



Proceedings of the 31st Annual National Conference of
Technology Education Practitioners Association of Nigeria
(Formerly Nigerian Association of Teachers of Technology, NATT)



Annual National Conference

Theme:

**Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and
Alternative Energy Sources for Sustainable
Economic Recovery in Nigeria**

DATE: Monday 15th - Thursday 18th October, 2018

VENUE: YUSUF MANTAMA SULE UNIVERSITY, ADU BAYERO HOUSE, KANO, KANO STATE

ISBN: 978-978-967-443-5

THE NEED FOR PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN TECHNICAL EDUCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN NIGERIA

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Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system is generally regarded as the best system designed to produce a skilled labour force that can support and drive a fast developing private and services industry economy. Technical Vocational Education and Training system in Nigeria and many other developing nations are in crisis and it needs more for innovation. Public Private Partnership (PPP) is considered as an alternative approach for funding it and with the challenges confronting the Nigerian education system. For this reason, the paper focuses on ideas in the existing literature on Public Private Partnership in technical Vocational Education and Training by examining Public Private Partnership (PPP) and its role in economic recovery. Issues relating to the role of PPP in TVET programmes. Implications for design of institutions. PPP for technological development and economic recovery in Nigeria through PPP collaboration were also highlighted. The paper concludes by recommending for Public Private Partnership participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training system in Nigeria to enhance its economic potential.

Keywords: Public Private Partnership, Technical Vocational Education and Training, Technological Development, Economic Recovery.

Introduction

Today, the inability to accommodate the growing number of applicants, little participation of private sector, and mismatch between the training provided and needs of the employers of labour has remained a challenge of Technical Vocational Education and Training programmes in Nigeria. Uncertainties about the indigenous people's professional skills, weak and labour force, demands of labour environment coupled with concerns about educational attainment, are driving an extraordinary claim for high quality and excellence services derived from workforce who are technologically skilled. However, it is only a high quality educational programme can essentially contribute to skill acquisition and cognitive development by providing prospects for optimistic education and development. Knowledge is positively communicated if learners could apply and practice what they were trained in character and production. Therefore, there was a search for an excellent educational system to inculcate these learning characteristics in Nigerian youths. Okoye and Okwelle (2013) stated that to realize these, a variety of committees, commissions and academic boards were inaugurated by the Local, State and Federal Governments. Unfortunately, the vocational system which falls within the realm of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was generally commended and suggested at several forums as the source of these performance qualities in character, implementation and production. This is because TVET imparts skills acquisition, knowledge and attitudes needed for professional careers (BENESSA, 2011). One of the key challenges to the development of Nigeria is creating employment opportunities for new entrants into the labour force. Without a sound education and training in the employable skills, the best jobs youth are able to secure are low paid jobs in the informal economy. With effective and appropriate educational and training such as TVET, these young people have the potential to be skilled and productive.

A factor that foreign investors consider in siting their investments is the competencies of the indigenous labour force. In addition, it is an established fact that the economy of any nation does not completely depend on the availability of labour, but rather on having a large pool of skilled workers that can handle the capacity of investment in the labour market. Afo (2011) reported that the nature of TVET has been changing to cater for different socio-economic and academic backgrounds and to provide meaningful employment and sustainable livelihoods. This implies that TVET can be offered at different levels and therefore, can respond to the needs of different types of education (formal and informal) and cut across educational levels (primary, post primary and tertiary) and sectors (formal or school based, non-formal or enterprise based, and informal or traditional apprenticeship) which offer the best opportunities for the acquisition of employable skills in the informal economy. Regrettably, TVET has long been a neglected sector in Nigeria. Research evidence by UNICEF in 2004 revealed that Nigeria suffers from a mismatch between employment opportunities and the skills possessed by her workers. The educational system produces graduates in the labour force with capacities that do not meet the requirements of the productive sectors of the economy. Afanador (2011) revealed that over the past few decades, the ratio of unskilled workers has increased in Nigeria, when the global demand for skilled workers has risen. This reveals that Nigeria is failing to have mechanisms to identify which skills are in demand or not training personnel and workers accordingly. This is blamed on the theoretical base that graduates are spurned toward without adequate practical and application. Schools whether formal or informal in Nigeria are plagued by insufficient funds and fast deteriorating facilities without replacement or refurbishments making laboratories and technical centres handicapped by either obsolete facilities or lack of trained manpower to improve the quality of the courses in their curricula, relevance, and connections to the world of work in a contemporary competitive environment. According to Umoa and Ma'aji (2010) availability of appropriate facilities enhances student learning and allowing them to be involved in demonstrations and projects that build their skills. Resolutions to the challenge requires that all hands must be on deck, attractive enough and give cognizance to the external environment which consists of local community, local councils, state, the industrial community and world of work at large. Collaboration therefore becomes relevant to the needs and interest of the learners, interest of the society and specifically to ensure competence and possessing the needed expertise in the work environment. Poyate (2003) stressed that in an ideal situation, as obtainable in developed societies of the world, the training and education of nation's citizenry is a collective effort of both governmental and Non-governmental organisations, private firms and private individuals or philanthropist.

Since deprived and insufficient funding have been a long-standing challenge facing TVET in Nigeria, it is therefore necessary to recommend other promising channels to alleviate the problem in favour of TVET. This has required the present day seek for better options which currently could be a Public Private Partnerships (PPP) strategy. Measures to ensure adequate TVET provision in Nigeria is imperative since the certainty is that sufficient TVET provided to individuals will assist to attract and encourage youths who are expected to be more devoted, purposeful, innovative, and productive (Ezech, 2001).

Public Private Partnership and its Vital Roles in Economic Recovery

Public Private Partnership (PPP) could be defined as a contractual agreement between public and private partners for the development or management of a project aimed at delivering a public service, whereby the risk, the provision of funding, or the provision of finance are substantially shared. According to the Conference of European Directors of Roads (CEDR, 2009), the responsibilities and degrees of involvement of the various public parties can vary to a great extent, both in terms of finance and risk allocation. Key variables include the nature and feasibility of the project, legal framework, bid process,

number and nature of the stakeholders, financial environment, as well as the public perception of the involvement of the private sector in public services. As a result, the potential structures for specific PPP schemes can be extremely diverse. The objectives of a PPP scheme according to CEDR (2009) include:

- (a) To increase the availability of financial resources, allowing the development of additional projects without recourse to public budgets;
- (b) To increase the efficiency of a project or reduce its costs, incorporating specific private sector technologies, know-how, management techniques, or innovative financial schemes;
- (c) To simplify the development of the project, reducing the lead-time and merging different procurement phases into one single tender process;
- (d) To optimize the whole life cost cycle of the project, incorporating development and management/maintenance into one single contract;
- (e) To allow funding structures that are more reliant on users and those directly benefiting from the project, thereby avoiding distortions generated by taxpayer funding through public budgets;
- (f) For accountancy purposes, to defer public liabilities without showing them in public accounts.

Duch (2001) asserted that a PPP exists when the private sector collaborates with the public sector in pursuit of a common goal. The personnel composition and structure of any private public partnership is unique. However, all effective partnership shares the following characteristics in common.

- (a) The public sector appoints representatives who are authorized by their sector (say federal or state government) and the private sector (say civil groups or organization) will elect or appoint representatives.
- (b) Both partners usually work together to achieve common objectives or goals.
- (c) Each partner contributes money, technical expertise and time for the success of the partnership.
- (d) Administrative/management responsibilities and decision-making rights/privileges are shared among the personnel composition.

Although, these four characteristics are essential in partnership, the structure, organization, and goals of member partnership may vary to a reasonable extent. Egboh and Chukwuemeka (2012) maintained that PPP involves a contract between a public sector authority and a private party, in which the private party provides a public service or project and assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risk in the e-project. PPP is of great importance to economic recovery of any nation. For instance, the challenges facing the Federal and States Government in respect of provision of TVET at secondary and tertiary education levels in Nigeria become noticeable in a number of areas. For example, the failure of both state and federal government to provide adequate skill training has persuaded many industries to seek alternative measures for the training of their workers. To overcome this demands that the private and public sectors should come in partnership to device new paradigm for the provision and management of training facilities for effective skill training in TVET institutions. Fannell (2007) opined that it is possible through a sharing of personnel between both sectors thereby bringing about a shared set of incentives and common culture. PPP in education were introduced in USA in the 1990s, and the developing countries like Nigeria could embark on these ventures to improve on educational access and quality in TVET sector (Patrinis, 2005). Due to growing pressure to find new and better ways to succeed in the innovative field of the labour market and to reach the poorest areas of the society, the public sector (government) is looking up to the private sector (civic group, organizations or philanthropists) for leadership, technical expertise, and innovative ways to finance vital societal projects and services.

Factors Militating against Effective PPP in TVET programmes

Obitain (2005) expressed that it is an established fact that formal western education in Nigeria started with vocational education when the first Europeans that came to this country recruited our ancestors as gardeners, laundry men, carpenters cooks, stewards, tailors and even house builders among others. Although these new trades or occupations were not called vocational, they form a major part of what we know today as vocational education. Then these forms of skill training were given to handicapped, physically or mentally retarded people. The missionaries provided them with training in handicraft, shoe repair, broom-making, etc. this was a critical land mark in the development of vocational education because those that were handicapped were trained in skills and gainful occupations, since then any such trainings given were associated with the handicapped, and hence vocational education was since then understood or recognized to be the education for the handicapped or mentally retarded individuals. As a result of this misconception, the meaning and definition of what vocational education is all about have not been clearly understood by majority of people. The assertion here, therefore, is that the confusion and problems encountered in vocational education in Nigeria today be it organizational, administrative, educational or otherwise, seem to emanate from the lack of understanding of the concept of vocational education and its purposes. Habibu (2009) reported persistent cry of most of the industries in the Asia Pacific Region is that TVET graduates turned out by the system lack in the requisite skills, knowledge, attitudes or values to meet their needs. In effect, premature competencies possessed by the new workforce are feared to affect productivity. These challenges to the effectiveness of vocational technical education can best be tackled through building a strong partnership between the public and private sectors.

There are several factors militating against TVET Institution-Industry Partnership in Africa. According to Massaquoi (2002) there are several reasons why institution-industry partnerships or the enabling institutional arrangements for institution-industry partnerships have not developed over the years. These include the weakness of the research infrastructure in some countries, which inevitably leads to a scarcity of scientific research of economic value of such partnership. Another factor is the nature of the local industries, which tend to be infant factories of the parent company normally located in Europe or North America. These factories do all their technology development activities through their foreign parents and hence have no reason to develop partnerships with local institutions. Consequently, these factors exist as a result of the attitude of stakeholders such as scientists, the industry, the institution, society, the general macroeconomic environment, and the government. However, this paper examined the three core factors which are industry, the institution, and the government.

1. **Constraints on the Side of Industry:** Most of the inhibiting factors may have their origin in the nature of the ownership of the local industries (i.e. factory units of multi-nationals) and the size (usually small) of local industries.
2. **Institutional Constraints:** TVET institutions and Research institutions which host the scientists have certain administrative structures and practices that adversely affect their own ability to promote TVET institution-industry partnership. These include among others; poor management of funds, nature of the project administration and institutional politics.
3. **Government Policies:** One key stakeholder in the TVET institution-industry partnership is the government. The later has the responsibility to create the environment and climate for nurturing such partnerships. Government's main role is to promote the partnership through the institution of appropriate policies and institutional framework. It can also assist by providing financial support to scientific institutions to carry out research and development work.

Management Strategies

The occupational nature of the labour market demands human resources adequately prepared to deal with the situation. This demand has placed a great deal of emphasis on TVET worldwide. TVET is an integral part of all inclusive education for all citizens which helps an individual to become active citizen and who contributes positively to the well-being and to economic growth of his society (Wapinuk, 2011). This implies that TVET gives attention to the development of both material and human resources. It is the process by those who need it, those who want it, and those who want to progress by it. To have good results of TVET programs, it is obvious that no nation will adequately prosper as long as it neglects the development of skilful labour force. This advocates close coherence between private and public sectors and calls for effective collaboration of private and public sectors as well as stakeholders in TVET for adequate technological advancement, human development and economic recovery in Nigeria (Eseji, 2011). To achieve this objective, Nigerian governments should restructure TVET for economy recovery like in Malaysia. Okoye and Okwelle (2013) reported that in Malaysia, the innovative strategies devised to revamp TVET for effective PPP are categorized into what the country employed, National Dual Training System (NDTS), Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) and Vocationalization of Tertiary Institutions (VTI). In Malaysia's NDTS program, 70-80% of the technical and vocational training are done in the industry, while the remaining 20-30% is carried out in training institutions, utilizing curriculum developed by the board saddled with that responsibility. In this program plan, students/apprentices are meant to be exposed to actual situations in the industry in respect of technical and vocational competencies. Emphasis is also placed on team work, self monitoring, shouldering of common responsibilities, and the likes.

In Nigeria, the activities of National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) appear to be replica of what National Occupational Core Curriculum (NOCC) does in Malaysia in this respect. It is possible that NBTE could adopt this system and try it in Nigeria. In the Malaysian HRDF, the government was able to introduce a training levy-reimbursement scheme. In this scheme, the companies that participate in certain apprentice training programs qualify for tax incentives. These industries and companies also collect 1% part of the training cost from the government plus other hidden user charges. These incentives motivate healthy competition and improved performance among companies in the technical and vocational training offered to the students. The students/apprentices are assured of employment, eligible for total reimbursement of training cost and given insurance protection, among others (Zain, 2008). Through this scheme, accelerated industrial training is provided. It is possible that the management of industrial training fund (ITF) in Nigeria could adopt and modify this system and make it a trial in Nigeria. A formidable strategy permit governments to improve on their services and programs by offering complementary services, such as vocational training, occupational and career education, workplace training/education, technical assistance, and public programs to encourage public support. These innovations were borne for effective TVET restructuring in that country based on *borrowed system approach*. For instance, available document shows that that country made their recommendations based on models such as "Fachhochschule" found in Germany and the "Polytechnic University System" in Hong Kong, and some other fruitful systems adopted from other countries. In these systems, user fees were noted as among the best strategies to achieve success. User fees are charges which the users of services contribute towards the cost of providing such services. The point here is that Nigeria as a nation should learn to adopt, modify to suit the environment, copy and implement useful systems good for the country's economy recovery. In this way, competent skilled work force for the labour market would be produced.

Conclusion

Based on the available literatures, it is concluded that TVET is faced with a lot of challenges and constraints, not only in Nigeria, but worldwide. The image and inadequate funding of TVET are part of the major problems. The emphasis in this paper show that public private partnership (PPP) in the affairs of TVET will positively make a difference should any nation embark on the system in favour of TVET. User fees were identified as one of the remarkable strategy to achieve success in the management and revitalization of TVET in any nation. It is also noted that TVET is very vital for technological development and economic recovery of any nation. The paper also show that the long-term well-being of any nation depends on the economic viability of the citizens, and quality supports and good skill training given to youths in partnership collaboration between public and private sectors is an important factor to enhance the economic potentiality of the nation. It is believed that partnership in providing TVET will make the difference. Adequate training in TVET ensures the production of skilled workforce who possesses knowledge and attitudes needed for professional career.

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