

# Achieving Transformation of Nigeria Economy through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

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## Abstract

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*Education is generally regarded as a necessary and an essential requirement for development. It is centered on socio-economic and technological advancement, and it is critical to self-sustaining and self generating process for positive transformation of modern society. This paper focused on Technical Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria as a catalyst for achieving transformation. It highlighted the concept of technical and vocational education; the strategies adopted by technical and vocational education as an agent of transformation in the country, the potentials of technical and vocational education for sustainable development and transformation and the challenges facing technical and vocational education. Recommendations for future direction of technical and vocational education were made, such as: academic staff members should always be sponsored to seminars, workshop and conferences to update their knowledge on new skills; modern technological equipment should be adequately provided in technical and vocational schools. The paper concludes by recommending that government should create more awareness to encourage massive enrollment in technical vocational education and training program in Nigeria Universities, polytechnics and colleges of education.*

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**Keywords:** Vocational Education, Technical Education, Technical Vocational Education and Training.

## Introduction

The purpose of education in Nigeria has long been identified and stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) as the process that helps the whole man develop and change physically, mentally, morally and technologically. To enable him/her function effectively in any environment that he/she may find himself and to become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization. The Federal Republic of Nigeria also introduced technical vocational education and training, and defined it as education designed to prepare individuals to acquire practical skills, basic and scientific knowledge and attitude required as craftsman and technicians at sub-professional level (FRN, 2004). She adopted education as an instrument for national development and change. It is believed that quality of education is the key variable for the survival of Nigeria in the competitive economy (Narling-Hammond, 2010). According to the author, parents, practitioners and policy makers agree that the key to transform the nation's economy is to improve quality of education with more emphasis on technical and vocational education.

Also, Fafunwa (1997) pointed out that education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitude and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the transformation of the society in which they live. Education therefore involves the process of transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge. Specifically, the National Policy on Education stipulated that education in Nigeria aims at the acquisition, development and inculcation of proper value orientation, knowledge and skill for the survival of the individual and the societal transformation. Education in this context stated that the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skill, which will enable an individual to develop into useful members of the nation. The implementation of educational policy has always been the key factor in the educational innovations which could lead to rapid transformation. However, the education system in Nigeria has become more notable in terms of frequency and intensity of violent incidences, drug abuse and addiction (Fafunwa (1997). This paper therefore examines the role of Nigeria educational system in the transformation of the Nigeria economy, especially with the

introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a core subject in vocational and technical education.

### **Vocational Education**

This is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare people for employment in recognized occupation. It provides the skills, knowledge necessary for effective employment in specific occupation. Okoro (2006) defines vocational education as education that provides a special programme offered at secondary and post-secondary levels. Vocational education is education for occupational preparation. It is also regarded as that aspect of the total education process that focuses on individual occupation. Vocational education is usually viewed as consisting of six major areas – trade and industrial trade, business and office education, agricultural education, home economics education, distributive and health occupation education.

### **Technical Education**

Technical education is a post-secondary vocational training programme whose major purpose is the production of technicians. Technical education is a special grade of vocational education which can be distinguished from other vocational educational programmes because more mathematics and science are required in the training programme. Their graduates are called craftsmen. It is more often found in trade and industrial education.

### **Technical Vocational Education and Training**

The terms technical vocational education and training are often used interchangeably to refer to the same type of education. Technical Vocational Education and Training is a programme of study designed for the training of individual in a formal environment for the acquisition of occupational skill (trade) under the supervision of a technical officer or expert (Akpan, 2004). In Akpan's opinion it is an education meant to prepare individuals to enter a chosen occupation both professional and non professional for livelihood According to Osuala (1987), Technical Vocational Education and Training is a training and retraining programme which prepare individuals as semi-skilled workers, technicians or sub-professionals including programmes such as designed for professionals who require a bachelor degree or higher degree. The author affirms that Technical Vocational Education and Training is therefore for youths as well as adults, and mentioned that it can take place in a formal environment such as school, trade centers and technical colleges. As stipulated by Osuala (1987), vocational education is used comprehensively to embrace technical education, business education, home economics education, agricultural education, computer education, fine arts, and distributive education. Without these listed form of education, no country can boast of any change or development (transformation). It is on this background, that the Federal Government listed the vocational courses to include, engineering, technology, catering, management, business studies (including accounting and secretarial studies, now Office Technology and Management in Nigerian polytechnics) and technical education which embraces a number of programmes such as metal work, auto-mechanic, electricity, electronics, technical drawing among others. All these sectors/areas of education enhance speedy transformation of the national economy, as stated in the Federal Government National policy on Education (2004).

### **Importance of Technical Vocational Education and Training in achieving transformation**

There is the need to empower the youth and adult with necessary knowledge, skills and attitude for survival in the new millennium driven by modern technologies. Technical Vocational Education and training is the gateway through which these knowledge, skills and competencies can be successfully transferred (Akpan, 2002). The author stressed that Technical vocational education and training enhances transformation of the nation in the following ways:

### ***Youth Empowerment***

Through Technical vocational education and training the youth will be sensitized, mobilized, motivated and gingered for self-employment and self-reliance. Effective acquisition of technical and vocational skills will inculcate entrepreneurial skill that would help the youth to be self-reliant. Akpan (2002) affirmed that technical vocational education and training equips individuals with managerial skill to effectively utilize the human and material resources in their environment through the acquisition of skill and competencies in agricultural, business, computer, home economics, marketing and entrepreneurship.

### ***Formation of Technical and Vocational Attitudes***

Technical vocational education and training, educates the youth with the proper knowledge, vocational behavior and attitude needed for successful technical and vocational career desirable social and cultural behavior. Eni (2004) in his technical and vocational education survey, revealed the desirable kinds of vocational behaviors and proper knowledge, habit and attitudes that are needed by vocational workers to control their socio-economic development and transformation.

### ***Manpower Development***

Technical vocational education and training provides highly trained and dedicated technical and vocational education teacher for the production of various level of business and technical manpower to keep her citizens above subsistence level of poverty. It also provides a solid base for healthy multi-cultural transformation that would eliminate over dependence on foreign economy. The aim of technical and vocational education is to provide adequately trained and skilled manpower necessary for agricultural, industrial and commercial section of the nations' economic development. It was on these bases that Okoro (2006) asserted that vocational and technical education must aim at producing students that would acquire with saleable and adequate skills that would help them to be employable. It is also expected to:

1. provide training and empowerment for the necessary skill leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will assist in transforming the economy of the nation.
2. provide an introduction to professional studies in engineering and technologies which is the bedrock for economics transformation.
3. lead to human capital development that enhances empowerment of people and strengthening economy for economic transformation.

### ***Career Education***

Technical vocational education and training provides education experience and ability that would enable students to make intelligent occupational decision, specialization and progress in a chosen area. It provides opportunity for students to make realistic decision about a successful and satisfying career for economic survival. Akpan (2004) opined that skills, experiences, decision and interactions gain in technical and vocational education, when taken consciously, result in the formation of variable technical and vocational career choice and also provide the means in which the abilities and experiences could be applied on non-vocational areas. Robert (2001) concluded that career education guide individuals to fit into the job opportunity available with the system for national economic development and transformation.

## **Strategies for Achieving Transformation of the Nigeria's economy through Technical Vocational Education and Training**

The following strategies would build and sustain the Nigeria economy through technical vocational education and training:

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1. introducing and making technical and vocational education programme compulsory from junior secondary level to ensure early acquisition of vocational and technical skills by the youths.
2. it would reduce drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system through improved instructional delivery with relevance quality and efficient educational programme.
3. developing the entire citizens with a strong consciousness for lifelong education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
4. empowering the citizens to be self reliant through the promotion of technical vocational education and training programmes.
5. ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy, manipulative, communicative and life skills, as well as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed for a solid foundation for life-long learning which lead to rapid economic transformation.
6. catering for the needs of those who for one reason or the other had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary educational approaches.
7. motivating technical and vocational education students in all aspect of their live and also encourage enrollment into the various career programme.
8. training the vocational and technical teachers to be well equipped for the task ahead of them and also giving vocational and technical education graduates the opportunity to work in office/parastatals relevant to their training and skills.
9. ensuring that relevant agencies and stake holders co-operate and provide effective and enabling environment for the technical and vocational education graduates to establish their own businesses; thereby encouraging self-employment rather than government employment.
10. promoting technical vocational education and training as a means of reducing unemployment, youth restiveness, violence, militancy and kidnapping in the society which may affect rapid transformation.

### **Challenges in Achieving Economic Transformation through Technical Vocational Education and Training**

#### **1. Insufficient Basic Instructional Tools**

Technical vocational education as a discipline is confronted with insufficient instructional tools for effective instructional delivery and skills training the basic tools include computers, typewriters and other machines. Some institutions of higher learning do not have enough computers and workshop facilities while others have few outdated instructional tools/equipment for their practical exercises. This hindered the effective acquisition of technical vocational skills and attitudes to meet the challenge of technological changes.

#### **2. Poor design and implementation of vocational and technical education curriculum**

Technical vocational education and training curriculum is not designed to reflect the present day technological changes in the industrial world. Technical and vocational educational curricula are yet to practically emphasize entrepreneurial training and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a course to prepare the youths to meet the current technological needs of the society. It also emphasizes the philosophy for useful living, employment and the needed human qualities in the industrial world.

#### **3. Insufficient Funding.**

Technical vocational education and training in various institutions of learning in the country is not adequately funded to procure, maintain and make replacement of non-functional tools and

equipment for teaching when necessary. This affects the effective acquisition of technical and vocational skills.

**4. Poor maintenance Culture.**

The maintenance culture of facilities and equipment available in most of our institutions of learning are poor. Where instructional tools are available, they are obsolete and non-functional as they need repairs and servicing or replacement. This creates a problem to effective acquisition of the needed skills. This agrees with Ikpe (2004) observation that where facilities and equipment are available, they are usually obsolete and non-functional as they need repairs and replacement.

**5. Lack of self Empowerment.**

Technical and vocational educators in our various institutions of learning are not often empowered through in service training, research, conferences, seminars and workshops to update their knowledge and skills and to improve their pedagogy in teaching technical and vocational courses to meet the technological changes in the society. These deny technical and vocational educators the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and attitude needed for rapid economic transformation.

6. Finally, technical and vocational education is expensive since it requires quite a number of tools, equipment and material which are an important part of the training process.

**Conclusion**

For Nigeria to make meaningful progress towards the attainment of its vision 20:2020, she must strengthen her educational system especially Technical Vocational Education and Training programm. Nigeria is faced with numerous and diversified challenges relating to economic transformation and development, which technical vocational education programme is the gate way that could be adopted to solve the nagging problem of the nation. Therefore, government should create more awareness in student enrollment of technical and vocational education programme as a necessity and increase the content of the curricula to produce self-reliant and generate employment. For the transformation vision 20:2020 to become a reality, government, institutions, parents, stake holders must contribute positively to support technical vocational education and training, and encourage enrolment of Nigeria youths in this sector of education to promote self-employment, self empowerment, self sustenance and self-reliance of the citizens.

**Recommendations**

1. More qualified technical and vocational education teachers should be recruited to teach vocational education courses.
2. Technical and vocational education teachers should be retrained through sponsored seminars, workshops and conferences.
3. Budgetary allocation for the procurement and maintenance of instructional facilities and equipment should be made available by the government.
4. Use of instructional facilities and equipment should always be emphasized.
5. Vocational, technical schools and departments should be manned by qualified technologies.
6. Government should equip schools with modern technological facilities.

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