

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN TVET FOR EMPLOYABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

BY

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Abstract

Adequate preparation of Technical Education Trainees is very paramount for Industrial and National Development. Graduates of Technical Vocational Education and Training need to meet up with the current industrial employer's demands hence the need to inculcate in them the needed skills to meet up with this expectation. The researchers established through literature evidence prospects and challenges of skills development in TVET. This discovery will enable relevant stakeholders beef up relevant and effective strategies for preparing TVET trainees for Sustainable National Development in the 21st Century.

Keywords: Technical Vocational Education and Training, Skills Development, Employability.

Introduction

Conceptually, development is about productive capacity of an economy and improvement in the general living condition of the people. Development is sustainable when it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable National Development as defined by Shan (2013) focuses on the Management and Conservation of the National Resources based on the orientation of Technological and Institutional change to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. Sustainable Development has become a key concept central to the programmes of many governments, businesses, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations around the world. Sustainable Development is dependent on local contexts, needs and interest concerned with the progress of individuals and that of the economy at large. Sustainability is essential in Technical Vocational Education.

Technical Vocational Education is a type of education whose major objective is to prepare

individuals in chosen occupations by equipping them with needed knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for employment. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) defined Technical Vocational Education and Training as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education the study of technologies and related science for the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes and understanding relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life. Technical Vocational Education gives individual the skills to learn, work and live as productive citizens hence reducing the over dependence of graduates on Governments for employment.

For adequate preparation of Technical Vocational Education students to meet the needs of industries; the facilities used during the education and training process must reflect the need of the industry. Acquiring work ability requires the use of developed skills to solve current Technical Vocational issues. A study on Employers Needs carried out by Ogundola, Popoola and Oke (2010) ranked work skills or ability as the number

one traits that Chief Executives of Organizations seek in employees during job selection process. Technical Vocational Staffs are expected to interact, share ideas and work collectively on projects or tasks as well as solve problems to enhance productivity and industrial development.

One of the most significant aspects of TVET is its inclination towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills. Employability Technical Vocational Education delivery system are therefore structured to train workers that the nation needs to create employment for the youths in order for them to become productive and contributive to the development of their society and the nation at large. But in recent times, youth unemployment is increasingly becoming a source of worry in many parts of the world. Unemployment according to Adebayo 2013 is the condition where person or group of persons are without jobs. International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013) defined unemployment as the number of economically active population who is without work but available and seeking work including people who have lost their jobs and those who voluntarily left. In spite of numerous policies and programmes initiated to address this issue, available statistics show that unemployment is on the increase yearly. According to Adebayo (2013), there are many root of unemployment in Nigeria such as lack of relevant skills

Employability is a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that makes an individual to gain and maintain employment (Berntson, 2008). Employers favor candidates with a wide range of employability skills to complement their job-specific skills hence there is need for TVET students to identify

their respective skill gaps and plan how these skills can be developed so as to build a portfolio of skills valued by employers. Potential employers do source for achievements and experiences when considering applicants for employments, therefore, a need for technical students to ensure the development of transferable skills and practical experience in order to be employable.

Skills Development

Skill means proficiency or capacity acquired and displayed by a person in a chosen trade (Adigun, 2003). For skills to be effectively displayed in a job, such skill must be continuously developed. Skill Development is the process of improving workers skills in order to advance their performance in their place of work (Dopemu, 2016). Skill Development has become necessary as efforts are now focused on closing the existing gap created by skill mismatch that dominates the repair and maintenance activities especially in the informal sector. This gap or mismatch was created as a result of the numerous technological advancement in the TVET industry due to changes in component configurations and designs. For instance, the automobile components have changed from being highly mechanical to electro-mechanical as a result of the use of Mechatronics Technology to achieve low emission, better fuel economy, improved comfort and safety.

To cope with new trends, emphasis has shifted from pure manual method in TVET to modern digitalized system characterized by the use of computerized scan tools, equipment and machines to carry out Technical Vocational activities for optimum result. Eric (2008) blamed the apprenticeship system of training Technical Vocational Students as being insufficient and irrelevant to provide

adequate competencies required to cope with the difficulties that is experienced in both formal and informal sectors hence this calls for the need to investigate the challenges of Skills Development aiming primarily towards the development of workforce skills and to improve the quality of workers life and their prospects of work. Skills Development is important because skills possession determines ability to execute plans successfully. Dopemu (2016) revealed that what builds expertise is not theory but practice and this is so when skill has an actionable component as practiced in TVET. Skills development therefore can be viewed as the process of identifying skill gaps and developing and honing these skills. It is important because skills determines the ability to execute plans successfully. Without the right skills, frustration, waste of time, spending lots of time dealing with rudimentary issues caused by the lack of knowledge or lack of skills will be the order of the day for an unskilled TVET personnel. To develop skills, two group of skills needs to be considered which are Hard Skills and Soft Skills. Hard skills is relating to knowledge-based proficiency in a subject, certification and technical skills while Soft skills deals with personality traits and it tends to be transferable which are communication, leadership, time management, stress management, adaptability, ability to deal with adversity, and networking. Philosophy, Vision, Mission and Specific Objectives of TVET.

Philosophy:

The Philosophy of TVET is that every citizen has the ability to develop competence in at least one skill that will contribute to a prosperous individual and the nation (Nigeria).

Vision:

TVET system is meant to meet the changing demands of global competitiveness to develop human resources potentials taking into considerations equal access, necessary competence, acquisition of skills without any discrimination in order to prepare adults and youths who can contribute to socio-economic and overall development of their immediate society.

Mission Statement:

The mission of TVET is focused on the provisions of a Nigeria workforce with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude contributing to increase in productivity and economic development.

Objectives:

The Objectives of TVET according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) include the following: to -

- a. provide trained manpower in Applied Science, Technology and Commerce particularly Art, Advanced Craft and Technical level;
- b. provide the Technical Knowledge and Vocational Skills necessary for Agricultural, Industrial, Commercial and Economic Development;
- c. provide people who can apply Scientific Knowledge to the improvements and solutions of environmental problems for the use and convenience of men;
- d. give an introduction to professional training in Engineering and other Technologies;
- e. give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of Craftmen, Technicians and other self-reliant individual; and,
- f. enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of Technology.

At present, preparation of skilled personnel and increase in national productivity and competitiveness seem to be the urgent objectives of TVET. The goal of Education and TVET is to fight ignorance and illiteracy so as to produce competent human resources for economic and social development. To address the critical shortage of qualified Technical and Vocational manpower in the labour market, there is need to link TVET policy with employment and other sectors development policy because of the benefits of TVET.

These are the ways in which TVET contribute to national development hence referred to as benefits of TVET:

- i) TVET is the driver of employment, prosperity and social inclusion embracing a commitment to environmental responsibility and best practices. In fact, an effective TVET system in any country enables adults and especially youths to fulfil their career aspirations and contribute to economic growth and social development. In a nut shell, Atsumbe et al (2013) summarized the purpose of TVET as being the needed avenue to promote peace, justice, equity and poverty alleviation.
- ii) TVET assist nations in developing policies and practices concerning education for the world of work and skill development for employability and citizenship.
- iii) TVET contributes to increased opportunities for productive work, sustainable livelihood, personal empowerment and socio economic development especially for youths, girls, women and the disadvantaged.
- iv) TVET helps to restore human dignity through skill empowerment and makes recipient relatively secured from poverty.
- v) TVET reduces inequality, filling income gaps that would otherwise exist between the rich and the poor.

vi) TVET reduces crime and high cost of combating crime.

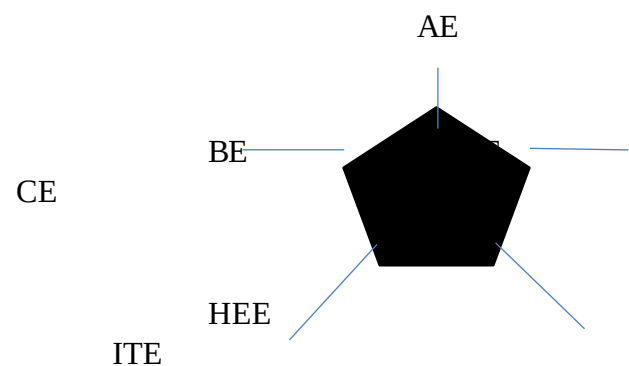
vii) TVET reduces migration and offsets the high rate of brain drain among others.

It has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that TVET have significantly improved the development of several countries of the world.

Major Areas of TVET.

The five major areas of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria are:

1. Agricultural Education (AE)
2. Business Education (BE)
3. Computer Education (CE)
4. Home Economics Education (HEE)
5. Industrial and Technical Education (ITE)



Benefits of Skills Development in TVET.

The term TVET as used in this paper follows the 1997 UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education definition which is Education and Training to acquire practical skills, technical know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade group. It is important to note that TVET is not only about knowing why things are done in a particular way but also involves the adopting of the best practice that can achieve sustainable technological development.

Although, new technologies are very much dependent on digitalized systems that does not mean that the manual system be ignored completely because one does not function without the other. For example, Kirpal (2006) revealed that the innovative developments in automobile body structure, components and systems have drastically changed the maintenance activities in the automobile workplace as a lot of electro-mechanical skills is now required for effective maintenance of automobiles. To cope with the new trends therefore, emphasis in TVET workplace have shifted from pure manual method to digitalized system characterized by the use of diagnostic scan tools, equipment and sophisticated machines to carry out effective maintenance and repair jobs.

When TVET students/graduands skills are on constant development, it has various benefits amongst which are;

- Increased productivity and efficiency.
- In touch with new technology hence exposure to new ways and methods of doing things.
- Reduced error as a result of possession of right skills.
- Keeping up with industrial changes hence the ability to handle increased workloads.
- Built up confidence because of increased innovation in strategies.
- Improved talent and personality due to updated new and enhanced skills.
- Expedite development of skills and abilities in TVET is highly necessary for effective job performance.

Challenges Encountered in TVET Skills Development.

Technical Vocational Education and Training faces a lot of challenges in ensuring adequate Skills Development properly instilled into its trainees or graduands. Some of these challenges are as follows:

1. TVET requires workshops, tools, equipment and materials for demonstration and practical works. Since Technical Institutes mostly rely on materials and tools for training, their short supply negatively affect practical skills acquisition and development.
2. TVET subjects are not allotted sufficient time to satisfy their practical goals. Unqualified and unskilled Technical Vocational Education teachers are also beclouded in Technical Vocational schools now.
3. The nature of Industrial Attachment Programme in TVET is of concern, as this corroborates the observation by Roeske (2003) that, notwithstanding the important role Industrial Attachment plays in a particular occupation or trade, many organizations have shown little or no serious interest in encouraging and monitoring Technical Vocational trainees to undertake such training. If this situation continues, trainees are likely to enter into labour-market with little or no practical learning experiences which are relevant to the world of work or a foundation for entry into further education and training for specific roles.
4. One of the greatest challenges facing TVET in Nigeria currently is the low prestige accorded to it by the public. Most parents and guardian have dreams of their children becoming Medical Doctors, Lawyers, Accountants, etc. Trades like Auto Mechanics, Hairdressing, or Carpentry are considered to be preserve of children who do not have sound mental ability or for parents who are poor. These trades are also thought to be better suited for those coming from the bottom line of socio-economic ladder (Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, 2012-2013).

5. Aside inadequate financing and negative perception, the socio-economic environment and the contextual framework within which TVET is delivered in Nigeria is characterized by other factors such as low quality of gender and economic equities, weak monitoring and evaluation system, poor management and ill adapted organizational structures, large class size in the few TVET institutions hence disallowing teachers/instructors to attract and sustain the attention of all students during demonstration lessons (African Union, 2007).

Measures to Avert the Challenges

The way out of the challenges encountered in TVET Skills Development are –

- i. TVET workshops should be well funded with materials, equipment and tools needed for regular practicals. Government and relevant stakeholders should rise up to this task.
- ii. Qualified and highly skilled teachers should be strictly employed to teach TVET students at all times. The present once can go for training and re-training from time to time. Sufficient time should be allotted to the teaching and practical activities in order to achieve the set practical goals.
- iii. The Industrial Attachment Units organizations should be beefed up with monitoring and constant assessments as they are an important enigma to the practical skills acquisition of students and graduands.
- iv. TVET trades should be given its place in the society. It should be rated same or even higher than those in the Medicals, Engineering or Accounting fields.
- v. Girl-Child should be encouraged at all levels into TVET trades. Monitoring systems should be re-structured to give it

strength in delivery. Teacher – Student ratio should be cut down to cater adequately for learners hence getting their attention and cultivating sound learning.

Conclusion

From some of the sources cited in this paper, it can be concluded that the success of TVET depends on how educational stakeholders lay emphasis on Skills development in TVET. There is generally inadequacies in the provision of instructional materials, tools and equipment which leads teachers focusing more on theoretical teaching leading to trainees lacking proficiencies practically in their chosen field of specialization hence the need for emphasis on more of practicals than theories. Large class size mismatch with inadequate supply and utilization of training resources hence negatively affecting the necessary skills for the world of work. There are also inappropriate teaching methods used for practical teaching which needs to be addressed.

It is worthy to state here that unless the challenges pointed out as facing TVET Skills Development are seriously considered and looked into, TVET graduands will be adversely affected by innovations which could make them lose significant opportunities and subsequently lose their jobs hence becoming unemployed therefore leading to poor sustainable national development.

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