WEALTH CREATION, POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN TVET WITH PARTicular REFERENCE TO NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The critical challenge of job creation, poverty and low economic growth that face Nigeria and other developing countries has made it difficult for them to compete with the world’s giants economies known as developed countries such as Canada, USA, Australia, Germany, China, Singapore, Japan, etc. Developed countries have cuddled TVET and ripped its benefit to become global leaders in all aspect of their enterprise in a very short space of time. Inspite of these giant stride, TVET, is much still neglected in Nigeria in the aspect of adequate funding, personnel, staff motivation, modern facilities which consequently are robbing the country the gains from TVET. This paper considers the contribution of TVET to wealth creation through the development of entrepreneurial skills and provision of job opportunities which is the key to alleviating poverty and boosting economic growth. The study also explores how TVET can be used as a tool in reducing poverty and enhances sustainable growth in Nigeria. The study highlighted the following factors as challenges of TVET programmes for sustainable growth in Nigeria: poor funding of TVET programmes, lack of required TVET facilities etc. The paper finally recommended that, to achieve macro-economic objectives of full employment and economic growth, the government should improve funding in this critical sector and increase access to technical and vocational education for the ever-growing youths.

Keywords: TVET, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth.

Introduction

It is incontrovertible that nation cannot grow without well-equipped technical and vocational institutions or centres for imparting and training youths and women on practical skills that will yield development in such nation. Okwelle and Deebom (2017) asserted that it is not gain saying that developed nations such as Japan, China, USA, Germany and others have attained tremendous height in terms of industrialization as a result of consistent and massive investment in technical and vocational education and training of its citizens. May (2007) observed that technical vocational education and training are very must still neglected in the aspect of adequate funding, personnel, modern facilities, staff motivation which consequently are robbing the country the gains from TVET. Asogwa and Dogu (2007) maintained that there is an urgent need for the Nigeria’s attention to be redirected towards self-reliant and sustainable means of livelihood which technical education provided in enhancing national development.

According to Okolocha (2012), Nigeria has joined her world counterparts in revamping and repositioning TVET programme geared towards ensuring a national system of vocational education. A system that ensures that, young people see TVET as challenging and worthwhile. To achieve the objective of revamping of repositioning TVET in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria according to Olakunri (2006) came up with the strategy of using the Education Trust Fund (ETF) which was set up by law in 1993 to fund and upgrade the quality of TVET in Nigeria. The introduction of trade subjects in senior secondary schools in Nigeria is also a pointer to government desire to give TVET a right place in our education curricula. Some of the trade subjects are animal husbandry, auto body repairs, auto-mechanic, auto-electrical work, bricklaying, plumbing and pipe fitting, welding and fabrication, marketing mining, furniture making and so on (The counselor,2020). These subjects are to provide career and technical education to children in secondary school, as this will enable them to gain hands-on experience to learn a trade alongside their academic studies.
TVET has also been used in Nigeria as an effective mechanism of facilitating poverty alleviation, some of these programmes include National Economic Empowerment Development Scheme (NEEDS), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Subsidy Re-Investment Programme (SURE-P), N-Power Programme, Trader Moni, etc. This shows that Nigeria recognizes the importance of the TVET in the world economic order. Despite the importance of the TVET in Nigeria, the programme still seems to be far from full commitment and implementation. There are however, a lot of other challenges. Other challenges of TVET as observed by Deebom and Zite (2017) are over dependent on paper and certificate qualification by employer rather than skills, negative perception of Nigerian towards technical education, poor budgeting for TVET, placement of other graduates ahead of TVET graduates in terms of employment, professional certification and so on. These challenges hamper national development in any developing, developed and under-developed countries globally. National development in any country depends on its skilled manpower available. No country can have development economically, scientifically, technologically, politically and socially without developing its human capacity which is the main goal of TVET. Training and capacity building for both men and women is a key for poverty reduction. Basically, if people lack in technical skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial skills, the natural resources will tend to remain unutilized and underutilized which affect the national growth and development.

Formal and informal education which is the policy thrust of TVET is a process of training designed to give knowledge, develop skills and abilities that could lead to the development of mental alertness and the right attitude to life. This implies that if education is adequately incalculated in human kind, individuals would meaningfully help themselves and positively contribute to the growth and welfare of their immediate community. In essence TVET remains the veritable tool that guarantees both individual growth and nation development. TVET is good for individuals and is good for countries to eliminate the problems of poverty, unemployment and poverty (Lolwana, 2017). TVET is the sub-sector of the education system widely recognized as the bedrock to sustainable technology development programmes in entrepreneurship, occupational, professionalism, self-reliance, poverty alleviation and wealth creation (Okoye and Okwelle, 2013).

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to refocusing the discussion on TVET as viable tool in the global economy that offers Nigeria and other Africa countries new opportunities to compete with other developed countries in the area of production of goods and services thereby making jobs available for her citizens and also improve the economy of the nation. This paper also presents Nigeria and other developing countries with challenges it cannot ignore in order to break the vicious cycle of unemployment, poverty and low economic growth.

Literature Review

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

TVET is a type of education that prepares manpower for sustainable national development through the provision of employable skills for employment and poverty reduction as well as the application of scientific and technological knowledge for national productivity (Obadara and Oyebolu, 2013). It is seen as a system of education that gears towards the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to perform a specific task in the work of environment. Okoye and Okwelle (2013) defined TVET as a diversified form of education that focuses on suitable manpower production relevant to the needs of the industry, society and the changing technological work environment.

TVET as defined by UNESCO (2001) and adopted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in her national Policy on Education (2013:16) is “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”. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo stated that TVET, with its relevant practical training component, holds the key to Nigeria becoming technologically relevant and internationally competitive in the world market. He continued that TVET is also the most effective means of empowering the citizenry to stimulate sustainable
national development, enhance employment, improve the quality of life, reduce poverty, limit the incidence of social vices due to joblessness and promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy (Federal Ministry of Education – FME, 2000).

There is no doubt that TVET serves multiple purposes and it has been recognized as the wide diversified education system instrumental in making the remarkable contribution to economic growth of a country by a way of suitable manpower production to the needs of industry, society and changing technological work environment.

According to UNESCO – UNESCO (2006), TVET is classified into three categories; formal, non-formal and informal TVET.

(i) **Formal TVET** refers to organized vocational education programmes provided within an approved public or private educational or training institution and it is structured (in terms of curriculum, learning objectives and learning time) in such a way that it constitutes a continuous “ladder” where one level leads to the next and finally leads to certification. Moreover, teachers in the formal TVET delivery system are required to be trained technical teachers with relevant vocational teacher’s qualification.

(ii) **Non-Formal TVET** is the type of vocational and training which takes place outside the formal school system either on a regular or intermittent basis. It has the advantage of a short-term training period; it is occupation – specific; the main emphasis is on the acquisition of practical skills for self-reliance or direct employment in a related field. For this reason, skilled craftsmen with some pedagogical training may be engaged as instructors.

(iii) **Informal TVET** is the type of vocational education that is provided by craftsmen of different trade in the informal sector of the economy. It is more appropriately often referred to as vocational training or experience based leaning and usually carried out in form of apprenticeship system. Thus, the informal TVET is characterized by the non-existence of any curriculum or structure as there is no well-designed and the method of training is not always sequential. The master craftsman decides out of his experience what the apprentice should learn.

**The Goals of TVET:**

The Goals of TVET are:

- To provide manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at the sub-professional level.
- To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for the agricultural, industry, commercial and economic development.
- To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge towards solutions for environmental problem.
- To offer training and necessary skills that will lead to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.

**Wealth Creation**

According to vista.com, wealth creation is ultimately the process of creating and building a stable source of sustenance so that one would not have to struggle to make ends meet.

**TVET as a Tool for Wealth Creation**

Acquisition of employable skills will enable individuals to engage in dependent and non-dependent employment generate income and benefit from enhanced opportunities for social participation. By enhancing capabilities, individuals are empowered to shape their own lives and work situation pro-actively. By helping individuals gain access to decent work and sustainable jobs, as well as to escape from poverty and marginalization, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) can impact positively on the economic development, achieving full
employment and promoting social inclusion. A well-structured TVET system will enable productivity to enhance global competitiveness particularly in an era of economic integration, transformation and technological change. TVET can be seen as the key to wealth creation.

**Poverty Alleviation**

Poverty in its simplest form refers to the inability of an individual to attain the minimum standard of living which is living below $1.90 per day according to the world bank. Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2000) conceptualize poverty as a function of education, health, child mortality and other demographic variables. Poverty to them is the availability or otherwise of the above parameters. Poverty alleviation is a set of measures, both economic and humanitarians that are intended to permanently lift people out of poverty. Poverty line in Nigeria is 137,430 naira ($381.75) per year. According to national Bureau of Statistics (MBS) 2019 report, 40 per cent of Nigerian lived below the poverty line (world bank,2020).

**TVET as a Tool for Poverty Alleviation**

TVET is a widely recognized approach to overcoming poverty and the social exclusion that comes with it. The underlying concept is simple. TVET leads to work (job creation) and work leads to income (wealth creation). TVET has been used as an effective mechanism of facilitating poverty alleviation in many developing countries of the world including Nigeria. TVET helps in choosing a profitable occupation and it provided the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupations. It engages people in self-employment trade businesses such as vulcanizing, photocopying, farming, hairdressing, etc. The development of small scale industries through TVET based on the utilization of available resources in the immediate neighbourhood and the level of technology that is appropriate to the level of education and skills of the disadvantage groups can enhance job creation, economic growth and poverty reduction.

**Nigeria and Poverty Alleviation Scheme**

Nigerian government introduced various poverty alleviation programmes at one time or the other. These programmes include the Directorate of Foods and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRRI), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Economic Empowerment Development Scheme (NEEDS), Struftural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Subsidy Re-Investment Programme (SUE-P) meant to cushion the effect of fuel subsidy removal on the common man, N-power programme for graduates and trader Moni.

However, how much positive impacts have these schemes had on the Nigerian people leaves much to ponder. According to the Guardian Newspaper in Oderinde (2005) the following is a list of weaknesses of government’s poverty alleviation schemes:

1. Lack of coordination which has given rise to duplication of efforts and resources, wastes, inefficiency and conflicts.
2. Weak monitoring and evaluation.
3. Lack of policy framework and national strategy for poverty alleviation.
4. Non-sustainability of programmes and frequent changes in poverty alleviation initiatives.
5. Poor targeting of the poor for assistance.

The weaknesses only demonstrate that the poverty alleviation schemes have recorded very little success and have impacted very little on the Nigeria masses.

**Meaning of Economic Growth**
Economic growth is said to occur if an increase in an economy’s productive capacity, sustained over a reasonable time period, leads to a greater output of goods and services in the economy as a whole and to the extent that there more goods and services available per person on the average. It is an increase in the production of goods and services over a specific period. To be most accurate the measurement must remove the effects of inflation.

**TVET as a Tool for Economic Growth**

According to the World Economic Forum the key to economic growth lies in the talent, know-how, skills and capabilities of human capital. TVET has been recognized as the major contribution to economic recognized as the major contribution to economic growth of a country by a way of suitable manpower production relevant to the needs of industry, society and changing technological work environment. As more jobs are created through TVET, incomes rise (wealth creation) consumers have more money to buy additional products and services. TVET facilitates economic growth through better education and training of manpower. In other words, it facilitates economic growth by increasing the productivity of workers. The returns from increased output far exceed the costs of training direct and indirect leading to economic growth.

**Challenges of TVET in Nigeria**

Today, the global economy offers Nigeria and other Africa countries new opportunities to compete with other developed countries in the area of production of goods and services. It also presents Nigeria and other developing countries with challenges that it cannot ignore. Therefore, Nigeria must break this vicious cycle if it to take its rightful place given its enormous potential.

Based on the literature review, the studies identify the following challenges facing TVET in Nigeria.

(i) For instance, Oguntuyi, 2013 asserted that Vocational and technical degrees are regarded as inferior to regular academic degrees hence acute shortage of vocational technical teachers, therefore, Vocational training should be integrated into general education and facilitate nationally certified training in small business enterprises.

(ii) Lack of adequate training facilities: Many of the institutions running vocational and technical education in Nigeria are yet to meet approved national standards. In many of the schools, basic facilities such as furniture, laboratories, running water, electricity, machines, computers, etc. are not adequately provided. Hence, TVET handlers (lecturers and technical teachers) should be open to continuous in-service training so as to equip and update them of new technologies.

(iii) Inadequate funding of vocational and technical education programme by the government. Government should ensure proper funding of vocational schools and vocational training centres for effective functioning of the schools in the country.

(iv) Lack of awareness about vocational business education programmes at various levels of school curricula. Government should create awareness through the National Orientation Agency (NOA) on the need for the ever growing youths to be fully involved in TVET.

(v) Placement of other graduates ahead of TVET graduates in terms of employment and professional certification. There should be review of vocational education policy to strengthen national development.

(vi) Absence of clarity of aims and objectives on TVET programs in Nigeria. There should be clear cut and flexible TVET policies so as to allow room for changes and guide against policy somersault.

(vii) Difficult to transform theories into practice by TVET handlers (lecturers, technicians, technologists). Therefore, there should be Synergy between TVET institutions or centres for practical skills.

**Conclusion**
TVET revolve around the advancement of technological, industrial and entrepreneurial objectives that will eventually manifest in employment generation which will inevitably leads to wealth creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable economic growth. No nation can make any meaningful socio-economic stride without functional vocational – technical institutions. Many developed and developing countries in the world are increasing the emphasis they place in improving the capacity of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems, in recognition of the important role TVET plays in equipping individual with relevant skills and knowledge for the job market. TVET can also be better enable individuals to participate in social, economic and technological processes.

In the interest of sustainable job creation, achievement and competitive ability of young people, the whole TVET system has to be oriented towards the labour market and the employment system. Certain factors such as inadequate training facilities such as laboratories, machines computers, electricity etc., inadequate funding of TVET programmes, difficulty to transform theories into practice by TVET lecturers and technical teachers have been identified as the challenges of attaining quality TVET programmes to enhance a sustainable national growth in Nigeria. Also, strategies for addressing the challenges of attaining quality TVET were identified in this study as review of vocational education policy to strengthen national development, adequate provision of funds for vocational schools and training centres for effective functioning of the schools, TVET lecturers and technician teachers should be open to in-service training, TVET handlers should be highly remunerated and provision of adequate training facilities. If these are implemented into TVET programme in Nigeria, the country will witness economic transformation for global competitiveness. From the foregoing, it can be concluded that TVET is such an aspect that its neglect poses a great threat to the economic well-being of a nation.

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