Repositioning TVET for Economic and Industrial Growth in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Technical and Vocational Education and Training is designed to equip individuals with practical skills and knowledge for employment in various technical and vocational fields. TVET aims to prepare individuals for specific occupations and trades, contributing to both their personal economic advancement and the overall economic development of a country. In Nigeria, emphasis on technology integration, personalized learning, and industry collaboration which includes using virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) for simulations, online learning platforms, and data analytics for tailoring instruction have dominated TVET trends. The role and importance of TVET in National development cannot be over emphasized, this is because Technical and Vocational Education and Training provides the necessary knowledge, attitude and competencies for survival and sustainable national development till to today. The challenges and issues of TVET in Nigeria over the years make it difficult to fully tap these obvious TVET benefits. The paper proffer Solutions to the emerging challenges and recommendations to the Repositioning of TVET for Economic and Industrial Growth in Nigeria if positively met, will enhance the national development, economic growth and technological advancement in Nigeria.

Keywords: TVET, economic growth, industrial growth, repositioning

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial driver of national development-impacting economic growth, social progress, and the quality of life for citizens. It provides individuals with the knowledge, skills, and character needed to participate effectively in the economy and contribute to societal well-being. By fostering a skilled and informed populace, education empowers nations to compete globally, reduce poverty, and achieve sustainable development. Vocational Education is that aspect of education that provides an individual with knowledge, skills and attitudes required to enter into the world of work and progress in a given occupation. According to Thompson (2019), 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.

Technical Education in Nigeria is one of the important sub-systems of the educational

system, concerned with providing individuals with practical skills and competencies to discharge specific trades and technical professions. This type of education seeks to close the gap between academic knowledge and practical application so that on completion, graduates are ready for employment (Abubakar & Adeyemi, 2020). Therefore, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is crucial for socio-economic development, particularly in Nigeria, where it's seen as a driver of economic growth, job creation, and youth engagement.

However, studies also highlight significant challenges to TVET's effectiveness, including curriculum misalignment with industry needs, funding issues, and the need for enhanced teacher training and professional development. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) aids in promoting national development, especially the maintenance of security (Oguntuyi, 2013).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training is crucial for economic and industrial growth because it directly addresses the skills gap in the workforce by providing practical, hands-on training for specific jobs. This ensures a steady supply of skilled workers, leading to increased productivity, innovation, and overall economic development. TVET also promotes entrepreneurship and self-employment, further contributing to job creation and economic diversification. It provides instruction for specialized jobs and skills. It makes ready to start working in a high-paying career or profession right away. An impartial organization certifies the skills once completion of the training at a vocational school giving an edge over those who have received less formal training.

Historical Development and Trends in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigerian

As already noted, the origin of vocational education dates back to the beginning of human communities (Roberts, 2019). Vocational education existed in traditional forms and people had to work for their survival. It was practiced within family circles. Under indigenous system or traditional vocational education, the Nigerian child was taught various skills through weaving, sculpturing, blacksmithing, carving, farming, fishing, cattle rearing, hair plaiting, dress making, bead weaving, leatherwork, pottery, brick making, basket weaving, raffia works, mat weaving and others (Nduka, 2013; Fafunwa, 2016). The foregoing was forms of vocational education in pre – colonial Nigeria. During the colonial era in Nigeria, vocational education was not accorded a worthwhile recognition by the missionary school system. Education was literary as in most former British colonies. For almost a hundred years in Nigeria, educated people were those who read classics: Latin, Greek, Milton and Shakespeare. Most of Nigeria's early scholars were famous for their literary erudition or "much book learning" (Fafunwa, 2016).

In the light of the foregoing, vocational education had a very unpopular beginning in Nigeria. As the "mother" of all forms of education, it was not given such an overwhelming official recognition as was accorded grammar school education (Okoro, 2018; Ibritam, 2016; Datol, Danwanzam & Associates, 2020). In Nigeria, trends in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are emphasizing technology integration, personalized learning, and industry collaboration. This includes using virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) for simulations, online learning platforms, and data analytics for tailoring instruction. TVET is also being recognized as a key driver for economic development, addressing the skills gap, and improving workforce quality.

Roles and Importance in TVET in Nigerian

In Nigeria, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays a crucial role in equipping individuals with practical skills, fostering self-reliance, and driving national development. TVET is vital for bridging the skills gap, empowering the youth, and creating a pipeline of skilled workers for various industries, ultimately contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction. Technical and Vocational Education and training was previously not seen as fundamental to national development or for the economic development, but for school dropouts and never do well individuals. Okafor et al (2018) asserts that no nation can move forward technologically, industrially and economically without developing a strong partner initiative in the creation of wealth, poverty reduction and employment generation through Technical and Vocational Education and Training. In fact, many African governments view it as a poverty reduction strategy.

UNESCO (2021) identified the two major objectives of Technical and Vocational Education and Training which include the urgent need to train the workforce for self-employment and the necessity to raise the productivity of the informal sector. Technical and Vocational Education and Training thus plays an orientation role towards the world of work and its curriculum emphasizes on the acquisition of such employable skills, which is a fundamental necessity for driving the industrial and economic growth, and it is a key to building this type of technical and entrepreneurial workforce which Nigerian needs to create wealth and emerge out of poverty. Technical and Vocational Education and Training is a means through which training needs of learners from different socio-economic and academic backgrounds are responded to, thus preparing them for self-employment and sustainable livelihoods. The poor and the vulnerable in the society can therefore benefit from (TVET). Wale and Adaramola (2020) stated that concerns have been raised by most African countries about the move towards making Technical and Vocational Education and Training complementary to post-basic education. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays a crucial role in Nigeria's socio-economic development. Its importance is particularly significant given the country's high youth population, unemployment rates, and the need for a skilled workforce. Here are the key reasons why TVET is important in Nigeria:

Employment Generation: TVET equips individuals with practical skills that are directly applicable in the labor market. This help to reduce youth unemployment and underemployment. Enable self-employment and entrepreneurship in sectors like agriculture, construction, ICT, and services.

Poverty Reduction: By providing individuals with income-generating skills, TVET helps lift people and communities out of poverty. Skilled artisans and technicians often earn sustainable livelihoods even without formal higher education.

Economic Growth and Industrialization: A skilled workforce is essential for the growth of industries and the manufacturing sector. TVET contributes to Enhancing productivity and efficiency and Supporting Nigeria's industrialization and diversification away from oil dependency.

Bridging the Skills Gap: There is often a mismatch between university graduates and labor market needs. TVET addresses this gap by Providing hands-on, job-ready skills and Producing technicians and middle-level manpower needed in various industries.

Promoting Innovation and Technological Advancement: TVET fosters creativity, innovation, and the practical application of knowledge, particularly in fields like: Renewable energy, Agro-

processing, ICT and digital technologies etc.

Educational Inclusion and Alternative Pathways: TVET provides an alternative path to higher education for Students who do not pursue university degrees, dropouts and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Challenges and Issues in TVET in Nigerian: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness and limit its contribution to national development. These issues span policy, infrastructure, perception, funding, and relevance to labor market needs. Nuru (2021) opined those changes in any nations' economy is required to prepare youths for future jobs in Technical and Vocational Education and Training have crucial roles to play. May et al (2020) observed that technical and vocational education and training are still neglected in the aspect of adequate funding, personnel, modern facilities, staff motivation which consequently are robbing the country of the economic development to be contributed by graduates of technical/vocational education.

Now the major issues facing TVET in Nigeria education system is the too much emphasis on University education has always reduced the economic opportunities of those who are more work oriented than academics (Ojimba, 2020). Here are the major challenges and issues of TVET in Nigeria**:**

Inadequate Funding: TVET institutions often suffer from poor budget allocations compared to universities and other academic institutions. Lack of funds affects the procurement of modern training equipment, facilities, and materials.

Outdated Curriculum: Many TVET programs still use outdated curricula that do not align with current industry standards or technological advancements. There is often a disconnect between what is taught and the practical skills needed in the labor market.

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.

Poor Infrastructure and Equipment: Many technical colleges and vocational centers lack modern tools, workshops, laboratories, and ICT infrastructure. Existing equipment is often obsolete, making it difficult for students to acquire relevant, hands-on experience.

Shortage of Qualified Instructors: Many TVET institutions lack adequately trained and experienced teachers who are current with industry practices. Instructors often lack opportunities for continuous professional development or exposure to emerging technologies.

Poor Policy Implementation: Although Nigeria has policies supporting TVET (e.g., National Policy on Education), implementation is weak and inconsistent. Overlapping responsibilities among government agencies (e.g., NBTE, NUC, and Ministries) often lead to policy conflict and inefficiency.

Solutions to the identified Challenges in TVET in Nigerian

- Increase government budgetary allocation to TVET institutions**.** Encourage public-private partnerships (PPPs) to finance equipment, infrastructure, and programs. Establish an Education Trust Fund specifically for TVET to support operations, materials, and teacher training.
- Regularly review and update the TVET curriculum in line with industry trends and technological advances**.** Involve industry stakeholders in curriculum development to ensure relevance and employability. Promote integration of entrepreneurship, digital skills, and

green skills into training programs.

- Instructional materials and learning aids suitable for use in the Nigerian society should be provided especially textbooks.
- Rehabilitate and modernize TVET centers with state-of-the-art laboratories, workshops, and tools. Set up model TVET centers in each geopolitical zone for best practice. Adopt mobile training units for rural and hard-to-reach areas.
- Provide regular professional development and in-service training for TVET teachers. Offer competitive remuneration and incentives to attract and retain qualified personnel. Encourage collaboration with foreign technical education institutions to train Nigerian instructors
- Establish a central TVET regulatory body to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate all TVET activities. Ensure policy consistency and continuity across successive governments. involve all levels of government (federal, state, and local) in coordinated implementation and funding**.**

Conclusion

Repositioning TVET for Economic and Industrial Growth in Nigeria requires concerted effort from various stakeholders (Federal Ministry of Education, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), TVET policy makers, administrators, lecturers/teachers, students, and parents),by focusing on skills development, entrepreneurship education, public-private partnerships, technical teacher development, infrastructure improvement, and expanding apprenticeship opportunities, TVET can contribute to reducing youth unemployment and fostering economic growth in Nigeria. It is imperative for policymakers and educators to prioritize the modernization and revitalization of TVET with a future-oriented approach to achieve the renewed hope agenda of the current administration.

Recommendations

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

- Government should do everything within its power to ensure steady power supply in the country or provide appropriate standby generators to all vocational education programmes for the operation of machines and tools involved in skills acquisition.
- Vocational education teacher training institutions should be redesigned for competency-based teacher training involving the use of information communication technology.
- 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.
- The curriculum taught in our vocational education institutions should be reviewed to meet the demands of the labour market.
- 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

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