Journal of Community & Communication Research
ISSN: 2635-3318
Volume 10, Number 1, June 2025
Accessible at: https://jccr.sccdr.org

SUSTAINABILITY OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUNDING FOR HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Ime, E .O[1]; Udoudo, N. J,[2]; Ekong, E. A[3] and Udom, U. G[4]
[1, 3& 4]Department of Agricultural Education, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria
[2]Department of Industrial Technology Education, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The paper discussed the need for a funding policy for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria as a necessity for its sustainability and human capital development. It examined the concepts of TVET, funding, and funding policy, the historical perspective of TVET funding patterns in Nigeria, the challenges of TVET funding in Nigeria, and the need for a TVET funding policy. The authors are of the view that financing of education, especially regarding TVET, proved to be a very challenging and thorny issue in Nigeria. Inadequate funding of TVET institutions can negatively impact the schools' contribution to human capital development. Inadequate funding manifests in insufficient training machines, tools, equipment, and consumable materials, as well as poor staffing. The authors concluded that adequate funding of TVET will facilitate its sustainability, which in turn will lead to the sustainable development of Nigeria. The authors recommended, among others, that a funding policy should be developed for TVET in Nigeria, where other sources of funding should be exploited in addition to the already existing ones.

Keywords: Funding, Funding policy, TVET, Sustainability, Human capital development

INTRODUCTION

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the aspect of education that leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2020) and Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defined Technical, vocational Education and Training (TVET) as those aspect of the educational process involving, in additional to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of knowledge, practical skills and attitudes relating to occupations in various sector of economic and social life. UNESCO maintained that TVET embrace all forms and aspects of education that are technical and vocational in nature, provided either in educational institutions or under their authority, by public authorities, the private sector or through other forms of organized education, formal or non-formal, aiming to ensure that all members of the community have access to the pathways of lifelong learning. The Federal Republic of Nigeria views TVET as

i. an integral part of general education;
ii. a means of preparing for occupational fields and effective participation in the world of work;
iii. an aspect of lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship;
iv. An instrument for promoting environmentally sound, sustainable development;
v. a method of facilitating poverty alleviation

TVET involves the study of technology and related sciences for the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, and knowledge relating to occupations in the various sectors of the economy and social life. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is globally recognized for its role in preparing people for dynamic engagement in occupations of functional value and effective source of skilled workforce (Duhu, 2020). TVET is essential because it creates jobs for sustainable living and provides the training that individuals require to catch up with the dynamic and ever-changing living standard in a fast-growing technological world. TVET has been seen as a global solution to socioeconomic development and has been known to be a central pillar for nations achieving economic stability (Mack, 2024). Ladan (2023) noted that for a country to progress socially, economically, and technologically, it requires productive and innovative citizens, the majority of whom can create job opportunities rather than solely seeking employment. This can only be possible by improving the quality of TVET programmes through adequate funding, especially amidst a dwindling economy as in Nigeria today. This paper, therefore, discusses the need for an effective TVET funding policy in Nigeria as a necessity for its sustainability and enhanced human capital development.

The Concept of Funding and Funding Policy

Funding is the act of providing funds or financial resources for a particular purpose on a continuous basis. It is the act of providing money for a particular purpose. According to Duhu (2020), funding is an absolutely crucial input of any educational system. This is because it provides the essential purchasing power with which the education system acquires its human and material resources. Oviawe (2020) noted that the availability and effective utilization of funds and other resources sustain the development of any activity or programme, including educational programmes. Such funds should be adequate to cater for the programme for which they are provided. Oviawe(2018) posited that adequate provision of funds is a vital variable in the success of any education system. This is because funds provide the fundamental resources (purchasing power) for the system to acquire material and human resources. The author pointed out that TVET is capital-intensive, and the

expensive nature of TVET does not lie with its recipients but also with its providers (government). The need for adequate funding of TVET programmes is based on the fact that, unlike general education programmes, TVET programmes require tools, equipment, machines, and other facilities for effective teaching and learning. The importance of these facilities for the overall success of any educational programme, especially TVET programmes, is not contestable. Students are supposed to be trained with modern equipment to meet the demand of the contemporary labour market. Teachers of TVET courses need to be professionally developed through attending conferences (locally, nationally, and internationally), workshops, symposia, seminars, and in-service training, and all these require funds. Oviawe (2020) further asserted that the following justify greater funding need of TVET programmes: purchase of tools, equipment and machines; regular repairs and maintenance of equipment; manpower development; provision of consumables materials; equipping of library; salaries and allowance of staff; building and maintenance of workshops and classrooms; security needs and research in TVET. The author therefore suggested that to provide qualitative TVET programmes in Nigeria, adequate budgetary provisions should be made by education providers. To ensure high quality TVET programme that is relevant, there is a need for an effective TVET funding policy in Nigeria.

The TVET Funding System in Nigeria: Historical Perspective

The issue of funding TVET programmes in Nigeria has been a thorny issue for a very long time. According to Okoli et al (2016), the nonchalant attitude of Nigerian governments towards
funding of TVET dates back to the colonial days. During the pre-colonial era, TVET was entrenched in the African Traditional Education system, which was transmitted non-formally through the apprenticeship method in which parents sponsored their children, and functionalism was effectively

built into societal life. During the colonial era, TVET was not given the priority it deserved, not until the Phelps Stokes report, when the colonial government attempted to promote formal TVET. Despite the renewed efforts, the TVET programme faced many challenges, prominent among which was funding. The authors further stated that the colonial government did not prioritize TVET because Nigerians looked down on the programme and pursued grammar school education in anticipation of white collar jobs in air-conditioned offices instead of blue-collar jobs. From then, TVET suffered and is still suffering serious neglect in the post-independence era.

In supporting the above viewpoint, Osidipe (2019) posited that the problem of poor funding of TVET started sequel of the concerns raised by the World Bank's rate of returns studies, which showed higher returns on investment in general education than vocational education. Consequently, there was a drastic shift of interest to the funding of general education at the expense of the funding of TVET. During the period between 1980 and 1990, the World Bank's lending for TVET to the African region dropped sharply by more than 40%, compared to other parts of the world. This adversely affected the education and training projects financed by the bank and also undermined external support for TVET. From that point, the attractiveness of TVET began to wane, and provision of education in Nigeria largely shifted towards the general education sector while the TVET sub-sector was considered as an option for the low achievers.

Financing of education in Nigeria has principally been through government grants which continued till the 1970's before the establishment of the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in October 1971, which is an agency of

the government established to be part of the collaboration for the sharing of funding burden between the private and public sectors on recognition of the importance of Vocational Technical Education in Nigeria. This agency provides a link between academic institutions and the world of work through the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). The establishment of the ITF led to wider participation in the private and public sectors in the financing of TVET programmes,

In Nigeria, there are two major sources of finance for TVET: internal and external. The internal sources include school fees, income from investments or educational entertainment activities, sales of school items, and consultancy services, among others (Duhu, 2020). The external sources include government grants, subventions, loans, donations from non-governmental organisations, endowment funds, and appeal funds. The finance obtained from these sources could be utilized in the execution of TVET in terms of capital and recurrent expenditure. Oviawe (2022) and Mack (2024) listed the sources of finance for vocational education to include the following: Budgetary allocation by the Government, Students' school fees, Endowment fund/Donations, Companies and non-governmental organizations, Industrial Training Fund, Sales and Services, Alumni Association, and Aids, The host community: International Aids and Parents-Teachers Association (PTA):

Oviawe (2020) posited that despite the efforts of the government in funding TVET programmes, it remains grossly inadequate due to the following reasons: inadequate budgetary provision from the government, over dependence on the government for funds, lack of financial commitment to the programme by stakeholders, and poor gesture from the workplace. The author concluded that there is a need to have proper funding of TVET programmes to facilitate the sustainability of the programmes and production of skilled graduates for the sustainable development of Nigeria.

Sustainability is the state of having well-balanced, steady, and effective use of human material and capital resources for total economic independence and development of the nation (Oviawe, 2020). It is the ability to sustain a programme for an indefinite period without damaging the environment or depleting the available resources. It is simply the act of maintaining a programme for a long time without causing it to become extinct because of the depletion of the resources that keep it alive. Oviawe stressed that sustainability is linked to sustainable development, which is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Adequate funding of TVET will facilitate its sustainability, which in turn will lead to the sustainable development of Nigeria.

Challenges of TVET Funding and the Need for a TVET Funding Policy in Nigeria.

The issue of poor funding of TVET programmes in Nigeria has been a thorny issue for a very long time. Over the years, Nigerian TVET programmes have been bedeviled with numerous challenges that have been affecting TVET programmes both in their inputs and outputs. Most of these challenges are tied to poor funding. Onwusa (2021**)** stated that the challenges of TVET are numerous, which include curriculum of technical vocational education; access and equity; public perception/estimation; economic relevance of vocational training; inadequate provision of funds; apathy of political holders/law makers; enrolment and gender disparity; non utilization of ICT in technical and vocational education and Nigerian value system. The

author noted that Technical and vocational institutions do not have enough workshops, tools, equipment, and materials for their practical work.

Sustainable financing of TVET to support skills development among students amidst a dwindling economy is very relevant to Nigeria's continued development for several reasons. First, Nigeria has a high youth unemployment rate. A well-funded TVET can equip young people with skills for paid employment, entrepreneurship, or further education, aligning with SDG 8, which is the provision of Decent Work and Economic Growth. (Kreinin and Aigner, 2022). Secondly, Nigeria's economy is heavily reliant on oil exports, and TVET can support diversification by developing skills in other sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services (Zubair, 2014). Thirdly, by providing skills training, TVET can help reduce poverty and inequality, aligning with SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) (Kreinin and Aigner, 2022); By extension, investing in TVET enhances Nigeria's human capital, which is an imperative for economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness (Oviawe, 2020). Lastly, TVET can address skills gaps in key industries, such as construction, healthcare, and technology, thus supporting Nigeria's economic development (Nungse and Sagbara, 2024).

In supporting the need for a well-articulated TVET funding policy in Nigeria, Oviawe (2020) posited that the attainment of TVET goals and objectives depends to a large extent on proper planning, efficient administration, and adequate funding. The author lamented that the current sources of funding TVET programmes in Nigeria, which include government grants, donations, and fees, seem to be inadequate to cater for the funding needs of TVET. These limited sources of funding for TVET programmes made it difficult to achieve effectiveness in teaching and learning because of their capital-intensive nature. To this end, Oviawe (2018) asserted that the government alone cannot take on the responsibility of funding TVET and that there is a need for public/private partnership in TVET funding.

Oviawe (2018) stated that TVET has suffered in the hands of general education administrators who, in many nations, have control over funds, especially when such funds are centrally controlled, and where TVET is jointly managed with general education. In the situation where the two are jointly managed, the likely personnel in control, for obvious reasons, is the general educator who hardly understands that TVET is much more capital-intensive and more financially demanding than general education. A way out is to separate the management of TVET from that of general education. This can be more precisely addressed in the TVET funding policy. One initiative in this direction was the establishment of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) at the national level and TVET boards at the State level, which has addressed the management issues of TVET to some extent. However, a lot still needs to be done by ensuring that only professional TVET educators with adequate expertise and insight in TVET policy making should be placed in control of TVET management.

Education is an expensive social venture that requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for the successful implementation of the educational programme (FRN, 2013). Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) today has shifted towards skill acquisition courses capable of making youths and adults self-reliant; hence, there is a clear need for the Nigerian Government to invest in it. Other countries, such as France, have taken a giant step toward making it work. The French National

Assembly approved the law on social modernization, which contains important measures concerning TVET and the right to employment. Duhu (2020) noted that Nigeria has joined other world counterparts in revamping and repositioning the TVET programme, which is geared towards ensuring a national system of education that will enable young people to see TVET as being lucrative and worthwhile.

Another reason to justify the need for an effective funding policy for TVET is that the present poor funding system has devastating effects on TVET programmes. One of the major implication of low funding of TVET in Nigeria, according to Wakili and Kwami (2024) is the production of low quality products (graduates) who were not adequately trained due to low funding of the programme as required, it is quite noted that none among the skills in TVET is not hand and saleable skills, and that the job requires proper use of tools and equipment with consumable materials like woods, metal electrical and electronic ships, computer gadgets and accessories. Therefore, if these items were lacking or inadequate, then proper training of the programme will not be achieved. In an attempt to demonstrate the commitment of TVET's graduates to the nation building, it is expected that the Federal Government should establish a network of quality control laboratories to ensure that the graduate is tested based on their ability to display practical skills acquired to reach the global standards.

Benefits of Proper Funding of TVET for Human Capital Development

Although Nigeria is facing difficult financial times, investing in TVET is a very worthwhile investment. This is because strengthening TVET systems and establishing proper monitoring and evaluation systems will enable governments to make more informed decisions about managing TVET institutions (Knight et al., 2021). Thus, TVET institutions can make decisions based on policy and provide courses that will benefit the wider society and promote economic, social, and industrial development. When TVET students are adequately trained, they can be creators of their destinies via self-employment. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a sustainable funding policy for the sustainability of Technical Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria.

The funding mechanism of Technical Vocational Education and Training Institutions (TVETI) can affect institutional behaviour and impact the manner in which monies are utilized. Thus, the need and how TVETIs are financed are important and can lead to proper management and administration for a better vocational system. The right TVET infrastructure can enhance TVETIs and provide the nation with professional, competent workers with the necessary competencies for healthy skills development (Mack,2024). TVET is known to be a vehicle for economic growth. Proper funding of the system will help TVET systems operate effectively and efficiently. Additionally, it will help with the management and administration of TVETIs.

Another important effect of effective funding of TVET is human capital development. Human capital development refers to an investment in people, which often results in bountiful gains.

Human capital development is based on the notion that people are a form of capital, and investing in TVET via financial contributions to TVET institutions will not only benefit the individual but the society at large.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that a funding policy for TVET in Nigeria is very imperative as it will facilitate its sustainability, which in turn will lead to sustainable human capital development in Nigeria. The ability of TVET to meet its envisioned goals in Nigeria depends largely on providing the proper funding mechanisms, which would lead to the production of high-quality skilled graduates with the attendant socio-economic benefits to the individuals and the society. By funding TEVT appropriately, the economy of Nigeria would be strengthened, school drop-out, attrition, and youth unemployment rates would be significantly reduced, and crime in the nation would be reduced equally. There is an imperative need for pro-active measures that would help in developing a policy and model to finance TVET for the sustained growth and human capital development of Nigeria

RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors made the following recommendations:

1. A funding policy should be developed for TVET in Nigeria to ensure its sustainability
2. Other sources of funding should be exploited in addition to the already existing ones
3. Multi-national companies should be made to contribute a certain percentage of their profits towards TVET funding as part of their cooperate social responsibilities.
4. International aid should be sourced by the Federal Government of Nigeria to boost the implementation of action plans for the TVET sector.
5. The management of TVET programmes should be separated from that of general education to reduce conflicts in fund allocation.

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