reduction and job creation as lip service in this regard by Government at various level would not address the challenges identified.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper is of the position that professional and vocational education should be given adequate funding by the various levels of government in Nigeria. Inadequate funding has had a serious negative effect on the procurement of facilities such as well-equipped laboratories and workshops, related textbooks and instruction manuals. Vocational education in Nigeria also requires the employment of professional and knowledgeable instructors.

The paper therefore recommended that priority should be given to teacher- training programmes and seminars which must involve periodic industrial instructions for teachers of TVET to keep them up to date with technical development and trends in the industry.

In additions, Nigeria's technical institutions should be encouraged to build strong relationships and linkages with similar institutions abroad in order to facilitate a cross-fertilization of ideas and possible technology transfer. By taking these proactive steps Nigeria's educational universities, polytechnics and technical institutions would gain access to technological advancement, exchange programs, and other advantages available in foreign institutions with well-developed technical programs and foundation.

The Federal, States and Local government in Nigeria should eliminate the distinction between university and technical institution as soon as possible. Technicians, as well as all others who graduate from technical schools, should be fairly and equitably compensated. The distinction in the civil service between holders of 'General Studies' qualifications and professional certificates must be eliminated not only as a matter of strategy, but also in the thought and attitude of government officials Technicians and technologists are not less qualified than their peers.

In Nigeria, there is a pressing need to reform the educational system as emphasis must be given to investment in vocational and technical education and skill training. Since no nation can perform favorably in the evolving world economy with low-skilled labor. Lawmakers and stakeholders in the education sector in Nigeria must learn from foreign experience as Nigeria strive to create a more flexible Technical Vocational Education (TVE) framework to fulfill the ever-changing demands for technological growth.

Finally, The Federal Government of Nigeria should do all in its power to maintain a consistent power supply in the country, or provide adequate standby generators to all vocational education programs for the functioning of machinery and tools used in skill acquisition. Instead of being included under the umbrella of science and technology, vocational education should be given independent legislative recognition for its role in national development.

## References

- Chauhan, S.S. (1983). *Innovation in Teaching Learning Process*. VICAS Publishing House, PVT Ltd, 5 Ansan Road, New Delhi.
- Duke, V.E. (2009), "Technical And Vocational Education Key to Nigeria Development". Printed 10th June, 2015 on Line.
- Fafunwa, A. Babs (1995). *History of Education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: NPS Educational Publishers Limited.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Hornby, A.S. (2000). *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Idirisu, I. (2007). Comparative Evaluation of the Perceptions of Electrical and Building Students Regarding Technical College Programme Implementation Features in Niger State. *Journal of Vocational and Adult Education* 6 (1) 100-109.
- Ike, C.U. (2004). *International Media and New Technologies*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Nduka, O. (1982). *Western Education and the Nigerian Cultural Background*. Ibadan: University Press Limited.
- Ojimba, D.P. (2013). "Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria: Issues, Problems and Prospects" Dimensions. *Journal of Education and Social Research* Vol. 2(9) November, 2012.
- Okorie, J.U. (2001). *Vocational Industrial Education League of Researchers in Nigeria*, Bauchi, Nigeria.
- Okoro, O.M. (1999). *Principles and Methods of Vocational and teachers education*. Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- Olaitan, S.O. (1996). *Vocational Education in Nigeria and Manpower Development (Unpublished Manuscript)* University of Nigeria, Nsukka
- Osuala, E.C. (2004). *Foundations of Vocational Education*. Enugu: Cheston Agency Limited.
- Roberts, R.W. (1971). *Vocational and Practical Arts Education*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Thompson, J.F. (2002). *Foundation of Vocational Education*. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Winer, R.K. (2000). Rung by up the health career ladder. *American Vocational Journal*. 48 (7) 18-27.