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# The Place of the Library in TVET Programmes in Colleges of Education in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The study looked at the place of the library in actualizing TVET programmes in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. TVET as a programme focuses on practical learning in the areas of science and technology. TVET programmes are divided into theory and practice, and are overseen by NBTE. Regardless of the importance of TVET, its implementation is faced with challenges ranging from lack of funds to misappropriation of funds to lack of facilities, non-functional and inaccessible facilities, to brain drain, gender inequality, wrong TVET curriculum, government apathy and wrong value system. The library, if better placed, can help to correct the anomaly. This is possible by making the citizenry to become independent thinkers and life-long self-learners who will appreciate and use their knowledge and culture for the development of the nation.

Key Words: TVET, library, Colleges of Education,

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## 1. Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an educational process where emphasis is placed on practical learning in the areas of technology and science, with the hope of breeding manpower that are employable and prospective employers. Because of the importance of TVET, it has received significant attention in recent times, both locally and internationally. That is why Azeem, et al (2022) posit that globalization will become easier with a properly trained workforce that will be adaptive to and driven by industry-responsiveness. For Hamid, et al (2022), the objective of TVET is to produce a workforce that is industry-ready. Hence, the relevance of TVET cannot be over flogged in the Nigerian context, where there is underemployment and unemployment. A way to combat underemployment and unemployment is to develop manpower that can handle whatever tasks are placed in front of them; Colleges of Education are Institutions saddled with the task of developing such manpower.

Colleges of Education are primarily tasked with the duty of producing teachers for primary and secondary schools; this makes them aptly placed to implement TVET. By implication, they are supposed to produce teachers who are both industry-ready for the teaching profession and specialists in their subject areas such that they can become entrepreneurs who employ labour. Becoming subject specialists who are industry-ready would be possible when the curriculum of the Colleges of Education is designed in such a way that courses are practical oriented and technology focused. To achieve these, the library plays a pivotal role. There is no gainsaying that the library is a sine-qua-non if Colleges of Education are to successfully implement practical oriented teaching, aiming at achieving the goals of TVET.

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## 2. TVET in Nigerian Colleges of Education

The organization and administration of TVET programmes across the globe varies. In Nigeria, it is overseen by National Board of Technical Education (NBTE). Opoko, et al (2018) stated that NBTE is a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Education, primarily charged with vocational education other than university education. TVET in Nigeria is enshrined in all facets of the Education sector, such that students are exposed to technical and vocational trainings from lower secondary and upper secondary schools. At the post-secondary level, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Education, TVET is also an integral part of their curriculum (UNESCO, 2019). The formal TVET system in Nigeria has the following structure, given in Table 1 below.

In Nigeria, TVET is divided into two broad groups: theory and practice. While the theory is taught by lecturers, the practice is handled by

instructors/technologists (UNESCO, 2019). To have specialists who can effectively deliver the theoretical and practical aspects of TVET underscores the importance of Colleges of Education, where quality teachers are formed; Colleges of Education play a dual function here: first, they help to produce specialists who can teach the course contents in TVET, secondly, they produce experts in TVET who have mastered the art of Technical and Vocational Education, and are ready for the market, either as entrepreneurs and employers of labour or at the barest, as people that are market-ready for employment.

To produce experts who are market-ready for employment, Colleges of Education are either Technical-inclined, where they focus mainly on science and technology courses; or if they are conventional Colleges of Education, they have School of Technical and Vocational Education, where they produce experts in TVET. Eith

er way, Colleges of Education have had their fair share in the training of experts in technological, vocational and science education, and still continue to do so. Okoye and Arimonu (2016) summarized it by asserting that notable impacts have been made by vocational and technical education in Nigeria.

**Table 1: Formal TVET System Structure in Nigeria**

Level	Courses Taught	Taught In	Duration	Admission Requirement	Remark
Lower Secondary	Welding and Fabrication, Carpentry and Joinery, Garment making, Computer Science	Technical (Secondary) Colleges	3 years	Primary School Certificate or Common Entrance	Graduates either seek work or advance to TVET programmes at the upper secondary level
Upper Secondary	Courses for National Vocational Certificate and Trade Tests	Technical Colleges, Vocational and Innovation Enterprises Institutions	1 – 3 years	Pass in the Junior School Certificate Examination	Graduates can seek work after attaining the National Vocational Certificate or Trade Tests
Upper Secondary	National Technical Certificate / National Business Certificate programmes	Technical Colleges	3 years	Pass in the Junior School Certificate Examination	Graduates advance to TVET programmes offered at the post- secondary non-tertiary level
Post-Secondary non-tertiary	National Diploma and National Innovative Diploma	Polytechnics and Monotechnics	2 years	Senior School Certificate	Graduates can advance to TVET programmes offered at the tertiary level
Post-Secondary non-tertiary	Advanced National Technical Certificate and Advanced National Business Certificate	Technical Colleges	1 year	National Technical Certificate or National Business Certificate	Graduates can advance to TVET programmes offered at the tertiary level
Tertiary	Higher National Diploma	Polytechnics and Monotechnics	2 years	National Diploma, National Innovation Diploma, Advanced National Technical Certificate, or Advanced National Business Certificate	Graduates can advance to further education for Professional Diploma
Tertiary	Professional Diploma	Polytechnics and Monotechnics	1½ years	Higher National Diploma	Graduates can advance to Master's programmes at the tertiary education level

Source: UNESCO (2019)

Table 1 above gives a detailed structure of the progression in TVET formal training in Nigeria, with Technical College playing a vital role in the actualization. Detailed and laudable as the structure of TVET in Nigeria may be, implementation is still faced with several challenges.

### 3. Challenges of Implementation of TVET

Several issues have hindered the implementation, growth and stabilization of TVET in Nigeria. They include: misappropriation of funds, lack of facilities, lack of trained manpower, lack of political will power.

**3.1 Lack of Funds:** Budgetary allocation for education in Nigeria is small and inadequate. Again, as noted by National Board of Technical Education (NBTE, 2017), the share of the education budget given to TVET Institutions is barely sufficient to sustain them, even with evidence that TVET graduates do better in the labour market.

**3.2 Misappropriation of Funds:** The issue of misappropriation of funds meant for TVET programmes is a major challenge to the success of the programme. Apart from buildings, TVET also need learning equipment like machines, tools, special furniture. The absence of these, which is more of a result of misappropriation than lack of funds, makes standards in TVET in particular and education generally to be on the constant decline. Opoko, et al (2018) noted that funds are necessary, because they are used for acquisition of facilities, employment of skilled manpower, and provision of quality learning materials, amongst others. Regrettably, however, funds provided in the budgetary allocation for these purposes are diverted and embezzled, leaving the commonman in the street, whose only hope is entrepreneurship, which would have been possible with TVET, to be left hanging and stranded.

**3.3 Lack of Facilities:** This challenge naturally draws from misappropriation of funds. When monies approved for any venture are stolen and diverted, that venture naturally dies from lack. Okoye and Arimonu (2016) averred that most departments in higher institutions where TVET are taught lack laboratories and workshops as well as useable equipment; and where they exist, they are grossly inadequate. A major cause for this challenge of lack of facilities is misappropriation and corruption. It is a well-known fact that when contracts are awarded in Nigeria, for instance, the amount that gets to the contractors is barely 50% of the total allocation. All other monies are missing in transit.

**3.4 Non-functional and Inaccessible Facilities:** The problem seems to be a general one in Nigeria. Nigerian public facilities are built without considering those who are physically challenged. Opoko, et al (2018) observed that the absence of ramps in public buildings in Nigeria makes access by the physically challenges almost impossible, save when they are assisted by others. This natural exclusion arising from non-functional facilities makes it impossible for those who may have flair for TVET programmes to participate.

**3.5 Brain Drain:** Brain drain entails the movement of manpower from one sector to another, or from one location to another. Okoye and Arimonu (2016) have observed that within Nigeria, lecturers and instructors in TVET institutions are moving to other professions that have better economic benefits and remunerations. This is causing severe damage to the technological and socio-economic development of Nigeria. The researchers also cited Bassi (2004) as saying that over 45% of Nigeria's professionals in all professions, including technical education, have left the shores of Nigeria. Okoye and Arimonu (2016) further averred that Nigeria lost over 10,000 high level and middle level managers to western economies between 1997 and 2007 alone. Should the issue of brain drain continue in TVET, a time will come, soonest, that Nigeria will be technologically lagging behind; and should the brain drain continue in all sectors of the economy, Nigeria will soon be a country best described as one dying of thirst in the middle of an ocean. This is so as Opoko, et al (2018) opined that brain drain leads to lack of trained personnel.

**3.6 Gender Inequality:** UNESCO (2019) pointed out the enrolment for TVET in Nigeria has less than 40% female enrolment. This inequality, Okwelle and Kooli (2021) believe is caused by societal perceptions which include parental factors, government factors and peer group influence.

**3.7 Wrong TVET Curriculum:** Most curricula developed in Nigeria are adopted from models developed in the western worlds. As noted by Okoye and Arimonu (2016), those models are not easily duplicated in Nigeria because of variance in infrastructure, equipment, training opportunity, staffing, etc.

**3.8 Government Apathy:** The ruling class in Nigeria has not proven otherwise that they are not interested in the education sector of the country, which is why they exhibit lack of interest in anything that has to do with education. This apathy is why the government of the nation will allow tertiary institutions to be closed for 8 months, refusing to heed the demands of staff of these institutions, while at the same time having excess money to spend on political nomination forms vying for the presidency of the nation.

**3.9 Value System:** Nigeria has placed too much emphasis on paper certification against know-how. That is why Nigeria is more interested in degrees not minding whether the holders actually have the corresponding knowledge and skills. This is evident in the public sector where graduates of technical and vocational educations are often discriminated against and their career prospects are limited (Nworlu-Elechi, 2013 cited in Okoye and Arimonu, 2016).

#### 4. The Library and TVET in Colleges of Education

Daunting as these challenges are, a careful look will reveal that if properly harnessed, the library can proffer lasting solutions to most if not all of them. It is no longer news that the library is an information power house that can enlighten the minds of its users. An enlightened mind can achieve anything, for nothing is impossible once the mind has conceived it. Some of the ways that libraries can help Colleges of Education in successfully implementing and actualizing TVET are given below:

**4.1 Independent Thinkers:** The library help create independent thinkers who do not need the approval of society to pursue and actualize their dreams. This the library does by collecting and providing relevant information in all formats and disseminates same through all possible media to those with such information needs. Anyira and Idubor (2020) posit that libraries have the social responsibility to disseminate information to those who require using such information.

**4.2 Spread of Knowledge, Education and Culture:** Libraries help to spread knowledge by making available, recorded knowledge from the past and the present. Access to this knowledge enhances education and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the nation. Love for culture is the basis for development (Yang, 2011) and when the library is able to instill that love, in people, for their culture, through reading, then and there will there be real industrial development, which is really possible with a successfully implemented TVET programme. Anyira and Idubor (2020) argue that the library plays a vital role as a gateway to knowledge and culture; helping to sieve through the myriads of available information to bring out the most relevant, current and correct information.

**4.3 Development of Life-Long Self-Learners:** The library help inculcate the attitude of life-long self-learning, where people get to study every time instead of when they have need for information. Life-long self-learners are able to impart their society with the information they gather on their own through self-study and research, and this information is able to assist them in improving their learning efficacy, creative and design abilities, their abilities for divergent and holistic thinking on the different perspectives of a subject (Yang, 2011) and thus become better inventors would be better entrepreneurs, which is the goal of TVET.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In all, if the library helps in actualizing the above stated functions it would have helped to create a knowledge economy. In a knowledge economy, citizens are enlightened enough to hold government accountable. When the library is able to create independent thinkers, some of the challenges facing the successful implementation of TVET would have been addressed as the citizens would be better placed to hold government accountable, agitate for implementable TVET curriculum and strive to change the status quo on the value system that places more values on certificates and degrees rather than know-how. If the library is able to create an informed and enlightened citizenry who appreciate their cultural heritage and are vast in the knowledge about their craft and scientific background, the challenges of brain drain and gender inequality. Thus making the necessary manpower needed for the industrialization of the economy possible. This achieved, the library would have assisted in combating the challenge of government apathy, where government would no longer be interested in investing in education, because they will see the dividends of their investments.

TVET programmes have what it takes to move Nigeria to become a technological nation. Unfortunately, however, implementing TVET in Nigeria has been faced with several challenges; some of which are issues with the government, others are issues with the society and employers of labour, while others are issues with the value system and economic issues. The library is central to correct the ills orchestrated by these challenges, that prevent successfully implemented TVET programme. Some of the ways the library help in combating these challenges are by helping the citizenry to become independent thinkers and life-long self-learners who will appreciate and use their knowledge and culture for the development of the nation.

Thus, the research recommends that libraries, all types, should be well equipped and furnished with human, material and information needed to function optimally. Also, librarians should be given the privilege of being members of curriculum development and review in Nigeria, so they can use the 'eye' of their professional training to advice on the appropriateness of the items in the curriculum.

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