



TOWARDS EMPOWERING TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) YOUTHS THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study determined ways towards empowering technical vocational education and training (TVET) youths through entrepreneurship education as the heart of sustainable development in Nigeria. The study is a descriptive survey design with three research questions. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed in selecting 115 respondents, made up of 68 TVET facilitators and 57 entrepreneurship education experts from six tertiary institutions in the three Local Government Areas of Lagos and Enugu States, Nigeria. A self-structured questionnaire validated by three experts with a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was used as an instrument for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation. The findings revealed 11 prospects, 11 challenges, and 14 strategies towards empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education. The researchers recommended re-training TVET facilitators through organized entrepreneurship education workshops for sustainable development.

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1. Introduction

Nigeria is the most populated black nation in Africa and eighth in the world, with a population of over 220 million people. It has a nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$ 375.75 billion, which according to Worldmeter (2023) is equivalent to 2.64% of the total world population. Akpoveta and Agbomah (2009) estimated that about 4.5 million educated youths leave Nigeria's tertiary institutions entering the labour market annually, with little hope of securing viable jobs. The authors asserted that the increasing incidence of poverty and youth unemployment in Nigeria has been associated with existing weaknesses in the nation's educational system, which places more emphasis on theoretical content than functional Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Technical education encompasses structured learning programmes that equip individuals with specialized skills and knowledge needed for various technical and practical fields (Singh, 2013). According to Bybee and Miller (2013), technical education prepares individuals for jobs requiring specialized training and expertise in computer programming, electrical electronics technology, auto-mechanical technology, engineering, woodwork technology, metalwork technology, building

technology, and more.

According to Herrera and Romaní (2018), vocational education focuses on hands-on training, preparing individuals for employment in various vocations, such as carpentry, healthcare, hospitality, home economics, business studies, and more. Smith (2018) argued that vocational education involves training individuals in practical skills for specific trades, crafts, or professions, to students or youths through systematic and planned activities. Broad (2010) contended that vocational education focuses on hands-on experiences and practical applications, preparing learners for future careers or further academic pursuits.

TVET is aimed at developing human resources and facilitates the transition of a nation to more sustainable economic development (Rojewski, Asunda & Kim, 2008). Unlike general education, TVET in the study of Shobowale, Oladipo, Ukeamezhim, and Akinyemi (2021) is centred on ‘applied’ as opposed to ‘academic,’ practical as opposed to theory, and skills as opposed to knowledge. Osuala (2010) argued that the primary objectives of TVET are to empower the 21st-century youths for the labour market and to develop private business ownership entrepreneurially. The dawn of 21st-century TVET, as observed by Nwangwu (2006), has witnessed tremendous efforts by countries of the world towards actualization of the status of one of the world’s leading economies. This has triggered several reforms in the education sector, targeted towards high-skilled human capital development to serve as drivers of socio-economic development through entrepreneurship education practices.

Entrepreneurship, in the view of Cronje, Du Toit, Marais and Motlatla (2004), is the process of mobilizing, and risking resources (land, capital, human resources), in such a way that the needs of society for products and services are satisfied and jobs are created using appropriate economic and productive skills. Okoye and Okwelle (2013) stated that education is an agent of human development, social mobility and socio-economic development of any society. Oguegbune and Ugbe (2008) described entrepreneurship education as exposing youths to the essential skills for effective development and management of an enterprise at any level. Similarly, Paul (2005) identified the objectives of entrepreneurship education to include offering functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed, serving a catalyst for economic growth, and development, reducing high rate of poverty, inculcating the spirit of perseverance in the youths, which will enable youths to persist in any business venture they embark upon.

Youths in every society form a significant segment that cannot be ignored. Youths are the bedrock on which every nation’s development thrives. Youths are the most active and energetic group of the country's population whose hand lays the destiny of the nation, within the age bracket of 18-35 years of age (Ojaleye, 2005). This may equally vary from country to country. Despite these positive attributes,

youths are arguably, according to Del-Tumi (2011) the most vulnerable, mainly deprived, marginalised, and most exploited, particularly by politicians in society. Therefore, youths are empowered to make informed decisions about their life.

Empowerment is the process of strengthening the existing capacities and capabilities of individuals in society to enable them to perform towards improving themselves and the society at large. It is based on the idea of giving individuals skills, authority, opportunities, and motivation, as well as holding them responsible and accountable for the outcomes of their actions (James, 2008). Regarding this study, empowerment equips TVET youths with the necessary knowledge, abilities, competence, and skills to effectively take control of their well-being and contribute positively to society.

Youths are empowered when they acknowledge that they can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of these choices, make informed decisions and accept responsibility for the consequences of life actions. It implies providing an enabling environment for young people to develop their true potential so that they can contribute to the development of society (Del-Tumi, 2011). Youth empowerment in the opinion of Umezulike (2020), aims to improve quality of life through participation in youth programmes. The eight interdependent dimensions of youth empowerment in the opinion of Umezulike include educational empowerment, psychological empowerment, community empowerment, organizational empowerment, economic empowerment, political empowerment, social empowerment, and cultural empowerment.

The objectives of youth empowerment, according to the Botswana Core Welfare Indicators Survey (2010), include a good work ethic, gaining entrepreneurship experience, attaining employment readiness, and developing skills and competencies that will enable them to make positive contributions to the development of their communities and fostering the development of behavioural change. Youth empowerment within the context of this study is the act of equipping the TVET youths through entrepreneurship education to initiate and explore appropriate prospects and ideas that could improve economic and productive prospects for prospective self-employment opportunities.

Prospects are advanced realization of success and benefits to increased self-reliance of an individual to discover and create needed goods and services in society. Oviawe (2010) argued that the prospects of empowering youths through education increased the self-esteem of the graduates, improved the economy of society, and reduced poverty in society. In this study, prospects are advanced realization of success and benefits to increased self-reliance of entrepreneurship education youth's positive self-image, to secure financial assistance from sponsors; create and exploit business opportunities needs of the society, alleviate poverty, and become self-employed. Despite the numerous prospects of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education, it is still faced with a lot of

A challenge is a situation of being faced with complex tasks that need great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully. Daramola (2005) noted that a challenge is a mismatch between acquired skills, and market needs, widespread concern about poor quality training environments and negative public perceptions regarding technical education. Challenges to empowering youths of TVET, according to Okoye and Okwelle, include inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructures, shortage of qualified instructors, poor supervision of TVET education programmes, lack of modern facilities, and poor facilitators' motivation. In this study, a challenge is a situation faced by youths with complex tasks that need great mental or physical efforts about poor quality training environments and negative public perceptions regarding entrepreneurship education. Therefore, from the foregoing, it becomes necessary to adequately devise strategies towards the empowerment of TVET youths through entrepreneurship education to exploit the business opportunity needs of society.

Strategies to alliterative the challenges of youth empowerment through woodwork technology education will help to provide small businesses, where interested students in school enterprises can participate in planning, creating, and operating small and medium-scale enterprises. Shobowale (2015) posited that strategy is a pattern in a stream of decisions that guides an organization's ongoing alignment with its environment and shapes internal policies and procedures. Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves an advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment to meet the needs of markets and to fulfil stakeholder expectations. Dokubo (2017) observed that all the stakeholders in TVET and entrepreneurship education programmes must cooperate with TVET production industries, and facilitators to expand youth trades training surroundings. However, strategies are methods and blueprints worked out in advance to boost the TVET youths' interest in enhancing economic and productivity skills through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development (SD). Sustainability is the efficient and equitable distribution of resources with the operation of socio-economic activities within the confines of a finite ecosystem (Stoddart, 2011). Sustainable TVET youth empowerment provides economic and productive skill opportunities for social, economic, and environmental development. Todaro (2016) asserted that development can be seen as an increase in living conditions, an improvement of needs, and a free and just society.

SD is any form of developmental strives and government that are enduring, meeting the needs of the present and the future generations. SD is geared towards enhancing the citizens' job creation, poverty reduction, nature preservation, and technological advancement (Chikwelu & Arinze, 2009). The three fundamental and interconnected domains or pillars of sustainability describe the relationships among the economic, social, and environmental aspects of SD, according to Parkita (2019), which is captured

in Figure 1.

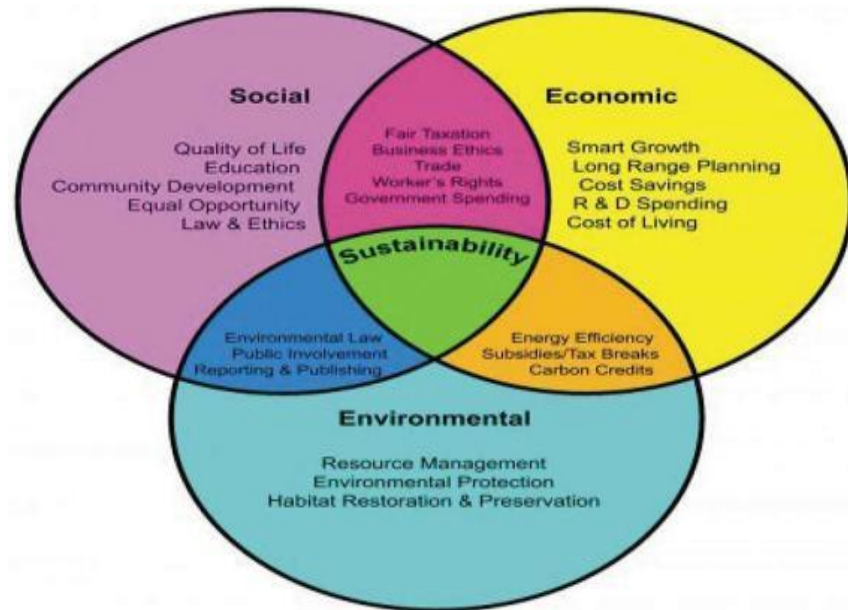


Figure 1: Relationships among the social, economic and environment of SD (Parkita, 2019)

Operationally, a visionary and forward-looking SD paradigm emphasises a positive transformation trajectory, which fundamentally rests on three conceptual pillars. These pillars according to Parkita, include:

Economic sustainability: This implies that macroeconomic and financial stability, as well as the prevention of balance-of-payments crises, are an essential requirement for sustained economic development. This implies that human and financial resources must be used in a way that ensures continuous and lasting improvements in the standards of living.

Social sustainability: This explains that peace, social, justice, and inclusiveness are indispensable for sustained social progress and lasting development. Social disruption resulting from excessive discrepancies in the standards of living of different segments of the population-including poverty and all its symptoms-could eventually bring economic progress to a halt and jeopardize the quality of the natural environment.

Environmental sustainability: This implies that the quality and protection of the natural environment, as well as successful adaptation to climate change, influence the scope for long-term social progress and economic development. Environmental degradation, waste of non-renewable natural resources, and the various impacts of climate change have a direct effect on living conditions towards a high level of viable living, self-esteem, and economic freedom.

However, empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education, suggests that investment in education and skill development improves the overall human capital, leading to better entrepreneurial capabilities and, consequently, aligning with long-term SD goals.

2. Statement of the Problem

The increasing rates of unemployment with the high incidence of economic degradation have necessitated the need to empower TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for job creation and sustainable development of the Nigerian economy (Edokpolor & Owenbiugie, 2017). Unemployment is persistent because the TVET youths on graduation appear to lack the entrepreneurship education orientation needed by the employers of labour and for self-employment. Observations also revealed that TVET and entrepreneurship education programmes aimed at reducing poverty and the high unemployment rate. This is because these youths, on graduation will be able to set up and flourish in their various enterprises, which also requires re-training of TVET facilitators to acquaint with the emergent trends in the world of work opportunities on the need of the market, reducing the rate of youth unemployment in the society. Despite the numerous prospects of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education on graduation, TVET youths' find it difficult to establish and run a viable enterprise successfully. Consequently, many youths on graduation seem to drop their enterprise and resort to commercial bus conducting, internet fraudsters, hoodlums, banditry, and political thugs, among others, to meet their daily needs. This, therefore brings to the fore to examine the prospects, challenges, and strategies towards empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development in Nigeria.

3. Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What are the prospects of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development?
2. What are the challenges of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development?
3. What are the strategies for empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development?

4. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Lagos and Enugu South Western and South Eastern, States of Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of all the facilitators of TVET and experts of entrepreneurship education studies from all the federal and state tertiary institutions in all the three Local Government areas, namely: Yaba Local Government, Ojo Local Government and Nsukka Local Government Areas of Lagos and Enugu States, Nigeria. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed in selecting 115 respondents, made

up of 68 facilitators of TVET and 57 experts of entrepreneurship education studies from three tertiary institutions (two federal and one state) namely: the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State University of Education, Otu/Ijaniki, and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in Nigeria that meet the criteria in the three Local Governments. A self-structured questionnaire titled: Empowering TVET Youths through Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (ETVETYEEQ) that addressed the research questions was used as an instrument for data collection with a 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Undecided (UD) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the assigned scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The ETVETYEEQ was face-validated by three experts: two TVET facilitators, and one expert of entrepreneurship education studies from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. Cronbach Alpha analysis was used to determine the internal constituency of the ETVETYEEQ items and a reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. All 115 copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents with the help of three research assistants. The entire instrument retrieved was filled and returned by the respondents, and the return rate was 100%. The data collected was statically analyzed using a *Mean* and *Standard Deviation*. Any item with a *Mean* score of 3.50 and above was regarded as *Agreed*, while any item with a *Mean* score below 3.50 was regarded as *Disagreed*.

5. Results

5.1 Research Question 1: What are the prospects of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development?

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation on Prospects of Empowering TVET Youths through Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development. N=115

S/N	Prospects of Empowerment TVET Youth	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	Transform indigenous economic and production industries and technologies.	4.21	0.83	Agreed
2.	Constitute the fundamental basis for industrial activities within TVET of a nation.	4.10	0.88	Agreed
3.	Help to boost the nation's economy by growing her gross domestic product (GDP).	4.17	0.75	Agreed
4.	Enable TVET youths to create jobs, be self-employed, and employ others.	4.06	0.80	Agreed
5.	Enable TVET's youths to secure financial assistance from sponsors.	4.06	0.80	Agreed
6.	Translate TVET's creative skills into productive goods and services economically.	4.04	0.98	Agreed
7.	Increase TVET youths' positive self-image and overcome stigma.	4.23	0.85	Agreed
8.	Help to alleviate poverty among TVET youths because of unemployment.	4.26	0.75	Agreed
9.	Enable TVET youths to exploit business opportunities and the needs of the society	4.11	0.77	Agreed
10.	Reduce unemployment and hoodlums among TVET youths in society.	4.04	0.98	Agreed
11.	Promote economic and productivity for the sustainable development of a nation.	4.21	0.83	Agreed

The data analysis presented in Table 1 showed that all 11 items had their *Mean* values above 3.50. The *Mean* values of the items ranged from 4.04 to 4.26, while the *Standard Deviation* ranged from 0.98 to 0.75, showing the opinions of the respondents. This implies that the respondents agreed to all the items as prospects of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development.

5.2 Research Question 2: What are the challenges of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Challenges of Empowering TVET Youths through Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development. N=115

S/N	Challenges of Empowerment TVET Youth	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
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1.	Inadequate funding of TVET programmes for economic and production projects.	4.06	0.83	Agreed
2.	Low level of TVET programmes towards entrepreneurship education development.	4.22	0.85	Agreed
3.	Misconception values placed on TVET by the society.	4.15	0.88	Agreed
4.	Inadequate TVET facilitators for youth entrepreneurship education empowerment.	4.03	0.91	Agreed
5.	Lack of innovative-entrepreneurship facilities for TVET programmes.	4.13	0.87	Agreed
6.	Mismanagement of TVET resources in youth entrepreneurship programmes.	4.05	0.94	Agreed
7.	Inability to engage experts to boost TVET youths' interest for self-employment	4.13	0.90	Agreed
8.	Lack of re-training of facilitators with current trends in entrepreneurship education.	4.05	1.02	Agreed
9.	Lack of support for TVET youths to go on entrepreneurship field trips.	4.06	0.83	Agreed
10.	Lack of quality economic and productive activities to the needs of TVET youths.	4.22	0.85	Agreed
11.	Lack of project production consultancy services to the needs of TVET youths.	4.15	0.88	Agreed

The data in Table 2 indicated 11 items with *Mean* values above 3.50. The *Mean* values of the items ranged from 4.03 to 4.22, while the *Standard Deviation* ranged from 0.91 to 0.85, showing the closeness of the respondents' opinions. This indicated that all the items were agreed upon as challenges of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development.

5.3 Research Question 3: What are the strategies of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development?

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation on Strategies for Empowering TVET Youths through Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development. N=115

S/N	Strategies of Empowerment TVET Youth	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	Encourage partnerships with local TVET trade industries.	4.15	0.91	Agreed
2.	Cultivate the spirit of entrepreneurship skills to the TVET youths.	4.09	0.95	Agreed
3.	Adopt products and service-learning approaches for TVET youths.	4.22	0.68	Agreed
4.	Employ traits approaches to facilitate entrepreneurship education in TVET	3.58	0.69	Agreed
5.	Restructure TVET curriculum to entrepreneurship project-based learning.	4.19	0.93	Agreed
6.	Re-training of facilitators with the current trends in the entrepreneurship job market.	4.35	0.90	Agreed
7.	Effective management of TVET programmes to attract interested youths.	4.39	0.79	Agreed
8.	Incorporate entrepreneurship content aligned with market needs.	4.37	0.76	Agreed
9.	Appointed experienced administrators to manage TVET programmes	4.37	0.76	Agreed
10.	Engage experts to boost the youths' interest in becoming self-employed.	4.22	0.87	Agreed
11.	Improve the excellence image of TVET through entrepreneurship education.	4.22	0.89	Agreed
12.	Promote in-house TVET enterprise empowerment for career advancement.	4.24	0.76	Agreed
13.	Encourage collaboration among TVET and entrepreneurship education facilitators.	4.18	0.91	Agreed
14.	Encourage TVET youths towards entrepreneurial activities on the needs of the market.	4.27	0.81	Agreed

Data presented in Table 3 above revealed 14 items with *Mean* values above 3.50. The *Mean* values of the items ranged from 3.58 to 4.39, while the *Standard Deviation* ranged from 0.69 to 0.79, showing the closeness of the respondents' opinions. The items were, therefore found appropriate as strategies for empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development.

6. Discussions of Findings

The results in Table 1 indicated 11item prospects for empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development. The prospects include transforming indigenous economic and production industries and technologies; constituting the fundamental basis for industrial activities within TVET; helping to boost the nation's economy by growing her gross domestic product (GDP); and enabling TVET youths to be self-employed, among others. These are in agreement with the view of the Botswana Core Welfare Indicators Survey (2010) which emphasized

that youths can be empowered through life skills and attachment to local public and private industrial projects. This finding is also in line with the work of Oviawe (2010), who argued that the prospects of empowering youths through entrepreneurship education increased the self-esteem of the graduate, improved the economy of the society, and reduced poverty in the society. The findings and the opinions of the authors above helped to justify the findings of this study on the prospects of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development.

The results of the findings in Table 2 disclosed that all 11 items were agreed upon as challenges of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development. The challenges include inadequate funding of TVET programmes for economic and production projects, low level of TVET programmes towards entrepreneurship development, and misconception values placed on TVET by the society, among others. These agree with the opinion of Daramola (2005) that challenges are a mismatch between acquired skills, and market needs, widespread concern about poor quality training environments and negative public perceptions regarding TVET. The findings also agreed with the report of Okoye and Okwelle (2013) that challenges in empowering students include inadequate funding for TVET programmes, poor power supply, shortage of qualified TVET facilitators, poor supervision of TVET programmes, lack of modern facilities, among others. The findings and the views of the authors above helped to add value to the study's findings on the challenges of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development.

The findings of the study in Table 3 revealed the 14-item strategies of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development. The strategies include encouraging partnerships with local TVET trade industries, cultivating the spirit of entrepreneurship skills to TVET youths, and adopting products and service-learning approaches for TVET youths, among others. The findings agreed with the argument of Shobowale (2015) that strategy is a pattern in a stream of decisions that guides an organization's ongoing alignment with its environment and shapes internal policies and procedures. The findings were also in consonance with the view of Chinedu and Olabiyi (2015) that qualified instructors and trainers should be recruited to ensure that up-to-date content are taught to youths who participate in TVET empowerment programmes. The findings and agreement of the authors above gave credence to the result for the findings of the study on strategies of empowering TVET youths through entrepreneurship education for sustainable development.

7. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was established that TVET youth empowerment through entrepreneurship education is at the heart of sustainable development and only those nations that continue to invest in empowering their youths, and talented workforce will reduce the level of poverty,

unemployment, and hoodlums in the society. TVET youth empowerment through entrepreneurship education will boost the youth's interest and translate TVET's innovative skills into goods and services locally. Also, it forms the foundation of TVET industrial activities of a nation for achieving sustainable development. Consequently, TVET and entrepreneurship TVET remains a vital ingredient for sustainable development in Lagos State and Enugu States, Nigeria.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. TVET facilitators should be re-trained through organized entrepreneurship education workshops for sustainable development.
2. Adequate funding of TVET through public and private sector partnerships for sustainable development.
3. Adequate engagement with entrepreneurs as mentors to boost TVET youths' interest to become self-employed for sustainable development.
4. Enhance collaboration and partnerships between educational institutions and industries to ensure TVET programmes align with current market demands and technological advancements.
5. Implement policies that incentivize businesses to provide internship opportunities and hands-on experiences for TVET students, promoting practical skill development.
6. Integrate digital literacy and technology-focused training within TVET programmes to prepare youths for the evolving demands of the modern workforce.

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