
REVIEW PAPER

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FUNDING VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigerian education is suffering from acute shortage of fund. For decades, the funding of education has been the sole responsibility of the government. At national level in 2012, ₦4.9trn budget proposal was presented to the National Assembly and ₦426.53bn was allocated representing 8.7 per cent of the national budget to Education compared to 26 per cent international benchmark for developing countries. Not bearing in mind that some programmes like Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) are practical oriented and large sum of money would be needed in order to retain its right place in the development of skills/competencies, self-reliance, technological, economical and national growth. It is disheartening that VTE in Nigeria is suffering the frustration and indignity of very low rating in the world ranking due to inadequate funding by the government. In view of this, the paper examines the alternative sources of funding Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria. It was concluded that, the funding of VTE must not be left alone to the government; but every citizen of this nation must contribute his/her quota to ensure that quality education is given. It was recommended that institutions should generate Internal Generator Revenue (IGR) and seek for assistance from companies, philanthropists and alumni associations in order to finance Vocational and Technical Education adequately.

KEYWORDS: Vocational and Technical Education (VTE), alternative sources of funding, occupation, self-reliant, Internal Generated Revenue (IGR)

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INTRODUCTION

Education in general is an exercise that engages everyone. An individual either goes through liberal, general or vocational education. The adults who did not have the opportunity for formal education when younger were indirectly involved in education because education

means more than going to school. It should be noted that Vocational Education existed long before the advent of Western Education in form of home training on some skills and the apprenticeship system. Some decades ago, missionaries developed people in such skills as carpentry, carving, knitting, masonry, gardening, weaving and tailoring among others.

Vocational and Technical Education is meant to prepare individuals for careers based on manual and practical activities but its growth is limited by the negative attitude exhibited by some people; who tend to relate Vocational and Technical Education to failure, that is, for drop-out students. A study by Mureithi (2008) on the challenges facing youth in Polytechnics in Rift Valley province, Kenya, found out that parents believe that only those who fail to make it to the secondary schools should be admitted to the Youth Polytechnics. This might be the reason for the establishment of Vocational and Technical Education. In Nigeria, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in National Policy on Education stated that students who leave schools at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) stage may go on to an apprenticeship system or some other schemes for out-of-school vocational training.

One obstacle to the development of Vocational and Technical Education is the issue of resources required for its sustenance. It is an important aspect of Vocational and Technical Education which refers to its financing. The mechanisms of allocation of resources in education do not seem to favour Vocational and Technical Education

Table 1: Budget Allocation to Priority Areas in 2012

S/N	Sector	Capital Expenditure (N bn)	Recurrent Expenditure	Total Expenditure (N bn)	% of Total for Priority
1	Agriculture & Rural Development	41.19	37.79	78.98	4.02
2	Education	55.06	345.09	400.15	20.34
3	Health	57.01	225.76	282.77	14.34
4	Niger Delta	57.00	2.72	59.72	3.04
5	Power	70.30	91.12	161.42	8.31
6	Security	110.44	653.75	764.19	38.85
7	Water Resources	30.40	8.60	39.00	1.98
8	Works	149.20	31.60	180.80	9.19
	Total			1,967.03	

Sources: 2012 Budget Speech and Appropriation Bill 2012 in Nigeria Education Fact Sheet (2012)

in many countries, most especially Nigeria. Vocational and Technical Education programmes are costly and the meagre, dwindling educational budgets in several developing countries, most especially Nigeria, does not allow for provision of sufficient resources for Vocational and Technical Education. Osuala (2004) stated that after independence, the sum

of over ₦40 million was committed by external agencies for the establishment, expansion, and operation of education institutions in Nigeria. Out of which Higher Education and Teacher Training absorbed 48% and 29% respectively of the funds, 13.5% of the budget went to Secondary Education; while, Vocational Education had the lowest percentage of disbursement which is 7.3%.

Government funding of education has been inadequate for the past decades. The funding of education is shared among different levels of government and supplemented by funds from other sources like organisations or companies and levies. Inadequate funding of education has been one of the most significant causes of the low quality of the education offered at all levels (Moja, 2000). Funding allocations have been in flux during the last decades. There has been a drop in the funding level of education in Nigeria, for instance, percentage of budgetary allocation to Education reduced from 10.13% in 2011 to 8.43% in 2012, then increased to 8.7% in 2013. Despite the fact that UNESCO recommends that at least 26% of national budgets should be spent on education. In 2010 for example, the Federal Government of Nigeria spent only ₦249.08 billion on education generally out of a budget of about 4.07 trillion which translates roughly to 6% of the total budget (Aturu, 2011). Oseni (2012) asserted that sometimes wide gaps exist between the amount budgeted for and amount released. In the budgetary provision for education from 2006 to 2010, all the appropriations for recurrent expenditure were fully released but this was not the case for capital expenditure. In 2010 out of the appropriated amount of ₦74,923,247,201 only ₦38,569,636,552 was actually released (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Also, funding has always been the major obstacle to the development of effective Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria (Atsumbe, Emmanuel, Igwe and Atsumbe, 2012). Nuru and Mumah (2009) observed that investment in Vocational and Technical education in the First, Second and Third Development plans were 0.10%, 0.36% and 0.84% respectively. At every level of Vocational and Technical Education in this country, enough funds are never allocated to Vocational and Technical Education to achieve its aims and objectives, despite that VTE requires infrastructure, human resources and facilities needed for the development of skills/competencies in students. It is quite unfortunate that Vocational and Technical Education has always not been favoured when it comes to statutory allocation of finances to agents of the government. Funding mechanisms for education must be re-thought. For Vocational and Technical Education to achieve its goals, there must be a sustainable financing arrangement. It is against this background that this paper aims at examining the alternative sources of funding Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria.

Concept of Vocational and Technical Education

The Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is basically Occupational Education which makes individuals self-sufficient and self-reliant. Vocational and Technical Education provides both practical and theoretical instructions, which are usually given to those who need employment in commerce and industry or in any type of enterprises which involves the use of tools and machinery.

Table 2: Federal Government Recurrent Expenditure (N million)

Year	Total Recurrent Expenditure	Education Recurrent Expenditure	% of Education to Total Recurrent Expenditure
2000	461,600.00	57,956.64	12.56
2001	579,300.00	39,882.60	6.88
2002	696,800.00	80,530.88	11.56
2003	984,300.00	64,782.15	6.58
2004	1,110,643.60	76,527.65	6.89
2005	1,321,229.99	82,797.11	6.27
2006	1,390,101.90	119,017.97	8.56
2007	1,589,269.80	150,779.27	9.49
2008	2,117,362.00	163,977.47	7.74
2009	2,127,971.50	137,156.62	6.45
2010	3,109,378.51	170,770.56	5.49
2011	3,314,513.33	335,837.89	10.13

Source: CBN Statistical Bulletin (2000-2011)

Okoro (1993) defined Vocational Education as any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognised occupations. Okoro stressed further that Vocational Education provides the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupations. Osuala (2004) saw Vocational Education as an education designed to prepare skilled personnel at a lower levels of qualification for one or a group of occupation, trades or jobs. Osuala stressed further that Vocational Education usually provided at upper secondary level includes General Education, practical training for development of skills required in the chosen occupations and related theory. Osuala noted that Technical Education includes General Education, Theoretical, Scientific and Technical Studies and related skills training. The components may vary considerably but the emphasis is usually on practical training. On the other hand, Okoro (1993) defined Technical Education as a post-secondary vocational training programme whose major purpose is the production of technicians and that Technical Education is most often found in Trade and Industrial Education but other occupational areas such as Agricultural Education, Home Economics Education and Business and Office Education also have their own levels of Technical Education. In line with Okoro's definition, Osuala (2004) described Technical Education as an education designed at upper secondary and lower tertiary levels to prepare middle-level personnel (technicians and middle management) and at University level, to prepare engineers and technologists for higher management positions. Ekpeyong (2005) observed that there is always confusion surrounding the meaning of the terms "Technical" and "Vocational" Education due to different interpretations attached to them. Ekpeyong explained further that some individuals (including intellectuals) interpret "Vocational" to mean business subjects or studies, and "Technical" to mean technical subjects or studies, or that which has to do with engine or metals. Also, when used in relation to school,

“Vocational school” is taken to mean where only business subjects are taught, while, “Technical school” is taken to mean where only technical subjects are taught.

Therefore, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) defined Vocational and Technical Education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational 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. Vocational and Technical Education is rooted on preparation of students for acquisition of necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to earn employment as expert assistants to professional in any field of Technology and Engineering (Okpor and Hassan, 2012). It could be discovered from the above definitions that, ‘Vocational’ or ‘Technical’ Education cannot be completed without some aspect of general education; this is because ‘Vocational and Technical Education’ has broad goals and application, it is different from vocational training which is aimed at developing individual

Table 3: Growth Rate of Nigeria’s Annual Budgetary Allocation to Education (2000 - 2011)

Year	Education Recurrent Expenditure (N million)	Growth Rate (%)
2000	57,956.64	-
2001	39,882.60	-31.19
2002	80,530.88	101.92
2003	64,782.15	-19.56
2004	76,527.65	18.13
2005	82,797.11	8.19
2006	119,017.97	43.75
2007	150,779.27	26.69
2008	163,977.47	8.75
2009	137,156.62	-16.36
2010	170,770.56	24.51
2011	335,837.89	96.66

Source: CBN Statistical Bulletin (2000-2011)

specific competencies for specific jobs or occupations; and that ‘Vocational and Technical Education’ involves the study of ‘technologies’, ‘theories’ and ‘related sciences’, as well as the acquisition of practical skills related to various aspects of the economy. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, Vocational and Technical Education can be seen as an organised programme of Education that prepares learners for entrance into a particular chosen vocation or upgrade employed workers.

Needs for Vocational and Technical Education

Vocational and Technical Education is the panacea to the increasing rate of population explosion and consequently unemployment and under-employment which have continually

been posing social and economic problems to both the government and individuals in Nigeria. Nigerian government has tried in so many ways to alleviate poverty and unemployment in this country but all to no avail. Nigerian's quest for self-sufficiency in food production, agriculture, and production of raw materials for homes, industries and total security against the invasion has triggered off the total over hauling of her education system from the inherited legacy of colonialism. The essence of this is to provide a productive and utilitarian type of education which is achievable through Vocational and Technical Education that equips individuals with competencies needed to be self-reliant. VTE needs to be financed and sustained for Nigerian youths so that they do not rely on white-collar jobs which cannot go round the citizenry due to the incessant increase in the number of graduates the country produces yearly. Okoro (1993) stated that there is need for Vocational and Technical Education because people need to work. Okoro further gave the following as reasons why people work: to earn income, as an activity, to gain self-respect, for social contact and participation and to express themselves creatively. Dike (2009) asserted that it is imperative for Vocational and Technical Education as the key for national development to be adequately funded to make it result-driven. This is because Vocational and Technical Education by its comprehensive nature provides the beneficiaries with knowledge, competencies, skills and aptitudes necessary to be useful members of the society. Vocational and Technical Education is the basic way by which many Nigerians can avail themselves of the opportunities for gainful employment.

Sources of Financing Vocational and Technical Education

Historically, the financing of Education in Nigeria has been accomplished through: School fees; grant-in-aid from the various governments; and levies by cultural unions and various forms of voluntary contributions by parents and guardians (Bassey, 2000). In the past, Mbipom (2000) observed that though education receives the largest share of annual budgets, it still remains inadequately funded because of large numbers and high cost of equipment, facilities and resources. But in budget allocation to priority areas in 2012, security received the highest percentage of the budget allocation with 38.85% and 20.34% allocated to security and education respectively (Table 1) (Budget Speech and Appropriation Bill, 2012).

In the years before Nigerian independence, the United Kingdom was the main source of financial assistance in Nigeria's developmental projects. After independence, external agencies acted autonomously on the basis of arrangements and agreement which they made with the Nigerian government to provide her with funds for educational expansion and operations. According to Osuala (2004), the agencies that provide funds for the support of Nigerian Education expansion programmes were: The Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands.

In the past decades, educational institutions were owned and funded by Christian missionaries. During this period, only few schools were owned by the government before the government took over most of the schools from the missionaries. Then, the funding of education in Nigeria involves the Federal, States and Local governments' appropriations and releases for capital and recurrent expenditures. It also includes Education Trust Fund (ETF), Donor Agencies, Interventions, as well as Scholarship awards by Federal, States and Local

Table 4: Annual Budgetary Allocation to Education by some Selected Countries in 2012

S/N	Country	% Budget Allocation to Education	Position
1	Ghana	31.0	1 st
2	Cote d'Ivoire	30.0	2 nd
3	Uganda	27.0	3 rd
4	Morocco	26.4	4 th
5	South Africa	25.8	5 th
6	Swaziland	24.6	6 th
7	Mexico	24.3	7 th
8	Kenya	23.0	8 th
9	United Arab Emirate	22.5	9 th
10	Botswana	19.0	10 th
11	Iran	17.7	11 th
12	USA	17.4	12 th
13	Tunisia	17.0	13 th
14	Lesotho	17.0	14 th
15	Burkina Faso	16.8	15 th
16	Norway	16.2	16 th
17	Columbia	15.6	17 th
18	Nicaragua	15.0	18 th
19	India	12.7	19 th
20	Nigeria	8.4	20 th

Source: World Bank (2012) in Odiaka (2012)

governments (Oseni, 2012). Oseni explained further that Government educational institutions are funded from the budgetary allocations for the educational sector for a particular fiscal year; that is, recurrent and capital expenditures are all taken care of from the budget allocated for that year.

The percentage allocated to Education in Nigeria is very insignificant. World Bank rated Nigeria the least (20th position) in the annual budgetary allocation to education out of the selected countries in 2012 (Table 4) (Odiaka, 2012). The United Nations recommends that 26 per cent of the total expenditure be devoted to education but in Nigeria, the percentage allocated is meagre. For instance, for the 2013 fiscal year, an amount of N4.92 trillion was presented as a budget in which Education sector got N426.53 billion which is 8.7% of the budget. While, in year 2012, N400.15 billion representing 8.43% of the budget was allocated to Education. In the previous years, 2011, 2010 and 2009; 10.13%, 5.49% and 6.45% respectively were percentages of total national budget allocated to Education (Table 2) (CBN, 2011; and Oseni, 2012). All these figures were against the international benchmark for

developing countries which is 26%. Compare to other developing countries, these figures fell below the percentages of the total national budget allocated to Education in Ghana, South Africa, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya and Morocco with the following percentages respectively: 31%, 25.8%, 30%, 23%, and 17.7% (Abayomi, 2012). Going through the growth rate, the growth rate in Education recurrent expenditure was doubled in 2002 with growth rate of 101.92%. It was 96.66% in 2011; but the growth rates were negative in 2001, 2003 and 2009 (31.19%, 19.56% and 16.36% respectively) (Table 3). Scholars suggested that the government should increase the annual budgetary allocation of education to 30 per cent without further delay (Odiaka, 2012 and Oseni, 2012).

Babalola, Sikwibele and Suleiman (2000) stated that other sources of financing higher education include endowments, fees/levies, gifts and aids from international organisations. Ibara (2011) stated that tertiary institutions are now diversifying funding sources in which intellectual capital is used as a source of income through consultancy, applied research, executive education, technology development, publishing, business incubator services and so forth.

Agbulu and Olaitan (2002) identified government as the financier of Vocational and Technical Education. They stressed further that the government source for finance through tax, both personal and co-operative tax; levy, sales of property, donation, custom and excise duties, loans and fines.

Alternative Source of Funding Vocational Education

Scholars advocated for adequate funding of Vocational and Technical Education since the programme is capital intensive (Akpan, 2010; Atsumbe *et al*, 2012 and Offiong, Akpan and Usoro, 2013). Adequate funding of Vocational and Technical Education need to be emphasised if Nigeria is to provide required training and competencies to individuals that will proffer adequate solution to industrial apathy and technological backwardness in this nation. Therefore, there should be adequate funding for the stated objectives and proper implementation to be achieved. To achieve this, there is need for alternative sources of funding because the government cannot fund it as expected. The following are the identified alternative sources of funding Vocational and Technical Education:

1. **Private-Public Partnerships (PPP):** Any institution that has successful private and public companies or firms within their area could make contacts with these firms for assistance as the need arises. Most companies have a policy of assisting communities and institutions within their area of operation on a regular basis. The institutions of Vocational and Technical Education need to maintain a good relationship with the community, organisations/companies and the institutions around them for peaceful co-existence and free-flow of assistantships to them. At the same time, there should be collaboration between the institutions of Vocational and Technical Education and the firms around them in such a way that the firms will be buyers of the machine and equipment designed by Vocational and Technical Education department for the programme to sustain itself. Also, private corporations can grant scholarships to students of VTE as well as provide some of the needed equipment needed in the school.

2 **Interest on Investment:** Institutions should strive to generate income by engaging in one type of business ventures. Vocational and Technical Education department that is practical-oriented should be used as a source of fund generation for the institutions and the fund so generated should be used to facilitate the programme and sustain other aspects of the institution. For instance, whenever the institutions are organising any programme, Home Economics or Hospitality department should be awarded the contract of preparing the food and other refreshment that will be used during the programme. Buttressing this, Omole (2012) asserted that all the institutions in the country should generate Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) for their sustenance.

He further said:

to be the Chief Executive of the University, you must be very creative. You have to put on your thinking cap every second. I keep saying that if you want to be a successful VC, you cannot be an armchair VC that will sit in the office and be writing memos. You have to move out; go to philanthropists, friends of the University, go to everywhere. A VC of the 21st century, especially in Nigeria and Federal Universities, if you want to be successful, you are not better than a beggar.

Apart from this, all institutions should also look for other lucrative businesses that will serve as IGR, for instance, Federal Polytechnic Ede has a venture that specialises in production of sachets water and moulding of blocks. Institutions should conduct feasibility studies of their area before they embark on viable businesses as IGR.

3 **Employers of labour:** Employers of labour should help to finance training programmes that are designed to upgrade productivity within a particular business or industry, especially the industries that benefit from Vocational and Technical Education training, should contribute to its cost. If organisations are not ready to contribute voluntarily, they should be compelled to contribute to the funding of Vocational and Technical Education. Smith and Billett (2005) suggested two policy options to increase employer's engagement: either by creating incentives to encourage voluntary involvement or by compelling employers through imposition of levies or licensing arrangements.

4 **Students:** Individual students' contribution can take various forms including fees for the study, that is, school fees, charges for material and resources necessary for their education and forgone earnings for example bursary. Watson (2005) provides a detailed analysis of the public and non-public fees and charges for material and resources to students because the materials and resources component increase the real costs to students of Vocational and Technical Education between 50% and 100%.

5 **Alumni association:** All institutions of Vocational and Technical Education except the newly established ones have alumni associations or old students' forum. Therefore, efforts should be made by school management to trace all alumni students who passed through the institutions. Advertisements through media, for instance, newspapers, radio and television, could be useful in locating successful alumni or old students for the formation of

alumni associations. After the alumni associations have been formed, funds and assistance can be generated through them from time to time.

6 **Rent for use of school facilities:** Institutions in urban area may be contacted by the community for the use of their facilities like the field, multi-purpose hall, students' hostels or halls and other facilities that are useful to them. Such facilities should not be given out free of charge, certain amount of money should be charged on such facilities and that will serve as part of IGR for the institutions.

7 **Entrepreneurship centre and exhibition:** Every institution is expected to have entrepreneurship centre and the centre is expected to generate income for the institution. Since entrepreneurship is a compulsory course in all institution, each department should be taught trade that relates to their course of study, the practical part of it should be made compulsory for all students. The practical work of the students should be sold to the students and community during exhibition and the proceeds should be used as IGR for the institution. Exhibition should be organised by the institution in which the students will be allowed to show-case their practical work. For instance, different machines invented or designed by the technical education students and all other invented work will be displayed. To make it more interesting and attractive, different concerts like cultural dances, acrobatic displays, and any other interesting programmes can be included in the exhibition.

8 **Proceeds from vocational and technical education students' practical work:** Vocational and Technical Education is practical oriented; it is a programme that develops skills or competencies in the students. The students should show-case their skills by displaying their practical works for patronage by the community or the industries around them. For instance, the students in Building department should be responsible for the building of some structures in the school compound. The Home Economics or Hospitality students should be awarded contract whenever the school has a special programme that the school will need to entertain the invited guests and others; also, the department should also be allowed to have an outlet in the school compound where snacks and other refreshments will be sold at low prices. Agricultural department should be allowed to practise commercial agriculture and display the crops harvested from the farm, which should be sold to the members of staff and the community. Also, Business Education department should be allowed to have business centre and all the students in the institution should be encouraged to patronise the centre for typing, spiral binding, as well as lamination of documents and so on.

9 **Unions:** Nigeria labour congress and any affiliated unions including the Students Union Government and Departmental Association can assist in the development of VTE by procuring equipment and providing other necessary infrastructure needed by the institution for effective implementation of the programme.

10 **Endowment fund:** Endowment fund is the money donated to provide income for execution of some projects. Vocational and Technical Education students can organise programmes like departmental week,

football match competition and so on in order to raise fund. Some Philanthropists or people with philanthropic foundations should be invited to sponsor the programmes and donate funds generously towards the execution of some specific projects that will be of assistance to VTE programme. Some philanthropists can also be invited by the institution to erect building(s) for the school like lecture room(s) or hostel(s) with the aim of naming such buildings after them.

CONCLUSION

It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that every child has an access to a functional education because education is the source of empowerment that every individual needs to contribute to national and economic growth of a nation. Vocational and Technical Education as a skilled based programme is capital intensive due to the infrastructure, equipment and resources needed to develop the right skills in the students in order to ensure technological growth of the nation. It has been observed that the government of this nation finds it difficult to release the meagre 26 per cent recommended by UNESCO as budgetary allocation to Education. For an individual to have access to quality Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) that will enable him/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/her quota to ensure that quality education is given. If Vocational and Technical Education which is the panacea to the increasing rate of unemployment is adequately funded, rate of kidnapping, stealing, maiming and incessant killing by Boko Haram will be reduced in this country. Adequate funding of Vocational and Technical Education needs to be emphasised if Nigeria is to provide the required training and competencies to her citizens that will proffer adequate solutions to industrial apathy and technological backwardness in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

The Federal government should endeavour to abide with the recommendation made by UNESCO that 26 per cent out of the yearly budget should be allocated to education. At the same time, the 26% should not only be on the paper but must be released to education sector.

The industries should not wait until they are compelled to finance Vocational and Technical Education, they should endeavour to render assistance voluntarily in order to enhance national growth.

The Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) should be used wisely by the management of Vocational and Technical Education. The IGR should be used to develop Vocational and Technical Education by acquiring modern machines and equipment and other infrastructure required for the development of the programme.

The institutions of Vocational and Technical Education programme should develop good relationship with the community in order to make it easy for them to approach them for assistance and for the community to be able to patronise their products.

The students of Vocational and Technical Education programme should take their studies serious in order to acquire the required skills needed for self-employment instead of adding to the increased number of unemployed graduates in the country.

The parents of the students of Vocational and Technical Education programme should not default when asked to pay school fees or other levies.

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