



## **Investment In Vocational And Technology Education: Panacea For National Development And Security**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper seeks to view Vocational and Technology Education as a panacea for national development. Three research questions and one hypothesis was adopted in the study. Survey research design was employed in the study. The population covers a total of 535 experts in tertiary institutions in the department of vocational and technical education. Random sampling was used to sample out 56 experts in the department of vocational and technology education from two states in Nigeria. These include Rivers and Bayelsa State.

The researcher developed an instrument titled “Investment in Vocational and Technology Education” (IVTE). The data was analysed using mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis was analysed using Z-test. Findings obtained from research question 1 table 1 revealed that item 1, 2, and 3 is highly effective on increased relevance of schooling to likely occupational futures of vocational and technology education graduates. Findings obtained from research question 2 table 1 revealed that item 4, 5 and 6 is highly effective on investment in vocational and technology education program have on youth empowerment. Findings obtained from research question 3 table 1 revealed that item 7, 8 and 9 is highly effective on Vocational and Technology education program towards poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations to those who do not succeed academically. Findings from table 4 revealed that z-calculated value of 0.89 is less than z-critical value of 2.576. This implies that the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it was stated that there is no significance difference between investments in vocational and technology education program and poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations on youth empowerment. Finally, it was recommended amongst others that government at all levels should invest more in Vocational and Technology Education as a guide against brain-drains and significantly alleviate overdependence on aids from the developed nations and educational organizations.

**Keywords:** Vocational and Technology, National Development, Security, Education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Vocational and Technology education has always had attractions to policy-makers since it seems to kill several birds with the same stone. Thus justifications for investment are frequently couched in terms of one or more of increased relevance of schooling to likely occupational futures; reductions in youth unemployment as a result of the acquisition of employable skills; increased economic development arising from improvements in the quality and skill levels of the working population; poverty reduction

through giving access to higher income occupations to those who do not succeed academically; and transformation of attitudes amongst youth to favour occupations where there are some employment prospects.

According to Foster (2015), Vocational and Technology Education Training is a way of increasing the relevance of schooling to occupational futures. He argued that academic schools were in fact perceived as Vocational and Technology since they led to the most desirable modern sector jobs and that Vocational and Technology schools would inevitably be regarded as inferior since they were oriented towards vocations that were relatively unattractive. They would always be a second best option unless conditions in the wider labour market changed.

Vocational and Technology Education have had a slow start and developed less quickly than other forms of education in Nigeria. This was partly due to the fact that the voluntary agencies that pioneered western education in Nigeria were unable to popularize Vocational and Technology Education on the same scale as the literary education. In any case, the Christian Missions were more interested in the natives' ability to read and interpret the bible and literary subjects than in their ability to turn 'screws and prime water pumps'. The situation was further complicated by the fact that most of the British policy makers were literary men and women who had studied classics at the University of Oxford. Fafunwa in Ovbiagele (2007 declared "the highest level of Vocational and Technology Education was the degree course in Mechanical, Civil, Electrical, Agricultural and Chemical Engineering run by all, but one of the six Nigeria universities in the late 60s and early 70s. Though there were about five post-secondary Vocational and Technology colleges in the same period, these institutions only trained people in Commerce, Accountancy, Secretary Ship, at Diploma level and for professional bodies like the City and Guild of London Institute.

The National Policy on Education document in Nigeria attaches great importance to Vocational and Technology Education. This is because it is one of prime movers for achieving the desired technological and economic development of Nigeria.

Prior to this new consciousness, there had been a two-fold criticism of Nigeria educational and training system. Firstly, the system was not geared effectively enough towards the realities and needs of the labour market; that is, it was not adequately employment- oriented. Secondly, there was insufficient system's facilities and manpower towards solution of the country's most pressing problems, it was not adequately service oriented.

Generally, Education is a variable tool for national development which requires deliberate plan to suit the developmental needs of a nation. More so, it is geared towards the system producing the right type of manpower in the right quality and quantity for nation development. It is a process that enables the individuals to live as useful and acceptable members of a society. An individual may go through liberal and general education to become useful to himself and to the society at large. An adult, who did not have an opportunity of formal education, maybe directly or indirectly involve in education in the informal way. Okoye (2002) opined that an educated man is the person, who is socially, morally, intellectually and physically useful to the society.

It is no gain saying that societal norms and values are prerequisites for a person to fit into any society, hence the need for the acquisition of Vocational and Technology skills and competence for self-relevance. For any developing nation, the level of economic growth is tied to the level of technology that exists therein. Technology, mean the ability to improve on the ways things are done for better performance, and it is only through the application of appropriate technologies that the skilful can be made functional in our society. There is no doubt that the nations of the world that are technologically and economically strong have the story of their success rooted directly in investment in Vocational and Technology Education.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The study looked at investment in vocational and technology education: panacea for national development and security. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent of increased relevance of schooling to likely occupational futures of vocational and technology education graduates.
2. Find out the extent to which investment in vocational and technology education program have on youth empowerment.
3. Find out the extent to which vocational and technology education program towards poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations to those who do not succeed academically.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions served as a guide for the study:

1. What is the extent of increased relevance of schooling to likely occupational futures of vocational and technology education graduates?
2. What is the extent to which investment in vocational and technology education program have on youth empowerment?
3. What is the extent to which vocational and technology education program towards poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations to those who do not succeed academically?

### **Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significance difference between investments in vocational and technology education program and poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations on youth empowerment.

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Concept of Education and National Development**

According to National Policy on Education (2013), Vocational and Technology Education is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education. The study of technology and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitude, and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of the economic and social life of Nigerians. It further expatiated the concept of Vocational and Technology education to include: an integral part of general education, a means of preparing for participation in world of work, an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenships, which is an instrument for promoting environmentally health sustainable development.

#### **The Concept of Sustainable National Development**

The most interesting aspect of sustainable National Development is the fact that it puts in to consideration the present conditions of people as well as not compromising those that come later. Therefore, the concept of sustainable national development remains the modern parameter of measuring development. The Bruntland Commission, (2007) defined sustainable development as “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.” Moreover, Munasinghe (2004), defines sustainable national development as a process of improving the range of opportunities that will enable individual humans and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potential over a sustained period of time while maintaining the resilience of economic, social and environmental systems.

Age (2005), identified some objectives which sustainable national development which include among others increase capital income and employment, promoting human welfare satisfying basic needs and protecting the environment. From the above objectives, there are common phenomenon which they all shared; that is prioritizing the development of the present generation without compromising the future generation.

#### **Education and Sustainable National Development: The Relationship**

In all nations, Nigeria inclusive, education remains the instrument for effective national development. Development is championed through education, which is often assumed to have significant influence.

Education entails the enlightenment of people in their ways of pursuit in life. Development is associated with a positive change in the condition of either individual groups, communities or even a country as a whole (Umoh, 2005).

Education and sustainable national development are interwoven, intertwined, and interconnected. While, sustainable national development is geared towards producing or creating something new or more advanced for the society and its members, on the other hand, education is a tool which can enhance the desired sustainable development. Umoh, 2005 therefore, refers education and sustainable development as two sides of the same coin. The fact that education and sustainable development shows glaring connectivity probably explained why scholars emphasized the need for education for the purpose of achieving the desired sustainable development.

Ebong (2006), opined education as a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture through formal and informal training of people in the society. He stated that education deals with mental, physical, psychological and social development of the citizens in a given society. He further stated that “the goal of education in man power development is aimed at national growth and development” Ebong (2006) advocated for any country therefore, to attain sustainable national development, “there is need for skilled man power and those skills required are basic ingredients for national development and can only be acquired through education”.

Education provides consciousness, awareness and enlightenment to individuals in order to properly pursue their aspirations and yearnings. It is also mentioned by Olubademo (2006) that educated population that can command skills necessary for sustainable economic growth and a better quality of life. Sustainable national development can therefore be seen as the target goal since it is meant for the society and its members. Education however remains the instrument for achieving and attaining the target goal.

Upon this background, education seems to directly determine whether sustainable national development is going to be achieved or not and therefore, the need for a well-structured educational system that will enhance the achievement of the aforementioned development.

### **Development and National Security**

Development generally has to do with dynamics; positive development connotes progressive changes in everyday usage of the term. However, the focus of this discourse is national development. Development economics emerged in the post second war eras, since then, the meaning of national development had really not been fixed and consistent. The 1960s was seen as the development decade. Between the 1960s to the early 1970s, development was seen as synonymous with economic growth. Many theorists as Rostow (1952) and Harrod and Domar (1957), among others proposed models of development, generally identifying structural changes, savings and investments as the source of economic development and growth. It was assumed that as the economy grows and output increases, there will be more happiness and improved welfare arising from the pull of resources which if well distributed would have generally improved the well-being of the masses. The basic assumption was that in so much as the economy grows, trickledown effect will at least lead to improvement for everybody in the economy and standard of living would generally improve.

It was discovered that misery, poverty, unemployment, etc. grew worse vis-à-vis economic growth. This prompted a redefinition of development to mean a growing economy in addition to even distribution of resources and reduction in poverty, unemployment, inflation among other social undesirables. In the 1970s, capacity became a key determinant in the definition of development. At this time, the ability to understand nature and transform it to meet human needs became the focus of the development. According to Nnoli (2008), a developed economy is one that had a high capacity to transform nature and its inter-human environment to meet the needs of the society.

Development defines a dialectical phenomenon in which man and society interact with their physical, biological and inter-human environments transforming them to better humanity at large and being transformed in the process. Development therefore connotes a high ability to exploit nature for the improvement of the greatest good of the greatest number in society.

### **National Security**

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) National security may be defined to as chronic threats such as hunger disease and repression. Security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities. Security may also be defined as the state of being or making safe secure from danger, etc.

Essentially, security must be related to the presence of peace, safety, happiness and the protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis, threats to human injury among others. The presence of peace could facilitate progress. Security is not a discrete or measurable variable in quantitative terms. But spending on security can be used as proxy to quantify the volume of security especially if the spending is effective.

At the inception of every government, the President or Governor swears to an oath to among other things protect life and property. So security is a key concern of government (at all tiers) in Nigeria.

### **The Role of Educational Investment in National Development and Security**

Since the late 1980s, much of the attention of macroeconomists has focused on long-term issues, notably the effects of government policies on the long-term rate of economic growth. This was in recognition that human capital and technological advancement are the two big endogenous driving influences promoting sustainable economic development (Schulz, 2002). Now, people take human capital investment as more important to economic growth. This emphasis reflects the recognition that the difference between prosperity and poverty for a country depends on how fast it grows its human capital over time. In this context, education was found to be fundamental in the development of human capital (Foster and Rosenzweig, 2009). Thus the stock of education or human capital, usually proxied by average years of schooling in the working-age population was found to influence human development. Worldwide, education is viewed as a principal route out of poverty in many countries. Such an important attachment to education can be established based on the investment that goes towards education in relation to other programmes in most countries (Knack and Keefer, 2010).

Many countries of the world have allocated huge sums of money in their national budgets to enhance attainment of education to the citizens (World Bank, 2010). Education is attracting growing interest from economic policy-makers, perhaps for two main reasons. First, the best available economic evidence suggests that rising educational attainment is an important influence on economic growth. Secondly, education accounts for a sizeable share – around 14 per cent in the world of public expenditure (Barro and Lee, 2001). The expansion of formal education and training in developed countries in recent years has had substantial and easily observed implications for the skill levels and skill structures of the populations and employed workforces of these countries.

Governments, policy makers, and civil society have emphasized that developing countries need to invest more in education and ensure that systems of education are efficiently managed so that the limited funds allocated to this sector have maximum impact, and that cost-recovery measures are adopted (Crespo and Lutz, 2007). For instance in the Sub-Saharan African, investments towards education account for between 25% to 60% of the national budgets of these countries (Lutz et al, 2007). During Kenya's independence there was shortage of skilled labour which limited the growth expansion of the country.

In Nigeria, about 30% of the national budget goes to education. This investment goes towards enhancing the free primary education, subsidized secondary education and loaning to the students at higher education of learning besides the direct cost that the government incurs in training students at the university levels (Njuguna, 2008).

The link between education and economic growth in some of the early work on the economics of education was based on the argument that a major effect of education is that an improved labour force has an increased capacity to produce. Because better-educated workers are more literate and numerate, they are easier to train. It should be easier for them to learn more complex tasks. In addition, they should have better work habits, particularly awareness of time and dependability with eventual reflection on the outputs from their work (Temple, 2009). But exactly how education increases productivity, how

important it is, and in what ways it is important are questions that have no definite answers and have not been evaluated in Nigeria. A shortage of educated people may limit growth, but it is unclear that a more educated labor force will increase economic growth. It is also unclear what kind of education contributes most to growth general schooling, technical formal training, or on-the-job training and what level of education contributes most to growth primary, secondary, or higher education. Moreover, there has been considered demand for salary increment for the working force in Nigeria, which the government has continued to fulfil by providing most of the well educated workforce with higher salaries, yet it is not clear whether the increased salaries for the workforce contribute to increased productivity and therefore improved economic growth in the country. Finally, although it is possible that investment in education may reflect positively on increased economic growth in the country, there are other externalities that may not have been anticipated that may affect the overall growth of the country and therefore limit the intended multiplier effect of the increased investment on the education and positive economic growth. These externalities have rarely been determined in Nigeria in the wake of increased investments on education.

### **The Role of Educational Investment in Nigeria Economy**

The role education plays in the national development of any nation cannot be over-emphasized. It has been established that no country can develop beyond her educational level. The realization of the economic development, advancement or independence of any nation is a function of the educational capacity of the working class or the decision makers of that nation.

Education has been recognized globally as a veritable and strategic venture pivotal to economic transformation of any nation (Odeleye, 2013). The significance of education is not only in the area of providing the much needed human capital or resources but it also acts as an agent in developing the necessary technological tools and know-how for economic take-off. Many discoveries have been unravelled which have tremendously contributed to a shift from manual to electronic enabled methods of processing in every sector of the economy – service, manufacturing or mining – through researches.

In Nigeria, one of the challenges in the education sector is the skewness nature in the trend of recurrent expenditure on education. In 2015 and 2016, the Federal government budget for education was N392.4 billion and N369.6 billion representing 15.05% and 9.32% respectively of the total budget. This shows the insensitivity of the government to educational development when compared to Ghana 31% allocation of budget to education. This allocation is far below the 26% recommended by the United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for developing countries.

However, this paper is focused on desirable investment in education for sustainable economic development in Nigeria. It is worthy of note that education provides the needed human resources for economic transformation of any nation. This assertion is supported by Afolabi and Loto (2012), when they emphasized that a developed economy is proud of ample human manpower capable of enhancing the growth of a nation. Ajayi and Afolabi (2009), remarked that education in Nigeria is to a large extent considered as essential tool which will bring about the actualization or receipt of the necessary skills, character, values agility that will not only foster national unity but national development and self-actualization. It is therefore crystal clear that education trains the minds of people of a particular society for the purpose of making them relevant, useful and adequately preparing them to immensely contribute to national development. It shows that the needed manpower for economic growth and advancement cannot be actualized outside education. The quality of the products of education such as teachers, engineers, medical personnel, economist, accountants, lawyers etc is the determinants of the success of Educational Investment in Nigeria Economy.

Edoren (2014) stated that the effort of the successive government in Nigeria to improve the quality of education has been commendable. The Nigerian government commitment has been felt in the areas of the implementation of compulsory education, primary to junior secondary school, through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, the introduction of Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) Act of 2008, Reviewed of the national Policy on Education, the monumental increase in the

number of enrolment of students into primary and secondary education most especially Muslim girls and nomadic education, the establishment and implementation of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the inauguration of Presidential Task Force on Education in 2011 and deepen relationship with international organizations such as Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) among others are areas of investment in Vocational and Technology Education in Nigeria.

**METHODS**

Survey research design was employed in the study. The population covers a total of 535 experts in tertiary institutions in the department of vocational and technical education. The figure was obtained from heads of departments in the various institutions offering vocational and technology education department. Random sampling was used to sample out 56 experts in the department of vocational and technology education from two states in Nigeria. These include Rivers and Bayelsa State.

The researcher developed an instrument titled “Investment in Vocational and Technology Education” (IVTE). The instrument is a four point rating scale consisting of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE) and Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE). The response options were weighed as 4, 3, 2 and 1. The instrument is a questionnaire item consisting of nine (9) questions.

IVTE was subjected to face validation by two experts in the department of Technical education in Rivers State University. The data was analysed using mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis was analysed using Z-test.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Research Question 1**

*What is the extent of increased relevance of schooling to likely occupational futures of vocational and technology education graduates?*

Table 1: Increased relevance of schooling to likely occupational futures of vocational and technology education graduates

| <b>S/No</b>  | <b>Items</b>  | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b>   | <b>Decision</b> |
|--------------|---|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1            | Schooling in vocational and technology education creates job for graduates.                                     | 3.46        | 0.50        | HE              |
| 2            | Schooling aid in developing self-employability skill in vocational and technology education graduates.          | 3.41        | 0.49        | HE              |
| 3            | Schooling through vocational and technology education create a sustainable investment background for graduates. | 3.54        | 0.49        | HE              |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |   | <b>3.47</b> | <b>0.49</b> | <b>HE</b>       |

Findings obtained from research question 1 table 1 revealed that item 1, 2, and 3 is highly effective on increased relevance of schooling to likely occupational futures of vocational and technology education graduates.

**Research Question 2**

*What is the extent to which investment in vocational and technology education program have on youth empowerment?*

Table 2: Investment in vocational and technology education program has on youth empowerment

| S/No         | Items   | Mean        | SD          | Decision  |
|--------------|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 4            | Vocational education program have given room for youth development                            | 3.52        | 0.50        | HE        |
| 5            | Vocational education program aid youths towards self-sustainability.                          | 3.32        | 0.47        | HE        |
| 6            | Vocational education program have given youths the opportunity to be the employers of labour. | 3.54        | 0.50        | HE        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |   | <b>3.46</b> | <b>0.49</b> | <b>HE</b> |

Findings obtained from research question 2 table 1 revealed that item 4, 5 and 6 is highly effective on investment in vocational and technology education program have on youth empowerment.

**Research Question 3**

*What is the extent to which vocational and technology education program towards poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations to those who do not succeed academically?*

Table 3: Vocational and Technology education program towards poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations to those who do not succeed academically

| S/No         | Items  | Mean        | SD          | Decision  |
|--------------|--|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 7            | Vocational education program as created opportunity for economic growth in the society.                          | 3.48        | 0.50        | HE        |
| 8            | Vocational education program as created opportunity for income generation among timid youths.                    | 3.53        | 0.50        | HE        |
| 9            | Vocational education program as created opportunity for poverty reduction among developing youths in the society | 3.61        | 0.51        | HE        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |  | <b>3.54</b> | <b>0.50</b> | <b>HE</b> |

Findings obtained from research question 3 table 1 revealed that item 7, 8 and 9 is highly effective on Vocational and Technology education program towards poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations to those who do not succeed academically.

**Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significance difference between investments in vocational and technology education program and poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations on youth empowerment.

Table 4: Z-test analysis between investments in vocational and technology education program and poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations on youth empowerment

| s/no | Items   | N  | M    | S.D  | Z-Cal | Z-Crit | Decision        |
|------|---|----|------|------|-------|--------|-----------------|
| 1    | Investments in vocational and technology education program                                | 56 | 3.46 | 0.49 | 0.89  | 2.576  | No significance |
| 2    | Poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations on youth empowerment | 56 | 3.54 | 0.50 |       |        |                 |

Findings from table 4 revealed that z-calculated value of 0.89 is less than z-critical value of 2.576. This implies that the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it was stated that there is no significance difference between investments in vocational and technology education program and poverty reduction through giving access to higher income occupations on youth empowerment.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Findings from research question 1 revealed that schooling creates occupational futures of vocational and technology education graduates. This is in line with the view of Afolabi and Loto (2012), that emphasized that a developed economy is proud of ample human manpower capable of enhancing the growth of a nation.

Further, Findings obtained from research question 2 and 3 revealed that investment in vocational and technology education program is effective on youth empowerment and poverty reduction. This is also in tune with the view of Ajayi and Afolabi (2009), that opined that education in Nigeria is to a large extent considered as essential tool which will bring about the actualization or receipt of the necessary skills, character, values agility that will not only foster national unity but national development and self-actualization.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the foregoing is very lucid that the position of Vocational and Technology education is a prerequisite in the development of any nation, Nigeria inclusive. This can be advised through the acquisition of relevant Vocational and Technology skills, knowledge and abilities for self-employment or paid employment. Productivity today line in technology for work as well as the rate of changes in the technology world of work, so that the overall quality and reliability of Vocational and Technology education in Nigeria can be improved upon if the inhibiting factors are to a great extent, if not totally removed.

From the fore-going statements, it is evident that Vocational and Technology education stand as imperatives for socio-economic and political stability in Nigeria. Jimn Gang (2004) posited that there is need for a total overhauling of the educational system and that in many fields, course work available only lead to rising unemployment, poverty and misery. He concluded that the situation could only be curbed if syllabuses were innovated, re-engineered or re-designed to include disciplines that build up the fighter-spirit needed for today's intellectual battles of life. For progress to be made in Nigeria, the challenges confronting technical education must be recognized and fought vigorously. Since a focus on technical – vocational education will help ameliorate the incessant youth restiveness in Nigeria, advocating for a technically-oriented economy will not be in the wrong direction. There should be a comprehensive reform in Technical and Vocational Education as an attempt to uplift the programme since it is the only panacea to a technological underdo in Nigeria.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study examines investment in Vocational and Technology Education for National development and security in Nigeria. Education has been recognized globally as a veritable and strategic venture pivotal to economic transformation of any nation. The research therefore recommends;

1. That the government at all levels should invest more in Vocational and Technology Education as a guide against brain-drains and significantly alleviate overdependence on aids from the developed nations and educational organizations.
2. Adequate resources should be allocated to technical and vocational education. Inadequate funds affect the provision of essentials such as well – equipped laboratories and workshops, relevant textbooks and training manuals.
3. Vocational and technology education requires skilled and proficient teachers. Teachers' preparation should be given a priority attention. There is the need for regular in – service training for teachers of technology to upgrade their skills. Periodical industrial training for teacher is a sine-qua-non in other to keep them abreast with the technological changes in the industry
4. It is important that Vocational and Technology Education is made compulsory at all levels – from primary up to university level. This measure would go a long way to improve the level

of awareness and increase the literacy level. The more people are educated the more security conscious they are of themselves and their environment.

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