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**Relevance of Technical Vocational Education and Training for Smooth Transition from Schools
to Jobs in Nigeria**

By

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Abstract

In recent times, trainees graduating from vocational and technical institutions appear to be having a rough transition from school to work. This is evident by the alarming high rate of unemployment, under employment and poverty confronting them. The issue of youth employment and self reliance has been relegated to the background due to higher priority given to politics. To help address the issue of employment and prepare trainees for smooth transition from schools to jobs, this paper gave a literature evidence on the relevance of Technical Vocational Education and Training for smooth transition from schools to jobs. The paper gave a conceptual review on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), benefits of TVET programme and its relevance in enhancing trainees smooth transition from schools to jobs. It also unveiled the function of ministry of labour and employment concerning skill development and certification in Nigeria as well as the benefits of trade test certificates at professional craft level. It also unveiled the national problems and challenges militating against effective utilization of the available marketable TVET skills in Nigeria.

Keywords: Technical Vocational Education and Training , Transition, School, Jobs.

Introduction

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the current nomenclature for Vocational and Technical Education (VTE). TVET is a type of education whose major objective is to prepare individuals for employment in chosen occupations by equipping them with vocational skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for employment in specific occupations of their choice. It prepares individuals to function effectively as skilled men and technical teachers who in a particular trade can demonstrate a good mastery of occupational skills. A skill refers to expertise or ability developed in the course of training and experience demonstrated by an individual's ability to expertly use manual dexterity in a particular vocation (Adetokunbo, 2009). Skill acquisition is the development of a new skill, practice or a way of doing things usually gained through training or experience. To possess a skill is to demonstrate the right habit of acting, manipulating, thinking or behaving in a specific activity which has become so natural and automatic to the individual through repetitive practice in a given occupation or trade area. While a trade is a specific occupational area where people can be engaged to earn a living and excel in the

world of work. A skill is very vital and a key factor that is needed by trainees to perform effectively in a trade. From the foregoing, the relevance and mandate of Vocational and Technical Education in equipping individuals with requisite technical knowledge and skills justifies the utmost importance of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria. This is because TVET empowers individuals and creates self employed skilled individuals.

Skilled individuals could either be employed by the government, private individuals, organizations or self employed. Self employment is a situation whereby an individual creates job or alternative source of livelihood for himself and also provide avenues for gainful employment for others. Being self employed implies that an individual possesses all the required technical knowledge and skills to successfully create job or alternative source of livelihood to earn a living. Self employment is possible only when skilled individuals are able to set up their own business venture in their vocational area and become self-employed by practicing their trade and be able to employ others.

VTE training gives skilled individuals the opportunity to set up their own private business venture where they can practice their trade to generate additional income and source for themselves and others employed by them to enhance self reliance. Being self reliant implies that an individual possesses all the requisite technical knowledge and skills to successfully carry out relevant tasks in chosen occupation to earn a living. Atsumbe and Mele (2012) defined self reliance as the social and economic ability of an individual, household or community to meet basic needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, healthcare and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity.

To maintain peace and reduction in crime rate in Nigeria today, there is great need for sustainable youth employment and self reliance. This is because the benefits or advantages of being self employed and self reliant are numerous:

1. It reduces over dependence and heavy burden on government for jobs;
2. It offers the employee the opportunity of generating income by engaging in full practice;
3. Successful self employments create in the employed a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction;
4. The self employed does not need to undergo job selection interviews; the self employed is thus a creator and master of its fortunes;
5. He/she decides his own works or programmes, work hours, what to produce, and where to produce.

It is worthy to note that enjoying the benefits of self employment and being self reliant is not automatic because it demands that youth acquire relevant technical knowledge and vocational skills in chosen occupation for job creation and self reliance. In Nigeria, these technical knowledge and vocational skills are usually acquired from technical colleges, vocational skill acquisition centers as well as other

vocational and technical institutions where youths are trained and equipped with the skills needed for self employment, job creation and self reliance.

Overview of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a type of education whose major objective is to prepare individuals for employment in chosen occupations by equipping them with vocational skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for employment in specific occupations. TVET equips individuals with the requisite technical skills for survival in the world of work. TVET is the type of education that prepares learners who could apply relevant practical skill to make positive changes within their society and afford a self dependent life (Atsumbe, 2014). Educational scholars and researchers have several times attested to the fact that this form of education provides self employment, enhance productivity and self reliance. TVET gives individual the skills to live, learn and work as productive citizen. It reduces the over dependence of graduates on government for employment.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in her National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) described TVET as 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. Specifically the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) stated that the goals of TVET shall be to:

1. provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical level;
2. provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;
3. give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

VTE institutions in Nigeria include universities, polytechnics and colleges of technology, technical colleges, and vocational training centres among others. Technical colleges are regarded as one of the principal Vocational and Technical Education institution in Nigeria for the training of craftsmen and women. National Board for Technical Education (NBTE, 2017) stated that technical colleges prepare students for the National Technical Certificate (NTC) and Advanced National Technical Certificate (ANTC) examinations leading to the production of craftsmen and master craftsmen respectively in various vocational areas. Technical college programmes are structured in levels of hierarchy as Technical College (TC) one, two and three (TC I, II and III) and runs for a period of three years for the award of

NTC and extra additional years for the award of ANTC depending on the trainee entry period and capability.

The objectives of TVET at technical college level according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) is that trainees completing technical college programmes shall have three options:

1. Secure employment either at the end of the whole course or after completing one or more modules of employable skills;
2. Set up their own business and become self-employed and be able to employ others; and
3. Pursue further education in advance craft/technical programme and in post-secondary (tertiary) technical institution such as Science and Technical Colleges, Polytechnics, College of Technology, Colleges of Education, Monotechnics and Universities.

The education policy further stated that these benefits of self reliance, productivity, financial wealth and employment are available for all trainees (students training to acquire skills) in the various technical training institutions, vocational training centers, vocational schools and trade centers if and only if the available and marketable skills in vocational trades are properly utilized for smooth transition from school to job.

Benefits of Attending TVET Schools

There are numerous benefits for attending TVET schools or trade schools. Some benefits for attending TVET schools are as enumerated below:

1. **High Rate of Employment among Skilled persons:** Most skilled persons have greater opportunities for paid employment in industries, government agencies and as self employed in self owned practical workshops.
2. **Multiple Admission Opportunities:** TVET schools offer multiple opportunities to start attending training programmes to acquire skills. Admission opportunities for vocational schools are available all year round.
3. **Small Classes and Like-Minded Peers in Trade schools:** When attending a TVET school, you will notice right away that the class sizes are smaller. In a smaller classroom you can get more individualized attention from the instructor so you can better develop your skill set. These classes are also filled with others who are interested in the same career choice as you. This makes it easy for you to form a group of like-minded peers who are interested in the same things as you are. This bond will provide support that makes getting through school and networking to find a job much easier.

4. **Career Service Opportunities:** TVET schools specialize in specific areas of skill and pride themselves on their ability to place their students in jobs right out of school. Many institutions have counselors whose only job is to find their students employment once they earn their certificate or degree. This shows how dedicated schools are to your success. It also helps them provide targeted hands-on training, internships, and industry-specific training so that you can be successful both in the classroom and on the job.
5. **Save Some Cash:** In TVET school, trainees who have acquired relevant work skills are paid on the job. Several of the experienced trainees while undergoing training are sent out to carry out maintenance and repairs and they are paid on the job. Once you graduate and get a job based on your TVET certificate, you are also likely to make more money than someone who only holds conventional certificate.
6. **Stay Current:** With a certificate or degree from a TVET school, you will have access to today's most in-demand jobs. Most TVET schools offer programs that are current with industry trends and the technology and skills they teach in class. Having a relevant skill set will make you more marketable and desirable to employers and the clients you will work with in the field of work.
7. **Hands-on Training:** TVET schools work hard to provide their students with hands-on, real-life experience. Because of this, they make sure their programs are current with the new and upcoming trends in the field they teach and that they are providing relevant hands-on training. This training allows trainees to better master what they are learning and get experience they can use on the job after graduation. It also helps them get the skills and techniques needed from experience professionals already working in the field.
8. **Job Placement:** Most TVET schools will advertise their job placement rate before and after trainees graduate. They do this because the numbers show that they are successful in preparing students to earn jobs. Unlike a typical two- or four-year program, trade schools want you to earn a job and help you get there. When you are looking for a TVET school, make sure you ask them what their job placement rate is; this will show you their commitment to you and your success.
9. **Connections to Industries:** Many technical colleges have connections to key people in their specific industries. Instructors are often seasoned veterans with years of experience working in the industry. These connections often lead to networking opportunities and learning the ropes of the industry.
10. **No Unnecessary Extra Classes:** TVET schools focus more on skills needed in the specific trade and does not inconvenience trainees with unnecessary extra classes that distract learners from acquiring trade skills.

There is urgent need to utilize the available and marketable skills/trades for smooth transition from schools to jobs has become necessary due to the rising high rate of unemployment among the youths in Nigeria. The need to utilize the available and marketable skills/trades for smooth transition from schools to jobs in Nigeria has become necessary due to the geometric rate of youth unemployment which has led to idleness, insecurity, crime and escalating hardship, poverty prevalent among youths and the society at large. Unemployment is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. The higher the youth unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges. Atsumbe, Okoro and Ogwo (2012) described unemployment as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. The situation of unemployment in Nigeria rises geometrically and mostly affects youths. Aisha (2019) reporting for Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in the month of June revealed that 78 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed. Aisha further stated that 80 percent of the 80 million youths in Nigeria are either unemployed or underemployed.

This implies that over 56 million Nigeria youths are either unemployed or underemployed. Ngozi (2019) quoting the figures from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in April unveiled that no fewer than 53 million Nigeria youths are jobless while 1.8 million graduates enter the labour market every year without job. If government needed to know the gravity of the nation's unemployment rate, especially youth unemployment, the trampling of job seekers to death during stampedes at the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment exercise on 15th March, 2015 across various recruitment centers in the country, presents a clear picture of the problem. That incident, alone, tells us that something needs to be done urgently to address the scourge of unemployment in the country. This accounts for one of major reason for the rising wave of various categories of crimes in Nigeria as the jobless youths are prone to become potential tools for perpetuating crimes in exchange for money for survival.

The alarming rate of unemployment calls for the need to utilize the available and marketable skills in vocational trades for smooth transition from school to job in Nigeria. This is especially important for those youths who are seeking out a living in both formal and informal sector of the economy. Today in Nigeria, increase in population growth and urban migration; poverty and lack of income generating capacity and failure of graduates from secondary and tertiary school system to secure employment clearly highlights the importance and need for skill acquisition among youths in Nigeria. To draw the majority of jobless people out of the unemployment market and to enable those still in school to be relevant to the world of work and to ensure smooth transition from schools to jobs, there is need to utilize the available and marketable skills/trades for smooth transition from schools to jobs in Nigeria. This also implies

increasing modalities for skill acquisition which is the best means to empower the youths with the available marketable skills that will make them have smooth transition from school to job.

Available and Marketable Skills/Trades for Smooth Transition from Schools to Jobs.

The rising rate of youth unemployment calls for the urgent utilize the available and marketable skills/trades for smooth transition from schools to jobs in Nigeria. According to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment in collaboration with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE)(2017), there over 33 vocational skills areas in over 33 specialized occupational trades which are available and having marketable skills which youths and training institutions can utilize for smooth transition from schools to jobs. According to NBTE (2017), the most commonly available and marketable skills/trades for smooth transition from schools to jobs are : Auto mechanics trade, Building trade, POP, Plumbing, Electrical and Electronics trade, Computer craft work GSM repairs, Metal trade, Welding trade, Woodwork trade, Carpentry and Joinery, among others.

It is worthy to note that the available and marketable skills/trades for smooth transition from schools to jobs can only be possible through effective Vocational and Technical Education. This is because Vocational and Technical Education is designed to provide vocational and technical skills and prepare individuals for gainful employment as skilled worker in a recognized occupation such that the individuals could be self reliant. VTE has also been described as an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development. It therefore gives individuals the skills to live, learn and work as productive citizen in various occupations in the society (Atsumbe, Raymond & Ajunwa, 2015).

In addition to these, there are also other lifelong learning opportunities available for acquiring technical knowledge and skills through Vocational and Technical Education like apprenticeship training and continuing education and training or retraining programmes where trainees and skilled workers are subjected to practical trainings and experiences that will help improve their skills to enhance their performance on their job. Researches revealed that TVET is a vital tool for combating unemployment because VTE gives individual the skills to live, learn and work as productive citizen. It reduces the over dependence of graduates on government for employment and above all enhances effective utilization of the available marketable skills that will make them have smooth transition from school to job. It is worthy to know that after acquiring the skills, the skills acquired becomes more marketable when the trainees are certified with national certificates of competence (Trade Test Certificates) issue by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment.

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**Brief Description of the Function of Ministry of Labour and Employment Concerning Skill
Development and Certification in Nigeria and the Benefits**

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment is the sole government agency vested with the responsibility of issuing certificate of competence (Trade Test Certificates) to qualified tradesmen and tradeswomen. Trade testing is the process of properly assessing and classifying tradesmen and tradeswomen in different skills or trades and awarding certificates of competence of grades III, II and I to persons who have been tested as evidence of the person's proven ability. The Ministry conducts Trade Tests at Trade Test workshops for grading the skills of the employed and unemployed (but employable) tradesmen and students of vocational training schools and technical colleges. The tests are conducted in more than 66 trades under the supervision of experienced professional staff and specialist testers.

Benefits of Trade Test Certificates

The trade test certificate issued by the Ministry presents a unique opportunity for generating jobs and ensuring appropriate job placement and promotion industries as well as government establishment. The Trade Test Service also provides standard grading for artisans and craftsmen which facilitates access to better paid jobs or work as self-employed persons. It provides Nigerians with a standard validation of the qualifications of tradesmen and tradeswomen. Workers passing any of the grades are given certificates of competency and employers are assured that any applicant for employment possessing these certificates has reached the standard of skill indicated on the certificate.

**National Problems and Challenges Militating Against Effective Utilization of the Available
Marketable Skills in Nigeria**

1. Epileptic power supply creating scarcity of electricity for practical use.
2. Poor quality of training facilities for practical activities.
3. Appointment of non professionals to head technical offices.
4. Negligence and ignorance of people towards the available and marketable skills.
5. Bribery, Corruption and Misappropriation of funds allocated for funding skill acquisition centers and school workshops.

Conclusion

The researchers have established the need to embrace Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a tool for making effective utilization of the available marketable skills that will make them have smooth transition from schools to jobs in Nigeria. Despite the possible national problems and challenges that may hinder effective utilization of the available marketable skills, all teachers, parents, guardian and stakeholders must live up to the challenges of the situation highlighted in this discussion by collaborating together with appropriate community heads, industries, government agencies in the design and implementation of appropriate workable programmes geared towards ensuring sound and functional TVET programme which is the foundation for effective utilization of the available marketable skills that will make them have smooth transition from schools to jobs in Nigeria and subsequently reduce youth unemployment, poverty and over dependence on government for jobs.

Recommendations

1. Giving orientation to youths at Basic education level on the available opportunities in TVET programme.
2. Introducing youths to the various specialized occupational area of specialization in TVET which exploit for for erlf reliance.
3. Exposing youths to the available marketable skills .trades covered by TVET programme.
4. Exposing youths to the training requirements needed to enter into and survive in a particular trade.
5. Provision of training facilities needed for success in a particular occupation trade.

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