

**PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP:  
A MISSING LINK IN EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) PROGRAMME FOR NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT.**

**BY**

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***Abstract***

*Nigeria is currently faced with many socio-economic problems such as Youth unemployment and slow economic development. The economic and social well-being of a nation depends on the skills and competencies of the workforce. Technical, vocational education and training (TVET) is a veritable tool for skills development of the workforce. Unfortunately, TVET in Nigeria is suffering from neglect. The private-public partnership (PPP) strategy can be used to ameliorate the situation. The focus of this paper therefore is to elucidate on how the PPP strategy could be used to enhance the effective delivery of TVET programme in Nigeria. In the course of doing this, the paper explained the concept/ objectives of TVET. It also discussed the role of TVET in National development and stated its benefits/objectives. Some major constraints to effective delivery of TVET were outlined which included inadequate financing; paucity of teaching facilities and irrelevance of the curriculum. The need for and the establishment of strong PPP in TVET were also discussed. The paper concluded that the public and private sectors need to partner effectively with TVET institutions for skill training of youths. Consequently ways of enhancing successful implementation of PPP among TVET partners were proffered.*

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**Keywords:** Private-public partnership (PPP); Effective delivery; Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET); National Development

## **Introduction**

Many of the African countries are passing through series of socio-economic challenges. Nigeria not being an exception is confronted with many socio-economic problems such as youth unemployment; poor industrialization; incompetent workforce; slow economic development and poverty. Despite the abundance of natural resources, Nigerian youths are faced with poverty and unemployment which leads them to all kinds of illegal activities and violent crimes (Nwachukwu, 2014). The social and economic well-being of a nation is a function of the quality of its workforce (Agbobu & Oladokun, 2004). Mustapha and Greenan (2002) stated that the economic competitiveness of a country depends on the skills and competencies of the workforce which in turn depends on the quality of country's education and training system. No nation can adequately develop if it neglects the development of its skilled workforce (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). This is because a nation's development is assessed by an increase in its Gross National Product (GNP) and Human Development Index (HDI). While the countries with high GNP and HDI are said to be developed, the countries with low GNP and HDI are classified as underdeveloped (Usoro & Udoudo, 2012). According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2008), Nigeria ranked 158<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries that are below the average for sub-saharan Africa in human development. The economy of any nation does not depend solely on the educated population but partly on a large pool of skilled workers that can handle the rapidly changing demands of the labour market (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). The poor labour market situation in Nigeria due to poor skills and obsolete technologies have led to the high level of unemployment, increased inequality and exclusion (Caleb, Nsini & Hart, 2012). The sophisticated nature of the labour market demands that human resources be adequately trained in technological know-how to tackle these sordid situations (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). This demand has placed much emphasis on technical, vocational education and training (TVET) worldwide. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012) defined TVET as that aspect of the 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. It is a form of education which purpose is to prepare person(s) for employment in an occupation or group of occupations (Nwachukwu, 2014).

TVET is widely recognized as an education system which can compete and excel in a rapidly changing environment and thereby improve a country's economy (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013).

TVET is a vital and indispensable tool for national development. National development is the capability of a nation to improve the socio-economic well-being of the people by providing social amenities such as good education, employment, infrastructure, security and social services (Caleb, Nsini & Hart, 2012). National development also involves political, social, cultural, moral and religious upliftment of the masses so that unemployment, poverty and inequality of income are reduced to the barest minimum (Ugiagbe, 2007). Therefore, it is the key and the bedrock upon which Nigeria's socio-economic development must be hinged. The realization of the critical role of TVET in national development accounts for the various programmes and interventions being undertaken by many national governments and international agencies in recent years aimed at revitalizing TVET in many countries across the globe (Usoro & Udoudo, 2012). Unfortunately, it appears that the potentials of TVET have not been fully recognized in Nigeria due to its neglect (Usoro & Udoudo, 2012).

TVET in Nigeria is in crisis occasioned by the declining resource inputs particularly from the government and is in immediate need of intervention. This has necessitated the search for a better

measure to circumvent the problem, which is traced to a private-public partnership strategy (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). Private-Public Partnership (PPP) is a mutual agreement to jointly provide service to people on established terms between a private sector partner and a public sector partner in pursuance of a common goal (Deish, 2001; Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). The private providers (individuals; civil groups; organizations) and public providers (government; community people; agencies) can partner or jointly provide services such as education to the people (Okpor & Hassan, 2011). PPP is an alternative strategy which can be used to address the challenges confronting the TVET system. PPP was first introduced in United States of America in the 1990s. PPP has become an important tool for the implementation of TVET programme and developing countries like Nigeria could key into this laudable venture to improve educational access and quality in their school sector (Patrinos, 2005). Okpor and Hassan (2011) posited that if TVET is to be meaningful and successful in Nigeria, the private and public sectors need to partner effectively with TVET institutions for the skill training of youths. Against this backdrop, the concern of this paper is to elucidate on how the private-public partnership strategy could be used to enhance the effective delivery of technical, vocational education and training (TVET) programme for the social and economic development of the Nigerian nation. This is predicated on the premise that the private sector partnership with the public sector in education remains a veritable tool for the achievement of national development and this could be a panacea for many of the ills plaguing the country.

### **The Role of TVET in National Development**

The African Union (AU, 2011) stated that the primary objective of TVET is to help alleviate poverty through the acquisition of employable skills. The Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2009) maintained that the main purpose of TVET is to produce skilled manpower in applied science, engineering technology and commerce, to operate, maintain and sustain the nation's economic activities for rapid socio-economic development. Therefore, TVET plays a significant role in a nation's economic development. Its basic role is found in terms of its capacity to provide workers with the skills required to support a developing modern economy. TVET programmes provide saleable and employable skills necessary for gainful employment (Agbobu & Oladokun, 2004). TVET has been an integral part of national development strategies in industrialized societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development. It gives attention to the development of both material and human resources: the two essential elements on which national development depends (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013).

Uwaifo (2009), highlighted the social and economic benefits / implications of TVET to national development to include, that:

- i. vocational and technical education aims at helping the society maintain its material civilization by e *Alfred, S. B.* ace with the rapidly changing industrial and technological development;
- ii. TVET helps in the development of technological skills as an intermediary between technology and society;
- iii. TVET is designed to meet the employment needs of particular areas of the economy. The training provided is closely matched with specific job requirement, so as to foster immediate production performance by the trainees and
- iv. TVET trainees can become wage earners thereby becoming more useful and productive citizens who will be assets and not liabilities to the society. According to Kombe (2010), TVET results in increased productivity, profitability and competitiveness of organizations.

With increase in productivity and high profits, the organizations will in turn contribute to the wealth of the country through taxes.

Technical and vocational education enhances individual creativity, improved participation in economic and social roles and improvement in quality of life thereby transforming the society (Caleb, Nsini & Hart, 2012). TVET can also be used to promote peace by reducing youth restiveness (Usoro & Udoudo, 2012)

### **Constraints to Effective Delivery of TVET in Nigeria**

Technical, vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria has been constrained by many factors, a few of which are highlighted here. A major problem of TVET is finance. There is scarcity of capital to procure teaching facilities, establish workshops or farming inputs and other skill developing equipment (Adara, 1991). Yakubu (2003) pointed out that the inadequate investment in TVET has greatly contributed to its deterioration and has aggravated its relatively low effectiveness and efficiency.

According to the Federal Ministry of Education (FME,2009), the steady decline in funding in TVET institutions has resulted in limited access and equity, inability to attain set standard, disproportionate student – teacher ratio, which in turn has led to steady decline in the quality of curriculum delivery and overstretching of available facilities and infrastructures.

Nwachukwu (2014) explained that graduates lack the requisite skills today as a result of inadequate funding of TVET because instructors, technicians and craftsmen that possess the dexterity of industrial / technical acts are not available in the schools due to poor remuneration. To save cost, poorly qualified personnel are hired for instruction. The end result includes poorly prepared products in both human resources and material services (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013).

Another problem of TVET is the inadequate teaching facilities within the school system (Adara, 1991). Most TVET institutions suffer setbacks in terms of infrastructure like inadequate classroom and lack of functional facilities for learning (Ajie, 2011). The workshops for TVET at tertiary education level are used to showcase outdated and obsolete machines, equipment and tools (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). Therefore, the teachers are often forced to adopt a system of delivery which is devoid of the essential practical training necessary for their students (Adara, 1991).

The adequacy and relevance of the curriculum content to the area of industry the learner intends to seek employment upon graduation from the programme is another major constraint. Dambare (1991) observed that almost all the TVET curricula were drawn up without consultation with experts in the industries, as there is a clear indication that the planning /designing of TVET curricula is an affair between the Federal Ministry of Education on one hand and National Universities Commission (NUC) National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Technical Education (NATE) on the other hand. Dambare (1991) stated that employers of labour, union representatives and professional bodies were not consulted.

Notable among the challenges posed to TVET is the non-implementation of public –private partnership guidelines on funding, resource mobilization and utilization (FME, 2009). In fact, there exists a weak partnership among TVET providers and industries/enterprises in Nigeria regarding the delivery of apprenticeship training. Some industries/ enterprises in Nigeria are not willing to co-operate with TVET institutions. This can be attributed to lack of clear understanding and the failure to reach consensus on the implementation of the TVET programme (Woldetsadik & Lumadi, 2015). This may explain the reason why the one year students' industrial work experience

required for Higher National Diploma (HND) and B.Sc in technology education and four months for NCE in vocational and technical education is virtually in principle. Most TVET students end up without reasonable work experience before graduation (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). This is attributable to the fact that the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) which was established to work as cooperative entity with industry and commerce where TVET students can undertake mid-career work experience attachment in industries which are compatible with students' area of study (Asikadi, 2003), has almost failed in their function due to inadequate funding and poor management (Okuwa, 2005).

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which is commissioned to accelerate economic growth, reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with TVET as an integral part, appears to be redundant (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). Many other brokerage institutions which have also been established in the past to function in the same capacity have ended up as channels for pumping funds into unintended activities. For instance, the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB); Bank of Industry (BOI); African Development Bank (ADB); the Bureau of Public Enterprise (BPE) are yet to accomplish the mission of organizing adequate industrial training for TVET trainees, finance vocational agriculture and ensure effective private-public collaboration in wealth transfer procedure respectively (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013)

#### **The need for private –public partnership in TVET**

Private-public partnership (PPP) has a key role to play in the development of TVET in Nigeria. PPP has become an important tool for the implementation of TVET programmes. By linking private sector businesses to public sector education and training, service providers in PPPs bridge the gap between human resource needs and educational outcomes (Okpor & Hassan, 2001). PPP also known as developmental partnership with the private sector, paves way for entities in the private sector to perform their corporate social responsibility by extending their services and financial cooperation for substantial development (Okpor & Hassan, 2011). TVET delivery is expensive and requires huge financial, human and material resource allocation. This seems a burden and governments request the private sector to lend a hand. As a result, joint cooperation needs to be established between the public and private sectors. This approach will help to build a solid foundation for the successful implementation of apprenticeship training programme (Woldetsadik & Lumadi, 2015).

One other area of TVET programme desiring serious attention is the positive interaction and cooperation between the training institutions (Curriculum implementers) and employers of labour (consumers of trained products). There is a pressing need to bring the school and industry together so that the industry can know what the school is doing and the school can also know what is happening in the industry. This would help to bridge the communication gap between TVET institutions and the industry, as well as avail the technical and vocational education teachers the opportunity to have work experiences and proper understanding of what goes on in the industry in order to gear their teachings toward the need of the industry and the occupations (Dambare, 1991).

In an ideal situation, as obtainable in developed societies of the world, the training and education of nations' citizenry is a collective effort of both governmental and non-governmental organizations, private firms and private individuals or philanthropists (Puyete, 2005). Adara (1991) suggested that the industry, communities, local governments, state and federal ministries of Agriculture, commerce, science and technology should partner TVET institutions in the

provision of infrastructural facilities as a multi-sectoral responsibility. Such partnership will help to spread the burden and resolve the issues of inadequate funding and teaching facilities confronting TVET institutions in Nigeria.

### **Towards a Virile PPP for effective TVET delivery**

The need to produce skilled manpower demands the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders of TVET. This can be implemented through the establishment of strong partnership between public and private institutions (Woldetsadik & Lumadi,2015). Woldetsadik and Lumadi (2015) posited that the effective implementation of TVET programmes require the establishment of strong PPP among all sectors. They stated that partnership between TVET institutions and industries should clearly specify which service should be provided and by whom and that it should also reflect the partners' shared responsibilities and explain each partner's right and obligations in detail. They emphasized the need for the partners to be concerned about the implementation of the object of agreement. This involves who does what including who provides resources and controls them and the failure to respond according to the agreement should result in sanctions for non-performance .

According to the Ministry of Education (2008), the government as the main partner of TVET may be vested with the responsibilities of law and policy-making, controlling quality management to the TVET system and providing support to TVET institutions. The private sector on the other hand is expected to provide in-company TVET training programmes, apply best experience for quality training programmes and improve the supply of the TVET system through the use of resources. The working group for international cooperation in skill Development (2001) highlighted the following elements of PPP as important for an effective functioning of TVET:

- i. Training is organized according to needs
- ii. Stake holders including employees and employers' organizations are involved in management of the sector;
- iii. Sustainable mechanism for financing of recurrent and capital costs is developed and
- iv. Training can be shown to cater for the formal as well as the informal sector.

According to Okoye and Okwelle (2013), all effective partnership shares the following characteristic in common:

- i. the public sector appoints representatives who are authorized by their sector (federal or state government and the private sector (civil groups or organizations) will elect or appoint representatives
- ii. both partners usually work together to achieve common objectives or goals,
- iii. Each partner contributes money, technical expertise and time for the success of the partnership and
- iv. Administrative/management responsibilities and decision-making rights /privileges are shared among the personnel composition.

To ensure a virile public-private partnership in Nigeria, a cue can be taken from Malaysia's example. In Malaysia, an innovative strategy tagged "National Dual Training System (NDTS)" was devised to revamp TVET. Under the NDTS programme, 70-80% of the technical and vocational training are done in the industry while the remaining 20-30% are carried out in the training institutions using the National Occupational Core Curriculum (NOCC) developed by the board saddled with that responsibility. In this programme plan, students/apprentices are meant to be exposed to actual situations in the industry in respect of technical and vocational competencies. Emphasis is placed on team work, self monitoring and shouldering of common responsibilities.

Through this scheme, accelerated industrial training is provided. Companies/industries that participate in the apprentice training programme, qualify for tax incentive from the government. They collect 1% part of the training cost from the government plus other hidden user charges. These incentives motivate healthy competition and improved performance among companies in the technical and vocational training offered to the students (Zain, 2008; Okoye & Okwelle, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

The social and economic well-being of a nation is a function of the quality of its work force which in turn depends on the quality of the country's education and training system. The Nigerian educational system is therefore expected to prepare and supply the youths who are the future workers with appropriate and relevant skills to enhance their productivity and employability. This demand has placed much emphasis on technical, vocational education and training (TVET). TVET is a vital and indispensable tool for skill development of the nation's work force.

The TVET delivery system is cost-intensive, requiring the use of more equipment, highly qualified trainers and well developed infrastructure. In the face of the dwindling financial revenue accruing to government, it has become increasingly difficult for government alone to shoulder the responsibility of financing TVET programme. This necessitates the search for an alternative measure to enhance effective delivery to TVET programme.

Private-Public Partnership (PPP) is an alternative strategy that can be used to address this challenge confronting the TVET system. The private sector partnership with the public sector in education is a veritable strategy for effective delivery of TVET programme for National development. As a result, efforts should be made by all stakeholders (the private and public sectors) in TVET to partner effectively for the skill training of youths which will propel Nigeria to become one of the 20 largest economies by the year 2020.

### **Recommendations**

To enhance effective delivery of TVET for national development through private-public partnership among TVET partners, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. There is the need for a strong and more result-oriented private-public partnership in TVET to enhance its economic potentiality through a decentralized, demand-driven, participatory approach.
2. To ensure that TVET is more market driven, governments should involve industries and organizations in the designing of the curricula and certification of the skills offered.
3. Government needs to put in place regulations and an enabling environment for private sector participation in order to deliver the minimum standard of services required for PPP to thrive.
4. Local communities should be involved in planning TVET curriculum so as to erase the fears and misconceptions of the general public on the type or quality of TVET programmes offered to youths.
5. The Provision of infrastructural facilities for TVET programmes should be a multi-sectoral responsibility involving local government; State and Federal ministries of agriculture; commerce, trade and industry; science and technology.

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