

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century TVET Policies and Practices in Nigeria: Challenges and Enhancement Measures

by

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### Abstract

*The study investigated 21<sup>ST</sup> Century TVET Policies and Practices in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. Two research questions guided the study. The population for the study was 62 consisting of 34 TVET lecturers and 28 professional staff from the faculty of Vocational and Technical Education University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Due to the manageable size of the population there was no sampling as the entire population was used. For effective investigation, a four point scaled questionnaire face validated by three experts and with reliability coefficient of 0.87 was used for data collection from the respondents. The researcher with the help of three research assistants administered the instrument to the respondents. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. It was found out that lack of political will, insecurity in the country, inadequate number of TVET experts and resources, image of TVET in Nigeria, poor implementation of TVET policy documents, lack of legislation, insufficient funds among others were the challenges facing TVET policies and practices in Nigeria. The study further found out that provision of appropriate legislation, up-lifting the image of TVET, involvement of industries in development of TVET policies among others as the enhancement measures for efficient TVET policies and practices in Nigeria. The study therefore recommends among others that there should be establishment of national board for the implementation of TVET policies in all the six geo-political zones in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** TVET, Policy, TVET policies, TVET practices

### Introduction

The twenty first century presents a radically different economy which the society referred to as knowledge economy and technology-driven society, which is likely to have profound implications on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria despite her great geographical, economic and demographic diversities. TVET as defined by UNESCO (2001) and adopted by the federal republic of Nigeria in 2014 as a comprehensive term referring to those aspect of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related science and as well as acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various

sectors of economic and social life. In this broad definition according to Ejiofor and Ali (2015), TVET refers to education and training given to the learners to acquire skills, knowledge and attitude needed in the world of work and necessary for employment in ones' chosen occupation. Goel in Okwelle and Ayonmike (2014) noted that TVET plays a vital role in human resource development for enhancing industrial productivity and improving the quality of life.

TVET is the most effective tool for the society to develop its members' potential to respond to the present and future challenges of these society (<https://allafrica.com/stories/201803070539.html>). TVET is learning for work, citizenship and sustainable future which are ideal for meeting

the goals of SDG four. TVET is meant to impart knowledge and skills for increased efficiency in the world of work, sustainable livelihoods, personal empowerment and socio-economic development, which enhances proper adjustment in knowledge economies and rapidly changing work environment (Okorafor & Nnajofo, 2015). The authors further stated that the former president of Nigeria, Obasanjo opined that TVET with its relevant practical training component holds the key to Nigeria becoming technologically relevant and internationally competitive in the world market. The former president continued that TVET is also the most effective means of empowering the citizenry to stimulate sustainable national development, enhance employment, improve the quality of life, reduce poverty, limit the incidence of social vices due to joblessness and promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy (Federal Ministry of Education-FME, 2000). In order to realize the full potentials of TVET in Nigeria in 21<sup>st</sup> century, well thought out TVET policy has to be in place as blue print.

Policy is defined as the set of basic principles and associated guidelines, formulated and enforced by the governing body of an organization, to direct and limit its actions in pursuit of long-term goals (Okorafor and Nnajofo, 2017). A policy is a practice that has

been thought through, formalized and formally presented as an expectation of management (Cohen, 2012). When policies are directed towards education, it is referred to as educational policies. Educational policies are initiatives mostly by governments that determine the direction of an educational system (Okoroma, 2000). Therefore, TVET policies in the context of this study are basic principles, guidelines, formulated and enforced by government to actualize the goal of TVET in Nigeria. In Nigeria, TVET policy is enshrined in the educational policies. Okorafor and Nnajofo (2015) stated that the Major educational reforms and policies in Africa and Nigeria in particular have been to restructure colonial education system with emphasis on vocationalization. Consequent upon the attainment of independence, it was discovered that the colonial education did not meet the aspiration of Nigerians. This led to the introduction of 6-3-3-4 education policy in 1977 which was later changed to 9-3-4 system in 2006. According to Okorafor and Nnajofo (2015) Nigeria has long acknowledged TVET, at least in policies, as the master key to unlocking the future. Evidence is illustrated in some of these policy statements in Nigerian policy documents thus:

*Recognizing that TVET is an integral part of technological development, a greater proportion of education expenditure shall continue to be devoted to vocational education at Federal and State levels (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2004, section 7, 52 pp. 35)[5]. In recognition of the fundamental importance and cost intensive nature of TVET, government shall provide adequate funds for TVET (FRN, 2004, section 7, 56 pp. 35). The purpose of development of individuals is to enable them contribute to the development of the society. For this reason, the plan lays emphasis on TVET as the "master key" to unlocking our future (FME, 2012, pp2). The ability of Nigeria to realize the vision of becoming one of the twenty largest economies in the world by the year 2020 is largely dependent on the capacity to transform its youths into highly skilled and competent citizens .... It is for this reason that commitment to TVET must be strengthened (FME, 2012, pp. 54; FME, 2009, pp. 14).*

In line with the above policy statements, it is clear to agree that TVET would turn the nation into one of the top 20 countries of the world. It is believed from the policy document that TVET through the production of skilled manpower in applied science, engineering

technology and commerce, would generate employment, reduce poverty, kidnappings and arm banditry and transform the country technologically from resource based to knowledge based economy. In contrary, the current happenings and the actual expectation of

TVET policy document remains a mirage in Nigeria. The effectiveness of an organization is not only reflected in its ability to formulate policy, but also in its ability to execute such policies effectively (Okoroma, 2000). The Economist Intelligence Unit – EIU (2010) stated that writing policy is the easiest thing to do while the hardest thing is to get the governance and structure right from day one. The outcome of TVET in Nigeria is a clear indication that TVET policy document is divorced from the actual practice.

Practice is the actual implementation, application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it (Okorafor and Nnajiifo, 2015). In the context of this study, practice is the actual implementation of the policies documents formulated and enacted in Nigeria for TVET. It is the performance of actions or exercises taken to realize the expectations of TVET policies for the benefit of the citizens and the country at large. Whenever, there is a mismatch between TVET policy documents and the actual practice the resultant effects will be inefficiencies on the nations' workforce. According to Odukoya, (2013), the National Policy on Education puts the ratio between secondary and technical vocational education/schools at 3:1, Nigeria has 5,100 secondary schools with enrolment of 4,448,991 as against technical colleges of only 169 with enrolment of 43,354 representing ratios of 37:1 and 102:1 respectively. In Nigeria, only 3.6% of senior secondary school students were enrolled in TVET in 2005 (Federal Government of Nigeria, FGN, 2009) and 3% out of 166000 enrolled in TVET in 2007 (UNESCO - UIS, 2009). Okorafor and Nnajiifo (2015) observed that according to the policy, technical colleges are expected to feed polytechnics just as secondary schools are to feed universities. The authors stated further that prevailing situation however is that the total products of technical colleges represent only 17% of available spaces in polytechnics in Nigeria thereby producing more theoreticians than technicians.

Therefore, having seen that there is a great mismatch between TVET policy document and practices in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century characterized with technological

advancement, climate change challenges, high rate of unemployment, increase poverty level, alarming rate of kidnapping, arm banditry, Boko Haram activities and food insecurity requires urgent attention in Nigeria for the restoration of TVET glory. According to Igberadja (2014), the implementation of TVET curriculum has not been yielding the expected outcome and results because of notable challenges in Nigeria. According to Hussaini and Jumba (2018), public perceptions of TVET, curriculum issues, poor funding of TVET programs, the development, recruitment, and retention of quality teachers for TVET programs poor teaching methods employed by teachers; and poor assessment of TVET students' competency are the challenges of achieving quality TVET programs in Nigeria. In view of Okorafor and Nnajiifo (2017), a number of factors have hindered TVET in Nigeria; making it difficult for TVET practices to march its policies. The authors stated that some of these factors are: faulty policy and institutional frameworks, policy somersaults arising from instability of the political environment, and lack of political will compounded by the hemorrhage of rampant corruption. This is due to the fact that the aims and objectives of TVET as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (NPE) has not been met as seen by the persistent petition by the labour market, that Nigerian university graduates (TVET graduate inclusive) do not possess employable skills which could be traced to the poor implementation of educational policy and curriculum. Evidences from available literatures reviewed showed dearth of information on challenges facing effective implementation of TVET policy documents and enhancement measures as researchers such as Kennedy, Udoetuk & Ufot (2017); Okoye & Arimonu (2016), Inyiagu (2015) and Igberadja (2014) focused on only TVET curriculum challenges in Nigeria. It is against these backdrops in Nigeria that the study emerged to tackle TVET policy issues and place TVET in proper perspective as the best tool for solving the problems facing the nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as mentioned above.

## Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to find out 21<sup>st</sup> Century TVET policies and practices in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine;

1. Challenges facing TVET policies and practices in Nigeria
2. Efficient measures for TVET policies and implementation practices in Nigeria

## Research Questions

1. What are the challenges facing TVET policies and practices in Nigeria?
2. What are the measures for effective TVET policies implementation practices in Nigeria?

## Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A survey research design in the view of Anyakaoha (2009) uses questionnaires, interviews and observations to determine the opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of persons. The design was considered appropriate since the study obtained data from TVET lecturers and professional staff through the use of questionnaire. Two research questions guided the study. The study was conducted in University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State Nigeria. The Population for the study was 62 TVET professionals comprising 34 TVET lecturers and 28 professional staff with five years teaching experience. The entire

population was studied because of the manageable size. A structured questionnaire consisting of 16 items was used to collect information from the respondents. Each item in the questionnaire was assigned a four response options of Strongly Agree (SA =4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD =1). The instrument was subjected to face validation by three-experts, one each from the Department of Agricultural Education, Home Economics Education and Industrial Technical Education all from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The internal consistency of reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha method which yielded the reliability co-efficient of 0.87. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents with the assistance of three research assistants who were briefed of how to administer and retrieved it to ensure timely completion of data collection. The data collected was analyzed using mean to answer the research questions, standard deviation was used in determining how close or otherwise the respondents were to the mean and to one another in their responses. Based on the mean calculated, any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted as agree, while any one less than 2.50 was regarded as disagree whereas any item with its standard deviation less than 1 from the mean value were considered very good response and highly clustered around the mean.

## Results

**Table 1: Mean Response with Standard Deviation of TVET Lecturers and Professional Staff on Challenges facing TVET Policies and Practices in Nigeria**

| Challenges facing TVET Policies and Practices in Nigeria  |                                                 |           |     |                    |     |       |     |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----|--------------------|-----|-------|-----|--------|
| S/N                                                       | Item statement                                  | TVET      |     |                    |     | Grand |     | Remark |
|                                                           |                                                 | Lecturers |     | Professional Staff |     |       |     |        |
|                                                           |                                                 | Mean      | SD  | Mean               | SD  | Mean  | SD  |        |
| Challenges facing TVET policies and practices in Nigeria: |                                                 |           |     |                    |     |       |     |        |
| 1                                                         | lack of political will                          | 3.27      | .87 | 3.32               | .69 | 3.26  | .74 | A      |
| 2                                                         | Insecurity in the country                       | 3.20      | .78 | 3.27               | .71 | 3.27  | .73 | A      |
| 3                                                         | Image of TVET in Nigeria                        | 2.54      | .90 | 3.30               | .62 | 3.28  | .73 | A      |
| 4                                                         | Faulty policy and institutional frameworks      | 3.13      | .97 | 3.06               | .80 | 3.08  | .84 | A      |
| 5                                                         | Lack of appropriate legislation                 | 3.11      | .73 | 3.17               | .73 | 3.15  | .74 | A      |
| 6                                                         | Insufficient funds                              | 3.44      | .73 | 3.44               | .76 | 3.44  | .70 | A      |
| 7                                                         | Political instability                           | 3.19      | .83 | 3.05               | .62 | 3.31  | .68 | A      |
| 8                                                         | Inadequate number of TVET experts and resources | 3.39      | .73 | 3.97               | .73 | 3.37  | .72 | A      |
| 9                                                         | Corruption (diversion of resources to           | 3.71      | .69 | 2.89               | .69 | 3.35  | .69 | A      |

|    |                                                                                |      |     |      |     |      |     |   |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|---|
| 10 | personal account)<br>Poor implementation of available TVET<br>policy documents | 3.22 | .50 | 3.24 | .54 | 3.23 | .52 | A |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|---|

The result of Table 1 showed the mean of responses and standard deviations of TVET lecturers and professional staff on the challenges facing TVET policies and practices in Nigeria. The values of the grand mean ranged from 3.44 to 3.08, indicating that the responses of the respondents for all the items were under agree category. The grand value for the standard

deviation ranged from 0.84 to .52. The values of the SD were low, and this shows that the responses are clustered around the mean. It can be deduced from the grand mean values that all the identified items of Table 1 were the challenges facing TVET policies and practices in Nigeria in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Table 2: Mean Responses with Standard Deviation of TVET Lecturers and Professional Staff on Measures for Effective TVET Policies Implementation Practices in Nigeria**

| S/n                                                                      | Item statements                                                                                                                                     | TVET<br>Lecturers |     | Professional<br>Staff |     | Grand |     | Remark |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|-------|-----|--------|
|                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                     | Mean              | SD  | Mean                  | SD  | Mean  | SD  |        |
| Measures for effective TVET policies implementation practices in Nigeria |                                                                                                                                                     |                   |     |                       |     |       |     |        |
| 1                                                                        | Provision of appropriate legislation by Nigeria law makers                                                                                          | 3.22              | .97 | 2.76                  | .66 | 2.99  | .82 | A      |
| 2                                                                        | Up-lifting the image of TVET through awareness campaigns                                                                                            | 2.52              | .62 | 3.23                  | .76 | 2.88  | .69 | A      |
| 3                                                                        | Involvement of industries and institutions in development of TVET policies                                                                          | 3.18              | .56 | 3.51                  | .88 | 3.35  | .72 | A      |
| 4                                                                        | Provision of adequate fund for TVET in annual national budget                                                                                       | 3.88              | .71 | 3.78                  | .41 | 3.80  | .56 | A      |
| 5                                                                        | Strengthening of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria                                                                                                | 2.59              | .34 | 2.71                  | .76 | 2.65  | .55 | A      |
| 6                                                                        | Making adequate provision for TVET experts and resources                                                                                            | 3.02              | .59 | 2.79                  | .43 | 2.91  | .51 | A      |
| 7                                                                        | Establishment of monitoring and evaluation committees on TVET policies and practices at upper and lower chambers of legislatures houses in Nigeria. | 2.56              | .77 | 3.11                  | .69 | 2.84  | .73 | A      |

The result of Table 2 showed that the mean responses and standard deviations of TVET lecturers and professional staff on the measures for effective TVET policies implementation practices in Nigeria. The values of the grand mean ranged from 3.80 to 2.65 indicating that the responses of the respondents for all the seven items were under agree

### Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that ten challenges facing TVET policies and practices in Nigeria in 21<sup>st</sup> century. They include lack of political will, insecurity in the country, inadequate number of TVET experts and resources, image

category. The grand value for the standard deviation ranged from 0.82 to .51. The values of the SD were low, and this shows that the responses are clustered around the mean. It can be deduced from the grand mean values that all the identified items of Table 2 were the measures for effective TVET policies implementation practices in Nigeria.

of TVET in Nigeria, faulty policy and institutional frameworks, Lack of appropriate legislation, poor implementation of available TVET policy documents, Corruption, Political instability and insufficient funds. The findings are in line with the view of Oketch (2009) that a look at the funding of TVET can shed light on

the contradiction between the emphasis for skills in policy document and the limited funding that, governments are willing to commit to it. Clearer pictures are that Nigeria spent about 2.3% of GDP for education, less than half the percentage of GDP spent by the 19 sub-Saharan African countries on average (FGN, 2009). In 2010 the Federal Government spent N249.08 billion on education out of a budget of about N4.07 trillion (Okorafor & Nnajofo, 2015). This sum translates to just about six percent of the total budget in spite of UNESCO's recommendations that, at least, 26 percent of national budgets should go to education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics - UIS 2009). Available data indicated that 20.9%, 7.1% and 13% of total expenditures on education in 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively went to the NBTE of which 39.2%, 83.6% and 78.4% of yearly budget appropriations to NBTE in the same years were actually spent (OECD, 2008; Okorafor and Nnajofo, 2015 ). In the scale of low priorities to Education system, TVET comes lowest. Capital allocations for TVET showed that 0.13% of total FGN budget and 0.05% of total proposed FGN budget were allocated to TVET in 2011 and 2012 respectively (Chukwumerije, 2011). The dearth of qualified teaching staff, inadequate number of technical and vocational colleges and low social estimation of vocational education are key constraints of TVET (Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2009). On area of corruption, Okorafor and Nnajofo, (2015) stated that there is strong evidence that the cancerous growth of corruption in Nigeria is spreading fast across the education sector as educational administrators and other stakeholders divert institutional/faculty/departamental resources as their share of the national cake. The findings agreed with the view of Ejiofor and Ali (2015) that in Nigeria there are no laws binding TVET institutions and industries which are the end consumers of TVET products. The findings equally agreed with Asare-Bediako (2005) that there is no legal framework for coordination of the activities of the government ministries, private organizations and agencies that participate in the provision of TVET in Nigeria. On issue of political instability Okorafor and Nnajofo, (2015) observed that frequent changes

in government and politics in Nigeria have negatively influenced policy implementation not only in education but also in other sectors of the economy. On the image of TVET, the findings agreed with Okoye and Okwelle (2014) that low societal estimation of TVET with its professional practice not seen as a substitute to gaining employment in any other quarters that are highly remunerated lends TVET inferior in the eyes of the public. More so, education is in the scale of low priorities in Nigeria with TVET receiving the least attention.

The study found out seven the measures for effective TVET policies implementation practices in Nigeria. These include provision adequate fund for TVET, provision of appropriate legislation, up-lifting the image of TVET, strengthening of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, making adequate provision for TVET experts and resources and establishment of monitoring and evaluation committees on TVET policies and practices at upper and lower chambers of legislatures houses in Nigeria. The findings were in agreement that the role of stakeholders at local and school level is essential and it is the linking of the two that may be able to create reforms that can address the needs of the people. This process is twofold and goes in both directions – policy makers learn from innovative practices, practitioners learn from each other (peers) and policy makers consult practitioners and challenge them for more useful innovation (Castel-Branco & Faudel, 2008 ; Adekunle, 2017). This is in line with Okoye and Okwelle (2013) that providing training within national policy framework, increased funding strengthens guidance and counseling services to trainees as well as promoting industry and academic interaction among others will enhance the image problem of TVET in Nigeria.

## Conclusion

The result of the study revealed that in Nigeria there are ten challenges facing TVET policies and practices in Nigeria and seven measures for effective TVET policies implementation practices in Nigeria. TVET Policy documents if well-articulated and implemented would deliver the expected skilled work force for sustainable livelihoods, personal empowerment and socio-

economic development, which enhances proper adjustment in knowledge economies and rapidly changing work environment.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following were recommended for action:

1. Federal government of Nigeria should establish national board for the implementation of TVET policies in all the six geo-political zones in Nigeria.
2. All stakeholders in TVET sector should be involved in policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria.
3. Government at all levels in Nigeria should make provision for TVET awareness creation to attract Nigeria youths.
4. Adequate fund should be allocated for TVET in Nigeria annual national budget.

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