

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND NATIONAL ECONOMY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The study examined the crucial role of integrating political ideology and National economy in vocational education to achieve sustainable national development. Aligning vocational training with national goals and value, and addressing labor market needs, countries can faster a skilled and patriotic workforce, drive economic growth, and promote social cohesion. The research explores the intersection of political ideology, national economy, and vocational education, highlighting best practices and strategies for sustainable national development. The findings emphasize the importance of curriculum alignment, industry partnership, and sustainable practices in vocational education, ultimately contributing to a more skilled, innovative and responsible workforce. The study's conclusions inform policymakers, educators, and industry leaders on effective approach to integrate political ideology and National economy in vocational education, driving sustainable national development.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education has long been recognized as a vital component of sustainable national development, playing a pivotal role in shaping the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of a nation's workforce. As the global economy continues to evolve, the importance of vocational education in driving economic growth, reducing unemployment, and promoting social cohesion has become increasingly evident.

Effective vocational education systems equip individuals with the practical skills and competencies required to thrive in an ever-changing job market, fostering a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and self-reliance. By aligning vocational education with national economic goals and priorities, moreover, vocational education has the power to transform individuals, communities, and societies.

In Nigeria, such response saw the adoption of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) schemes which focus on poverty reduction and access to education, respectively. The overall objective of these strategies is to place Nigeria in its right place in the world economy using education as the springboard. Perhaps this partly explains why Onoriode, (2015) opined that the height of development of any nation finds its root in education as it pervades every spheres of a nation's life in pursuit of self-sustainability. This underscores the need for nations to effectively articulate and pursue educational policies that best suit their peculiar situation and development agenda. The success or otherwise of such policies depends largely on all stakeholder's ability

in resource mobilization and efficient allocation.

However a critical look at the Nigerian Education System, portrays a picture of a system that is yet to be fully integrated and focused to brace up to the challenge of the changing world and propel the nation to self-sustainability.

Consequently according to Egbele and Momoh,(2017) the education system has continued to produce more of those individuals that lack job skills and attitudes for employment then those the economy requires to remain vibrant and competitive.

In collaboration, The Guardian (2017) asserted that the unemployment index is rising not just because there are no jobs but essentially because the skills available are not sufficiently relevant to the needs of industry. Besides, the available skills are not sufficiently dexterous to be able to undertake the available jobs to be done. Okonjo – Iweala (2015) supported this assertion when she said that the present Nigeria system of education is a system that emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of technical vocational and entrepreneurial education. Suffice to say that there is need for more attention to be given to a functional practical skill based education in Nigeria on both implicit and explicit values to harness the nation's vast natural resources for economic prosperity.

Vocational education offers this type of education and with the changing global order, more roles and responsibilities for stakeholders in the education system have equally emerged. This of course is the thrust of this paper which seek to examine the contribution of vocational education to the nation's drive toward self- sustainability with emphasis on the roles and responsibility of stakeholders.

As the world grapples with pressing challenges such as climate change, technological disruption, and demographic shifts, the significance of vocational education in sustainable national development cannot be overstated. This article explores the critical intersection of political ideology, national economy, and vocational education, highlighting the imperative for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to prioritize vocational education as a cornerstone of sustainable national development.

The Role of Vocational Education in Sustainable National Development

With a vast deposit of natural resources and a growing population of over 125 million people, Nigeria offers a good example to explain the paradox of poverty in the African continent. The Nation's natural endowments are in diverse forms and locations which need to be harnessed with the right skills, attitudes, ideas and will for self-reliance. Thus, the increasing incidence of poverty, shrinking industrial landscape, widening inequality between the rich and the poor, the embarrassing height of unemployment especially graduate unemployment, brain drain among others/point to the fact that Vocational Education has not been given its right place in the Nigerian education system. A nation's claim to wealth could only be guaranteed when members of the society are knowledgeable and skilled enough to positively control at least both the industrial and agricultural sectors of the economy to ensure food security and foreign

exchange.

Vocational education offers the individuals the skills, knowledge, attitude and ideas to explore his environment and harness resources within it for prosperity, Vocational Education could train, encourage and engage people in the various components of Agriculture, Home Economics, Fine and Applied Arts and Business Education at different levels, thereby contributing their quota to national development. The National policy on education (2004) stated the goals of (VTE) Vocational Technical Education as to:

- (a) Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at crafts, advance craft and technical levels;
- (b) Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural commercial and economic development;
- (c) Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self- reliant economically. It is however, pertinent to note that nothing in this regard could be achieved in abstraction. In other words, the tenets of VTE would remain a mirage unless they are professionally taught, particularly learned and pragmatically applied.

Arguing from a philosophical stand point, Egbele and Momoh (2017) noted that knowledge per say is ornamental. It is the knowledge that is acted upon (usefully applied) in a socially useful way that yields good results. This, according to them implies that all the variables of national development at all stages and in the final analysis are traceable to knowledge, skills and attitudes; hence the carninal significance of VTE in national development. (Egbele and Momoh 2017).

In recognition of the strategic position of Vocational Education in the nation's drive towards development, the interest of the government to promote VTE in Nigeria is gradually gaining ascendancy with policy statements and reform proposals and initiatives. Be that as it may, what then are the challenges of Vocational Education in Nigeria that need to be addressed.

Challenges of Vocational Education in Nigeria

The value system and societal expectation are perhaps the greatest challenge facing VTE in Nigeria. The value system is negatively skewed towards general education with graduates seeking white collar jobs after school. It is believed in the society today that when a student graduates, he gets a paid job either in government employment or multinational company. This societal expectation partly explains why graduates of functional practical skills based disciplines such as agricultural science, Home economics, Fine and Applied Arts, Business Education and other related fields of study are also queucing up in the labour market thereby spurring the unemployment figure. Somewhat related to the issue of societal expectation is the perception of the Nigerian society about the actual meaning of vocational education which leaves more to be desired. The society regards vocational education as a type of education meant for drop-outs, delinquent and low intelligent people in the society as a result it is looked upon as inferior to the conventional grammar school / libral system of education. It may not be

out of place to assert that even some Vocational Educators today are in the field by fate because many of them never took vocational education as a choice of course in their admission application. The perceived structural imbalance in the education system today as evident in poor student's enrollment in VTE buttresses this assertion adequately.

There is the general problem of poor funding of education in Nigeria which Vocational education has to share. This is evident in the shortage of instructional materials, equipment's and facilities in some VTE, institutions / departments. Even where some of these facilities are provided, the problem of electricity is still there to contend with such that some of the machines and equipment meant for practical classes are left to rust away idly which make them to be prone to theft and damages. Facilities and machine supplied to some rural schools for the takeoff the 6-3-3-4 system is a case in mind.

The UNESCO standard on funding of education recommended 25 % of national budget to be devoted to education every year. However, the nation's budget for education is a far cry from that recommendation. Olayemi (2012), asserted that Lecturers no longer enjoy facilities like; research grant travel sponsorship for conferences abroad, new journals and text books are not available and generally avenue to share on contemporary thinking in the various fields with counterparts abroad have virtually evaporated.

The problem of underfunding according to Onoriode (2015) is further compounded by the cases of corruption rocking the sector. He note that a situation where budgetary provisions are not totally released and the few ones available to the sector are either misappropriated or embezzled by officers who are often enmeshed in the web of corruption - corruption of greed and corruption of need is quite appalling.

The Teacher

The Teacher form the corner stone of the education system. Fafunwa (2009) stated that the teacher is the key in the entire education programme, for a teacher can make or mar the best education programme in the world. In similar vein, Ukeji (2005) pointed out that if the child is the center of the education system, the teacher is the pivot of the process. On his own part, Igwe (2005) believes that the success of any system of education depends to a large extent on the number of teachers, their quality, their devotions to duty and their effectiveness on the jobs, these underscore the need for teachers to brace up to the challenges of the education in the emerging new Nigeria.

Statutorily, the teacher is charged with some duties and responsibilities in the school setting. For instance he is expected to diligently and resourcefully teach the subjects in the curriculum, inculcate by precept and example the habit of good conduct and behavior among students, encourage and guide students in the pursuit of learning and school activities among other things.

However, with the changing global order and development in education as a result of improvement in technology, teacher's responsibilities have been heightened. Globalization and information and communication technology (ICT) are gradually exerting influence on our

Educational frameworks manifesting in changes and improvement in facilities, concepts, ideas, information packaging, and so on, which is shaping our ways of thinking and methods of working today. It is much easier now than before to transfer ideas across continents. Children of today could easily learn on the television, radio, computers and even internet. These trends have made it imperative for teachers and educators in this part of the world to see the need to be continually relevant, up to date and to meet up with other parts of the world. (Akomolafe, 2015) Educators are therefore expected to provide quality academic leadership and guidance while involving methods of coaching that meet the demands of the new age.

Conclusion

The integration of political ideology and national economy in vocational education is crucial for sustainable national development. Effective vocational education systems can drive economic growth, promote social cohesion, and foster environmental sustainability.

Emphasis on practical and functional oriented system of education in Nigeria is imperative if the nation is to make meaningful progress in the development arena and be self-sustaining.

This emphasis should however be extended beyond rhetoric to practical efforts. Stakeholders must therefore brace up their roles and responsibilities in this regard.

It is the belief of the authors that such efforts by stakeholders would manifest in overcoming all the challenges facing vocational education in the country and guarantee a safe landing for the nation in the comity of developed nations of the world.

Recommendation

In light of the foregoing discussion, it is hereby recommended that;

- (1) The State need to translate the stated political will of the administration towards vocational education to concrete actions. In other words government should be honest enough to honour its pronouncements on refocusing vocational education.
- (2) While arresting the inadequacy of educational infrastructures and facilities in VTE institutions/departments, the issue of power supply should be seriously considered.
- (3) The perception of members of the society about vocational education should be corrected through proper enlightenment campaigns and our value syst in need to be reprioritized.
- (4) Training opportunities for vocational educators should be made more regular and comprehensive in view of the changing world.
- (5) Educators should involve and strengthen the conceptual links between vocational education and self-employment and make them explicit in their teaching.
- (6) Investigate successful vocational education models and their scalability.
- (7) Analyze the impact of political ideology on vocational education outcomes.
- (8) Examine industry Partnerships and collaborations in vocational education

Call to Action:

Policymakers, educators, industry leaders, and stakeholders must prioritize vocational education as a driver of sustainable national development. By working together, we can:

- Enhance vocational education's relevance and effectiveness, drive economic growth and competitiveness. Promote social cohesion and equity

Final Thoughts:

Vocational education has the power to transform individuals, communities, and nations. By integrating political ideology and national economy, we can unlock its full potential and build a brighter future for all.

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