

Strategies for financing vocational and technical education for sustainable economic recovery in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine the strategies for financing vocational and technical education for sustainable economic recovery in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. The entire population of fifty-two (52) respondents comprising of lecturers in universities offering vocational and technical education in Ebonyi state of Nigeria was studied. Out of the entire population only fifty (50) copies of the questionnaire returned. Data were obtained using structured questionnaire. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the items with face and content validity. Validity was done by two vocational and technical education lecturers and one lecturer in test and measurement from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. From the analysis, it was found that if Vocational and Technical Education will combat unemployment and poverty in the society as well as improve the economic performance of the country, new funding which includes engage in profit yielding venture, alumni development fund, involvement of vocational and technical education lecturers in procurement of instructional materials etc should be practice. The study recommended among others that the federal government should encourage effective maintenance culture to vocational and technical equipment.

Keywords: Vocational and Technical Education, Sustainability, Economic Recovery

Introduction

The progress and achievement recorded by vocational and technical education in developed countries of the world has brought about changes in technological advancement. No wonder the new industrial countries (Asian Tiger) have made remarkable contributions in technology because of their pride of place and finance devoted to education and vocational and technical education. South-East Asia Countries came first in the placement of the 20-best educational system throughout the world. Japanese education has equally performed above the board. That is why it became 2nd in the 2015 placing of 20-best educational system globally close to South-Korea. Japanese enjoys the rewards of adequate financing of her system and it is a household name all over the world. Oguntunji (2013) confirmed that Vocational and Technical Education is now on the primary list of the development agenda of many African countries after years of been neglected by complex set of reactions that involves budgetary constraints and criticism of the world bank in the early 80's on its direction and focus. World Bank argued that the cost of vocational and technical education was too high as compare with the returns to the economy. The author concluded that the gravity of vocational and technical educational training was poor and there was considerable mismatch between the training and the needs of industry. Simply put the cost of vocational and technical education was not cost effective. Unfortunately, the society has misconception that Vocational and Technical Education meant for drop out, unintelligent and non-achievers. This implies that the oil boom went without much impact in vocational and technical education. Olumese and Clack (2010) buttressed that for Nigerians hope for placing among the 20 economic countries

of the world by 2020 to be feasible, her educational system must be redesigned, reinvested, sustained, recreated, renewed, refocused, and strengthen to meet with the present day realities through Vocational and Technical Education. Ajayi and Ekundayo in Famade, Omiyale and Adeola (2015) argued that Nigeria government over the year has not been met with UNESCO recommendation that a country should devote at least 26% of its annual budget to education. Available records show that Nigeria spends a negligible proportion of its budget on education. According to Aina, (2009) if education in general has fared poorly in funding, Vocational and Technical Education has fare worst. The author revealed that the total budget allocations to Vocational and Technical Education in the first second and the third national development plan were 0.0%, 0.036%, and 0.84% respectively. Amoor (2009) is of the opinion that the government pays little attention to improve teaching and learning of Vocational and Technical Education. The laudable sustainable economic recovery can only be achieved if there is effective funding in VTE programme. Sustainable economic recovery programme a resuscitating or raising people's income. It increasing the economic strength of an individual on how to earn money and spend the money judiciously. It will equally encourage VTE students to be job creators and not job seekers after graduations.

In order to improve the financial state of our vocational and technical education, there is need for more financial assistance and the participation of private institutions as well as religion organizations. Adegbenjo (2007) opined that in Nigeria, the major sources of financing education is government which are inform of allocation from government or inform of taxes like educational Trust Fund (ETF) and Tertiary Education Trust Funds (TETFUND), the author expressed further that government carried the primary responsibility of funding education including vocational and technical education. Amesi and Nnadi (2015) came out with the following as the project which the department can embark on to generate additional funds apart from the government allocation. They are as follows: consultancy services, agriculture projects, rental services, Alumni, investment, grants and aids, philanthropist. Nwkpa (2016) suggested the following alternatives sources of funding education; Parents Teachers Association (PTA) use of direct labour, payment from extra lesson, proceeds from school activities, appeal fund raising, community involvement, donation, old students association and non-governmental organization, while Odufowoken (2011) submitted that the following are the sources of funding education which vocational and technical education is part of. They are as follows: public authorities, foreign aids, loan and grants, self-generated income, alumni etc. Despite the above strategies of funding vocational and technical education, under funding is still the bane as could be seen in the inadequacy of infrastructure, human resources and equipment in many higher institutions. It is unfortunates that V.T.E has always been given shorter end of the stick when it comes to statutory allocation of finances to agents of government. Therefore, Nigeria is in a mess economically and there must be several alternatives to be taken to take her out of it right now in other to mitigate the effect of post oil boom in financing technical education.

Statement of the problem

The economic depression brought about by the oil glut of 80s till date has its grip on the education sector. There has been increasing evidence of financial constraints couple with proportion of government budget and gross national products (GNP) available to education financing. Vocational and Technical Education programme faced many challenges. One of it is that colonial government did not prioritize Vocational and Technical Education, because Nigeria government look down on the programme and pursued other educational programme like science, social sciences, Arts etc which contributes little to the total economic products. Ekpeyong in Okoli, Wejinya, Agaim, and Asifs (2016), revealed that most of the facilities required for effective teaching of the subjects were grossly inadequate. The author expressed that in a school visited only a typewriter available to teach ten students, no exposure of the students to pratical experience and so students are half-baked incapacitated

in the job market. The author expressed further that core technology cum engineering programmes in VTE suffers gross inadequate provision of equipment which are: The heavy equipment and gadget that a 21st century needed, VTE workshop, laboratories e.t.c. The situation is worrisome and the society is paying very dearly for this neglect and insensitivity by government. It is clear that government alone cannot fund the programme.

Research questions

1. What are the internal financing strategies to be adopted in funding Vocational and Technical Education for sustainable economic recovery in Ebonyi State, Nigeria?
2. What are the external financing strategies to be adopted in financing vocational and technical education for sustainable economic recovery?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used to conduct the study on financing strategies to be adopted in financing vocational and technical education for sustainable economic recovery in Nigeria. The study area was Ebonyi State of Nigeria. The population of the study was 52 made up of all lecturers in the Universities offering Vocational and Technical Education courses Namely; Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki and Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo, in Ebonyi State. The entire population was studied by the researchers and no sample/sampling technique was considered necessary. Data for this study were collected by means of 20-item questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Financing strategies for Funding Vocational and Technical Education for sustainable economic recovery in Ebonyi State (FSFVTESER)" The questionnaire adopted likert scale as follows; Strongly Agreed (SA = 4 points); Agreed (A = 3 points); Disagreed (DA= 2 points); and Strongly Disagreed (SD = 1 point).

The questionnaires were face and content validated by three lecturers, who are expert in VTE and test and measurement. Cronbach Alpha method was used for obtaining the reliability of the instrument. A coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. The researchers administered 52 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents and 50 copies were filled and returned. The data collected for the study was analyzed using means and standard deviation. The decision rule was that any item with a mean score of 3.0 and above was taken as accepted while items with mean score below 3.0 were regarded as not accepted.

Results

Table 1: Mean Scores of the Respondents on the External Strategies to be Adopted for Financing Vocational and Technical Education for Sustainable Economic Recovery in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Subvention and grants from government	3.04	1.45	Accepted
2	Donations from non-governmental organization	3.20	1.60	Accepted
3	Donations from corporate organization e.g. award of scholarship, fellowship and grants to learners	4.05	1.25	Accepted
4	Support fund from government agencies e.g. ITF and NSTF)	3.10	1.67	Accepted
5	Support fund from the host community	4.06	1.40	Accepted
6	Foreign aids e.g. UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank	3.05	1.02	Accepted
7	Appeal funds from allied associations e.g. PTA and Allumni Association	3.85	1.61	Accepted

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
8	Donations from philanthropies	4.10	1.42	Accepted
9	Endowment funds for provision of facilities, equipments and structures for vocation and technical education	3.50	1.74	Accepted
10	Stolen Nigeria money recovered from the foreign bank should be allocated to finance vocational and technical education	3.30	1.54	Accepted

Table 1 shows that the respondents considered all the items in the table as the external means of funding vocational and technical education for sustainable recovery. The mean value range from 3.04 to 4.10 which are above the cut off point of 3.0 indicating that all the external strategies for financing vocational and technical education are adopted by vocational and technical education lecturers for sustainable economic recovery in Nigeria

Table 2: Mean Scores of the Respondents on the Internal Strategies to be Adopted for Financial Vocational and Technical Education for Sustainable Economic Recovery in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	School fees paid by the students	4.00	1.32	Accepted
2	Students payment of instructional material fees	3.08	1.66	Accepted
3	Consultancy services	3.74	1.92	Accepted
4	Developmental fees	3.93	1.57	Accepted
5	Workshop fees	4.19	1.26	Accepted
6	Registration and examination fees	3.05	1.44	Accepted
7	Caution deposit	3.06	1.53	Accepted
8	Payment of damage fees by trainees in vocational and technical education institutions	3.43	1.07	Accepted
9	Money realized from productions and hiring out items to the public	3.46	1.92	Accepted
10	Involvement of Vocational and Technical Education lecturers in procurement of instructional materials.	4.10	1.22	Accepted

The data in Table 2 above indicate that the respondents were in agreement with all the item listed as the internal strategies for financing vocational and technical education for sustainable economic recovery in Nigeria. This is because their mean value of 3.06 to 4.10 are above the cut-off point of 3.00. This means that all the items are important internal strategies for financing vocational and technical education for sustainable economic recovery in Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The analysis of the research question 1 in table 1 revealed that all the respondents adopted the external financing sources as a means of funding vocational and technical education. This implies that apart from the government as a main source of financing vocational and technical education, other means are: Donations from non-governmental organization, Donations from corporate organization e.g. award of scholarship, Support fund from government agency e.g. ITF, petroleum trust development fund and national science and technology fund (NSTF), Support fund from the host community, Foreign aids e.g. UNESCO, UNICEF and world bank, Appeal funds from allied association e.g. PTA and Alumni Association, Donations from philanthropies, Endowment funds for provision of facilities, equipments and structures for vocation and technical education. The findings of the research question 1 is in line with Nwarka (2016) who buttressed that vocational and

technical education can be financed through the following: parent teachers association, appeal funds, community involvement, donation by old students association etc. Odufunke (2011) also submitted in agreement with the above authors that vocational and technical education could be financed with foreign aids, loan, grants etc.

From the findings of the research question 2, it was found that the respondents agreed that the identified internal strategies of financing vocational and technical education were adopted for sustainable economic recovery. The result shows that vocational and technical education could be financed through the following: School fees paid by the students, Students payment of instructional material fees, Consultancy services, Developmental fees, Workshop fees, Registration and examination fees, Caution fee (against the possibility of damage to school properties, Payment of damage fees by trainees in vocational and technical education institutions, Production of bottle water, block molding, hiring out to the public, items such as tents, canopies, plastic chairs, plastic table, plate and spoons, Involvement of Vocational and Technical Education lecturers in procurement of instructional materials. The above result corroborated with the report of Amesi and Nnadi (2015) who came out with the following as the project which the department can embark on to generate additional funds apart from the government allocation.

Conclusion

Preparing the graduates for the competitive world of work has been the sole aim of VTE. Therefore, we need to be informed that the development of agriculture, commerce and industry may not be attained unless there is a serious effort on the part of everybody, government and private organization to support financially the running of vocational and technical education in the country. That is, for an individual to have access to quality vocational and technical education that will enable him or her to be self-reliant/sufficient, the funding of VTE must not be left alone to the government, every citizen of this nation must contribute his or her quota to ensure that quality education is given.

Recommendations

1. Federal government should separate budgetary provision to vocational and technical education from the general education.
2. Government and schools should create awareness to the public about the importance of vocational and technical education in the 21st century.
3. Government should encourage effective maintenance culture on vocational and technical education equipment
4. National endowment funds for vocational and technical education should be established.
5. Local government should be mandated to contribute part of their revenue to sustain vocational and technical education e.g. repair of dilapidated classrooms
6. Government must compel private organizations as well as religious organizations to support vocational and technical programme of the nation by being included in one programme or the other of the institution.
7. All the vocational and technical education institution should be encouraged to have ventures.

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