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Effectiveness of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on Self-Employed Youths for Sustainable Skills Empowerment in a Knowledge-Based Economy in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

Nigeria today is in a depressed economy because the tool that is needed to revamp the economy is being looked down upon, meaning the government of today has lukewarm attitudes towards Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), not taking note that the development of any nation is based in her economic, industrial and technological advancement. The study investigates the effectiveness of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy in Lagos State. The study adopted a descriptive survey method. The population of the study was 60 students (30 undergraduates and 30 postgraduates, respectively). 60 questionnaire items were used, but 58 were retrieved, comprising 32 undergraduate and 26 postgraduate students. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The paper identifies the effectiveness of TVET and factors that inhibit its relevance on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy. The study concluded, among others, that government and other stakeholders must provide an enabling environment for quality instructional delivery and TVET should be given utmost priority, having in mind the future consequences and the task ahead for sustainable youth skill empowerment in a knowledge-based economy, among others.

Keywords: TVET, empowerment, skill, youth and knowledge-based economy

1. Introduction

The development of any nation hinges on the social and economic efforts of its citizen (Ozoemena, 2013). No nation can improve economically, industrially and technologically without developing initiatives and improvements in the creation of wealth which will lead to poverty alleviation and employment prosperity with required specialized skills. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with oriented practical learning and training skills are widely recognized as the key for any nation to be technologically competitive in the international world market. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) opined that TVET is the most effective means of empowering the citizenry, especially the youths, to stimulate development, enhance employment, improve the quality of life, reduce and alleviate poverty, limit the incidence of social vices and promote the culture of peace, unity, freedom and democracy. Thus, TVET has been an integral part of national development strategies in many countries because of its impact on human resource development, productivity and economic growth in a knowledge-based economy.

It is also important to note that many developed nations, such as the USA, China, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia, to mention a few, have attained tremendous heights in terms of industrialization as a result of coherent investment in TVET. The effect of TVET as a veritable tool for self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy cannot be over-emphasized because the rates of poverty and social vices/menace are of high rate among the youths of today and to curb these atrocities, TVET curricula should be designed in such a way to enable

youths to acquire skills and knowledge necessary for economic development, employment, self-reliance and self-productivity.

Dokubo (2010) observed that TVET programme could be planned in such a way as to take care of the abundant unemployed youths and adults so they can own a small scale business and those wishing to take up employment in the private and public sectors in the knowledge-based economy as this will immensely contribute to self-employed youth for sustainable skills empowerment, reduction of poverty level which will thereby create employment and enhance technological development. This was in agreement with the findings of Ogundele, Oluwolara and Adegbelemi (2011) that skills acquired by the youths would alleviate job creation, youth empowerment and development, which, in turn, has the capabilities to promote national technological development and unity.

In the view of Alhassan and Abdullahi (2013.), TVET plays an essential role in improving the well-being of youths in the communities, increasing productivity, and enabling and inspiring individuals to be self-reliant and self-sufficient. Therefore, good quality TVET is an essential tool for culminating more sustainable skill empowerment among the youths since it helps to foster the development of skills, values, knowledge, understanding, and behaviour of people (Okwelle & Deebom, 2017). Also, Nwosu and Micah (2017) posited TVET is the type of education that brings about the acquisition of scientific knowledge and skills, which enhances self-dependent and economic development in a nation. Consequently, this means TVET is a powerful instrument that transforms and liberates youth into self-reliant humans and empowers them economically in a knowledge-based economy (Okonkwo, 2017).

1.1. Concept of TVET on Self-Employed Youths for Sustainable Skills Empowerment in a Knowledge-Based Economy

Nigeria as a country is blessed with many natural resources which can effectively cater to the upliftment of its citizens. Yet, the citizen, especially the youth, are living below the poverty level. Thereby, they cannot significantly offer to the development of the nation. This is because the technical vocational and training skills for empowerment are not imbibed into the youth due to the rejection of TVET, which is a basic tool that provides the skills needed for self-reliance in a knowledge-based economy.

World Bank (2011) defines empowerment as the process of boosting the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Thus, the level of attainment of any industrialized and technologically developed country depends on the extent to which the youths, who are referred to as the backbone of the development of any nation, have been trained with skills and empowered to apply such skills in meeting societal needs (Okwelle & Deebom, 2017). Also, the National Population Commission cited in Odunwale (2015) define youths as people between the age of 18-35 years. The Youth are seen as the foundation of any society, with their energies, character, inventiveness and orientation defining the pace of technological and industrialized advancement and security of a nation.

According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2019), National Youth Policy posited, "Youths are one of the greatest assets any nation can have. Not only are they regarded as future leaders, but they are also potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development in a knowledge-based economy. They serve as a good measure of the extent of their vitality and responsible conduct, and their roles in society are positively related to the development of their country. Therefore, the youths of a nation serve as building blocks that link the past with the present. Tambari (2019), in his paper 'Developing the Youth through TVET for Sustainable Development in Nigeria,' recommended that the period of National Youth Service Corps (NYSCs) should be regenerated and reconstructed to be a mandatory training period for all graduates on different types of TVET skills and for non-graduates youths, there should be a skill training organized and supervised through government agencies such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and other commissions and that government should endeavour to grant loan to those embarking into TVET as this will effectively enable the establishment of the acquired skills. Moreover, the training for knowledge and skills should be based on psychomotor and cognitive given to individuals, which must be able to solve the problems related to societal needs. A knowledge-based economy is defined as an economy that is increasingly dependent for its growth on the input of knowledge as a value-added input to the economic system in the context of work and training. According to Wikipedia, a knowledge-based economy is an economic system in which the production of goods and services is based principally on knowledge-intensive activities that have an impact on the development of technical and scientific innovation. A knowledge-based economy features a highly skilled workforce with the environment, institution, and industries creating jobs that demand highly specialized skills to meet the global market's needs. Therefore, highly skilled jobs in a knowledge-based economy require excellent technical skills and manpower, such as problem-solving and the ability to adapt to changes that can be realized through TVET.

The higher production capacity of a knowledge-based economy can only be achieved through quality and effective TVET education that is equilibrated with life skill acquisition through training and retraining programmes which can be accomplished through TVET. This view is supported by Iro-Idoro & Jimoh (2019), who asserted that TVET is seen as an effective means used in most developing and developed nations for developing professionals who are skilled in their various disciplines to control a nation economically, socially and technologically. Also, Nwosu & Micah (2017) posited that TVET is a type of education that brings about the acquisition of knowledge and saleable skill which intensify self-dependent and economic development in a nation.

Salma & Amin (2021) asserted that skill and development play an indispensable role in economic, industrialised growth and self-employed youths' skill empowerment in a knowledge-based economy of any nation. Therefore, in this era of globalization, developing nations need to develop personnel that will be more analytical and multi-skilled. For a knowledge-based economy, the manpower of that nation should possess the needed employability skills workforce with a strong Technical Vocational Educations and Training system that will heighten and improve industrial productivity and

the quality of life in the context of work and training. Also, David & Chinedu (2019) posited that a knowledge-based economy has four (4) key elements, namely:

- Education and skills,
- Innovation systems,
- Economic incentives and institution regimes and
- Information and communication technology

Therefore, the only sustainable source of competitiveness for a developing economy is one based on a highly educated and skilled workforce. Here, a knowledge-based economy appears to reflect a growing consensus about the nature of wealth-generating enterprises with a highly skilled and professional workforce by training individuals in new ways for future purposes. Emezue, Attah, Ogbonna, Iwuagu & Oragwa (2015) asserted that an improved understanding and recognition of a knowledge-based economy will clarify the effectiveness of Technical Vocational Education and Training and its importance to the learning need of companies, individual workers, industry, and the nations at large.

Skills training enhances productivity and sustains competitiveness in the global economy. Worldwide, nations are renewing their efforts to promote TVET because it is the only effective tool to prepare the youths for the world of work, which reaches out to the marginalized and excluded groups and engages them in income-generating livelihood. Therefore, empowering self-employed youths with sustainable skills empowerment by TVET education is an effective means that aids the development and growth of a nation in a knowledge-based economy if utmost consideration is given to the programme.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that TVET programme has been existing for more than 15 to 20 years ago in Nigeria, the needed facilitation of economic development through quality skills development by youth empowerment is farfetched. The problem of unemployment among Nigerian youth is of national concern because if the youths of a country fail to acquire technical vocational and training skills, there are tendencies to become caught up in the web of economic dependency, juvenile delinquency, social aggression and/or depression and hopelessness. The above observation has been the greatest cause of hooliganism, thuggery, internet fraud and prostitution among youths who have failed in their search for basic sustenance and self-reliance.

Akpan and Udoh (2014) opined that a lack of productive and marketable skills is the major cause of unemployment, as many youths are not competently or satisfactorily prepared to suit the productive sector of the knowledge-based economy. This view was supported by Alhassan & Abdullahi (2013), who stated that it appears that the Nigerian government does not seem to give TVET the desired attention it deserves and that perhaps is the reason for the rising unemployment and poverty in the society. Ogbuanya & Izuoba (2015) posited that perhaps, one fundamental question which stakeholders in TVET need to address is the TVET curriculum in relation to job creation for self-reliance. Obviously, there is a need to examine the TVET curriculum in our colleges and institutions to shed more light on these prevailing issues so that TVET curriculum and training must be aligned with the labour market because curriculum plays a vital role in the training of individuals in TVET programmes. It spelt out what to teach, how to teach and what students ought to know and do at the end of the programme. According to Momoh (2005), one of the problems of TVET in Nigeria is the lack of motivated teachers and the reason could be traced to the low esteem of the lecturers. Also, the findings of Njoku and Ajiluchi (2017) highlighted 15 items that led to the setbacks in repositioning TVET towards economic recovery in a recessed economy. These findings are in agreement with one of the principles of TVET that effective TVET can only be given where the training jobs are carried out in the same way, with the same operations, the same tools, the same machines and equipment as in the occupation itself.

The study, therefore, investigates the effectiveness of TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy in Lagos State.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy in Lagos State.

The study tends to find out the challenges facing the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy.

1.3.1. Research Question

The following research question was posed for the study:

- What are the challenges confronting the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy?

1.3.2. Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis is tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H01: There is no significant difference between the challenges confronting the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy.

2. Method

The design of the study was a survey. The design was adopted based on the recommendation of Nworgu (2015), which aims at collecting data and systematically describing the characteristics, features or facts about a given population

or its representative sample in existing phenomena. The study was conducted in Lagos State, where Technical and Vocational students are trained. The population of the study is 60 students comprising undergraduate and postgraduate students. The sample size was 60 but 58 were retrieved, comprising 32 undergraduate and 26 postgraduate students. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was structured, having two background information of 15 factors and 4 opinions. The researcher and a colleague assisted in administering the instrument and they were retrieved within a space of 1 week. For the research question, percentage was used at a significance point of 50% and chi-square at 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypothesis.

3. Results

The results of the data analysis of the study are presented in tables 1 and 2 below.

3.1. Research Question 1

What are the challenges confronting the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy?

S/N	ITEMS	NA	ND	PA	PD
1.	Lack of adequate training facilities and equipment	89.3	10.7	89.9	10.1
2.	Curriculum defects in TVET programme	67.3	32.7	67.4	32.6
3.	Ineffective SIWES	79.3	20.7	73.9	26.1
4.	Poor remuneration for TVET teachers, instructors and technical personnel	55.3	44.7	57.3	42.7
5.	Inadequate funding of TVET programmes	93	6.7	89.3	10.7
6.	Academically weak entrants	67.3	32.7	67.4	32.6
7.	Lack of government attention and weak government policy	72.7	27.3	74.6	25.4
8.	Misconception of the public about TVET programmes	68	32	72.7	27.3
9.	Law enrolment in TVET programmes	93	6.7	75.4	24.6
10.	Apathy of political office holders in TVET	67.3	32.7	67.4	32.6
11.	Epileptic power supply, which limits the conduct of practicals	93	6.7	89.9	10.1
12.	Lack of employment for TVET graduates	73.9	26.1	74.6	25.4
13.	Shortage of qualified TVET teachers, instructors and technical personnel	72.7	27.3	75.4	24.6
14.	Political instability	62	38	66.7	33.3
15.	Competency gap among TVET teachers, instructors, technical personnel and dilapidated classroom infrastructures	66.1	31.9	67.4	32.6

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of Graduate and Postgraduate Responses

UA = Undergraduate Agree, PA = Postgraduate Agree

UD = Undergraduate Disagree, PD = Postgraduate Disagree

Table 1 shows the respondents' opinions on the challenges confronting the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy. They strongly agreed with items 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14 and agreed on 2, 4, 7, 10, 13, 15. They were, however, undecided with item 12 for undergraduate and postgraduate students, with an overall percentage significance of 80% and 73%, respectively. This implies that there are challenges confronting the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy.

Hypothesis Testing:

- H01: There is no significance difference between the challenges confronting the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy.

S/N	ITEMS	Nx ² Cal	Decision	Px ² Cal	Decision
1.	Lack of adequate training facilities and equipment in TVET programmes	99.5	5	89.19	5
2.	Curriculum defects in TVET programmes	30.63	5	17.10	5
3.	Poor remuneration for TVET teachers/ineffective SIWES	55.5	5	33.42	5
4.	Poor remuneration for TVET teachers/instructors	29.05	5	29.07	5
5.	Inadequate funding of TVET programmes	89.36	5	89.5	5
6.	Academically weak entrants	30.63	5	17.19	5
7.	Lack of government attention and government policy	63.29	5	42.62	5
8.	Misconception of the public about TVET programmes	19.98	5	63.29	5
9.	Law enrolment in TVET programmes	89.36	5	37.18	5
10.	Apathy of political office holders in TVET	30.63	5	17.10	5
11.	Epileptic power supply, which limits the conduct of practicals	89.36	5	89.19	5
12.	Lack of employment for TVET graduates	33.42	5	42.62	5
13.	Shortage of qualified TVET teachers/instructors	63.29	5	37.18	5
14.	Political instability	9.41	5	33.44	5
15.	Competency gap among TVET teachers, instructors and dilapidated classroom infrastructure instructors	15.60	5	17.19	5

Table 2: Chi-Square (X²) Analysis of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students' Responses on the Challenges Confronting the Implementation of Effective TVET Self-Employed Youths for Sustainable Skills Empowerment in a Knowledge-Based Economy

Nx²Cal Represents Undergraduate Students

Px²Cal Represents Postgraduate Students

Table 2 calculates chi-square (χ^2) values from 9.41 to 99.5, i.e., items 1-15, respectively, show that there are significant differences in both the graduates and postgraduates students in the level of agreement because these values are more than the critical expected values of 7.82 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that states there is no significant difference between the challenges confronting the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy is rejected.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study in tables 1 & 2 revealed that there are challenges hindering the implementation of effective TVET on self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy in Lagos State. These findings are in line with the findings of Alhassan & Abdullahi (2013), who explained that the Nigerian TVET sector is currently largely characterized by a problem of disconnect between the needs of Nigerian industry and the nation's output of trained technical output. Consequently, Ogbuanya and Izuoba (2015) asserted that there is a need for TVET curriculum and programme alongside the global trends in a technological breakthrough that characterized the global era. Moreover, Ojimba (2012) agreed that poor remuneration, academically weak entrants, poor power supply, etc., are some of the problems confronting TVET. Conclusively, all the itemized items in tables 1 and 2 correspond to the findings of Njoku and Ajuluchi (2017).

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Involvement of professionals in TVET policy decisions.
- Preparing, training and retraining of TVET teachers, instructors and technical personnel.
- Provision of adequate and effective utilization of funds to TVET.
- Curriculum review of TVET programme.
- Public awareness of TVET programme.
- Provision of Up-to-date training facilities and equipment for institutions offering TVET programmes.
- SIWES should be mandatory and adequate supervision of students by supervisors.
- Special remunerations should be given to TVET teachers, instructors and technical personnel.

6. Conclusion

In order to enhance TVET to serve as a viable tool for self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy, the Management and Training Corporation (MTC) (2010) identified four areas that will lead to a successful TVET programme. These areas include relevance to the labour market, access of trainees, funding of the system and inclusion of skills. These areas imply that TVET curriculum and training must suit the labour market. Therefore, government and stakeholders must provide an enabling environment for quality instructional delivery. Also, to achieve self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy, attention should be given to strengthening the gap between education and schooling. It is in recognition of the above concept that TVET for self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy should be given utmost priority, considering the future consequences and tasks ahead for National growth and development.

The future prospect and success of TVET would depend on the continuation and expansion of the existing training programmes and by starting of non-financial programmes for the unemployed youths and the community at large as part of government efforts toward sustained welfare of the youth and development. The only sustainable source of competitiveness for a developed knowledge-based economy is one based on a highly educated and skilled workforce. Boosting the availability of skilled and educated individuals will itself act as a catalyst for economic change and enhanced productivity and competitiveness. Therefore, good quality TVET is a viable tool for achieving self-employed youths for sustainable skills empowerment in a knowledge-based economy.

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