TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION AMIDST INFRASTRUCTURAL INADEQUACY, NEGATIVE PERCEPTION AND SECURITY CHALLENGE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper discussed technical and vocational business education amidst infrastructural inadequacy, negative perception and security challenge in Nigeria. The position of the paper is that effective technical and vocational business education cannot be given without adequate infrastructural facilities and staff required to implement the programme. The programme can only meet the needs of employers if it is given in an appropriate environment. This paper also discussed the problem of misconceptions in technical and vocational business education and expresses the need to provide broad-based, multi-disciplinary, technology and business education that correspond to what is done and what the students are being prepared for. The need to close the enrolment gap and to identify programmes of action for promoting interest in technical and vocational business education so as to reduce the impact of infrastructural inadequacy, negative perception and security challenge on the survival of technical and vocational business education cannot be over emphasized.

Keywords: infrastructural inadequacy, negative perception, security challenge, technical and vocational business education.

Introduction

Technical and vocational business education is designed to prepare individuals for gainful employment in particular occupation or trade. The aim of technical and vocational business education is to provide the individual with the skills that can be applied to any and every industry. As espoused by Enemali(2016), technical and vocational business education is one of the most effective human resource strategies that a nation needs to embrace in order to support wealth creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. To accomplish this mission, the individual must be given not only specialized knowledge and practical background to support the skills, but also practice in the operation the individuals must carry out at the workplace (Enemali, 2007).

FRN(2013) defines technical and vocational business education as those aspect of education 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. If the technical and vocational business education programme is well designed and implemented as planned, the following options will be available to the products of the system: they will secure employment in industry; they will set up their own business, become self-employed and employ others; and they

will pursue further technical education in post-secondary technical institutions such as Polytechnics, Colleges of Education (Technical) and Universities of Technology (FRN, 2013).

In order to optimize these options, technical and vocational business education institutions must have: a well-equipped workshops and laboratories with up-to-date equipment and facilities; a well-equipped library with technical and vocational business education journals, technical and business education books; a constant power supply in both rural and urban areas; an appropriate level of funding to be used to purchase consumable training materials for workshops and laboratories; qualified teachers with practical experience to provide quality training; and a well-organized scheme of Industrial Attachment in order to carry out some productive work (Aina, 2009).

Unfortunately, the once efficient public school system nurtured by Nigerian patriots since independence is today faced with obsolete equipment, adoption and application of in-appropriate instructional strategy in the teaching process, inadequate infrastructural facilities, outdated libraries and demotivational environment. Ewuga(2013) laments that our youths are educated in very harsh conditions and environment. Often, basic infrastructure is lacking to support the emphasis placed on education and training in the various policies.

In this paper, attempt was made to provide answers to the following questions: What is the state of technical and vocational business education policy and programmes amidst infrastructural inadequacy in Nigeria? What is the status of technical and vocational business education enrolment amidst negative perception in Nigeria? And what is the state of technical and vocational business education programmes amidst security challenge in Nigeria?

Answers to these questions are provided under technical and vocational business education amidst infrastructural inadequacy, technical and vocational business education enrolment amidst negative perception, and technical and vocational business education amidst security challenge.

Technical and Vocational Business Education Amidst Infrastructural Inadequacy

The first edition of the education policy document of the FRN which was published in 1977 and was revised in 1981 created in Nigeria Society a negative value for technical and vocational business education (Enemali, 1989). The earlier education policy document of the FRN perceived technical and vocational business education as a programme meant for those who cannot stand the rigour of the 6 year secondary schooling. This negative public attitude along with the poor and haphazard manner in which the pre-vocational and vocational subjects were implemented at the secondary school level in Nigeria reflect badly on school children and engender in them poor attitude that cannot be easily erased. It is to be expected that if the children develop negative attitudes towards technical and vocational business education at the lower level of education, it may be difficult, if not impossible for them to re-enter it at a later stage. Thus, to popularize technical and vocational business education and to encourage the students to learn to work and make money legitimately. This country must take a long time view of the source of the problem. Even the education policy document of the FRN (2013) plan in section 56 that a greater proportion of education expenditure shall continue to be devoted to technical and vocational business education at Federal and State levels has not been implemented. We are all aware of the fact that technical and vocational business education programmes with

ill-equipped workshop and laboratory facilities will not produce competencies required to successfully contribute to the rapidly evolving economic, technological and social environments.

The rate of technological development around the world calls for urgent action on different types of high technology and new working materials in the 21st century. No country in the world can develop technologically without a functional technical and vocational business education. India and the Asian Tigers would not have been where they are today without effective technical and vocational business education system. United States of America, Japan, Britain and other developed countries of the world embarked on adequate construction of schools, building equipment for effective training of skilled manpower right from primary school to tertiary level. They embarked on aggressive manpower production, training and retraining to meet changes in technological development (Olaitan, 1996).

Notwithstanding, Government has recognized that technical and vocational business education is an integral part of technological development, this recognition has not been translated into the provision of adequate funding to support this aspect of education. Thus, while technical and vocational business education has contributed to the development of developed countries of the world, Nigeria has neglected technical and vocational business education making it the orphan of Nigerian Education System (Ewuga, 2013). Nigeria is witnessing the distressing lack of infrastructure in most of the State and Federal Government technical institutions. Most of the technical institutions operate on make shift campuses. Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities with Departments of technical and vocational business education where teachers of students and teachers of teachers are trained, lack up-to-date equipment and infrastructural facilities and teaching materials to maintain a functional technical and vocational business education programme.For instance, Saidu et al(2016) reported that although technical and vocational business education is recognized as a source of job creation and economic development , there are several factors that hinder its development in Nigeria. These include poor enterprising culture , inadequate teachers, low patronage of its pogrammes in the school system, poor societal attitudes , and inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning.

In a study by Adjekpovu et . al (2016), it was reported that technical and vocational education is not making the desired contribution to national development because of inadequate funding, in-adequate infrastructure, societal neglect, in-appropriate teachers, and mismatch between training and the needs of industries .Molokwu et al(2015) established that technical and vocational education is unable to achieve its declared objectives because of its numerous challenges, including inadequate sensitization to publicize and vocational education, bureaucratic bottlenecks of policy makers, lack of enabling environment to attract private sector to participate in education and training , and poor implementation of technical and vocational business education policies, among others.

Oluyinka (2021)studied the management of technical and vocational education workshop and students' academic performance in Ondo State and reported that the state of facilities in the workshop is very poor. The author further established that there were non-functional training facilities which include workshop tools and equipment and these affect students' academic performance .Elom (2017) studied the material resources necessary for teaching metal work in technical colleges in Ebonyi State. The study employed survey design. The population was 75 and this was used, since there was no sampling . The result showed

that the most needed material resources were not available for teaching and learning metal work in technical colleges in Ebonyi State. In effect;

1. Students lack the opportunities to carry out real practical projects/exercises which are the hall mark of technical and vocational business education.
2. Performance test has given way to achievement tests.

There is truly no alternative to the provision of workshop and laboratory equipment and materials for technical and vocational business education. While it may be necessary to contemplate on cost reduction in the choice and selection of technical and vocational business education equipment, there is a minimum below which effective technical and vocational business education cannot be given, and if the course does not permit of the minimum of per capita cost, technical and vocational business education should not be given.

To optimize the goal of providing the students the skills for gainful employment in existing or expected posts, managers in technical institutions must take necessary steps to carry out their social responsibilities. Unless technical and vocational business education institutions are well-equipped with facilities to provide the skills that the students need, the call for graduates to be engaged in self-employment and entrepreneurship will not succeed.

Technical and vocational business education Enrolment Amidst Negative Perception

The poor enrolment into technical and vocational business education programmes is a trend that has been on for the past years. Enemali (1998) investigated the extent to which certain variables contribute to the declining enrolment in technical and vocational business education programmes in Kaduna polytechnic. The participants were 79 technical teachers. Variable Influencing Enrolment Questionnaire (VIEQA) was developed and personally administered by the researcher. The mean statistic, standard deviation and mean rank were used to analyse the data. It was found out that the social prestige of the employment to which the programme leads, the relevance of the programme to the needs and interest of participants, financial rewards in the employment were rated among the first three variables.

Similar studies were conducted by Marinho(2009), Okafor(2011), Adamu(2014), Okoye and Oker(2014), Oresanya et al (2014), Sodipo(2014) and Lecta(2016) . These authors reported that: technical and vocational business education failed to encourage acquisition of technical and entrepreneurial skills which are necessary for employment; technical and vocational business education programmes make little or no impact on the economic independence of the students; the graduates at entry level of employment are less equipped with the skills needed for employment; the dismal performance of the graduates in the labour market was due to faulty curricula in the Nigerian Universities; the enrolment trend is not encouraging as some of the students find themselves in the programme against their wish. Some of the students who applied to study engineering programme who were not accommodated are usually placed in the technical and vocational business education programmes; technical and vocational business education needs an indepth review that would enable the graduates respond to challenges in the labour market and field of work; the curriculum of technical and vocational business education is not adequate in producing industrially competent graduates; and business education curriculum content in Nigerian Federal Universities does not provide students with essential skills required for their employment after graduation.

Adjekpovu et. al (2016) opined that enrollment in technical and vocational education is declining because the citizens are not motivated to acquire necessary technical skills that can contribute to national development. Olaitan (1985) in Kehinde and Adewumi (2015)studied the perception of educators and uneducated towards technical and vocational education and reported that technical vocational business education has been taken to mean education for under achievers mentally retarded, physically handicapped, socially maladjusted and for drop out from the formal school system.Owenvibiugie et al (2021) assessed the level of acceptance of the students of technical vocational education in Catholic Secondary School in Edo State. The population of the study was 1424 . From the population ,356 students representing 25% was used. It was revealed that students do not appreciate technical and vocational education in Catholic schools and that Catholic beliefs influence students choice of technical vocational business education subjects .

These findings to a large extent reflect the situation as it concerns the preparation of technical and vocational business education teachers for Nigerian system of education. This leads to the pertinent question: What exactly is wrong with the content of technical and vocational business education programmes in Nigeria? With the risk of over simplification, it appears that: the programme we offer is either out of date, not in touch with the real world, too expensive, or simply inappropriate; the contents of some of the vocational courses we offer do not lead to multiple entry level employment; and the programme is not meeting the needs of students.

Presently, technical and vocational business education courses at both secondary and post-secondary schools levels are exemplified by metal work, woodwork, electrical and electronics, building, auto mechanic technology, and business education. The present mode of skill acquisition emphasizes skills specific to only one activity. The structure is such that the students who experienced the content at a lower level of education have virtually no chance of expanding their technological knowledge, skills and attitudes. Thus, the discipline base of technical and vocational business education in Nigeria, even at the tertiary education level, remains more or less like those of the village trade of the 19th century Europe (Enemali, 1997). Even though all technical and vocational business education Institutions in Nigeria are consistent in the teaching of six areas, namely, metal work, wood work, electricity electronics, building, auto-mechanics and vocational business education. There are four variations in the nomenclature/titles of degree awarded by the institutions. The degree titles for the same technical and vocational business education programme under National Universities Commission (NUC) are as follows: Bachelor of Education (Technical); Bachelor of Education (Technology); Bachelor of Technology (Education); and Bachelor of Science Education (Technology).

The current technical and vocational business education programmes are offered in various Departments, namely: Department of Vocational and Technology Education; Department of Industrial and Technology Education; Department of Education (Technical); Department of Technical Education, Department of Industrial Education and others. Both the Departments and the degree titles reflect the misconception in the profession. The key to this discourse lies in the differentiation between technical and technology (Wright, 1980). Technical implies specific skill training. The skill training has short term goals and it includes technical hardware processes and practical experience. Students are engaged in discrete or unit laboratory/technical laboratory oriented courses. Technology implies the study of technical means, namely: transportation,

communication, construction and manufacturing. This involves long term goals and it includes the study of relationships between humans and technology, including social, cultural and personal experiences. Students are engaged in broad-based laboratory oriented courses. These two terms cannot be used interchangeably.

Therefore, our students need to be moved from unit or technical laboratory-oriented courses to broad-based technology laboratory or vocational business oriented courses. Accordingly, the conversion required in the structure and content of technical and vocational business education programmes that will meet the demands of the expected levels of competence are as follows:Woodwork and building laboratories are easily converted to construction laboratory; auto mechanic and metal work laboratories are easily converted to mechanical laboratory; technical drawing, design and photography laboratories are easily converted to communication laboratory; and electrical/electronics laboratories are easily converted to electrical technology laboratory, management education, office technology education, accounting education, marketing education and cooperative education laboratories can be converted to vocational business education laboratory (Enemali, 2003). These courses must be taught in a "system" context. Students must be able to see construction, for example, as a total concept. This could start with introductory course, and would require a closure with a course which allows the students to use all the content in a single course. The name of the technical and vocational business education programme must correspond to what is done and what the students are being prepared for.

This probably explains why UNESCO Report (1990) stated that the changing nature of jobs will place a threefold demand on technical and vocational business education system, namely: the need to upgrade the educational background of individuals to incorporate the emergence of new body of knowledge; the growing interdependence of new technologies leading to the need for broad-based, cross-disciplinary education and training for all occupations; and a continual upgrading of the responsibilities of lower level of professional manpower facing much higher expected levels of competence than before. In order to meet this demand, UNESCO Report cited earlier confirmed that education must respond to change by integrating old and new technologies harmoniously. It must engender a sense of the future so as to prepare for change and constant renewals.

As a discipline, we must close the enrolment gap and maintain enrolment. We must have something to offer if we are to sell our programme. In this regard, students need the opportunity to enroll in broad-based, multi-disciplinary technology laboratory oriented courses. We must: market our programmes and make it clear to the Government to popularize it; attach importance to what we do as teachers and encourage the management to employ persons capable of teaching technical/business skills; make a cursory look at our tasks and make the best out of existing situation; and learn from what is happening to our discipline and respond to that knowledge with imagination and maximum effectiveness.

Technical and Vocational Business Education Amidst Security Challenge

Over the past years, insecurity has become a problem of serious concern to us all. Today, schools, churches, mosques, roads and our homes are no longer safe. This problem manifests itself in the form of ethnic militancy, armed robbery, kidnapping, and terrorism. We are all witnesses to the devastating effect of insecurity on institutions and on individuals across the

country. We do know that, academic activities can only thrive in safe and secured environment. Unfortunately, Government strategy in addressing this concern has centered mainly in the use of the armed forces to forestall threat to peace and security of the state. Towards this direction, it is thought that national security could best be guaranteed when the armed forces is adequately equipped and well prepared to do their jobs (Saminu, 2012).

The experiences of Nigerians over the past years suggest that security issues should never be separated from issues around the welfare of citizens. This is because the underlying causes of insecurity in Nigeria lie at the heart of lack of economic opportunities for citizens. Thus, security in Nigeria can be enhanced when the Government begins to sincerely address the problems of illiteracy, poverty, injustice, hunger, corruption and unemployment. For too long the wealth of this nation had been in the hands of a few elites. There is the need for leaders to invest in activities or projects that will be beneficial to the generality of the citizens. They should pay due attention to the welfare of all the citizens so as to engender in them love for their country.

Nigeria is blessed with abundant natural resources. These resources should be exploited to meet the real needs of all the citizens. As long as Nigeria continues to operate an economic system that support imported consumption and not local production of goods and services for all citizens, insecurity will continue to be on the rise (Enemali, 2012).

The Way Forward:

It is a known fact that one of the most important characteristics of technical and vocational business education is its orientation to the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum on acquisition of workplace skills, attitudes and knowledge. Meeting the needs of workers require constant monitoring of workplace demands, to ensure that the graduates are workplace ready. Today, computers and microelectronics are changing the tasks in which workers engage in. For instance, the transportation industry has seen massive computer integration into their operating systems (UNESCO, 2003). Presently, automotive technicians must not only update themselves with changes in automotive technology but must also keep abreast with new equipment and procedures. In most modern automotive repair shops, workers must use computerized diagnostic tools to diagnose problems and effect repairs.

In building construction, manufacturing and printing sectors, many machines that were traditionally manually or mechanically operated and controlled are now controlled by information technology. In machine trades, Computerized Numerical Control (CNC), Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM), Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM), have replaced traditional skills and processes. Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) has replaced most of the traditional hand drawing and design (Enemali, 2012). Teachers need inservice training in terms of theory, philosophy and mode of instruction. They must be encouraged to enroll in courses that will assist them. They must be educated to work with models and computer simulations in their classes.

It has become imperative to reposition technical and vocational business education institutions to tap into global best practices in acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills that will meet student's needs. Accordingly, the programme of action for promoting interest in

technical and vocational business education and reducing the impact of infrastructural in-adequacy, and negative perception and security challenge are as follows:

1. In order to address the problem of low enrolment in technical and vocational business education institutions, technical and vocational business education institutions should engage in strong advocacy and creation of awareness.
2. Barriers to access at all the levels of education that are based on discriminatory factors such as sex, class, etcetera, on all spurious measures of academic abilities and potentials should be removed in order to support a seamless career path for all.
3. Priority attention should be given to technical and vocational business education in the nation's capital resource allocation. the government should correct the imbalance in funding of technical and vocational business education institutions in order to adequately cater for the needs of technical and vocational business education. Part of the allocation should be sourced from TETFUND.
4. The Departments and Faculties of technical and vocational business education in all Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities in Nigeria should be upgraded and adequately equipped to facilitate the production of the desired technical and vocational business education teachers.
5. There should be a policy targeted at encouraging male and female students to embrace technical and vocational business education. There is the need for Government to popularize technical and vocational business education.
6. There is the need to provide a more comprehensive, broad-based and up-to-date technical and vocational business education programme structure and content that emphasize technology and entrepreneurship.
7. Lecturers teaching technical and vocational business education courses in all technical and vocational business education institutions should strive to bridge the gap between theory and practice of the various occupations.
8. State and Federal Governments should ensure equal distribution of the wealth of the nation to all the citizens in order to reduce poverty and other social circumstances that can fuel insecurity.

Conclusion

A well-equipped technical and vocational business education institutions are required to enhance their contributions to national development. No country in the world can develop technologically without skilled personnel. Nigeria requires an army of strong military power and security forces to ensure law and order, as it requires an army of skilled personnel to ensure technological development. Unfortunately, technical and vocational business education institutions are notoriously plagued by lack of serious Government attention and consequent poor or declining enrolment. Needless to say that enrolment into technical and vocational business education in Nigeria will continue to decline if we let the programme decline in their philosophical integrity. The name of technical and vocational business education programmes must correspond to what is done and what students are been prepared for. It is only when Nigeria gives proper attention to technical and vocational business education, through deliberate capital allocation of resources that its influence on development can be felt. Thus, as a matter of necessity, the Federal and State Governments should support local production of goods and services to create jobs and revitalize technical and vocational

business education as a means of improving economic opportunities for the citizens. The leadership of Nigeria should make sincere efforts to reduce illiteracy, injustice, corruption, ethnicity, political and religious intolerance including poverty and all forms of economic and social circumstances that are likely to fuel insecurity.

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