

Prospects for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria: Bridging the gap between policy document and implementation

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This paper discusses the prospects technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria through bridging the gap between the policy document and practice. At the 1969 National Curriculum Conference and the eventual emergence of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1977, TVET was given prominence but, unfortunately, in theory only. However, the imperative of TVET for national development is no longer arguable, especially in the face of a dwindling economy, mass unemployment and the irrelevance of some academic content to societal needs. In the conceptual framework of globalization of education, this paper discusses the gaps between the TVET policy document and practice. This is historical research for which both primary and secondary sources of information were explored, including: all editions of the NPE, the Internet, and relevant journals and textbooks. A number of recommendations are made including that making education relevant to the needs of the society is desirable.

Keywords: national policy on education (NPE); policy implementation; technical and vocational education training (TVET); self-reliance

INTRODUCTION: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In Nigeria, technical education had a slow start and developed less quickly than literacy education, which was pioneered by the voluntary agencies. This was partly because it is much more expensive in terms of staff and equipment, and because ‘the Christian missions were more interested in a native's ability to read the Bible than in his ability to turn screws and prime water-pumps’ (Fafunwa, 1974, p. 195). Therefore, the Western education that was introduced in 1842 did not emphasize the acquisition of practical skills to make citizens become self-reliant, rather it was to make whoever had the opportunity to acquire it serve the purpose of the missionaries. The failure of Western education to include the learning of practical skills started the erosion of technical education because it was even practiced in the traditional education setting through the apprenticeship system. The curriculum was not integrated and comprehensive. This has culminated in the production of students with head knowledge, hearts underutilized and without practical use of the hands. This outcome is contrary to Akinpelu's (1981) view that “the hand and the brain evolved together; hence, technical and vocational education, on the one hand, and liberal and

general education, on the other, must go together, inseparably, if violence is not to be done to the natural process of growth in man” (p. 82).

The 1925 Memorandum on *Native Education in British Tropical Africa*, was an outcome of Phelps-Stokes Commission report, published in 1922, and showed the “appalling low government aid and the dubious quality of education” in Africa (Taiwo, 1980, p. 70). It became the first broad principle set as a framework for education and recognised the importance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). It emphasised that “education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabrics of their social life” (Taiwo, 1980, p. 70). However, according to Yakubu (2011), technical education did not attract government attention until the world economic depression in the 1930s, which made it uneconomic for the colonial administration to continue bringing expatriates to meet its needs. Hence, colonial administrations started setting up training schools to produce middle level technical manpower; among the training schools was the Yaba Higher College, which was established in 1932.

The 1960 Ashby Commission report, titled “Investment in Education,” (Taiwo, 1980, p. 140), also emphasized the importance of technical and commercial education and that it should be a compulsory part of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools so that children would develop an appreciation of manual and skilled labour. This recommendation led to the establishment of a number of comprehensive high schools; however, these schools soon reverted to more traditional grammar-focused education systems because of a lack of funding and proper monitoring.

In 1977, when the National Policy on Education (NPE) was first published, the issue of acquisition of practical skills to make students more self-reliant was incorporated (FRN, 1977, p. 13). The 6-3-3-4 (6 years of primary education, 3 years each of Junior and Senior secondary education, and 4 years of Higher education) system of education implemented in 1982 should have been a self-reliant policy but, in reality, it was not to be because of the gap between the policy document and the implementation, including: a dearth of qualified and competent teachers; infrastructure decay; lack of standardization and development of non-formal TVET; and a low level of funding for the programmes. TVET, no doubt, can serve as a bail-out from unemployment, underdevelopment and it can boost the economy of any nation if properly implemented and monitored (FRN, 2013). This fact has been recognized and accepted in Nigeria by various governments but the problem is how to make it work.

The consensus at the end of a workshop on "Technical Education: A Foundation for a Healthy Economy" organised by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) and Youth Development in collaboration with UNESCO and others in 1994 was that the state of technical education in Nigeria is most unsatisfactory. Some participants believed that technical education had reached a point of crisis. Adequate attention has not been given to the TVET sector. It should be noted also that there is no magic for reformation except for proper monitoring of everything that has to do with TVET. It has now dawned on most Nigerians that acquisition of practical skills with theoretical skills could be a means of creating jobs and could go a long way towards solving unemployment issues in Nigeria.

This is why the present administration in Nigeria is orchestrating a method of placing a premium on TVET and why institutions of higher learning are now introducing entrepreneurial courses in their curricula.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The ability of Nigeria to realise the vision of becoming one of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020 is largely dependent on the capacity to transform its youth into highly skilled and competent citizens through TVET (FRN, 2013, p. 73). This statement is a truism and related to functionalism as the main guiding principle of education in the traditional Nigerian society. A careful examination of the development and practice of formal Western education in Nigeria seems to lack this all important principle. This had resulted in the production of youth who cannot contribute to the economic growth of the nation, they are not self-reliant or functional, thereby swelling unemployment numbers; the National Bureau of Statistics reports such numbers rising consistently from 6.4 percent in 2014 to 13.3 percent in the second quarter of 2016. Some youth have even resorted to the “half-a-day” programme (learning a trade after school hours with master craftsmen) to ensure they will not be made redundant after graduation. Such an outcome demonstrates there is a gap between the intent of the TVET policy and implementation/practice of the policy. Governments at all levels in Nigeria should attend to making education functional, especially through proper implementation and monitoring of the TVET policy. In reality, there are good policies on paper that are not being implemented either because of corruption or inadequate funding. Those that are being implemented are not properly monitored and evaluated. Unless the gap between policy and practice is bridged, TVET may not serve its purpose in Nigeria.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) defines vocational education as education that has “a specific relation to working life” and is “closely related to, but not identical with, the concept of training (or vocational training), which tends to focus on learning specific skills that are required in particular work places. Vocational education, therefore, is clearly distinguishable from academic education” (FME, 2007, p. 135). However, section 5, paragraph 29 of the NPE (FRN, 1998) notes that vocational education is that form of education which is obtainable at the technical colleges. This is equivalent to the senior secondary education but designed for individuals to acquire practical skills, basic and scientific knowledge, and the attitude required to be craftsmen and technicians at sub-professional level. The 2004 edition of the NPE (FRN, 2004) section 7, paragraph 40, attempted a more comprehensive definition of the subject as: “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 occupation in various sectors of economic and social life.” The 2013 edition of NPE (FRN, 2013) section 3, paragraph 49 refers 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 as TVET. The definitions of TVET in the 2004 edition of NPE are:

- an integral part of general education;
- a means of preparing for occupational fields, for effective participation in the world of work;
- an aspect of life-long learning and preparation for responsible citizenship;
- an instrument of promoting environmentally sound sustainable development; and
- a method of alleviating poverty especially through pre-technical and vocational education.

These definitions are comprehensive, with the final item being the current driver of practice in Nigeria. TVET is also emphasised in section 3, paragraph 58, of NPE (FRN, 2013) as regards curriculum of vocational enterprise institutions (VEI) that it “shall cover all vocational and craftsmanship areas such as Adire, and other indigenous fabric making, artisans, apprenticeship etc.”

Emergence of TVET in the NPE

At the 1969 National Curriculum Conference (NCC), Naibi (1972) advocated that TVET should even be incorporated into the primary school curriculum to emphasize its importance. He noted that:

In developed countries where there is universal education up to secondary level, vocational education could wait till after primary education. In Nigeria and many other African countries the majority of children have an opportunity of only primary education. For this reason we cannot wait until after primary education to provide our children with vocational education . . . Many parents are not keen on sending their children to school only to learn academic subjects and for them to return to them after schooling without acquiring any valuable skill. (p. 12)

Naibi’s submission to the 1969 curriculum conference set the agenda for the importance of TVET and gave it a space in the NPE which was the outcome of NCC. The first edition of the NPE was published in 1977 and subsequently reviewed in 1981, 1988, 2004, and 2013. It is important to note that all the revisions unequivocally stated the importance and the objectives of TVET, though the training was given different names: Technical Education in 1981; Polytechnic and Monotechnics Education in 1988; Technical and Vocational Education in 2004; and Technical and Vocational Education and Training in 2013.

Goals of TVET in the NPE

The goals of TVET in Nigeria were stated in the NPE and were believed to have the capacity to advance the economy of the nation if properly implemented and monitored. According to Obasanjo (2012, p. 3), an objective that education must achieve in order to make it more relevant to the country’s development is the promotion of the culture of productivity by enabling every individual to discover the creative genius within. The individual must apply this creative genius within him/her to improve existing skills and techniques for performing specific tasks, thereby increasing the efficiency of personal societal efforts; indeed, this is related to the goals of TVET as stipulated in various versions of the NPE:

- provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business, particularly in craft, and advanced craft at technical levels; (NPE, 1998, sec. 5, para 31)
- provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; (NPE 2004, sec. 7, para. 42)
- give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be economically self-reliant. (NPE 2013, sec. 3, para. 50)

In spite of these goals for education, in place in black and white since 1977, the reality is that Nigeria still depends in a major way on the importation of goods, including common items like pencils and erasers. The challenge is to provide students with practical skills and properly equip them to produce items to meet local and export needs, and, thus, help the economy to become buoyant and people to become self-reliant. The findings of this research are, therefore, relevant at this time.

NATIONAL BOARD FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION (NBTE) AND ITS ROLES IN TVET

In “Nigeria Third National Development Plan, 1975-80,” part of the focus was reforming the content of general education to make it more responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country; and to make an impact in the areas of technological education so as to meet the growing needs of the economy. In the process, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) identified the acute shortage of technical manpower as a major constraint towards the execution of the Development Plan. As part of the response to this, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) was established by *Act No. 9 of 11th January, 1977*.

The NBTE is a principal organ of FME and specifically created to handle all aspects of Technical and Vocational Education falling outside of University Education. In addition to providing standardized minimum guide curricula for TVET, the Board supervises and regulates, through an accreditation process, the programs offered by technical institutions (as listed in Table 1) at secondary and post-secondary school levels. The Board is also involved with the funding of Polytechnics owned by the FRN (<http://www.nbte.gov.ng>).

To the best of its ability, the NBTE has tried to fulfil its functions to the extent it is able within the limits of government funding for its operation. As of January 2014, 366 approved institutions are responsible for TVET across the nation, including: 75 polytechnics with 225,171 students; 31 colleges of agriculture; 13 colleges of health sciences; 18 other monotechnics with 19,923 students; 80 innovation enterprise institutions (IEI); 55 vocational enterprise institutions (VEI) with 3,589 students; and 94 technical colleges with 90,038 students (Obomanu, 2015, p. 19). These are capable of producing citizens who are poised to develop the economy if there is adequate funding and government commitment.

Table 1: TVET Institutions, programmes and number of courses available as at June 2012

Institution	No of programmes	No of courses
Polytechnics, Monotechnics, colleges of Health Technology	11	94
Technical colleges	10	41
Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs) and Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VIEs)	8	20

Source: <http://www.nbte.gov.ng/Programes.html>

With the array of courses officially approved in the various TVET institutions in Nigeria, one would have thought that there would be a mass production of youths with technical knowhow, but this is not the case because actual implementation is at variance with policy. Today, according to Ojerinde (2011, p. 111), “institutions called Technical and Vocational Schools are a shadow of themselves where the science equipment and laboratory apparatus are heard of, rather than seen. Where the equipment is available, it has become obsolete.”

GAPS BETWEEN POLICY DOCUMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TVET

For any policy to be successful, there must be some inbuilt mechanisms that make room for the processes of implementation, monitoring, supervision, feedback, evaluation, improvement, reorientation, effectiveness, and the like. In consonance with this, Akindoyeni's (2014), among others, submitted that for any policy to be effective it must address a definitive need, have a legal instrument for the implementation with identifiable and measurable strategies, the interpretation must not be ambiguous, provide for periodic review, and the human capital capacity as well as the range of implementation resources must be identifiable. A problem with the TVET policy in Nigeria is that it does not conform with some of the properties that a good policy should possess. This is corroborated by the submission of the Presidential Task Team on Education (FRN, 2011) that “policies have not always been given the chance to prove their effectiveness (or failure to do so), as uncoordinated changes tend to be dropped in and out in a haphazard manner dictated by moods in the place of reason” (p. 17), and as administrations change.

It was observed at the 1994 conference on TVET that technical institutions have a primary role in producing a wide variety of technical manpower to guarantee a technological base for the 21st Century in Nigeria in line with paragraph 50c of the NPE (FRN, 2013). The institutions are also expected to liaise with industries to ensure the currency and relevance of their curricula, and to introduce new courses in response to the socio-economic needs-of the nation, (FRN, 2013, para 58i). But these roles have not been fulfilled because of general national apathy to technical education, insufficient funding, lack of equipment for practical training and insufficient qualified teachers for technical institutions as identified since 1994. Not only have the roles be unfulfilled, circumstances are deteriorating, despite strategies meant to turn around the situation: restructuring and strengthening the existing scholarship and Student Loan Boards to target TVET students; upgrading facilities in selected Polytechnics to make them centres of excellence; upgrading of facilities in selected

Technical Colleges to make them centres of excellence (4-year Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Sector 2011-2015: 73, secs 6.20, 6.21 and 6.22).

In the 4-year “Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Sector 2011-2015,” it was observed that government policy in the past had not accorded TVET its rightful place within the education subsector of the country despite policy mandates. “This can be seen in the placement of ceiling on career progression on polytechnic staff and graduates” (FRN, 2013, p. 74). For instance, holders of a Higher National Diploma (HND) are referred to as instructors and not lecturers, and their salaries are pegged at a level lower than their university graduate counterparts at the last grade level. Poor condition of service for staff and a relatively low level of funding of programs, despite the expensive nature of TVET, among other causes, are strong barriers for success in the sector.

UNESCO recommends that at least 26 percent of a nation’s budget should be allocated to the education sector. However, since 2000, the highest budgetary allocation for education in Nigeria was 10.4 percent in 2006 (Federal Budget Office, 2016). The yearly average was 6.23 percent, and the lowest was 3.1 percent in 2003. Whatever percent allocation is then shared among various service divisions as shown in the Table 2.

Table 2: Allocation to various service delivery structures

Organisation/Institution	%
Ministry	8.7
Parastatals (excluding NUC)	12.5
Polytechnics	13.4
Colleges of Education	9.1
NUC and Universities	47.1
Federal Government Colleges	9.2
Total	100.0

Source: PPTTE Report, 2013, p. 37

Other challenges, according to Olaitan (1994), FME (2007), FME (2012) and FRN (2013), are:

- low enrolment
- infrastructural decay: inadequate equipment and training materials
- low remuneration for skilled vocational workers
- low societal estimation of TVET
- poor private sector participation in the implementation of TVET programmes
- low level of entrepreneurship and ICT literacy and utilization
- poor learning outcomes due to poor learning environment
- use of outdated curriculum which result in a mismatch between what is taught and the needs of the labour market
- poor management of funds.

As a result of these problems, there is an overwhelming preference for general secondary education (FME, 2012, p. 54; FRN, 2013, p. 74).

It is not possible to discuss all these problems within the limitations of this paper, however, funding has an overbearing effects. Funding is necessary for the procurement of up-to-date training equipment and consumables as well as the training and retraining of technology teachers and instructors. Power supply and revitalization of the industrial sector are the other critical issues that the government should investigate. Olaitan (1994) lamented the near comatose state of the industrial sector, which is affecting skills development in the country, arguing that training institutions were supposed to interface with industries to produce the right skills.

The implementation of TVET policy, according to the NPE, is supposed to begin from the basic education level. This would give students the opportunity to be exposed to TVET early and help them to decide whether to study technical/vocational education in future. However, as identified by the FME in 2007, such opportunities are unlikely because of the lack of availability and functionality of equipment, including metalwork materials, auto-mechanics equipment, drilling machines, cutting fluids and lubricants, hand forging tools, sawing and bench tools, electrical materials, computer sets and accessories, local craft tools and, building material. With regard to the equipment, the FME's report (2007, p. 146) found:

Number expected:	81,942
Number in stock:	27,086
Number functioning:	7,421
Number in high quality:	4,055

Abimbade (2008) also sees lack of fund, inadequate facilities, tools and equipment, lack of adequate infrastructure, lack of sufficiently trained manpower and outdated curriculum as problems besetting the implementation of the TVET policy. He is also of the opinion that if the policy on TVET was well implemented, it would be capable of transforming the Nigerian society into a technologically self-sufficient and reliant nation. According to Wike (2014, p. 3), the transformation agenda of former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, emphasized continuity, consistency, and commitment of government in policy implementation. However, it is obvious that this agenda has not been met, thereby creating gaps between policy and implementation.

Corruption has been a major problem, and the list of corrupt practices is inexhaustible in Nigeria. Contracts awarded are not executed or even completed in some cases. For instance, in 2012, the foundations of Boy-Child Vocational Schools were laid in 15 states in Nigeria but by 2014, when there was a public presentation of the transformation agenda of the former President of Nigeria, none of the schools have been completed (Wike, 2014, p. 9).

IS THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TVET PECULIAR TO NIGERIA?

The problem of a gap between policy and implementation of TVET is not peculiar to Nigeria. The Presidential Task Team on Education (FRN, 2011, p. 17) observed that moving from policy documents to on-the-ground implementation always raises serious challenges, and the Nigerian case is no exception. In other African countries, TVET faces similar problems. In Botswana for instance, Pheko (2013) notes that the goal of TVET is to ensure that education systems provide the younger generation with quality education that impart key generic competencies, skills and attitudes, which would lead to a culture of lifelong learning and entrepreneurship in an ever-changing world of work. However, because of haphazard policy implementation, the government has taken control of all technical and brigade schools to ensure that they have a common curriculum and similar resources, and, thus, properly implement the country's TVET policy.

The situation in Cameroon is similar to that of Nigeria. Forje (2013) observed that the state neglected technical education in its socio-economic transformation of society and those who opted for technical education were often classified as "dropouts" or "pupils without brain." The sector, he further observed, is now suffering from inadequate infrastructure, absence of trained instructors and shortage of equipment.

Shibeshi (2013) notes that in Ethiopia vocational/technical schools that were opened could not cater for the country's manpower needs and could not serve students from all over the country. Therefore, some high schools were converted to comprehensive high schools to provide TVET. However, a study conducted on the operation of TVET by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 1996 found that the training provided in the comprehensive schools was of a theoretical nature and did not involve practical laboratory or workshop training.

In Uganda, the first recommendation of the Kajubi Commission on Tertiary Education, according to O'dama (2013), is that the government should expand technical and commercial/business education facilities to train technical, managerial, and professional people for national development. The government tried to implement the recommendation by refurbishing and allocating money to equip the TVET institutions. Unfortunately, the funds were misappropriated by corrupt public servants, thereby hindering success in the sector.

In response to the changing labour market and socio-economic concerns, the Zambian government launched a new TVET policy in 1996 with a focus on employment promotion, improved productivity and income generation. However, Matafwali (2013) observed that much remains to be done if TVET is to play a major role in the Zambian education system. This is because the infrastructure in most of the vocational training centres does not meet the expected standard and are characterized by low staffing levels.

Interestingly, in Zimbabwe, parents, teachers, and the public have a positive attitude to TVET because they are aware of the technical skills training component and demand from industry for graduates from TVET institutions. Therefore, it is not very easy to access

TVET because of the stringent entry requirement. The development of technical education has occupied the attention of the government of Kenya for the past 30 years (Mwamwenda & Lukhele-Olorunju, 2013). According to Amayo (2013), great efforts were made in the establishment and management of technical, industrial, vocational, and entrepreneurship training (TIVET) as part and parcel of Kenya's tertiary education programme, yet more needs to be done in establishing and equipping more TVET institutions. This is because Kenya Polytechnic and Mombasa Polytechnic have been upgraded to university colleges, which have led to lower enrolments.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN DEVELOPED NATIONS: LESSONS FOR NIGERIA

Olaitan (1994, p. 1) notes: "any study on comparative education cannot be complete without cross references and pin-pointing of lessons worth learning." He identified certain features of TVET in the US, UK, and Japan from which Nigeria can learn:

- TVET is a child of necessity. In the US it arose out of the need to develop weapons of war and dominate the world politically and economically.
- TVET programmes are utilitarian and dynamic, serving pressing local and national needs.
- TVET is a component of Basic Education. This is evident in the fact that basic education in developed countries is now considered incomplete unless the child has received occupational/vocational education. (However, sec. 3 para. 1 of the policy (FRN, 2004) and Ojerinde's (2011, p. 319) submission highlights that vocational education in Nigeria is meant for those who cannot stand the academic rigour of a 6-year secondary schooling, thus negating the spirit of this innovation.)
- Promotion of indigenous technology stimulates TVET.
- Consumption patterns affect TVET. The taste and fashion of the people must be such that encourage the expansion of local industries and stimulate industrial growth.
- Manpower development is central to TVET. In developed nations, the primary objective of vocational education is manpower development.
- Evaluation of TVET is performance-based rather than through achievement tests.
- Diversification of funding is desirable. Funding of TVET is a shared responsibility of all arms of government and industry.

All the features listed should become the focus of the Nigerian government because it is obvious TVET is a necessity in the face of a dwindling economy and rising unemployment. The current drive by the Federal Government to encourage people to patronize made-in-Nigeria goods will definitely promote indigenous technology. However, funding of vocational education in Nigeria is at present ineffective because the Federal Government is almost entirely responsible for it given that the majority of production firms and companies have closed down in Nigeria.

PROSPECTS OF BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TVET IN NIGERIA

The Executive Secretary of NBTE, Dr. Kazaure (www.nbte.gov.ng) said that the revitalization of technical and vocational education (TVE) is a panacea for solving the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. However, this would only happen if the policy is implemented to the letter. When this is done the prospects are immeasurable (www.nbte.gov.ng).

Haipeng (2015, p. 5) stated that “in modern China, revolution was the keynote of the society at that time, the purpose of which was to seek independence and prosperity of the country”; and since the founding of new China, according to Zheng and Lu (2015), the concept of “quality education” and the implementation of TVET policy has been emphasized, so that now there is hardly a Chinese person who does not have practical skills in one area or another. This level of achievement has led to the rapid development of the economy of China, making it one of the leading nations in the world, with products made in China available in almost every country in the world.

In Nigeria, the time for revolution is now, especially in the education sector through TVET, not least because of the impact that unemployment is having on the security of Nigeria. Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2012, p. 541) observe that “when youths are gainfully employed in any society, social vices and criminal activities will be reduced.” The present administration has promised to focus on TVET in the 2016 budget, and has begun a drive towards minimizing or stamping out corruption, especially in the area of the judicious use of funds meant for the implementation of TVET policy—even if such fund are inadequate, they should be spent judiciously to achieve part of the goals.

CONCLUSION

The importance of TVET in the economic and manpower development of Nigeria cannot be overemphasised, and this has been recognised by various governments and the people of Nigeria. Its importance has necessitated its inclusion in the various editions of NPE since 1977; however, there are gaps between the policy and its implementation, which has meant that the policy has not achieved its stated objectives. Kadri (2010) states that “noble policies or resolutions mean nothing without implementation. How can one measure the progress of what is not implemented?” He argued further that if the 1969 Curriculum Conference resolutions were implemented, Nigerians might be singing a sweet tune about their educational system today. The current economic reality of Nigeria, therefore, demands that urgent action be taken to redress the situation through proper implementation of the TVET policy. Obanya (2009, p. 24) believes that Nigeria needs to more closely follow current trends on TVET which would lead to a reorientation of the mindset of Nigerians. The trends are:

- TVET is a requirement for everyone’s basic education.
- TVET should be predicated on a sound general education, to produce thinker-doers instead of zombies, and to ensure social respectability for TVET.

- TVET should begin with “general technological studies,” to promote flexibility and versatility in learners, to equip them for the uncertainty of the 21st Century world of work.

These trends are part of what is being emphasised in this research but, most important, is the emphasis on functionalism through acquisition and utilization of practical skills, and making people job creators rather than job seekers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigerians must learn from history, looking back to understand the nature of missed opportunities and mistakes. Vinovskis (2015) stressed the importance of learning from the past and the value of historical knowledge in policy-making; for instance, in 1995 the US government commissioned well-known education historians to write on what history might tell the nation and policy makers about education reform.

Making education relevant to the needs of the society is desirable. This is in line with Olaitan’s (1994) observation that “in the mainstream secondary school, vocational subjects such as agriculture are treated as the pure sciences in content arrangement and methodology” (p. 4), which is a legacy of Colonial times. Learning by doing should be encouraged with rote learning abandoned; students should be allowed to use their native intelligence practically to discover the truth in the possibilities of becoming job creators because, “practice is the sole criterion for testing the truth” (Zhang, 2015, p. 1).

There is the need to improve the maintenance culture in Nigeria. When TVET equipment has a fault, the best thing to do is to immediately repair it to forestall further damage, however bureaucratic bottlenecks in the process of repairing damaged equipment can be frustrating and, thus, this process should be streamlined so that TVET is given the proper attention it deserves.

Olaitan (1994) believes that “improvement of vocational education in Nigeria can only be sustained through active research and development activities” (p. 4). He recommends a fully fledged centre for VET research. This centre, in Olaitan’s opinion, should be charged with the responsibility for curricula appraisal of TVET, conducting and sponsoring research on the impact of TVET on the economy, developing instructional materials, and monitoring developments of TVET around the world, within the country, and their implications for national interests. It should also be involved in developing and testing innovative approaches to TVET. Apart from the establishment of such a centre, the position of Furlong (2013, p. 177) that universities can contribute to the betterment of humankind through the provision of practical skills is also laudable; they may also, through vocationally oriented research, contribute to scientific or other forms of rationally based insight into educational processes. Universities in Nigeria should take up this challenge and justify such investment by the government.

Akanbi (2012) believed that ingenuity should be rewarded and encouraged among the youth. Those who have displayed innovative skills should be encouraged by the

government to improve on their innovations and thus serve to encourage others to put to use latent skills.

To bridge the gaps, TVET policy should certify all the properties of a good policy, but this cannot work unless there is sufficient funding and effective monitoring of the sector. More funds for education could also be raised if the country expands its tax base, axes unnecessary tax holidays for foreign investors, and challenges aggressive tax avoidance (Gustafsson-Wright & Smith, 2014). Regular appraisal and evaluation is necessary if the policy is to achieve its goals and if “all of us are willing to talk to ourselves to do things right” (Akanbi, 2014, p. 56).

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