

STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT THROUGH TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) IN NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT: *The study was carried out to determine the strategies that can be employed to empower individuals for self-employment through Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population was made up of 54 technical teachers and 73 technical instructors in the technical colleges and skill acquisition centres in the zones covered by the study. The instrument was face-validated by five TVET experts in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected. The strategies determined are agreed upon as empowerment strategies as well as the training facilities and challenges of TVET in empowering individuals for self-employment. It was recommended that public/private partnership should be encouraged in the funding and management of TVET to empower individuals for self-employment.*

KEYWORDS: Empowerment, Self-employment, Strategies, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

INTRODUCTION

The growth of any developing nation can be influenced by a well-articulated and organized Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a form of education whose purpose is to prepare individuals for employment in an occupation or group of occupations. This implies that TVET is a type of education given to individuals to develop their creative and manipulative potentials for the benefit of humanity. Through TVET various skills are developed for human empowerment.

Empowerment

To empower is to equip or supply an individual with the ability or enablement for some tasks in such programme like technology, agriculture among others. Wikipedia (2014) refers to empowerment as increasing the economic, political, social, educational, gender or spiritual of individuals and communities. The World Bank Group (2011) describes empowerment as the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. In the context of this study, empowerment refers to skill development in individuals capable of supporting the means of livelihood and eventual wealth creation. Economic empowerment according to Ogbe (1996) is the way of motivating individuals in the society to be productive, self-reliant and self-dependent by inculcating into the individuals technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills. Donli (2004) stated that acquisition is the manifestation of ideas and knowledge through training which is geared toward instilling in individuals the spirit of entrepreneurship needed for meaningful development. This however implies that if individuals are given the opportunity to acquire relevant skills needed for self-sustenance through self-employment, it will promote their charisma in any work environment.

Self-employment

Self-employment refers to a situation where an individual creates, begins and takes control of the business decision rather than working for an employer. Abdulkarim (2012) described self-employment as the act of working for oneself. According to Wikipedia (2014), self-employment is the act of generating one's income directly from customers, clients or other organizations as opposed to being an employee of a business or person. When one is self-employed, it means one is carrying on ones own business rather than working for an employer (Citizens information, 2014). This implies that self-employment is a situation in which an individual works for him/herself instead of working for an employer that pays salary or wages. Since it is not possible for the government to provide employment for all, there is need to device strategies to empower individuals for self-employment.

Strategy

Strategy is a method, road map, blue print worked out in advance for achieving some objectives (Nicholas, 2000). It is also a means or procedure for doing something. This implies that strategy is a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal usually over a long period of time. However, strategies for empowering individuals can be worked out through Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the type of education which provides individuals with skills, knowledge and attitudes for effective employment in a specific occupation. UNESCO (2005) viewed 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 science, the acquisition of knowledge, practical skills and attitude relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. According to Osuala (2004), FRN (2004) skills in building technology, electrical/electronics, motor vehicle mechanic work, motor vehicle body work, automobile electricity, metalwork, woodwork, drafting and designing, clothing and textile,

business studies, equipment servicing, computer hard and softwares among others can be acquired through TVET. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) could therefore be described as:

- (a) An integral part of general education
- (b) A means of preparing for occupational fields and effective participation in the world of work.
- (c) An aspect of lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship.
- (d) An instrument for promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development.
- (e) A method of alleviating poverty.

The FRN (2004) stipulated the following objectives for TVET:

- (a) To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub-professional level.
- (b) To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.
- (c) To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- (d) To give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies.
- (e) To give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.
- (f) To enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Nigeria's quest to be one of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020 to be achieved, individuals have to be empowered through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Problem

Nigeria is considered as a country with high level of poverty. Nigerian National Planning Commission (2004) revealed that more than two-thirds of Nigerians are poor, despite living in a country with vast wealth. The commission stated that although revenues from crude oil have been increasing over the past decades, majority of Nigerians have been falling deeper into poverty, with income of less than one US dollar a day. Also, the eagle on line (2014) quoted the African Development Bank that the Federal Government's effort to reduce poverty rate by 2015 seems weak. The Federal, State and Local Governments have repeatedly stated that government alone cannot provide jobs for all the teeming unemployed youths and adults in the country. Since the government cannot provide jobs for the large pool of the unemployed, then the need for self-employment by empowering individuals through TVET becomes paramount.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the empowerment strategies for self-employment through TVET?
2. What are the training facilities for empowering individuals for self-employment through TVET?
3. What are the challenges of TVET in empowering individuals for self-employment in Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design. According to Osuala (2001), survey research involves the accurate assessment of the characteristics of the population using questionnaire. This implies that survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people, their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviours. The study was carried out in south-east, south-west, south-south and north-central geo-political zones of Nigeria.

The population for the study was 127. This was made up of 54 technical teachers and 73 technical instructors in the technical colleges and vocational skill acquisition centres in the geo-political zones covered by the study. No sampling was carried out since the population is of manageable size.

This instrument used to collect data for the study was a structured questionnaire. It was developed by the researchers after review of available literature on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and self-employment. The instrument is divided into three sections A, B and C. Section A sought information on empowerment strategies, section B dwelt on training facilities while section C was on challenges of TVET in empowering individuals for self-employment. The instrument is based on five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with numerical values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was face-validated by five experts in TVET and tested for reliability using Cronbach alpha and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained.

The data were collected by the researchers and research assistants in the zones covered by the study. The researchers and assistants administered the instrument on the respondents. All the instruments administered were correctly completed and used for data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used for answering the research questions. Based on the five-point Likert scale, any item with mean 3.50 and above is regarded as agree while any item with mean less than 3.50 is regarded as disagree.

Results

Table 1: Mean Responses of Respondents on Empowerment Strategies for Self-employment through TVET.

N = 127

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Establishment of more formal and non-formal skill acquisition centres	3.78	0.81	Agree
2.	Establishment of TVET commission at Federal level	3.81	1.02	Agree
3.	Establishment of TVET commission liaison offices in each local government	3.79	0.89	Agree
4.	Trades and training relevant to the needs of the community	4.70	0.46	Agree
5.	Designing of curriculum for non-formal Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	3.66	0.90	Agree
6.	Training based on innovations in technology	4.13	0.83	Agree
7.	Arrangement of the contents sequentially based on their difficulties	4.49	0.77	Agree
8.	Provision of loan facilities to encourage students	4.49	0.24	Agree
9.	Career seminar/talks for students on the benefits of TVET	4.24	0.82	Agree
10.	Provision of starter packs for products of TVET centres/schools	4.95	0.21	Agree
11.	Collaborative efforts with practicing artisans to rub minds on new skills based on technological development	4.58	0.60	Agree
12.	Organising students industrial attachment Training for the trainees	4.54	0.69	Agree
13.	Sensitization of people on radio/television on the benefits of TVET	3.69	0.83	Agree
14.	Using electronic/print media to enhance public awareness of TVET	3.71	1.02	Agree
15.	Collaboration with state governments to train the unemployed	4.14	0.81	Agree
16.	Collaboration with local governments to train the unemployed	4.11	0.91	Agree
17.	Capacity building for TVET teachers on entrepreneurship skills	4.75	0.43	Agree
18.	Organising exhibition to display TVET products and designs	3.79	0.90	Agree

Data presented in Table 1 show that the respondents agreed on all the items as empowerment strategies based on the means which range from 3.66 to 4.95. The standard deviation shows that the respondents are not far from each other on their responses.

Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on the Training Facilities for Empowering Individuals for Self-employment through TVET

N = 127				
S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Well equipped workshops/laboratories	4.65	0.55	Agree
2.	Drawing/drafting equipment	4.59	0.59	Agree
3.	Machine tools	4.77	0.43	Agree
4.	Portable power tools	3.81	0.84	Agree
5.	Hand tools	4.80	0.41	Agree
6.	Training materials/consumables	4.90	0.37	Agree
7.	ICT facilities	4.59	0.62	Agree
8.	Computers	4.57	0.59	Agree
9.	Storage facilities	3.98	0.77	Agree
10.	Smart boards and projectors	3.42	0.69	Disagree
11.	Electricity supply/Generators	4.97	0.17	Agree
12.	Fire extinguishers	3.75	0.86	Agree
13.	Communication facilities	3.86	0.91	Agree
14.	Spraying facilities	3.60	0.60	Agree
15.	Safety gadgets	3.88	0.87	Agree
16.	Workshop clothing	4.59	0.56	Agree
17.	Lavatories	4.81	0.40	Agree
18.	Tool kits	4.11	0.91	Agree
19.	Training manuals	3.59	0.42	Agree

Data presented in Table 2 show that the respondents agreed on all the items as facilities for empowering individuals for self-employment. The standard deviation shows that the respondents are close on their responses based on the mean range of 3.60 to 4.97.

Table 3: Mean Responses of Respondents on the Challenges of TVET in Empowering Individuals for Self-employment in Nigeria

N = 127

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Inadequate funding of TVET programmes	4.43	0.73	Agree
2.	Poor image and status of TVET	4.51	0.72	Agree
3.	Inadequate machine, tools and materials	4.18	0.85	Agree
4	High teacher student ratio	3.91	0.86	Agree
5	Unavailability of consumable materials for practicals	3.76	0.90	Agree
6	Poor maintenance culture	4.06	0.86	Agree
7	Poor condition of service for TVET teachers	4.56	0.61	Agree
8	Lack of relevant and up-to-date text books	4.47	0.74	Agree
9	Lack of electrical power supply	4.13	0.83	Agree
10	Inadequate workshops/laboratories	4.02	0.81	Agree
11	Inadequate number of TVET schools/skills acquisition centres	4.27	0.73	Agree
12	Constant power outages	4.17	0.83	Agree
13	Poor teachers' skills in ICT	4.39	0.67	Agree
14	No starter packs for graduates of TVET	4.01	0.72	Agree
15	No loan facilities for TVET graduates to establish	4.21	0.76	Agree
16	Derogatory remarks about TVET students/graduates	4.71	0.46	Agree
17	Inadequate teachers for entrepreneurship education	4.69	0.47	Agree
18	Inadequate TVET teachers/trainers	4.44	0.69	Agree
19	Performance of TVET graduates not measurable to industrial requirements	3.89	0.91	Agree
20	Theoretical based curriculum against practical skill acquisition	3.75	0.84	Agree

Data presented in Table 3 show 18 challenges of TVET in empowering individuals for self-employment in Nigeria. The mean values range from 3.75 - 4.71 and standard deviation 0.46 – 0.91.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings presented in Table 1 show the empowerment strategies for self-employment through Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Individuals need to be empowered in order to go into self-employment. This agrees with Abdulkarim (2002) Osuala (2004) that it is necessary to empower individuals for self-employment through capacity building and entrepreneurship education.

The study found 19 training facilities for empowering individuals for self-employment through TVET. Little or nothing can be achieved in any TVET programme without facilities. This concurs with one of the principles of TVET that there is a minimum standard within which TVET should not be attempted Okoro (2000), Olaitan (1996).

It was also found that Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has challenges in empowering individuals for self-employment in Nigeria. These challenges pose a serious set back to the development of TVET in Nigeria. This is in agreement with Anyakoha (2009), Obi (2011), Anaele, Asouzu, Usman (2014) that unemployment and its attendant consequences cannot be reduced unless challenges and obstacles to self-employment are drastically reduced.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study have implications for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria have to be properly developed and positioned to reduce unemployment and its associated social vices like raping, kidnapping, ritual killing, armed robbery prevalent in Nigeria. This can be realized by empowering and equipping individuals with technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills for self-employment through Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

CONCLUSION

Meaningful progress towards the attainment of vision 20-2020 can only be made if Nigerian gives Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) its rightful place for technological advancement. The major role of TVET is to empower individuals for paid or self-employment. When people are empowered, the community is empowered and when the community is empowered, the nation is better off. This will eventually reduce the social vices associated with poverty as a result of unemployment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) should be backed up with entrepreneurial education to enhance self-employment.
2. Public/private partnership in the funding and management of TVET should be encouraged.
3. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) should be related to the employment requirements of the Communities/States.
4. Orientation programmes should be carried out to enlighten the general public on the employment value of TVET.
5. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) subjects should be more practical oriented and this can be facilitated through adequate provision of facilities and instructional materials.

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