

RESTRUCTURING ELECTRICAL TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL ECONOMY

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Abstract

The study on "Restructuring Electrical Technology Education in Tertiary Institutions for Sustainable Global Economy" highlights the critical need to revamp electrical technology education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It all started by emphasizing the central role of electrical technology in the modern global economy and the challenges facing Nigeria's current education system. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, outdated curriculum, a shortage of qualified lecturers, insufficient funding, lack of industry collaboration, inadequate practical training, electricity supply issues, and limited research and development. The study underscores the urgent necessity for restructuring electrical technology education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. This restructuring is not only vital for economic development but also for addressing the country's power sector challenges. It emphasizes the importance of curriculum revision, infrastructure improvement, teacher development, industry collaboration, and promoting entrepreneurship. Quality assurance, ICT integration, research and development, access to scholarships and financial aid, and government support are also identified as key strategies to enhance electrical technology education. In conclusion, the study advocates for a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to restructuring electrical technology education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. This approach aims to bridge the gap between academic training and industry needs, equip students with practical skills, and empower graduates to contribute effectively to the dynamic field of electrical technology, ultimately supporting sustainable economic growth and technological advancement.

Keywords: Restructuring, Electrical Technology Education, Tertiary Institutions, Sustainable Global Economy

Introduction

Electrical technology plays a pivotal role in the modern global economy, serving as the backbone of industries ranging from telecommunications to manufacturing. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and reliant on technological advancements, the need for a well-structured and adaptable electrical technology education in tertiary institutions is more pressing than ever. Nigeria, a country known for its resource-rich landscape and growing population, is no exception to this global trend. This introduction will shed light on the importance of restructuring electrical technology education in Nigerian tertiary institutions to ensure sustainability in the global economy.

Nigeria's current electrical technology education system faces several challenges that hinder its ability to meet the demands of the global economy. Rapid technological advancements and changing industry requirements often outpace the curriculum in many Nigerian tertiary institutions. According to the National Universities Commission (NUC) (NUC, 2020), there is a pressing need to modernize the curriculum to align with global best practices. Additionally, the inadequate infrastructure and limited access to modern electrical

technology tools and laboratories in Nigerian institutions hinder the practical exposure of students (Adegoke, 2018).

Restructuring electrical technology education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions is crucial not only for the country's economic development but also for its ability to compete on the global stage. The Nigerian government recognizes the need for this restructuring and has initiated various reforms to address the shortcomings in the current system. These reforms include investments in infrastructure development, curriculum revision, and partnerships with industry stakeholders to provide practical training opportunities for students (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019). This introduction sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of the strategies, challenges, and potential outcomes of restructuring electrical technology education in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Current Status of Electrical Technology Education in Nigeria

Electrical technology education in Nigeria has undergone significant developments over the years. Nigerian institutions, both at the secondary and tertiary levels, have been striving to provide quality education in the field of electrical technology to meet the growing demands of the country's infrastructure and industries. Technical and vocational education in Nigeria has been given prominence as the government recognizes the importance of producing skilled professionals in electrical technology to support economic growth and technological advancement (Okeke, 2019).

However, there have been challenges in maintaining the quality and relevance of electrical technology education in Nigeria. Insufficient funding, outdated curriculum, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers are some of the issues that need to be addressed to ensure that the education system aligns with the rapidly evolving technological landscape (Ajayi, 2018). According to Ogunnaike and Akinoso (2017), efforts are being made to improve the situation, such as curriculum reforms and partnerships with industry stakeholders to provide students with practical experiences and job opportunities.

Problem of Electrical Technology Education in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

- i. Inadequate Infrastructure and Facilities:** Many tertiary institutions in Nigeria lack modern electrical laboratories, equipment, and infrastructure required to provide quality electrical technology education (Adepoju, 2017). Inadequate infrastructure and facilities in Nigerian tertiary institutions significantly hinder the growth of electrical technology education. Many institutions lack the essential laboratories, equipment, and modern technology required for practical hands-on training, which is crucial in preparing students for the demands of the electrical technology industry. The absence of up-to-date facilities not only limits students' ability to gain practical skills but also impedes research and innovation within the field. This deficiency ultimately leads to a gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, limiting the quality and competitiveness of graduates in the electrical technology sector, and further exacerbates the skills gap faced by the industry.
- ii. Outdated Curriculum:** The curriculum used in electrical technology education may not align with current industry standards and technological advancements, leading to graduates with outdated skills (Ajayi, 2019). The presence of an outdated curriculum is a significant impediment to the advancement of Electrical Technology Education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The curriculum in many institutions often fails to keep pace with rapid technological advancements in the field, rendering graduates ill-prepared for the evolving demands of the electrical industry. This misalignment between the educational content and industry requirements results in a workforce that lacks the requisite skills and knowledge to address contemporary electrical technology

challenges, hindering innovation and employability prospects. Urgent efforts are required to revamp and modernize the curriculum to ensure that students receive relevant, up-to-date training that meets the needs of the ever-evolving electrical technology sector in Nigeria.

- iii. Shortage of Qualified Teachers:** There is a shortage of qualified and experienced instructors in electrical technology programs, which affects the quality of education (Ibemet al., 2018). The shortage of qualified teachers is a critical factor impeding the advancement of Electrical Technology Education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Many institutions struggle to attract and retain experienced instructors with the requisite expertise in the rapidly evolving field of electrical technology. This scarcity of qualified teacher not only hampers the delivery of up-to-date and industry-relevant curriculum but also results in larger class sizes, reduced personalized instruction, and limited mentorship opportunities for students. As a consequence, graduates may lack the practical skills and competencies necessary to meet the demands of the contemporary electrical technology sector, exacerbating the overall challenges faced by the education system and hindering the nation's progress in this vital field.
- iv. Insufficient Funding:** Many institutions suffer from underfunding, resulting in inadequate resources for electrical technology departments (Ogunleye, 2020). Insufficient funding is a significant factor hindering the growth of Electrical Technology Education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Many educational institutions in the country suffer from chronic underfunding, which directly impacts the quality of programs and infrastructure available for electrical technology education. This financial constraint limits their ability to acquire and maintain state-of-the-art equipment, modernize laboratories, hire qualified teacher, and keep curriculum up-to-date with technological advancements. As a result, students are deprived of the necessary resources and educational experiences, impairing their ability to develop practical skills and knowledge relevant to the rapidly evolving field of electrical technology, ultimately undermining the competitiveness and employability of graduates in both local and global job markets.
- v. Lack of Industry Collaboration:** Limited collaboration between educational institutions and the electrical industry hinders practical exposure and job placement for students (Afolayan, 2018). The lack of industry collaboration stands as a significant impediment to the development of Electrical Technology Education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. This shortfall in engagement between academia and the electrical industry results in limited opportunities for students to gain practical experience, internships, or exposure to real-world industry challenges. Consequently, graduates often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to seamlessly transition into the workforce, leading to a mismatch between educational offerings and industry needs. Moreover, this disconnect hampers the establishment of industry-relevant curriculum and impedes the integration of emerging technologies and industry best practices into the academic programs, ultimately inhibiting the growth and modernization of electrical technology education in Nigeria.
- vi. Inadequate Practical Training:** Theoretical knowledge often outweighs practical training, leaving students unprepared for real-world challenges (Adewale, 2016). Inadequate practical training in electrical technology education within Nigerian tertiary institutions represents a significant impediment to the field's growth. While theoretical knowledge is emphasized, practical hands-on experience is often lacking. This imbalance leaves graduates ill-prepared to apply their acquired knowledge in real-world scenarios, undermining their ability to meet industry demands and effectively contribute to technological advancements. The limited practical exposure not only

hinders students' skill development but also diminishes their overall confidence and competence, ultimately jeopardizing the quality of electrical technology education and the potential for graduates to thrive in a rapidly evolving industry.

- vii. Electricity Supply Challenges:** Frequent power outages and irregular electricity supply in Nigeria affect the ability to conduct practical experiments and hands-on learning (Oduntan *et al.*, 2019). Electricity supply challenges in Nigeria significantly hinder the growth of Electrical Technology Education in tertiary institutions (Oduntan *et al.*, 2019). Frequent power outages and erratic electricity supply disrupt the regular functioning of electrical laboratories, hindering practical experiments and hands-on learning essential for students pursuing electrical technology programs. This inconsistency not only impedes the quality of education but also adds operational costs to institutions, which often need to rely on costly alternatives such as generators or inverters to maintain power supply, diverting resources away from critical educational investments.
- viii. Inadequate Research and Development:** Limited investment in research and development within Electrical Technology Departments inhibits innovation and technological advancement (Oladipupo, 2017). Inadequate Research and Development (R&D) in the field of Electrical Technology significantly hinders the growth of education in this sector within Nigerian tertiary institutions. This deficiency in R&D stifles innovation and technological advancement, as highlighted in research by Oladipupo. The lack of substantial investment and resources allocated to R&D initiatives limits the development of cutting-edge curriculum, modern laboratory facilities, and opportunities for students to engage in practical, industry-relevant projects. As a result, graduates may not be adequately prepared to meet the evolving demands of the electrical technology industry, leading to a disconnect between academic programs and real-world applications, which ultimately undermines the overall quality of electrical technology education in Nigerian tertiary institutions."
- ix. Mismatch with Industry Needs:** Graduates often lack the skills and competencies needed by the industry, leading to unemployment or underemployment (Okonkwo, 2018). The mismatch with Industry Needs is a significant factor hindering the growth of Electrical Technology Education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. According to Okonkwo, graduates often lack the essential skills and competencies that align with the rapidly evolving requirements of the electrical industry. This disconnect results in a scenario where graduates are ill-prepared to meet industry demands, leading to unemployment or underemployment, and contributing to the widening gap between academic training and real-world application. This mismatch underscores the urgent need for curricular reforms, stronger collaboration between educational institutions and the industry, and a more responsive approach to ensuring that graduates are equipped with the practical skills that meet the current and future needs of the electrical sector in Nigeria.

The Need for Restructuring Electrical Technology Education in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Restructuring electrical technology education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a pressing issue that demands immediate attention. Nigeria's electrical technology education system faces numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness in producing well-trained professionals for the rapidly evolving electrical and electronics industry. According to a report by the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), the curriculum used in most tertiary institutions is outdated and does not align with the current industry standards and technological advancements (NSE, 2020). This mismatch between the educational curriculum and industry

requirements has resulted in a significant gap between graduates' skills and the demands of the job market. Furthermore, inadequate infrastructure, outdated laboratory facilities, and a shortage of qualified teaching staff have further compounded the problem, making it imperative for a comprehensive restructuring of the electrical technology education system (Ogunsanya, 2018).

Additionally, the restructuring of electrical technology education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions is essential to address the country's energy and power sector challenges. Nigeria's power sector has been plagued by issues such as low electricity generation capacity, frequent blackouts, and inefficient distribution systems. A report by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) emphasized the need for a skilled workforce in the power sector to tackle these issues effectively (NERC, 2019). By revamping the electrical technology education system, students can be equipped with the knowledge and skills required to address the power sector's unique challenges, fostering innovation and sustainable solutions. Moreover, restructuring can enhance collaboration between academia and industry, ensuring that educational programs are industry-relevant and produce graduates capable of making a meaningful contribution to Nigeria's energy sector development (Oke, 2021).

Key Considerations for Restructuring Electrical Technology Education in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Restructuring electrical technology education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a pressing concern given the evolving demands of the industry and the need to produce highly skilled graduates. To address this issue, it is crucial to consider several key factors. Firstly, curriculum revision and alignment with industry standards are essential. According to a study by Akintunde and Adebayo (2019), the curriculum in many Nigerian institutions does not adequately incorporate modern technology trends and emerging electrical engineering concepts. Therefore, updating the curriculum to include courses on renewable energy, smart grids, and automation is paramount to ensure graduates are equipped with relevant skills. As highlighted by the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), there is a growing gap between what is taught in tertiary institutions and what is required in the industry (NSE, 2019). To bridge this gap, institutions should collaborate with industry stakeholders to update and customize their curriculum, ensuring that students are exposed to real-world applications and the latest advancements in electrical technology.

Additionally, Olalekan and Salau (2020) emphasize the importance of practical training and hands-on experiences, indicating that the current lack of modern laboratories and equipment hinders students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge effectively. Thus, investments in infrastructure and partnerships with industry players are necessary to enhance practical learning opportunities. The Nigerian government, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), has emphasized the importance of practical skills acquisition in tertiary education (NUC, 2012). In line with this, institutions should invest in state-of-the-art laboratories and workshops, fostering a learning environment that allows students to gain practical experience in electrical technology. Moreover, partnerships with industry players can facilitate internships, industrial attachments, and apprenticeships, enabling students to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world setting

Furthermore, lecturer development is a crucial consideration. Adequate training and continuous professional development for lecturers are essential to ensure they remain up-to-date with the latest advancements in electrical technology. According to Onuoha (2018), inadequate lecturer training can result in outdated teaching methods and content delivery. Collaborations between institutions and industry experts should be encouraged to facilitate knowledge transfer and the development of cutting-edge research in electrical technology, as highlighted by Ajayi and Akinbile (2020). Restructuring electrical technology education in

Nigerian tertiary institutions requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses curriculum revision, infrastructure improvement, and lecturer development to align education with the evolving needs of the electrical technology industry. By prioritizing these key considerations, Nigeria can restructure electrical technology education in tertiary institutions to produce graduates who are not only well-versed in theory but also equipped with the practical skills needed to excel in the dynamic field of electrical technology.

Strategies for Improving Electrical Technology Education in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Electrical Technology Education plays a crucial role in shaping the workforce and technological advancements in Nigeria. However, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to improve the quality and relevance of this education in tertiary institutions across the country. Here, we discuss some strategies for enhancing Electrical Technology Education:

1. **Curriculum Review and Update:** One of the fundamental steps to improve Electrical Technology Education is to regularly review and update the curriculum to align with current industry trends and emerging technologies. Collaborations with industry experts and stakeholders can ensure that students are learning relevant skills and knowledge that meet the demands of the job market.
2. **Investment in Infrastructure and Laboratories:** Adequate infrastructure and well-equipped laboratories are essential for practical training in electrical technology. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria should invest in modern laboratories and ensure that students have access to state-of-the-art equipment to enhance hands-on learning experiences.
3. **Lecturer Development:** Teachers should receive continuous training and professional development to stay up-to-date with advancements in electrical technology. Encouraging professors to engage in research and industry partnerships can also bring real-world experiences into the classroom.
4. **Industry Collaboration:** Building strong ties with the electrical industry is vital for students to gain practical exposure. Partnerships with electrical companies can lead to internships, guest lectures, and collaborative research projects that bridge the gap between academia and industry.
5. **Promotion of Entrepreneurship:** Encouraging entrepreneurial thinking among students can lead to innovation and job creation. Entrepreneurship courses and support for student startups can help graduates become self-employed and contribute to the growth of the electrical technology sector.
6. **Quality Assurance and Accreditation:** Establishing rigorous quality assurance mechanisms and seeking accreditation from relevant professional bodies ensures that electrical technology programs meet recognized standards. This can enhance the credibility of graduates in both local and international job markets.
7. **Access to Scholarships and Financial Aid:** To promote inclusivity and diversity in Electrical Technology Education, institutions should provide scholarships and financial aid to deserving students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds.
8. **ICT Integration:** Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the curriculum can enhance remote learning, research, and collaboration. This approach is especially important in a rapidly evolving field like electrical technology.
9. **Research and Development:** Encouraging research in electrical technology can lead to innovations and advancements. Institutions should allocate resources for research projects and incentivize teachers and students to engage in research activities.
10. **Government Support:** Lastly, the Nigerian government should prioritize investment in education, particularly in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, to ensure that tertiary institutions have the necessary resources and funding to implement these strategies effectively.

Improving Electrical Technology Education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach that involves curriculum enhancement, infrastructure development, industry collaboration, teacher development, and government support. These strategies, when implemented effectively, could contribute to producing highly skilled graduates who can drive technological advancements in Nigeria's electrical sector.

Conclusion

The study concluded that there is an urgent and compelling need to restructure electrical technology education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The current system faces numerous challenges, including outdated curriculum, inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, insufficient funding, lack of industry collaboration, inadequate practical training, electricity supply challenges, inadequate research and development, and a mismatch with industry needs. These challenges collectively hinder the ability of the education system to produce graduates who are well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of the electrical and electronics industry in Nigeria.

The restructuring of electrical technology education is not only necessary to address the skills gap but also to support the growth and sustainability of Nigeria's power sector and overall economic development. To achieve this restructuring, the study recommends several key considerations and strategies, including curriculum revision and alignment with industry standards, investment in infrastructure and laboratories, teacher development, industry collaboration, promotion of entrepreneurship, quality assurance, scholarships and financial aid, ICT integration, research and development, and government support. Finally, restructuring electrical technology education in Nigerian tertiary institutions is imperative to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, ensure graduates are industry-ready, and contribute to the development of Nigeria's electrical and electronics sector.

Suggestions

Based on the discussions provided, here are some suggestions for improving electrical technology education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria:

1. **Curriculum Review and Update:** Tertiary institutions in Nigeria should regularly review and update the curriculum to align with current industry trends and emerging technologies through collaboration with industry experts and stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum reflects the demands of the job market.
2. **Investment in Infrastructure and Laboratories:** Regulatory bodies in charge of tertiary institutions should ensure that resources are allocated to modernize laboratories, provide state-of-the-art equipment for practical training, and ensure that students have access to well-equipped facilities to enhance hands-on learning experiences.
3. **Lecturer Development:** Provide continuous training and professional development opportunities for lecturers to keep them up-to-date with advancements in electrical technology. Encourage teachers to engage in research and industry partnerships to bring real-world experiences into the classroom.
4. **Industry Collaboration:** Individual tertiary institutions should establish strong partnerships with electrical companies to facilitate practical exposure for students and create opportunities for internships, guest lectures, and collaborative research projects that bridge the gap between academia and industry.
5. **Promotion of Entrepreneurship:** Tertiary institutions should encourage entrepreneurial thinking among students to foster innovation and job creation. Furthermore, tertiary institutions should offer entrepreneurship courses and support for student startups to contribute to the growth of the electrical technology sector.

6. Government Support: The Nigerian government should prioritize investment in STEM fields, including electrical technology education, to ensure that tertiary institutions have the necessary resources and funding to implement these strategies effectively.

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