



## ESPOUSING NIGERIA'S TECHNICAL AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

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### Abstract

*The potentials in technical and entrepreneurship education as tool for sustainable economy and self-reliance cannot be over emphasized. A nation with the desire to overcome economic challenges and youth unemployment as well as moral decadence must strive to give adequate attention to the benefits accruable from technical and entrepreneurship education. By pursuing this with all seriousness, it will not only pave way for national development, but could equally bring about technological advancement. This study employed the desk-based research method to investigate the above concerns. Impliedly, the data used in the collation was anchored on secondary sources such as journal articles, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, internet materials and other periodicals. This work therefore sought among other things to uncover the benefits inherent in supporting technical and entrepreneurship training. It also concluded that technical and entrepreneurial manpower is germane to national development. It was among others recommended that, there should be provision of necessary infrastructure as well as general enlightenment on the significance of technical and entrepreneurship education trainings. Furthermore, there should be re-designing of relevant school curricular to meet prevailing national and global demand.*

**Keywords:** Economy, Education, Entrepreneurship, Sustainable, Technical

### Introduction

The National Policy on Education document in Nigeria (revised edition) attaches great importance to technical and entrepreneurship education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). This is because it is the engine for achieving the desired and envisaged technological and economic development in Nigeria. The development of technical and entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has its foundation prior to pre-colonial education system. During this period, education which was informal in nature, laid much emphasis on the training of the youths in the skills already acquired by their parents (Ifesi, Asogwa & Irorakpor, 2019). Globally, the significance of technical and entrepreneurship education cannot be overemphasized because it holds the key to pragmatic economic and industrial growth of an economy (Morebise, 2022). Technical and entrepreneurship education donate a form of training in which one's innate abilities in skilled and technical work is enhanced. Technical

education promotes self-employment and is considered a significant requirement for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (European Commission, 2018).

Technical education and entrepreneurship training equip people with knowledge, skills or competencies required in particular calling or more broadly, on the labour market (European Commission, 2018). Similarly, Morebise (2022) averred that, technical and entrepreneurship education can be instrumental to building human resources for self-reliance and sustainable economic development. As stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), technical and vocational education refer to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technology and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of the economy of the country. Thus, technical education is a type of education designed for the preparation of persons for useful employment in a particular occupation. It requires a combination of intellectual abilities and practical skills. It is purposely designed for the development of skills and knowledge which can be useful to both concerned individuals in particular, and the society at large (Osundahunsi, 2019).

Nigeria's economy is overwhelmed amongst other factors by great poverty index, low industrial development capacity, unemployment, under-employment, irregularity in policies, and uncertainty of business existence (Fagbomedo, 2022). Technical and entrepreneurship education can make great impact on job creation by improving the standard of living and growing the economy. This is key to national development, especially socio-economic growth (John-Akamelu & Muogbo, 2018). It is on this premise that this paper focused on the pivotal role of technical and entrepreneurship education for a sustainable economy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Sustainable economy is measured by the level of entrepreneurial skills and ability possessed by practitioners of entrepreneurial activities. Nigeria has all it takes to become a major player in the global economy by virtue of its natural and human resource endowments. Unfortunately, it has been observed that most practitioners do not exhibit entrepreneurial skills that can promote job and wealth creation. Technical and entrepreneurship education is essential not only to solve the problem of economic development but also to solve the problems of unemployment and unbalanced areas development. This study was carried out in order to proffer solutions to the undesirable socio-economic challenges by harnessing the



significant role of technical and entrepreneurship education as a panacea through which social, vocational and economic adjustments could be addressed.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this paper are to:

- i. examine the concepts of technical and entrepreneurship education against the backdrop of its significance for sustainable economy.
- ii. highlight the role of technical and entrepreneurship education in fostering entrepreneurship development.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Technical and Entrepreneurship Education**

Technical and entrepreneurship education refer to universal, multi-disciplinary, and pragmatic field of study aimed at equipping individuals with requisite technical literary skills, which are needed to enhance relevance and functionality in the society (Umeh, 2019). Technical and entrepreneurship education and trainings are relevant for preparing skillful manpower. According to Ajokporise (2010), technical education is the education that prepares students for jobs and careers that are based on mostly manual or practical activities. Oviawe (2017) submitted that the major thrust of technical and entrepreneurship education worldwide is to address issues of youth unemployment, poverty, and global competitiveness in skills development towards current and projected challenges and opportunities. The Nigerian education system offers a variety of options for technical and entrepreneurship education at both the secondary and tertiary levels. Dada and Fanowopo (2020) stated that, in order to reduce the chronic youth unemployment, the Federal Ministry of Education supports a number of reform projects to advance vocational and technical training including the “vocationalization” of secondary education and the development of a National Vocational Qualifications Framework by the National Board for Technical Education.

No doubt, technical and entrepreneurship education and training offers leverage to improved quality of life and helps individuals to become productive economically (Ugwoke, 2014). The author stressed further that, when people’s skills are guaranteed, they become well-informed, self-sustained, employable and entrepreneurs thereby contributing to the economic development and sustenance of a country. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2013) sees technical and entrepreneurship education and training as

those aspects of training process involving in addition to general education, related science, practical skills and attitude relating to occupations in many sectors of the economy (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2013; UNESCO, 2015). Invariably, it is a form of training whose aim is to prepare individuals for engagement in different fields of endeavor. In similar vein, Osuala (2004) made reference as stipulated in National Policy on Education (revised edition, 2014) that, skills in electrical/electronics, metal work, motor vehicle mechanic work, woodwork, automobile design, building technology, equipment servicing, drafting and designing, computer software and hardware among others, can be learned through technical and entrepreneurship education and training.

The aims and objectives of technical and entrepreneurship education (TE) as contained in the National Policy on Education which was revised in 2014 include: meet educational demands of the population, support professional career development and social protection of individuals; maintain competitiveness of employees through training and professional development; feed economy with qualified manpower competitive both on local and international labour market and to ensure a match between the fast changing labour market and vocational technical education system; support student mobility; foster appropriation of the people's educational capacities with the new socio-economic conditions to support self-employment and entrepreneurial driven society; and, develop School-Business Partnership in technical and entrepreneurship education.

### **Sustainable economy**

Over the years, economic policy goals have changed; concepts of economic development have also been adjusted in tune with prevailing realities (Shu'aibu, 2022). Current consensus in non-Marxist thought defines sustainable economy to refer to practices that support long-term economic growth without negatively impacting social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the community. Oba and Shu'aibu (2020) posit that economic sustainability is the 'process whereby the real per capita income increases over a long period of time- subject to the stipulations that the number below an "absolute poverty line" does not increase, and that the distribution of income does not become more unequal'. This consensus ascribes the following features to a sustainable economy:

- a) Resource efficiency;
- b) Environmental protection;
- c) Social inclusion;



- d) Economic resilience; and
- e) Consumption and production (Oba & Shu'aibu, 2020)

The total development of society involves not only changes in economic activity, but also social, political, and cultural transformations. The general consensus remains that 'it is conventional to begin with an increase in per capita real income as the best available overall index of economic development (Oba & Shu'aibu, 2020). It is also the process of improving a community's well-being through job creation, business growth, as well as through improvements to the wider social and natural environment that strengthen the economy. It equally entails job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life.

### **Benefits of sustainable economic development**

The United Nations, the World Bank and the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) have identified some benefits of sustainable economic development which include:

1. Poverty Reduction– Reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty;
2. Quality Universal Education – Achievement of universal primary education for all;
3. Gender Equality – Gender equality and the empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education;
4. Reduce Mortality Rates – Reduction in infant and child mortality rates.
5. Decent work and economic growth;
6. Affordable and clean energy;
7. Reproductive Health – Provision of access to reproductive health services to all individuals of appropriate age; and
8. Environment – Implementation of national strategies for sustainable development to ensure the reversal of lost global environmental resources.

### **Challenges to sustainable development**

Several challenges threaten progress towards sustainable development goals. The spike in food and energy prices in 2008 led to a severe global food crisis. The subsequent fall of energy prices has eased some of the pressure on energy importing countries. Growth rates are falling, unemployment is rising, poverty is deepening, climate change, heavy population rate, hunger and malnutrition are on the increase again, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is in jeopardy.

Problems of sustainable development are rooted in issues of resource use and their pattern of distribution and ownership. Thus, a policy towards sustainable development cannot be framed in isolation to politics and state regulations.

### **Issues with technical and entrepreneurship education in Nigeria**

Technical and entrepreneurship education programmes are expected to bring about positive changes and improvements to the overall well-being of the country. However, according to Umeh (2019), the following factors hinders effective policy implementation:

- i. Inadequate funding - In learning, there is the combination of people, materials, facilities, equipment and procedures that interact to achieve set goal or objectives. These are grossly inadequate for effective teaching and learning. A substantial number of technical and entrepreneurship education equipment and facilities in our institutions are obsolete and non-functional.
- ii. Poor Contents and defective implementation of the curriculum - The need for relevant curricula for the training of professionals in various occupations cannot be overemphasized. The technical and entrepreneurship education curriculum at the secondary and tertiary institutions is defective to the extent that technical studies are taught as a single integrated subject. Presently, the nation's educational system produces job seekers who are deficient in training and dynamic knowledge that support the life skills required for quality living at local, state and national forums.
- iii. Misconception - Many parents are not disposed to the idea of their wards studying technical and entrepreneurial courses. This is partly because they believe that it is meant for the never-do-wells, drop outs, and instead they opt for courses like Accountancy, Medicine, Law, etc.
- iv. Lack of Maintenance - Another issue in technical and entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is that of maintenance of workshop equipment and instructional facilities. Most of the machines are outdated and there are no spare parts for maintenance. The consumables are very expensive to many institutions. Perhaps, this explains why some institutions require these machines only for accreditation purposes. The facilities are locked immediately the accreditation team departs, so the students are neither exposed to the facilities, nor allowed to see them.
- v. Lack of political will - The absence of political will on the part of government officials and other relevant stakeholders towards the implementation of technical and entrepreneurial education policy. Okoroma (2006) laments a situation where policies



are sometimes made for egoistic and selfish reasons by policymakers for political support and attention with less regard for implementation and importantly, lack political will for the desired practical implementation. In the same vein, Bolaji, Gray and Campbell-Evans (2015) cautioned that the best policies, techniques and templates will not attain set objective and will surely will not see light of the day without political will from the executive and those charged with such responsibility. According to Chemutai (2016), policy implementation is dependent on the political will of the political class and that effective and efficient policy implementation is hinged on the political will of the institution, bureaucrats and politicians.

### **Suggestions to assuage identified challenges**

Shu'aibu, Yusuf and Bolajoko (2020) gave the following suggestions which may assist in assuaging the identified challenges:

1. **Provision of facilities** - For the goals of technical and entrepreneurial education to be attained, there must be adequate funding in order to facilitate the provision of facilities in terms of space and equipment. This will lead to quality education in technical and entrepreneurship training. Students would be more motivated if teaching and learning is carried out using real materials under real situation.
2. **Proper funding** - Technical and entrepreneurial education is capital intensive and needs adequate funding. It is the responsibility of the government to step up efforts in providing funds for technical and entrepreneurial education in order to have entrepreneurially active economy.
3. **Teachers should be motivated** - Teachers and educators of technical and entrepreneurship education and training deserve to be encouraged by way of upward review of their remuneration and other fringe benefits. There should be opportunity for training and retraining as at and when due.
4. **Sensitization** - Adequate orientation is sine-qua-non for attainment of technical advancement. There is the need for adequate orientation and sensitization in the course of technical and entrepreneurship education and training curriculum execution. This step will change the wrong perception of both parents and their wards towards technical education.
5. **Qualified teachers** - For quality output assurance, high quality teachers must be recruited to impart technical and entrepreneurship knowledge and competencies required for the economic advancement of the country



## **Conclusion**

Failure in advancing and developing technical and entrepreneurship education to meet up with the contemporary challenges of unemployment, poverty and technological failure could be assuaged if government and other stakeholders such as private entrepreneurs should be determined. In all climes, technical manpower has been the bedrock of national development. Even with the advent of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the nation cannot rise above the level of her technical and entrepreneurship education. Hardly can any nation be self-reliant or survive economically without a viable economy. Technical and entrepreneurship education is perceived to be ideally positioned to continue its' role, and bringing about meaningful contribution to the task of preparing citizens for the acquisition of competencies needed for self-reliance through the building of appropriate frameworks. From the foregoing, it denotes that a re-engineered programme is needed if we desire the realization of educational objectives through functional learning at all levels.

## **Recommendations**

In order to make technical and entrepreneurship education relevant in Nigeria and also to ensure its' successful contribution to sustainable economy, the following recommendation were made:

- i. There should be provision of necessary infrastructure and training facilities for the teaching of technical and entrepreneurship education programmes. These facilities include: Classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshops, tools and equipment, textbooks, etc. the facilities should be handled by trained and qualified technical and vocational education teachers and experts.
- ii. There should be proper enlightenment on the need to embrace the realities in technical and entrepreneurship education by way of elaborate campaigns on the significance as a course of study. The government should complement these efforts by offering special scholarship to deserving students.
- iii. Policies on technical and entrepreneurship education must be made adaptable to capture the rapid demands of Information and communication technology in order to address the socio-economic realities taking place globally.





- iv. Curriculum should be re-designed to incorporate the modern skills needed for effective implementation. The contents in the curriculum should meet the peculiarities of the country.

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