

**Vocational Guidance in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for National Economic Recovery**

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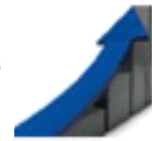
**Abstract**

*Literature revealed that Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a tool needed to salvage the economic woes of any nation. On this revelation, nations the world over have shifted emphasis from general education to TVET considering its significant role in national economic recovery. This paper examines the Nigerian economic situation and the role of TVET in restoring the economic fortunes of the country. It x-rayed the rationale and importance of vocational guidance if TVET must deliver on its intended purpose. Strategies for effective vocational guidance in TVET were also considered to have implications both for the government and TVET institutions. It was concluded that if Nigeria must recover from her economic down turn, TVET must be given the attention it deserves with vocational guidance properly integrated into the system. It was therefore suggested that government, the private sector, and TVET institutions should synergize to provide funding for vocational guidance programs and services; develop and provide methods and materials for effective vocational guidance; prepare the career guidance curriculum; provide training and continuing education for guidance counselors and teachers; conduct research and development to create new, more comprehensive and better ways of conducting educational and vocational guidance; and design promotional campaigns to interest learners, including girls and women, in science and technology.*

**Key Words:** Vocational Guidance, Counseling, TVET, Nigerian Economy, and Economic Recovery.

**Introduction:**

Nigeria aspires to have a rapidly growing economy with diversified sources of growth, increased opportunities for its people, and a socially inclusive economy that reduces poverty and creates jobs for the millions of young people entering the labour market annually. No nation can compete effectively in the emerging global market place with poorly educated and unskilled work force since the leading factors of production in the emerging global economy are said to be technology, knowledge, creativity and innovation (Eze, 2012). The level of economic

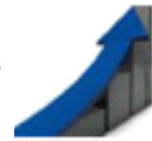


competitiveness of any nation is however dependent on the type of education she offers to her citizenry. As opined by Cinterfor (2006), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is tool to counteract at least in part, the harmful effect of unemployment by promoting greater job turnover and guarding against the risks of obsolescence. It implies therefore that TVET is needed to train and develop individuals who are experts in the fields of vocation and technology for the overall development of the nation. Supporting this view, Oluwale, Jegede and Olamide (2013) affirmed that TVET is a vehicle for the development of marketable and entrepreneurial skills in individuals, and the engine of development in a nation.

Recovery from the economic woes of a nation demands that special attention must be given to TVET. TVET impacts the skills and competencies needed for production and entrepreneurial ventures in the society. It turns a nation from being consumption based to production driven. The massive rate of unemployment and the changing face of the economic, social, political, labor market worldwide have led to new education reforms/policies with emphasis on TVET geared towards helping the youths and adults to be self-dependent. TVET has long been recognized as a potent tool for salvaging the economic woes of a nation, hence the shift of emphasis from general education to TVET. It therefore becomes imperative to consider various aspects of the program to ensure that its intended purpose is achieved, one of such area is Vocational Guidance. In discussing the place and rationale for vocational guidance in TVET for national economic recovery, an overview of the Nigerian economy is here presented.

### **An Overview of the Nigerian Economy**

Nigeria has the potential to become a major player in the global economy by virtue of its human and natural resource endowments. However, as highlighted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) 2017, this potential has remained relatively untapped over the years. After a shift from agriculture to crude oil and gas in the late 1960s, Nigeria's growth has continued to be driven by consumption and high oil prices. Previous economic policies left the country ill-prepared for the recent collapse of crude oil prices and production. The structure of the economy remains highly import dependent, consumption driven and undiversified. According to FRN 2017, Oil accounts for more than 95 per cent of exports and foreign exchange earnings while the manufacturing sector accounts for less than one percent of total exports. The high growth recorded during 2011-2015, which averaged 4.8 per cent per annum, mainly driven by higher oil prices, was largely non-inclusive. Majority of Nigerians remain under the burden of poverty, inequality and unemployment. General economic performance is also seriously undermined by deplorable infrastructure, corruption and mismanagement of public finances. Decades of consumption and high oil price-driven growth led to an economy with a positive but jobless growth trajectory (FRN, 2017).

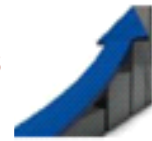


After more than a decade of economic growth, the sharp and continuous decline in crude oil prices since mid-2014, along with a failure to diversify the sources of revenue and foreign exchange in the economy, led to a recession in the second quarter of 2016. The challenges in the oil sector, including sabotage of oil export terminals in the Niger Delta, negatively impacted government revenue and export earnings, as well as the fiscal capacity to prevent the economy contracting. The capacity of government spending was equally constrained by lack of fiscal buffers to absorb the shock, as well as leakages of public resources due to corruption and inefficient spending in the recent past.

The current administration recognizes that the economy is likely to remain on a path of steady and steep decline if nothing is done to change the trajectory. It is in this context that since inception in May 2015, Government has made several efforts aimed at tackling these challenges and changing the national economic trajectory in a fundamental way. The earliest action was the prioritization of three policy goals: tackling corruption, improving security and re-building the economy. Consequently, the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) for the 2016 Budget of Change was developed as a short-term intervention for this purpose. Visible successes and achievements have been recorded. However, it is recognized that more needs to be done to propel the country towards sustainable accelerated development.

The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), a Medium Term Plan for 2017 – 2020, builds on the SIP and has been developed for the purpose of restoring economic growth while leveraging the ingenuity and resilience of the Nigerian people – the nation’s most priceless assets. It is also articulated with the understanding that the role of government in the 21st century must evolve from that of being an omnibus provider of citizens’ needs into a force for eliminating the bottlenecks that impede innovation and market-based solutions. The Plan also recognizes the need to leverage Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) and build a knowledge-based economy. The ERGP is also consistent with the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), given that the initiatives address its three dimensions of economic, social and environmental sustainability issues.

The United Nations Database Population Division (UNDP, 2006) reported that Nigeria has the third highest number of poor people in the world, after China and India. With a per capita income of about US\$ 350, around 70 million Nigerians are living on less than one US Dollar a day. Low human development level, social conflicts and environmental degradation are just a few problems which characterize the current state of development in Nigeria. As opined by FRN, 2017, the Nigerian economy is characterized by structural challenges that limit its ability to sustain growth, create jobs and achieve real poverty reduction. The economy is highly dependent on a single commodity for economic activities, fiscal revenues and foreign exchange – oil – and must import raw materials and intermediate goods to sustain the manufacturing sector. The economy is



also skewed towards consumption rather than investment, with gross domestic investment (GDI) to GDP ratio hovering at 13-14 per cent.

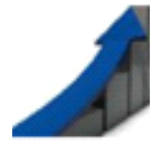
In the 10 years between 2005 and 2015, Nigeria's GDP grew at an average 6.3 per cent. In 2016, the economy entered into a recession with GDP contracting by 0.36 per cent in the first quarter, 2.1 per cent in the second quarter and 2.2 per cent in the third quarter. The forecast growth for 2016 overall is -1.54 per cent. Inflation soared from 9.5 per cent (December 2015) to 18.5 per cent (November 2016) as the combined result of currency depreciation, higher energy prices and high cost of inputs.

Nigeria's economy is highly dependent on the oil and gas sector. Although the sector accounts for just 10 per cent of GDP, it represented 94 per cent of export earnings and 62 per cent of Government revenues (Federal and State) in 2011-2015. Foreign exchange reserves declined from USD32 billion in January 2015 to USD25 billion in November 2016 (from a high of USD53 billion in 2008). As a result, the naira depreciated sharply, losing almost half of its value against the dollar. Similarly, foreign direct investment (FDI) declined sharply from a peak of USD8.9 billion in 2011 to USD3.1 billion in 2015 and did not recover in 2016. Falling oil revenues widened the Federal Government deficit from N1.2 trillion in 2013 to N1.4 trillion in 2015, and an estimated N2.2 trillion in 2016. States in particular have been badly hit by the oil price shock; in 2015, 40 per cent of States were running a deficit of more than 30 per cent of their revenues (FRN, 2017).

### **Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the Economy**

The shifts in the global economy, the emergence of new sectors and the digital revolution have changed the skills required of the work force. Nigeria has to reposition its education sector to prepare its young people to cope with the changing technological and economic environment. As things stand, limited access to basic education and science and technology courses coupled with insufficient capacity and sub-standard infrastructure at the tertiary level mean that the work force lacks the critical skills needed to develop the economy. A study by Dokubo and Dokubo (2013) indicates that a large number of employers cite lack of skills as a major obstacle to hiring personnel.

One important characteristic of TVET is that it can be delivered at different levels. This means that TVET institutions can respond to the different training needs of learners from different socio-economic and academic backgrounds, and prepare them for gainful employment and sustainable livelihoods. The youth, the poor and the vulnerable of society can therefore benefit from TVET. As the economic, cultural and technological changes unfold, the active youth all over the world need to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills. TVET plays a very important role in the economic growth and development of countries as well-trained and motivated workforce maximizes output to expedite socio-economic development. On this revelation, Johanson and Adams (2004), stressed that TVET should concentrate on the actual needs of labour market and

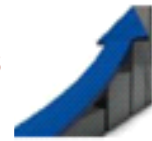


focus on the output, design flexible programmes that serve the needs of production and service sectors and design practices and learning experiences that best serve job requirements.

According to the ILO (2000), TVET prepares people for employment since it is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude for the world of work. It does also shape the social fiber of the society. Thus, the main goal of TVET is to increase the employability of TVET graduates. The participation in the labor force of the TVET graduates is an indication of intent to actively engage in the production of goods and services. This is a necessary step towards employment and social well-being. In the view of Usman and Tyabo (2013), Vocational education and job training programme has been an integral part of national developments strategies in many societies because of the impact on human resources development, productivity, and economic growth.

As opined by Center on International Education Benchmarking (CIEB, 2014) cited in Vivien (2015), TVET has the ability to transform the economy of any nation with the following objectives:

1. Provides students with a broad education designed to prepare them to easily gain additional skills and knowledge needed as their career goals, technology and work organization change over their employed lifetime,
2. Provides opportunities for students to learn and to practice necessary cognitive and non-cognitive skills in an authentic industry setting,
3. Provides opportunities for students to learn the theory behind the practice,
4. Creates learning environments in which students can learn and practice on state-of-the-art equipment,
5. Provides opportunities for students to move from vocational track to academic, university track and vice-versa,
6. Provides opportunities for students to move up from the lowest levels of occupational preparation to the highest levels of academic and professional preparation with career guidance along the way,
7. Provides standards and qualifications widely recognized in the labor market and continually adjusted to the leading edge of industries, including the increasingly global nature of occupations,
8. Adapts to the level of economic development of the economy in which the student will work and to the level of technological advancement and work organization characteristic of that economy,



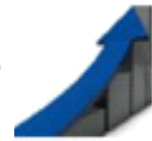
9. Provides a distribution of training slots that is reasonably related to the demands of the economy, in terms of occupations and levels of qualifications needed to operate the economy,
10. Provides instructors who have industry experience and whose knowledge of the industry is fully current with state-of-the-art practice,
11. Provides incentives adequate to attract the necessary number and quality of instructors for each occupational group and qualification level,
12. Provides incentives adequate to attract qualified students to each level of the skills training system,
13. Creates a brand that makes vocational education an attractive opportunity to young people who have options.

As emphasis shifts from general education to TVET, it becomes imperative to consider various aspects of the program to ensure that its intended purpose is achieved. One of such area is Vocational Guidance.

### **Vocational Guidance and Technical Vocational Education and Training**

Guidance is beneficial for the individual as well as to the society it helps an individual by providing assistance in solving problems relating to choose of career, occupational change and adjustments. From the standpoint of the society it is one of the means of achieving proper utilization of manpower indirectly it helps in rising productively and in minimizing unemployment and underemployment. Every young man requires advice as to what kind of work will be most suitable for him keeping in view his abilities and aptitudes. When such an advice is given, it is known as vocational guidance. According to Praveen (2017), Vocational guidance is the assistance given to students in choosing and preparing for a suitable vocation. It is concerned primarily of helping individuals to make decision and choices involved in planning the future career decision and choices necessary in effecting satisfactory vocational adjustment. “Vocational guidance is a facilitative process, a service rendered to the individual to aid him in choosing and adjusting to an occupation”. “Vocational guidance is a process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it, enter up on and progress on it”

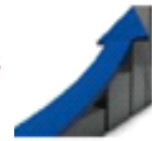
Vocational guidance is a system of scientifically based measures that help young people choose a vocation, while taking into account individual aptitudes and the needs of the national economy. The system of vocational guidance also helps young people find suitable jobs. Vocational guidance familiarizes young people with the branches of the national economy, types of vocational training; the national economy’s needs, and job opportunities. The need for Vocational Guidance in TVET cannot be overemphasized as it has a challenging role to play in every developing economy. The world of work is in a state of



continuous change. There is a disappearance of some careers and emergence of new and alternative careers. Life has become more complex. Innumerable problems exist within the social context and one's occupation has become increasingly prestigious. Vocational guidance is assuming responsibility in every direction – selection of educational courses, profitable occupations, jobs, placement, next stage of education, training, improvement study skills, personal adjustment, even identifying gifted and backward students and helping them to achieve the maximum. It is imperative to match the changing values of and individual with a new set of career possibilities, to assess the needs of the labour market and match them with the need of the individual. These among others accord Vocational Guidance a prominent place in TVET.

**Goals of Vocational Guidance:** As opined by Vivien (2015), the goal of vocational guidance centers on assisting learners to choose, prepare for, and progress in an occupation. Different scholars have consensus on goals of vocational guidance to include:

1. **Knowledge Acquisition:** Vocational guidance aims to assist students to acquire such knowledge of the characteristics and functions, duties, responsibilities and rewards of occupations that are within the range of his choice.
2. **Discover Abilities and Skills:** Vocational guidance according to Teacher Training Education aims to assist pupils to discover his own abilities and skills and to fit them into general requirements of the occupation under consideration.
3. **Evaluate Capabilities and Interests:** Assisting pupil to evaluate his own capabilities and interests with regard to their worth to him and to society.
4. **Develop Attitude towards Work:** Vocational guidance aims at helping the individual develop an attitude towards work that will dignify whatever type of occupation he may wish to enter.
5. **Exploration of Opportunity:** Give exploration of opportunity in different areas of school learning and vocational exploration that will enable the learner to get the feel of several types of activities.
6. **Critical Thinking:** Assisting the individual to think critically about various types of occupations and to lean a technique for analyzing information about vocations.
7. **Assisting the Mentally Handicapped:** Assisting the mentally handicapped, the physically handicapped or the economically handicapped to make the adjustments that will be best for them in their struggle for a fuller life for personal and social welfare.
8. **Secure the Necessary Information:** Assisting the pupil to secure the necessary information about the facilities offered by various educational institutions engaging in vocational training.



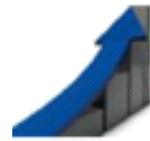
9. **Admission Requirements:** Providing information for the learner about admission requirements, the length of training, and the cost of attending any institution of higher learning to which he may wish to go after graduation for high school in order to continue his vocational preparation.
10. **Assistance during School Years:** Giving assistance during school years so that the individual will be able to adjust on the job work conditions and to other workers.
11. **Assisting Pupil:** Assisting each pupil to appreciate his rightful place in a group of workers and to become a functional member of the team.
12. **Helping the Learner:** Helping the learner realize that success is purchased at the price of effort, and that satisfaction on the job derives from doing his work competently.

### **Strategies for Effective Vocational Guidance in TVET**

Ensuring effective vocational guidance in TVET has implications both for the government and TVET institutions. There are several strategies that technical vocational education and training institutions can undertake in providing guidance to learners. According to International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), TVET institutions may adopt the following strategies for effective vocational guidance.

1. Conduct a needs assessment to determine what needs to be addressed, the characteristics of the learners and how they can be reached and served;
2. Build partnerships within the school and community of educators, administrators, business and industry representatives, parents and post-secondary officials to work as a team to effectively assist the learners in realizing their educational and career aspirations;
3. Design comprehensive programmes that include integrating guidance activities within the regular curriculum;
4. Organize and supervise work-based learning activities, including job shadowing, internships, career simulations and on-the-job training;
5. Tap available services and seek assistance (e.g., funding, equipment);
6. Plan professional development activities for school staff to orient them to their roles of successfully assisting learners in educational and career planning; and,
7. Conduct an ongoing evaluation of the programme
8. Appointment of counselors who should endeavour to meet with every potential student to help him/her select the most appropriate programme, and to meet with every student at least once every three months to discuss their education and career plans;
9. Prepare descriptions of occupations related to the training being offered. The descriptions might include: brief description of the work, working conditions, education and training required, registration, certification or licensing requirements, average pay, and future outlook. These may be printed. They may also be entered into computers for learners to





search. A consortium of technical and vocational education and training institutions in collaboration with UNESCO might prepare a standard format for computerized information;

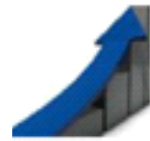
10. Prepare descriptions of the courses and programmes available in the technical and vocational education and training institutions. These may be printed. They may also be entered into computers for students in more junior levels of education to search.
11. Approach companies or other organizations with Internet connections to provide access to career guidance resources on the Internet through their connections. Corporate assistance in translating the material might also be obtained.
12. Adopt or adapt a career development curriculum and ensure that teachers are competent to conduct the course;
13. Organize relevant work experience assignments with local employers.

On the part of the State and Federal Ministries of education, Praveen (2017) suggested the following strategies for effective vocational guidance in TVET.

1. Establish an office with responsibility to:

- i. provide funding for vocational guidance programmes and services;
- ii. develop and provide methods and materials for guidance;
- iii. prepare the career guidance curriculum;
- iv. provide training and continuing education for guidance counsellors and teachers;
- v. conduct research and development to create new, more comprehensive and better ways of conducting educational and vocational guidance;
- vi. design promotional campaigns to interest learners, including girls and women, in science and technology;
- vii. develop programmes to increase the retention of learners by schools and thus reduce the numbers of drop-outs;
- viii. design campaigns to develop a career development culture that encourages all people to participate in lifelong learning; and,
- ix. promote the infusion of career development concepts into academic subjects to help learners understand how the course work fits together and forms a body of knowledge and skills related to performance in work and other aspects of life.

2. Enact legislation that defines the goals of vocational guidance, describes the range of services to be provided and stipulates the level of resourcing. The legislation should apply to the services to be provided to learners in educational institutions and to adults in the labour market.

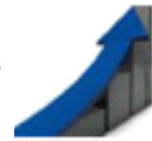


3. Provide employment counselling and placement services for learners completing their studies and for all people in the labour force.
4. Adopt policies on vocational guidance that include the following requirements:
  - i. all learners receive curriculum-based guidance;
  - ii. learners who require individual counselling for satisfactory achievement shall receive it;
  - iii. individual counselling is a specialized function which must be performed by staff members who possess the required competencies;
  - iv. the responsibilities of school principals, teachers and counsellors in respect of the guidance programme development and delivery are specified;
  - v. qualifications that teachers and counsellors in guidance should have; and, provision of guidance services to unemployed workers.
5. Enact legislation to authorize the collection, classification and publishing of labour market information that is useful to economic development efforts, technical and vocational training programmes, and educational and vocational guidance.

### **Suggestions**

Considering the prominent place of vocational guidance in TVET for national economic recovery, it is suggested that:

1. TVET institutions should synergize with industries to provide an environment for effective vocational guidance. This is a system that ensures opportunities for students to move up from the lowest levels of occupational preparation to the highest levels of academic and professional preparation with career guidance along the way.
2. State and Federal governments should take responsibility to provide funding for vocational guidance programmes and services, develop and provide methods and materials for vocational guidance; and provide training and continuing education for guidance counsellors and teachers
3. Counsellor's associations have an important part to play in the development of vocational guidance in TVET by advocating that all citizens who need and want educational and vocational guidance and counselling can receive it from a competent professional. They should advocate and recommend to the government and TVET institutions the basic nature and quality of service to be provided to students and adults
4. There is the need for a redesign of the programs and curricula of TVET institutions by curriculum planners. Industry committees should be used to redesign the curriculum and



create new structures of experience for students either in real apprentice or “sandwich” type situations or in simulated industry environments.

5. State and Federal governments should ensure that key positions in TVET institutions are held by people with joint appointments in industry or industry associations and schools.

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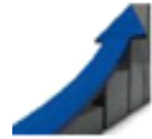
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