
**FUNCTIONAL VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY
IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The educational system is expected to produce sound, effective and productive citizens with relevant knowledge, skills abilities and competencies required for the achievement of its objectives. Vocational Technical Education is designed to ensure that its trainees acquire the relevant knowledge and skills needed to be gainfully employed, self dependent and contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. The paper examines concept of Vocational and Technical Education, functional vocational and technical education, objectives of vocational and technical education, peace and security, VTE for sustainable peace and security, barriers to effective implementation of Vocational Technical Education. The paper opined that for sustainable peace and security to be achieved, the citizens should be productively engaged in any of the vocational areas and government should establish more vocational centres to give opportunities to those who did not pass through formal education and also strengthen the existing ones.

Keywords: *Vocational and Technical Education, Functional VTE, Sustainable Peace and Security.*

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It has been proven that vocational and technical education is the bedrock of any nations economic, scientific and technological growth. Vocational and technical education is a field of study that is aimed at equipping the individuals with the relevant skills and knowledge that will enhance their functionality in the society where they live. It inculcate in the learners the necessary knowledge and skills needed in the present day of science and technology. Vocational and technical education for productive living, therefore, any stagnation in this form of education is a sure route to economic decay and frustration (Usoro, Otu & Joseph, 2012).

Based on the above, Nwalado and Nwalado (2013), defined vocational and technical education as a programme designed to train and equip learners with occupational skills, knowledge and competencies required for them to be self reliant and contribute meaningfully to the economic development of Nigeria through agricultural industries, commerce, traditional crafts and cottage industries which bring about peaceful co-existence of people within the society. According to Ekemini (2013), vocational and technical education is a type of education that helps the learners to develop skills and expertise in a particular field, group of techniques or technology. It prepares the learners for jobs that are based on practical activities which are totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation. It is an education that prepares an individual for gainful employment. Federal government of Nigeria (FGN) (2004), view vocational and technical education as an aspect 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 occupation in various sectors of the economy and social life.

Ekpenyong (2008), outlined four competencies of a VTE curriculum to include:

- ◆ General Education
- ◆ Relevant technology subjects
- ◆ Relevant science or applied science; and
- ◆ Acquisition of practical skills and competencies

Functional Vocational and Technical Education

Vocational and technical education stands to benefit its recipients if properly planned. Obinne (2012) has projected that if Nigeria employs the right strategies, with a strong vocational and technical education base, by year 2020, the nation will be the birth of more than 3 million new enterprises with more than 70% operating on micro and small scale levels.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines "functional" as "practical and useful". For vocational and technical education to be functional, it must be useful and practical in nature. According to Idowu (1999), functional education is the total

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process of bringing up individuals to develop their potentials (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) to the fullest and consequently to be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society. Functional education as summed up by Nwakolo (1998) reveals that:

The education of our dream in the year 2010 should be capable of producing Nigerians who can manufacture new materials, machines and tools needed for our industries, produce enough food for local and international markets, invent new designs, discover drugs capable of curing diseases hither to incurable and transform the nation from consuming one to a manufacturing one.

From the above views, functional vocational and technical education is expected to promote the well being of economic growth, promote peace and security and enhance overall development of any nation. Joseph, Utin, Akpan and Usoro (2013), state that with vocational and technical education, there should be a remarkable reduction in the rate of such crimes as robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, assassination, insecurity, war, internet scammer, prostitution, militancy etc as well as alleviation of the poverty rate in the nation. There is no doubt that vocational and technical education is one of the instruments a nation can use to curb rising wave of social vices like war, hatred, assassination, terrorism etc and unemployment that could lead to poverty. In addition, recipients of vocational and technical education programme should be trained on how to raise capital for funding commercial farming, business centres, catering services, tailoring, electronic mega shops, furniture workshops etc.

For VTE to be functional, they are key trends which the programme must put into place

- a) Retraining of vocational educators
- b) Reworking the vocational education curriculum
- c) Research partnership

According to European Commission (2012), the underlisted actions are put in place for a functional VTE training

- ◆ High quality vocational training which enables learners to acquire specific vocational skills combined with key competencies and which learners, parents and society at large recognizes as an appealing option as the same value as general education. It should equip learners with both key competences and specific vocational skills.
- ◆ Work-based learning should be included in all initial vocational training courses, ensuring that young people have the knowledge, skills and competences needed for a successful first step into the labour market. Companies should be engaged as

training providers together with vocational training schools or other education/training institutes.

- ◆ Provision of easily accessible and career-oriented continuing vocational training for all employees, irrespective of their educational background, employers, independent entrepreneurs and unemployed people which facilitates both competence development and career changes.
- ◆ Provision of attractive and inclusive vocational training with highly qualified teachers and trainers, innovative learning methods, high quality infrastructure and facilities, a high labour market relevance and pathways to further education and training.
- ◆ Improvement of permeability between the different education and training. Subsystems (school, education, vocational training, higher education, adult education) and cater for the validation of non-formal and informal learning including competences acquired in the work place.
- ◆ Provision of easily accessible and high quality lifelong information, guidance and counselling services which form coherent network and which enable citizens to take sound decisions and to manage their learning and professional careers beyond traditional gender profiles.

Objectives of VTE

Vocational and technical education is geared towards the production of the educated man who can effectively work with his head, heart and hands. The development of the economy and the crave for self-reliance and self-sustainability is the driving force for acquiring vocational and technical education (Uwaifo 2009). The National Policy on Education (2004) states the objectives of vocational and technical education as follows:

- ◆ to give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.
- ◆ to enable Nigerian young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.
- ◆ to expose students to career awareness by exploring usable options in the world of work.
- ◆ to stimulate creativity.

The emphasis on vocational and technical education by the National Policy on Education shows that through education, learners can acquire the appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for them to live and also contribute to the development of their society. Thus, for a society to have sustainable peace to a reasonable extent, the relevant functional and technological based VTE programme must be in place.

Peace and Security

Nigeria as a nation can not develop economically without peace. Peace can be determined by many socio-political factors. Ethnic homogeneity and language integration, religion, democracy, culture, ethos of the people, history of communities, discrimination and quality of leadership, relationship with neighbourhood and political system are fundamental causes for making peace that affect the economy of a developing nation (Fielding in Nwalado and Nwalado 2014).

According to Igwe in Nwalado and Nwalado (2014) view peace as means of beneficent adjustment of harmony between the individual and his fellowmen. He added that this applies to the entirety of the concentric relationship between individuals and community, community and community, community and nation, nation and nation. Peace means living in harmony and not fighting one another. When a nation is calm and relaxed, such nation is peaceful. Galtung (1996), sees peace in terms of the conditions that hold when a peaceful state is maintained and promoted. "peace consist of positive thoughts, pure feelings and good wishes". Maiyo, Gladys, Mulwa and Mugambi (2012), state that peace is not just the absence of war; it is the practice of love.

In a peaceful society, people would work together to resolve conflicts, develop morally and economically, treat each other with justice, satisfy basic needs and respect each others feelings, opinion and idea.

Security according to Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary is the activities involved in the protecting a country, building a person against attack, danger, etc. Security is a situation where either an individual, social group or geo-political entity is protected or defended against any form of danger, espionage or attack of any sort, internally or externally (Okene in Usman, 2012). Security according to Basse (2005), is an innovative, systematic and proactive process for the determination of danger, the protection and prevention of harm of any kind against persons and/or property.

For any nation to make progress and develop economical, politically and socially, its peace and security of life and property are prerequisites. For a nation to experience peace and security, her citizens have to be fully engaged in one vocation or the other which will bring about economic growth and peaceful co-existence.

Vocational and Technical Education for Sustainable Peace and Security

Quality education is a major tool to sustainable peace. Illiteracy is one of the major causes of war in our society today. Without good education given to the citizen of a nation, such nation will hardly experience peace. VTE has been programmed to deliver to the individual learner the needed skills required for them to be useful to

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themselves and the society at large. Sustainable peace and security can be achieved in Nigeria if the government will invest more in the future of her citizens by mobilizing them to engage in occupational skills and competencies, especially in VTE training within and outside the school system.

Upon completion of their vocational training and graduation, the individuals will be gainfully employed or become self employed, and then contribute meaningfully to their society. Individuals with such skill would be satisfied with their lives and relationship with the society, and will never have time to be recruited or involved in violence, robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking, suicide bombing by way of searching for daily bread (Ogo, 2012). The physical, emotional, economic and mental engagement of individuals will reduce their involvement in social vices.

There is an adage that says “that an idle mind is the devil’s workshop. This means that, when the mind of individuals are engaged in useful thoughts, such individual will be interested on the way and manner to achieve those useful thoughts in his mind. But when the individual’s mind is idle, it could lead to negative thinking that might cause the nation’s peace and security.

VTE has been designed to provide the learners with the necessary skills, knowledge, ability, competencies needed to be productive in life. Such productive activities include the establishment of business centres, phone booths, buying and selling of goods and services, poultry farm, catering services, block laying, advertising, marketing of goods and services, concreting, welding and fabrication, servicing, repairs and maintenance of mechanical and electrical equipments, carpentry, tailoring, entertainment, commercial farming (fish pond) and its like. Thereby occupying the individual’s mind with good thoughts on how to make money, which might bring about economic growth, peace and security. When citizens are productively empowered, they will not have time to be involved in violence, robbery, suicide bombing, prostitution, human trafficking, kidnapping etc.

Balogun, Idogho and others (2010) asserted that vocational and technical education and training plays a vital role in improving the wellbeing of rural settlers and communities, this increases productivities, empowers individuals to become self-reliant and positively engaged.

Principles Guiding Vocational Technical Education Implementation

The National Policy on Education (2004), outlined the goals of Vocational Technical Education as follows:

1. To provide trained manpower in applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels;

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2. To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development and
3. To give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

For the above goals of Vocational Technical Education to be achieved, there must be proper implementation and administration using appropriate facilities and equipment that will emphasize learning-by-doing (practicals).

Prosser in Nwaokolo (2003), recommended the following principles for Vocational Technical Education:

- For Vocational Technical Education to be functional, the training should be fashioned in the same way, some operations using the same equipment, facilities as for the occupation being prepared.
- Vocational Technical Education is functional to the extent that the individual is trained directly and specifically in the thinking and manipulative habits required in the desired occupation.
- The environment in which the individual is trained should resemble the environment he eventually work in.
- For Vocational Technical Education to be functional, it should permit each individual to develop his interest, aptitude and intelligence to the highest level possible.
- For Vocational Technical Education to be functional, the trainers should have acquired experience in the application of such knowledge and skills they want their trainees to acquire.
- Functional Vocational Technical Education is designed for people who need it, want it and can benefit from it.
- For functional Vocational Technical Education to be achieved, there is a minimum level of preparation needed in order to enable the trainees obtain and retain employment in that vocation and if the preparation is not attained up to that level, the occupation will neither benefit the trainee nor the society.

If the above principles are fully implemented, the goals of Vocational Technical Education will be achieved which will bring about sustainable peace and security in the society.

Barriers to Effective Implementation of Vocational Technical Education in Nigeria

It is very sad to note that Vocational Technical Education programmes in Nigeria is still facing some challenges despite all the money government put in to improve the situation. Students continue to graduate under ill-equipped programme to face the world of work. The current issues of concern that are facing Vocational

Technical Education programme in Nigeria has been observed by Gowon (2004), Olaitan (2005), and Akinseinde (2010), as:

- Inadequate resources and facilities for practical training of students;
- Non-diversification of school curricula to cater for entrepreneurial skills and development;
- Inadequate and improper administration of Vocational Technical Education by Administrators of the programme;
- Low awareness of the benefits of Vocational Technical Education as an instrument for national development;
- Brain drain of Vocational Technical Education teachers to other professions with better wages and remuneration;
- Inadequate power supply to schools and Colleges for effective operations of machines and computers in the laboratories and workshops;
- Low status of and poor societal attitude towards Vocational Technical Education programmes.
- Inadequate human and material resources in the schools and Colleges;
- Inadequate expertise and skilled manpower.

Conclusion

Vocational and technical education has a stake in the economic and peaceful state of Nigeria. It has a potential of providing the nation with bulk of the workforce and services needed to sustain the expected peace and security it demands through skill acquisition. If the Boko Haram insurgents were opportune to acquire functional Vocational and Technical Education, they would be dully equipped to make contributions to sustainable peace and security. They would not also be used as tools by mischief-maker bent on truncating the course of national development and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. There is great potential and hope for peace and security in Nigeria through functional Vocational and Technical Education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to improve Vocational Technical Education programmes for sustainable peace and security;

- The school curriculum should set aside one year for skill acquisition in any of the vocational areas which the trainees will undergo. The training should be skills and technology based (practicals only).
- The government should establish more vocational centers to give opportunities to those who did not pass through formal education and also strengthen the existing ones by renewing the facilities and equipments for better performance.
- The government should enhance the quality of Vocational Technical Education by expanding access to the programme, enrollment of students and reduction in vocational wastage.

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- The government should mandate all Secondary Schools, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities to start offering Vocational Technical Education courses. This will go a long way to engage young once in productive activities, which will keep them busy to a large extent.
- Training and retraining of Vocational Technical Education teachers should be regular and the Technical Teacher Training programme (TTTP) that was abolished in the past should be re-introduced to take care of Vocational Technical Education programmes in institutions.

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