

## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AMONG TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) STAKEHOLDERS: TVET INSTITUTION AND INDUSTRIES.

<sup>1</sup>Adelakun, Oluniyi A. & <sup>2</sup>Osaigbovo, Louis Odaro

<sup>\*1</sup>Department of Industrial Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

<sup>\*\*2</sup>Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin, Edo State.

Correspondence E-mail: adelakunoluniyi@yahoo.com

### Abstract

*This study sought to determine how to strengthen partnerships for quality improvement among Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) stakeholders: TVET institution and industries in Nigeria. To achieve this, the study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was 152 made up of 68 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) administrators and 84 Industrial sector administrators in the South-west, South-south and North-central geo-political zones of Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire based on five-point Likert scale. The instrument was facevalidated by three experts and Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the internal consistency, which yielded a coefficient of 0.81. The data collected were analysed using mean values. A mean of 3.5 and above were accepted while any mean less than 3.5 was rejected. The findings of the study revealed that there is the need to strengthen partnerships for quality improvement among Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) stakeholders -TVET Institution and Industries in Nigeria. It was recommended that Federal Government should muscle the political will to formulate policies that will encourage and strengthen partnerships of employers of labour/ industries with TVET institutions; and curriculum in TVET institutions should emphasize more on work environment habit inculcation into students among others.*

**Keywords:** Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Partnership, Institutions, Industries, Strengthening.

### Introduction

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an educational programme designed to provide students with knowledge, skills, and attitude that will enable them work in the industry or places where applied science is required. UNESCO (2011) view Technical Vocational Education and Training as a comprehensive term referring to all forms and

levels of the educational process involving, in addition to general knowledge, the study of technologies and related science and the acquisition of practical skills, know-how, attitudes, and understanding relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) in the National Policy of Education,

identified the goals of establishing TVET as to provide the manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business in particular at craft and technical levels; provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and give training and impart the necessary skills to the individual for self-reliance economically. This implies that TVET is a type of education given to individuals to develop their creative and manipulative potentials for the benefit of humanity. By design, the graduates of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions - universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and technical colleges among others are supposed to fit in well in the industry with little or no further training.

An industry could be described as the process that involves the collection of raw materials, and making them into products by using machineries. Banga and Sharma (2013) described an industry as that part of the business activity which concerns itself with the production, processing or fabrication of products. In spite of the efforts by successive government through its various policies to make our educational system more functional, there are still growing concerns among our industrialist and education stakeholders that graduates of our higher education lack adequate practical background and relevant job related skills for employment in the industries (Ideh, 2013; Idris & Rajuddin, 2012; Ikeoji & Agwubike, 2006).

Employers of labour have continued to express their worries over the quality of the graduates of institutions more importantly TVET institutions in Nigeria who are experiencing set-

backs due to lack of relevant job related skills for employment. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Slytee(2018)revealed that Nigeria's unemployment rate has increased from 18.8 percent in the third quarter (Q3) of 2017 to 23.1 percent in the third quarter (Q3) of 2018, meaning the number of unemployed Nigerians has risen to 20.9 million from 17.6 million. The report stressed that the economically active or working-age population (15 –

64 years of age) increased from 111.1 million in Q3 2017 to 115.5 million in Q3 2018. One of the reasons suggested for this condition by previous studies was skill mismatch - a situation where there is a disparity between the skills acquired by students in the TVET institutions and the actual skills needed in the labour market. This skill gap in the recent years has resulted to most TVET graduates in Nigeria tertiary institutions being subjected to several re-training programmes in the industry because most of them are considered to be ill prepared and adjudged unemployable based on the quality of training acquired (Ideh, 2013; Rufai, Abdulkadir & Kagara, 2013). This informed the proposal of the Minister of State for Education, Prof. Anthony Anwukah at the Retreat for Governing Councils of Nigerian Federal Universities, organized by the National Universities Commission (NUC) with the theme, —Elements of Statutory Governance, Procurement and Financial Accounting in Nigerian Universities.|| that the Nigerian students should spend extra one-year-reschooling in specialized institutions after graduation to make them employable in the industries. He stressed further that —the SIWES projects introduced for a year industrial attachment for students has failed in the universities. It is not performing its role in bridging the gap between the universities and the industries,|| (Okeke, 2018). The situation

where graduates of TVET institutions still undergo rigorous training and retraining after many years in the TVET institution is worrisome hence, the need to strengthen partnership between the TVET institution and industries.

Partnership is an arrangement where parties known as partners agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests. This agreement could be between government, schools, employers, professional associations, employees and their representatives, the local community and combinations of organizations. According to Ekpenyong & Edokpolor (2015), partnership can be described as a relationship between two or more groups. It is understood to be a voluntary alliance that enables the delivery of services and products and within the partnership there is sharing of resources to add value to the product or service of suppliers and consumers. Ideally, it implies a joint problem solving through sharing of risks, responsibilities, resources and competences for mutual benefit of collaborating parties. The industrial training focus in FRN (2013) is a kind of cooperative or partnership education between school and industry where students are exposed to industry-based skills that are necessary for smooth transition from classroom to the world of work (Mofesola, 2012). There is the need to strengthen partnership between TVET institution and the industries in order to ensure quality improvement to meet the set goals and objectives.

There is no gainsaying the fact that to produce the skilled and the demand driven graduates of TVET institution against the current supply driven who are termed unemployable in some quarters, there must be good relationship otherwise known as partnership between the

TVET institutions and the industries.

Government has been making efforts at ensuring this partnership, this is evident in the activities of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) which include setting and assessing curricular standards for polytechnics and technical colleges, and the Industrial Training Fund was also mandated to implement Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) to enhance practical skills acquisition of TVET students and other allied areas of study (Ekponyong, 2011: Egbri and Chukwuedo, 2013). Despite the obvious relationship, unemployment is still rife among the graduates of TVET institutions which negates the main objectives of vocational education which are to prepare the learner for entry to employment and advancement in his chosen career; meet the manpower needs of the society; increase the options available to each student; serve as a motivating force of learning; and enable the learner to wisely select a career (FRN, 2013). However there is the need to strengthen/ fortify/ invigorate this partnership where they exist or rather chart other ways of ensuring partnerships in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives. This informed this study which sought to determine how to strengthen partnerships for quality improvement among Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) stakeholders: TVET institution and industries in Nigeria.

### **Problem Statement**

Graduates of vocational education are supposed to be well prepared for entry to employment and advancement in their chosen career; meet the manpower needs of the society; increase the options available to each student; serve as a motivating force of learning; and enable the learner to wisely select a career (FRN, 2013).

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The current high rate of unemployment among graduates of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions (universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, technical colleges among others) is an indication of the need for tinkering or total overhauling of TVET programme to attain its aims and objectives. Currently, the nation is faced with supply driven graduates rather than demand driven – a situation where graduates of institutions are turned into the market without possessing adequate skills to perform in the industries. This results in production of army of unemployed youth roaming the street and seeking for paid jobs that are not there.

To curb this worrisome trend, it is imperative for government to strengthen the alliance otherwise known as partnership between Technical and vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and industry where it exists such as student industrial training scheme (SIWES) among others and initiate new policies that are not in existence to take TVET to the dream land. Hence, this study sought to determine ways to strengthen partnerships for quality improvement among Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) stakeholders: TVET institution

and industries

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study is to determine how to strengthen partnerships for quality improvement among technical vocational education and training (TVET) stakeholders: TVET institution and industries. Specifically, the study identified:

1. Areas to strengthen partnership between TVET institutions and industries

3. Strategies for strengthening partnership between TVET institutions and industries
4. Constraints to strengthening partnership between TVET institutions and industries.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the areas to strengthen partnership between TVET Institutions and Industries?
2. What are the strategies for strengthening partnership between TVET Institutions and industries?
4. What are the constraints to strengthening partnership between TVET institutions and industries?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Osuala (2004), descriptive survey research involves the accurate assessment of the characteristics of the population using questionnaire. This implies that survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people, their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviours. The study was carried out in South-west, South-east and North-central geo-political zones of Nigeria. The population of the study was 152 made up of 68 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) instructors and administrators in technical colleges and 84 Industrial sector administrators in the in the geo-political zones were the study. No sampling was carried out since the population is of manageable size. This instrument used to collect data for the study was a structured questionnaire. It was developed by the researchers after review of available literature

on how to strengthen partnerships for quality improvement among Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institution and industries. The instrument is divided into three sections A, B and C. Section A contains 12 items designed to find out areas to strengthen partnership between TVET institution and industries, B contains 15 items designed to find out strategies for strengthening partnership between TVET institution and industries and C contains designed to find out constraints to strengthening partnership between TVET institution and industries. The instrument is based on five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with nominal values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was face-validated by five experts from administrators in technical colleges and

Industrial sector and was tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.81. The data were collected by the researchers and research assistants in the zones covered by the study. The researchers and the research assistants administered the instrument on the respondents. All the instruments administered were correctly completed and used for data analysis.

Mean and standard deviation were used for answering the research questions. Based on the fivepoint Likert scale, any item with mean 3.50 and above is regarded as agree while any item with mean less than 3.50 is regarded as disagree. All computations were done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0.

**Table 1: Mean Responses of Respondents on Areas to Strengthen Partnership between TVET Institution and Industries (N=152)**

S/N	Item Statement		SD	Remark
1.	Strengthen partnership through research and development.	4.83	0.38	Agree
2.	Strengthen partnership through acceptance of more students for industrial work experience	4.92	0.30	Agree
3.	Strengthen partnership through provision/ sharing equipment and facilities	4.95	0.25	Agree
4	Strengthening partnership through designing, and updating TVET curriculum content in TVET institutions.	5.00	0.00	Agree
5	Strengthen partnership through staff exchange	4.63	0.64	Agree
6	Strengthen partnership through broadening the interfacebetween TVET institutions and industries for robust	5.00	0.00	Agree
7	Strengthen partnership through funding of some of TVET programmes	4.97	0.16	Agree
8	Strengthen partnership through organizing seminars, Agree workshops, and conferences	4.86	0.36	
9	Strengthen partnership through acceptance of staff and students for plant and field trips	4.90	0.30	Agree
10	Strengthen partnership through provision of jobs for best			

	graduating students from TVET institutions	5.00	0.00	Agree
11	Strengthen partnership through organizing on the job training for lecturers/staff of TVET institutions	4.13	0.92	
12	Strengthen partnership through awarding of scholarship to best students from TVET institutions and also to indigent students	4.89	0.31	Agree

Data presented in Table 1 show that the respondents standard deviation values range from 0.00 to 0.92 agreed on all the areas to strengthen partnership showing that the respondents are not far from each between TVET institutions and industries based on other in their responses on the items.

the means which range from 4.13 to 5.00. The

**Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on Strategies for Strengthening Partnership between TVET**

**Institution and Industries**

**N=152**

S/N	Item Statement		SD	Remark
1.	The partners should set clear objectives and deliverables The partners should communicate their strengths The partners should emphasize the mutual benefits.	4.90 . 5.00	0.30 5.00	0.00 Agree
2. 3		4.88	0.32	Agree Agree
4.	The partners should be open and willing to participate The partners should celebrate their successes	4.92 4.80	0.27 0.40	Agree 5. Agree
6.	The partners should share lessons learned	4.89	0.31	Agree
7	Government should formulate policies that will encourage industries  partner TVET institutions	5.00	0.00	Agree to
8.	Government should provide incentives like award of contract and national award to industries that are in partnership with TVET	4.75	0.43	Agree institutions.
9.	Government should establish special grant/ intervention fund scheme  industries to partner TVET institutions	5.00	0.00	Agree for
10.	There should ensure reduction of tax for industries that are in  partnership with TVET institutions.	5.00	0.00	Agree
11.	Government should establish a special ministry/commission to manage and supervised partnership between TVET institutions and industries	5.00	0.00	Agree industries

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12.	Government should make loan facility available to TVET institutions industries to fund projects	Agree 4.90	0.32 and	
13.	TVET – industry academic curricula reform councils should be to formulate market relevant curriculum content.	Agree 4.91	0.28 established	
14.	Government should intensify efforts to uplift TVET image through and electronic media	5.00	0.00	Agree print
15.	Launching awareness campaign on the need for collaborative effort between TVET institutions and industries.	4.95	0.21	Agree

4.75 to 5.00. The standard deviation shows that the Data presented in Table 2 show that the respondents are close in their responses with SD agreed on all the items on strategies for values range from 0.00 to 0.43. strengthening partnership between TVET institutions and industries based on the means which range from

**Table 3: Mean Responses of Respondents on Constraints to Strengthening Partnership between TVET**

**Institutions and Industries**

**N=152**

S/N	Item Statement		SD	Remark
1.	Poor integrated school-to-work transition curriculum	5.00	0.00	Agree
2.	Lack of finance	4.77	0.42	Agree
3.	Inadequate/obsolete facilities and information linkage issues	4.84	0.37	Agree
4.	Undue emphasis on theoretical based curriculum	4.82	0.41	Agree
5.	Undue emphasis on paper qualification	4.86	0.36	Agree
6.	Lack of clear cut agenda as to benefits derivable from the partnership	4.77	0.42	Agree
7.	Poor government policy for industrial sector	5.00	0.00	Agree
8.	Negative image of TVET that it is meant for never-do-well	5.00	0.00	Agree
9.	Lack of legislation for co-ordinating the activities of TVET and industries	4.82	0.38	Agree
10.	Lack of interest by TVET institutions and industries to partner	4.13	0.92	Agree
11.	Poor public relations practice by TVET institutions and industries	4.70	0.46	Agree
12.	Difficulty in differentiating between TVET and engineering profession	4.09	0.96	Agree

Data presented in Table 3 show that the respondents agreed on all the items as constraints to strengthening partnership between TVET institutions and industries. The mean values range from 4.09 – 5.00 and standard deviation 0.00 – 0.92.

## Discussion of results

The findings in Table 1 show that the respondents agreed with all the items on areas to strengthen partnership between TVET institutions and industries. This in line with Njoku, Anaele, & Chukwu (2015) that highlighted areas for TVET-industry partnership which include partnership through: designing and updating TVET curriculum content in TVET institutions, research and development, acceptance of more students for industrial work experience, among others also in line with Ukonze & Ajala (2015) staff exchange from time to time, provision/ sharing equipment and facilities, and strengthening partnership student industrial training scheme (SIWES) among others.

The finding presented in Table 2 indicated that all the items on strategies for strengthening partnership between TVET institutions and industries. This is in consonance with Weybrecht (2016) that highlighted tips for successful business school and industry partnerships that the partners should: set objectives and clear deliverables, communicate your strengths, emphasize the mutual benefit, be open and willing to participate, celebrate their successes and the partners should share lessons learned among others. Also in agreement with Ayonmike, Igberadja, Igberaharha & Okeke (2015) that postulated that government should formulate policies that will encourage industries to partner with TVET institutions, government should establish special grant/ intervention fund scheme for industries to partner TVET institutions, there should be reduction of tax for industries that are in partnership with TVET institutions, and establishment of special ministry to manage and supervise partnership between TVET institutions and industries among others.

Table 3 revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items on constraints to strengthening partnership between TVET institutions and industries. This is in agreement with Ayonmike, Igberadja, Igberaharha & Okeke (2015) that immediate gains from the partnership, time consumption, lack of finance, lack of interest by TVET institutions and industries, poor government policies and the risk involvement are among the challenges confronting partnership.

Also in line with Ikeoji & Agbidi (2015) that poor integrated school-to-work transition curriculum, inadequate/obsolete facilities and information linkage issues, undue emphasis on theoretical based curriculum, undue emphasis on paper qualification, lack of clear cut agenda as to benefits derivable from the partnership, poor government policy for industrial sector, negative image of TVET that it is meant for never-do-well, lack of interest by TVET institutions and industries to partner are also mitigating factor for partnership.



## Conclusion

The apparent partnership in some areas such as the efforts of Industrial Training Fund towards the implementation of Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is certainly not good enough to raise the standard from the current setbacks being experienced by graduates of TVET institutions due to lack of relevant job related skills for employment. Other areas of partnership need to be charted with the industry and efforts should be geared towards strengthening the existing areas following the identified strategies in this study.

## Recommendations

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

1. The Federal Government should muscle the political will to formulate policies that will encourage and strengthen partnerships of employers of labour/ industries with TVET institutions.
2. Curriculum in TVET institutions should emphasize more on work environment habit inculcation into students.
3. TVET institutions curriculum should be reviewed every three years in order to keep the students abreast with the emerging trends in the occupation of work
4. Adequate monitoring and supervision of SIWES programme should be intensified as well as developing a synergy of information between the schools and industries

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