

# Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Graduates in Nigeria: Assessing the Challenges of Graduate Productivities

Abodunrin David Olumuyiwa\*

Department of Agricultural Sciences, Ekiti State College of Education, Ikere Ekiti  
+2348030641819 E-mail: [muyiwaabodunrin@gmail.com](mailto:muyiwaabodunrin@gmail.com)

Adekanmi Jonathan Segun

Department of Civil Engineering, The Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria  
+2348030524504 E-mail: [adejon612@yahoo.com](mailto:adejon612@yahoo.com)

Adepoju Oluwaseun Adegoke

Department of Applied Geology, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State  
E-mail: [seunadepoju10@gmail.com](mailto:seunadepoju10@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Most of Nigeria graduates are constrained by lack of cognate experiences when it comes to recruitment, as the education system dwell much on giving theoretical knowledge with less industrial, field and practical experiences incorporated in the system. Employers avoid spending on training and (or) retraining of graduates to prepare them to fit into the labour system, but will rather employ graduates with cognate experience(s). This constrain is expected not to affect Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) graduates as the system of training in TVET is designed to afford the students the specific occupational skills and experiences for entry-level jobs in a trade or vocation. Despite the advantage possess by TVET graduates over others, TVET graduates are perceived to be relatively less productive in the labour system compared to their polytechnic and university graduate counterpart; this has led to employers of labour preference for university and polytechnic graduates over TVET graduates. This has adversely cut off the technical inputs into the labour system of Nigeria and consequently affected the balance of the labour system and the economy of the nation at large. This study reviewed the cause(s) of less productivity in TVET graduates and attempts to proffer solution to the challenges.

**Keywords:** Technical, Vocation, Education, TVET, Skills, Productivity.

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## Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) has a long history (Gordon, 2007; Rauner & Maclean, 2008; Scott and Sarkees-Wircenski, 2008). Various definitions/description have been given to TVET, of which Maclean and Wilson (2009) defined vocational education as a practical but non-academic instruction giving to learners of specific occupational skills for entry-level jobs in a trade or vocation. TVET gives the learners proficiency in manual skills; the design of the programs is in such a way to meet the specific needs of the individual and the society at large (Gordon, 2007; Rauner and Maclean, 2008; Scott and Sarkees-Wircenski, 2008). According to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2010), technical education should offer post-secondary skills training which should meet the needs of markets or of citizens and to fulfil stakeholders' expectations.

TVET has evolved over the years. In Nigeria, TVET began operation with training youths in traditional vocation such as weaving, pottery, mat making and wood carving by parents, family and relatives who were skilled in these vocations (Fafunwa, 2002). The system changed with the intervention of the colonial masters as formal vocational schools for interested learners of particular trades were set up.

The National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) was established in 1985, saddled with the responsibility of quality assessment and program accreditations at polytechnics, professional institutions, technical colleges, and training centres to set guidelines and standards for admissions to the different programs in each institution. In 1992, the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) was established and charged with the conduct of technical and business examinations, initially conducted by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI), and the West African Examination Council (WAEC) (Oni, 2006, 2008; UNEVOC, 1996).

The basic goal of TVET is to provide employability and workplace skills to prepare trainees for occupations above skilled craft but below the scientific, engineering or technical professionals (Maclean and Wilson, 2009). TVET therefore provides basic skills for trainees, prepare trainees for basic technical occupational requirements and also prepare graduates for continuing education. It is expected that TVET graduates will add to the economic and industrial growth of the nations through the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development developed from the training received from TVET; it is

however noteworthy that the graduates of TVET have contributed short of expectation to the society. This article presents review of the imbalances in the TVET system and the consequent effect on TVET graduates productivity.

### **Methodology**

This study employed the review of literatures, published and unpublished dissertations and manuals to achieve the set objective.

### **TVET System and Adjoining Challenges**

The Nigeria technical colleges are known for training people to become craftsmen and technician. The TVET system is therefore responsible for training of competent personnel with efficient productivities in their chosen vocation without need for pre-employment training (Ibrahim and Abdullahi, 2010). The case is however different as graduate of technical colleges have been found to perform below expectation and less productive; most of these graduate are not employable neither are able to gain admission to higher school of learning after completing their technical education.

### **TVET Curriculum**

“The curriculum in TVET schools is not well designed to meet the demand of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. The schools lack laboratory equipment for practical work, and they end up spending most of their time learning theory instead of doing hands-on lab activities that will empower them with the skills and knowledge they need to perform well on the job or to become self-employed” (Quoted from Victor, 2013).

Reviewing the NBTE curriculum for National Diploma in taxation; the curriculum is structured into four semesters of classroom, laboratory /workshop activities in the institution and 3 to 4 months students industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) in a relevant industry. Each semester of institutional based activities shall make up duration of 17 weeks with 15 contact weeks of teaching, i.e. theory, practical exercises, quizzes and tests; and 2 weeks for examination and registration. During the ND program, the students shall have four semesters during which they will offer courses totalling 23, 24, 27 and 28 units respectively, which now vary from one institution to another.

The curriculum is designed in such a way to help learners to acquire knowledge as well as experience. But the implementation of this curriculum has been a major challenge in Nigeria.

### **TVET Institution Related Factor**

According to Ayonmike (2014); factors such as unstable academic calendar, inadequate collaboration between tertiary institutions and organized private sector, inadequate and obsolete infrastructure and equipment, for example poor equipped TVET workshop and libraries, dilapidated classroom blocks, and weak support structure for students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) have plagued the productivity of TVET system and its graduate.

### **TVET Resource Persons**

According to Isa *et al.* (2013), Technical Teachers were few in technical and vocational institutions, instructions are being given by teachers who are not technically inclined and this have lowered the standard of instruction and learning in TVET schools. It is noteworthy that a good curriculum needs a competent instructor to achieve the goals for which the curriculum is designed. Ayonmike (2014) also stated that Human resource related problems such as brain drain, human capital flight, unattractive conditions of service for teachers, and staff shortages across board has been a major challenge of TVET education, which in turn reduces TVET graduate productivity.

### **Government Related Challenges**

Ayonmike (2014) noted challenges such as inadequate funding of government TVET schools, Isa *et al.* (2013) opined that the absence of independent or separate Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education made it hard for TVET to develop effectivel. Government are doing less to ensure the standardization and optimization of TVET School and system with respect to performance.

### **Student Related Challenges**

Egwu (2009) highlighted student related challenges such as cultism, examination malpractice, social and academic vices and others. It is important to note that for a successful implementation of a curriculum, the learners have a major role to play as the learners are the central figures in curriculum implementation.

Other scholars opined that the major challenge is funding, with lack of infrastructure, sponsorship, poor timing and lack of reward for excellence as other challenges (Ibrahim and Abdullahi, 2010; Udoka, 2010 and

Okafoafor, 2010).

### **Addressing TVET Graduates Productivity Challenge(s)**

TVET system differs from other learning systems in that it provides more practical and industrial experiences compared to others. The curriculum design should rather accord two third of the learning process in TVET to give students practical and industrial experiences. By this, the graduates will be more familiar with the market rather than theoretical understanding of the market. Redesign of the curriculum will not suffice if there is no proper implementation. It is therefore necessary to employ proficient technical teachers to teach the TVET students.

Collaboration with industries must also be ensured, this will foster relationship between technical schools and the industries which will consequently enable Technical schools understand the required standard and its dynamic form in the industries; with such understanding, TVET will be kept on their toes to upgrade knowledge and keep their relevancy in the industry. Active and well equipped laboratory for practical works should be made available in technical schools in order to meet up with global standard and enhance effective and efficient learning system.

Government must also allocate adequate funds to technical and vocational education. Inadequate funds affect the provision of essentials such as well – equipped laboratories and workshops, relevant textbooks and training manuals. Government policies should also be reviewed in order to address the dichotomy that exists between University and Technical Institutions; this will attract competent lecturers and as well help student's esteem the TVET system.

As it is expected that TVET graduates need no pre-training due to wealth of experiences gathered during their undergraduate period, it is therefore necessary for industries not to task the graduate beyond the learnt and derived skills. TVET graduate must work strictly as technicians in order to better help them to be more productive rather than struggling to be employed as engineers or scientist in the industries.

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria as a country needs the integration of TVET graduates into the market system in order to bridge the employee gap. This will help the Nigeria market to be more productive. To achieve this, proper training of TVET students is essential in all our institutions saddled with the mandate of technical education. It is therefore imperative that all concerned bodies and individuals contribute their quota.

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