

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The study was carried out on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, youth empowerment, challenges and implications for national development, using Warri South, Uvwie and Udu Local Government Areas respectively as the study area. The population was 1,821 youths whose names and data are registered at the Youth Secretariat in each of the three local government areas, and the sample was 910. Structured questionnaire validated by experts in TVET and measurement and evaluation was used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha technique which yielded a coefficient of 0.87. Data collected were analysed using a 3 x 4 Contingency Tables to answer the research questions and Chi-square analysis to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that there are some challenges such as inadequate funding and inadequate infrastructural facilities confronting TVET with regard to its role in empowering the youths for national development. Other findings include the absence of a level play ground for the youths to be empowered

acquisition of vocational and technical skills, exposure of individuals to career awareness and useable options in the world of work, and the stimulation of creativity. TVET is result-oriented; it is central in economic and industrial growth, employment generation, a vehicle for the development of marketable and entrepreneurial skills and an engine for development (ILO, 2005). The invaluable role played by TVET in social and economic development of any nation cannot be over-emphasized as noted by Grootings & Nielsen (2006), King & Palmer (2006).

The delivery systems of TVET have been identified by the African Union (AU) as veritable tools for training individuals in order to create wealth as well as emerge from poverty in any nation (AU, 2007). Usman and Tyabao (2013) and Amedu (2013) also contend that TVET has been an integral part of national development strategies because of its impacts in many dimensions. TVET is recognized as a catalyst and prime agent not only for employment but also for empowerment purposes as it provides recipients, particularly the youths with competencies and skills (Abokede, 2012). For these and many other reasons, TVET is regarded as the atlas of the world. Ezeji in Effiong, Anangagbor and Eyam (2013) observed that any nation that neglects TVET does so at a risk and cost as well as compromising the future of the youths. UNESCO and ILO (2002) made the point that TVET is any form of education that is broad-based and facilitates horizontal and vertical articulation. Among the courses that make up TVET are Business Education, Agricultural Science

They are exuberant, highly talented, innovative and most potent resource without which society is lifeless (Adeogun & Akomolafe, 2013). They also remain the bedrock on which national development is hinged (Ejiogu, 2001). Unfortunately, as Del-Tumi (2011) observes, the youths are, without doubt, the most vulnerable, most deprived, most discriminated against, most marginalized, mostly exploited particularly by the political class; the most counter-productive and the most endangered species in the society. This assertion is supported by Odoh and Eme (2014) when they stated that the youths are the least represented in political and economic spheres as a result of societal attitude, socio-political and economic barriers. These are the manifestations of the policy of youth exclusion. The youths need empowerment from adults, parents and the political class for their survival.

Empowerment, on the other hand, connotes the assistance people receive in order to overcome some obvious obstacles on the way to achieving their potentials. According to Ojo and Olakulehin (2006), empowerment comes from the inability of individuals to realize their desires and thus reach their greatest potentials as a result of artificial barriers created by individuals or groups in the same environment. Empowerment is associated with the concept of self-help, self-actualization, participation, networking and equity within the context of community (or national development) (Jimah, 2011). It also involves engraining

which might prevent them from attaining their full potentials.

Okoli and Okoli (2013) also defined youth empowerment as giving the youths the ability to eat when they are hungry, ability to meet their basic needs, have a shelter over their heads, and ability to speak their minds without hindrances and not being deprived in any ramification of life, among others. The authors likened youth empowerment to the “Laoche principle” of teaching a child how to catch fish and not to provide him with fish when he is hungry. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child regards youth empowerment as a central tenet (Wikipedia, 2016). Jimah (2011) also links youth empowerment to economic growth and national development.

National development is the overall development or a collective socio-economic, socio-cultural and political development of a nation that is best achieved through appropriate, dynamic and systematic development planning (Lawal & Oluwatoyin, 2011). National development, according to Dike in Amedu (2013), involves social, economic and political development leading to the attainment of increases in productivity, economic and social equity. Odoh and Eme (2014) see national development as sustainable growth and development of any nation to the level that is desirable; it is people-oriented and its ability to improve the total well-being and active participation of the people in every sphere of human endeavours determines its impacts. Accordingly, the quality of TV

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an educational programme with the objective of producing graduates, particularly youths, with skills, knowledge and attitude for life-long living. Youth empowerment is also the process by which the youths are given opportunities to actively take part in every sphere of national life without discrimination and limitation. Similarly, national development presupposes that a nation is developed in a sustainable manner so that the people will have equal opportunities to take part in national affairs irrespective of their gender, race, religion and age. The development under consideration should not be insensitive to future generations. TVET and youth empowerment for national development are subjects that cannot be ignored. They are invaluable and inevitable for any nation and its people.

Nevertheless, much as TVET and youth empowerment for national development are in the right direction, there are some associated challenges which stand as obstacles. In the Nigerian context, there have been the lingering problems of inadequate funding, provision of the necessary infrastructural facilities and an enduring policy for TVET together with the allegation of a mismatch between TVET graduates and the world of work. There are also problems relating to youth disempowerment instead of empowerment such as policies that promote economic, political and social exclusion. The youths are said to lack the skills for life-long living in a century that is propelled by skills in information and communication technology (ICT). These problems pose serious challenges for TVET and youth empowerment for national development. This study, therefore, was carried out with a view of examining these challenges in order to advance some strategies capable of turning the tide around for the good of all.

Purpose of the Study

respondents on various aspects of the subject under investigation. The design is supported by Osuala (2001) as it was designed to obtain respondents' views on existing conditions.

Scope/Area of the Study

The scope of the study was TVET, youth empowerment, challenges and strategies for national development, and the area covered was Warri South, Uvwie and Udu Local Government Areas respectively. The local government areas have close proximity with various industrial establishments such as the Nigerian National Petrochemical Company Limited, Ekpan, The Warri Port, The Osubi Airport and Delta Steel Company Limited, Ovwian-Aladja.

Population for the Study

The population for the study was 1,821 youths whose names and data are registered at the Youth Secretariat in each of the three local government areas, that is, Warri South: 658, Uvwie: 600 and Udu: 563.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study was 910, representing 50% of the population, using simple random sampling technique. The sample from each local government area was: Warri South – 329, Uvwie – 300 and Udu – 281.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used was a structured questionnaire on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree: 4 points, Agree: 3 points, Disagree: 2 points and Strongly Disagree: 1 point.

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

Two experts in TVET and one expert in measurement and evaluation from Delta State University, Abraka, determined the validity of the instrument; the Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument by administering it on those who were not included in the population and sample, and it yielded a coefficient of 0.87. A total of 910 copies of the questionnaire were administered with the assistance of three trained research assistance; the enthusiasm of the respondents was shown as all the copies were retrieved, fully completed and utilized.

Method of Data Analysis

To answer the research questions, a 3 x 4 Chi-square Contingency Table was used; Chi-square statistical tool was also used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The rule was that any calculated value that was greater than the critical table value led to the rejection of the hypothesis. However, the hypothesis was accepted where the calculated value was less than the critical table value.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: To what extent have the challenges of TVET affected its role as a tool for empowering youths for national development?

Table 1: A 3 x 4 Contingency Table

Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Warri South L.G.A.	110 (113.88)	135 (141.36)	55 (52.78)	29 (20.97)	329
Uvwie L.G.A.	105 (103.85)	121 (128.90)	61 (48.13)	13 (19.12)	300
Udu L.G.A.	100	135	30	16	281

	(97.27)	(120.74)	(45.08)	(17.91)
Total	315	391	146	58

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Testing of Hypothesis 1

Table 2: Summary of Chi-square Analysis

Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Df	X ² Cal	X ² Crit.	P	Decision
Warri South	110	135	55	29	329					
Uvwie	105	121	61	13	300	6	16.49	12.59	0.05	Rejected
Udu	100	135	30	16	281					
Total	315	391	146	58	910					

The result in Table 2 showed that the calculated value of 16.49 is greater than the critical table value of 12.59 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 6.

The hypothesis was, therefore, rejected. It can be inferred, therefore, that there is significant relationship between the challenges of TVET and its role as tool for youth empowerment and national development.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges that hinder youth empowerment for national development?

Table 3: A 3 x 4 Contingency Table

Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Warri South L.G.A.	120 (123.65)	141 (118.58)	38 (48.81)	30 (37.96)	329
Uvwie L.G.A.	128 (112.75)	82 (108.13)	43 (44.51)	47 (34.61)	300
Udu L.G.A.	94 (105.61)	105 (101.28)	54 (41.69)	28 (32.42)	281
Total	342	328	135	105	910

Testing of Hypothesis 2

Table 4: Summary of Chi-square Analysis

Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Df	X ² Cal	X ² Crit.	P	Decision
Warri South	120	141	38	30	329					
Uvwie	128	82	43	47	300	6	26.10	12.59	0.05	Rejected

Udu	94	105	54	28	281
Total	342	328	135	105	910

The result in Table 4 showed that the calculated value of 26.10 is greater than the critical table value of 12.59 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 6. The hypothesis was, Research Question 3: What are those strategies that can strengthen TVET for youth empowerment for national development?

Table 5: A 3 x 4 Contingency Table

Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Warri South L.G.A.	165 (154.74)	123 (134.85)	20 (20.97)	21 (18.44)	329
Uvwie L.G.A.	121.10 (141.10)	150 (122.97)	18 (19.12)	11 (16.81)	300
Udu L.G.A.	142 (132.16)	100 (115.18)	20 (17.91)	19 (15.75)	281
Total	428	373	58	51	910

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Testing of Hypothesis 3

Table 6: Summary of Chi-square Analysis

Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Df	X ² Cal	X ² Crit.	P	Decision
Warri South	165	123	20	21	329	6	16.61	12.59	0.05	Rejected
Uvwie	121	150	18	11	300					
Udu	142	100	20	19	281					
Total	428	373	58	51	910					

From the result in Table 6, the calculated value of 16.61 is greater than the critical table value of 12.59, at 0.05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 6, indicating that the hypothesis was rejected. The conclusion, therefore, is that there is significant relationship between the challenges of TVET and the strategies to strengthen them for youth empowerment and national development.

Discussion of Result

therefore, rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between the identified challenges and the hindrances to youth empowerment for national development.

Research Question 3: What are those strategies that can strengthen TVET for youth empowerment for national development?

The findings of the study showed that some challenges affect TVET in its role as a tool for youth empowerment and national development. The rejection of hypothesis 1 is pertinent. This role entails the provision of the required skills, competencies and attitudes. The challenges in this regard include curriculum implementation, lack of adequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate funding, institutional implementation and the mismatch between TVET and market needs. This finding is supported by the study carried out in South

West Nigeria, using Lagos, Ogun and Osun States (Oluwale, Jegede & Olamide (2013). In the same token, Amedu (2013) traced some of the challenges working against TVET to the level of infrastructural development.

Hypothesis 2 reveals that there is significant relationship between the identified challenges and the hindrances to youth empowerment for national development. Some of these challenges hindering youth empowerment include the prevalence of corrupt practices by those in positions of authority, lack of marketable and productive skills, policies that promote indigeneity instead of citizenship, inadequate representation of the youths in the nation's political system and the consequences of not fully developing and harnessing the potentials of youths (Okafor, 2011; Oviawe, 2010; Omotoso, 2008). Obstacles to youth empowerment, no doubt, have serious implications for national development. Any developing nation such as Nigeria that fails to empower its youths will be doing more harm than good if it has to develop.

From the findings of the study, it is clear in hypothesis 3 that there is significant relationship between the challenges of TVET and the strategies to strengthen TVET for youth empowerment and national development. Appropriate strategies like better synergy between TVET institutions and industry through exchange programmes, provision of adequate and functional infrastructural facilities and re-engineering TVET to enable it function effectively (Emmanuel and Asuquo, 2013) have been found to be desirable. The findings from the study have been corroborated by May in Amedu (2013) and Ayodele (2006) requiring that there has to be a way out through the implementation of some strategies.

The implications of the findings from the study on national development are far-reaching. TVET teaches skills and attitude that are required by the youths for their empowerment in terms of leadership positions, paid and self-employment and thus make them to play their roles in national development.

Conclusion

Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and youth empowerment are important for national development. In spite of this, the associated problems are yet to be adequately addressed. For example, infrastructural facilities and funding are found to be inadequate. This, among other factors regarded as challenges have hindered its role in impacting the required skills and attitude on youths, and ultimately, youth empowerment. Youth empowerment has also been hampered by a number of challenges, including the non-provision of an environment that will drive graduates of TVET for youth empowerment and national development. There is also the challenge of the promotion of indigeneity rather than citizenship that negatively affects youth empowerment for national development. The identified challenges, no doubt, need some interventions in the form of strategies as they have serious implications for national development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been put forward based on the findings from the study.

1. Technical and Vocational Education and Training should be re-engineered by the federal and state governments, and agencies responsible for policies on TVET together with Nigeria Vocational Association as a professional body. This is to enable TVET adequately play its role in developing and training youths with appropriate skills and attitude that will make them marketable and self-reliant for national development.
2. The curriculum of TVET should be reviewed by government; its agencies and tertiary institutions with input from Nigeria Vocational Association to make TVET programmes and delivery responsive to an emerging global and competitive world.
3. There should be adequate budgetary provision by government for TVET to meet its diverse needs such as having the right number and mix of manpower for service delivery. The manpower would

have to be trained and retrained through a deliberate and systematic manpower development programmes by government, its agencies and tertiary institutions.

4. TVET should be provided with adequate infrastructural facilities, information and communication technology (ICT) and other state of the art facilities by government and other stakeholders for it to empower the youths for national development.
5. There should be sincere and holistic efforts to empower the youths through policies that promote empowerment and not disempowerment, citizenship and not indigeneity. Also, policies that encourage/promote inclusion and not exclusion of the youths in every sphere of national should be vigorously pursued by government at all levels, their agencies, and backed by statutory provisions.
6. The three tiers of government should ensure that there are visible improvements in the provision of infrastructural facilities to drive the national economy in order to provide for youth empowerment.
7. The federal and state governments as well as their agencies; the judiciary, legislature and the police should pursue a deliberate and transparent policy where corruption perpetuated by those in position of authority and nefarious practices by policy makers are put in check to provide a level play ground for youth empowerment.
8. National Development programmes that will address all areas of national development as it was in the 1970s and 1980s should be put in place by the federal government.

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