



EMERGING CHALLENGES AND TRENDS IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Detailed consideration of divers emerging challenges and trends that have cropped up in the conceptualization of Technical and Vocational Education Training in Nigeria are well discussed in this paper. Despite the vital resolution of crisis experienced in Vocational Education in Nigeria in connection to human capital development, brought about emerged challenges that have resulted in malfunctioning and irregularity of Vocational Education in order to achieve the desired goal, the training of technical personnel in Nigeria has witnessed many challenges among which are policies which have no connection with workplace challenges, curriculum that has little or no relationship with workplace and social needs, inadequate funding, lack of motivation for teachers, inadequate equipment, infrastructural facilities, brain drain and poor staff training. This paper therefore aims to identify the challenges, proffer solutions and offer recommendations for effective technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria which would result in improved teaching and learning of technical and vocational education.

Keywords: Challenges, funding, trends, TVET

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria has been faced with numerous challenges which have resulted in slow development and trending issues within vocational education system. Technical and vocational education system in Nigeria is designed to produce competent craftsmen to carryout repairs as specified in the national curriculum. This system was adopted by all technical colleges across the country and accredited by National Board for Technical Education (Olayinka and Oyenuga, 2010).

Vocational education deals with the training designed to prepare individuals to enter into paid employment in any reorganized occupation (Okoro, 1993). The Nigerian National Policy on Education defined vocational education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (FRN, 2013). Vocational education and training (VET) is an education that prepares trainees for jobs at various levels from a craft or trade to a professional position in engineering, accounting, nursing, medicine and other health practitioners, architecture, pharmacy, law.

Vocational Education and Training involves the acquisition of skills and competencies that can help individuals to function productively in industrial and commercial occupations (Wapmuk, 2011). Skills are needed for sustainable economic development of individuals and the nation at large. Thus, vocational technical education has emerged as one of the most effective human resource development strategies that developing countries need to embrace to train and modernize the technical workforce for industrialization and national development (FRN, 2013).

Technical and vocational education serves as a catalyst for economic, social and political changes of a nation due to its uniqueness (Uwaifo, 2010). Technical and vocational skills are prime movers of economic and social development of any nation. Therefore, investment in human capital is beneficial to the future of any country. The success of nations, individuals, enterprises and communities increasingly depends on existence and possession of transferrable and renewable skills and knowledge. Developing countries recognize the important role that TVET plays in equipping individuals with relevant skills and knowledge, hence enabling people to effectively participate in social, economic and technological innovation processes.



TVET nurtures skills that are necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development and thus builds a self-reliant nation. TVET would enable the recipients to be better useful and productive citizens of the nation. TVET would bring about the developmental changes as envisaged in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) which emphasized ‘the equipment of individuals’ with appropriate skills, abilities and competencies necessary for them to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Thus, this paper examines the emerging challenges and trends of TVET in Nigeria and the way forward.

Emerging Challenges of Technical and Vocational Education

Divers challenges being faced in technical and vocational education make it difficult to alleviate hunger, unemployment and poverty (Eze, 2013). Oranu (2004) observed that the good intentions of successive Nigerian governments about TVE programmes are still fraught with a lot of challenges. These challenges according to studies are;

1. **Non-professionalising the teaching profession and Lack of motivation for teacher:** The challenge of non-professionalized teaching in Nigeria is still very obvious (Etuk and Asukwo, 2015). Professionalism has been described as the practice of the core values, ideals, skills, knowledge, attitudes, rights, privileges, conduct and obligations expected of a professional. Lack of motivation for teachers is a serious problem affecting TVET in Nigeria. Salaries, allowances, entitlements are always paid in arrears but at times they are denied of these entitlements which had resulted in poor attitude to work of some teachers. The teachers go about doing their private businesses instead of concentrating on how to improve teaching and learning in the school, thus rendering vocational trainers ineffective and hampering quality of teaching.
2. **Inadequate Equipment and Infrastructural facilities:** Most TVET departments in higher institutions of learning do not have well equipped laboratories, workshops and usable infrastructures. Where these exist, they are grossly inadequate, obsolete and in a dilapidated state. TVET laboratories that are seen in various institutions today are eyesores as the laboratories only have equipment that were provided at the point the departments were established. ‘Oduma (2007) found out that the classrooms and offices in most of the schools were inadequate in terms of decency, space, ventilation and insulation from heat and further noted that the incinerators and conveniences were not strategically placed, and the school plant was poorly maintained’. These combined deficiencies constitute a major gap in the quality of input and output in education, thus the non-attainment of the set standards and goals in TVET teacher education.
3. **Inadequate Funding:** The inadequate funding of vocational and technical education has been a problem in the implementation of quality teaching and learning of vocational and technical education in Nigerian. As a result of poor funding, lack of equipment, accommodation, workshops, training materials and money for maintenance of equipment, many of the institutions of higher learning producing vocational teachers, have been producing limited number of graduates (Etuk and Asukwo, 2015).
4. **Inadequate Instructional Materials:** Apart from the fact that basic facilities are lacking, there is also lack of teaching materials especially textbooks to aid the learning of students. This lack of materials will make the teachers unable to do their jobs effectively. This will, in turn leads to students getting inadequate knowledge as they lack vital information.
5. **Political Instability:** The different political dispensation has failed to create an efficient and productive economy through its ability to mobilize or generate adequate resources to optimally finance technical and vocational education. Taylor (1992) noted the presupposition that the capacity of the political system to achieve these goals depends on the style or approach adopted in pursuing them. Continuous change in leadership of various Technical and vocational centres who shares different political views from the government at the centre has created distortion in charisma and mode of administration of the centres thereby affecting the quality of outcome.
6. **Curriculum Inadequacy:** The curriculum of a subject with practical content is generally organized into theoretical classes and laboratory. Students also use the laboratory to develop case examples on their own time. Olunloyo (2002) noted that one of the issues confronting the design of appropriate curriculum for technical education is preparing students for the shift from the Fordist to ICT paradigm in technology practice. The low pace of industrialization and technological growth in Nigeria can be attributed to the widening gap between science and technology as a result of the inability of technical education to adequately utilize the scientific ideas to promote technology. This suggests the need to overhaul technical education curricula in Nigeria. However, the overhauling of the curricula may not necessarily translate to the production of highly literate technical education experts of ready-made graduates for the industry which may result in rapid industrialization or growth in the economy of a nation unless solutions are



proffered to some constraints that may militate against positive outcomes, but will adequately equip our youths with the relevant skills needed for their day to day living.

7. **Brain Drain:** Brain drain refers to the movement of lecturers of technical education which are needed for the socio-economic and technological advancement of Nigeria from one university to other universities or to other professionals (including politics) calling for better conditions of service. Akintunde (1989) identified five different components of brain drain:
 - Experts in academics who moved to the industry where they get better pay for their services.
 - Lecturers and students who leave the country to acquire more knowledge and skill but later refused to return. c) Lecturers who move from one country for other conditions of service.
 - Skill professionals who abandon the practice of technical education in favour of other more lucrative economic activities and political appointments which are not related to their training.
 - Skilled professionals, although in their field of training who do not devote their full attention to their job because of their effort to supplement their earnings through other unrelated economic activities. Bassi (2004) reported that: (i) About 45% of all Nigerian professionals including technical educators have left the Nigerian shores over the decades since colonization. (ii) Between 1997 and 2007 alone, Nigeria lost over 10,000 middle level and high-level managers to the western economies. (iii) About 500 lecturers from Nigerian universities continue to emigrate each year, particularly to Europe, America and other African countries where the condition of service is relatively better. These Nigerians in Diaspora contribute 35 times more wealth to Europe, America and other African economy.
8. **Staff Training:** Training of academic staff is a continuous exercise to ensure consistent improvement in the quality of their products. The training can be acquired either locally or overseas. Usually, local training within the country is cheaper than overseas training but more strenuous because of inadequate facilities, literature and distractions rising from the need to meet the necessary demands. Overseas training requires a lot of foreign exchange but the enabling environment exist to achieve success in a record time. However, overtime, it has always been difficult to get the trainees back to their respective countries after the completion of their study.

Solutions to the Identified Challenges of TVET

1. Government should embark on massive sensitisation of the public on the potentials of Vocational Education in Nigeria.
2. Government should also provide incentives to encourage youths to get technical training. Incentives such as small loans for business setup upon graduation should be provided.
3. Adequate budgeting should also be made for vocational education so there will be enough funds to provide standard education.
4. Funds provided should also be properly monitored and accounted for. This will prevent workers from enriching themselves with money that is supposed to be used for development.
5. Government should ensure that there is an orientation in form of sensitization on curriculum delivery so as to change attitude of people towards vocational subjects.
6. Standard facilities should be provided. Sub-standard facilities need to be done away with so that learners can access quality education.
7. Instructional materials and learning aids suitable for use in the Nigerian society should be provided especially textbooks.
8. Instructors and teachers of vocational education should be properly trained and should also have vast experience so as to be able to teach students well.
9. Curricula for vocational education should be made by seasoned professionals with wide experience. Also, curricula development should also include more practical training as this is supposed to be the focus of technical education. However, the academic aspect is also important and should not be done away with.



10. Laws and policies should be made to advance vocational education in Nigeria. Also, existing laws and policies should be properly implemented by relevant bodies.

Conclusion

Acquisition of skills and knowledge for employment and sustainable livelihood can be attained through TVET with the needed employable knowledge, skills and attitude necessary for effective performance in workplace as employees, employers and entrepreneurs. It is a programme that has suffered a lot of misunderstanding, poor implementation and abuse.

Technicians or technologists are not inferior to their counterparts. It is a matter of choice and we should make this known to our children right from the primary schools. There is an urgent need to overhaul the educational system in Nigeria. Investment in Vocational and technical Education and Skill training must be accorded priority attention. Since no country can favourably compete in the emerging global market place with poorly and unskilled labour. Adequate resources should be allocated to the programmes in order to achieve positive outcomes. A comprehensive reform towards technical and vocational education and a deliberate attempt to uplift the programme is the only panacea to a technological enderado in this country.

Recommendation

For effective continuity, consistency and proper functioning of TVET in Nigeria, government, non-governmental organization, international organizational stakeholders should work collectively to address the various emerging challenges facing TVET and trends in general educational problems of the nation.

- Adequate resources should be allocated to technical and vocational education. Inadequate funds affect the provision of essentials such as well – equipped laboratories and workshops, relevant textbooks and training manuals.
- Vocational and technical education requires skilled and proficient teachers. Teachers' preparation should be given a priority attention. There is the need for regular in – service training for teachers of technology to upgrade their skills. Periodical industrial training for teacher is a sine-qua-non in other to keep them abreast with the technological changes in the industry.
- There is the need for our technical institutions to establish good relationship and linkages with similar institutions abroad as this will promote cross – fertilization of ideas and enhance technology transfer. By doing this the technical institutions will have access to new developments, exchange programmes and other numerous benefits available at those institutions whose technical programmes are well developed.
- When there is collaboration between technical institutions and industries, the relationship will enable the parties appreciate and understand their needs and proffer the right solutions for the benefits of the society.
- The curriculum taught in our vocational education institutions should be reviewed to meet the demands of the labour market.
- There is the need to start the teaching of industry-based increase employment opportunities for school leavers of vocational and technical institutions. It will also provide ample opportunities for school dropouts.
- The government should urgently remove the dichotomy that exists between University and technical institution. Polytechnic institutions should be made to award degrees. This will not only attract more qualified students to vocational/technical education but will also encourage exchange of qualified lecturers/instructors between the two systems.
- It is important to monitor and regulate the informal sector that produces most of our artisans. Such training outfits can be licensed to certify trainees at the end of the apprenticeship period on behalf of the government. Through this way, charlatans can be easily identified and separated.

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