

ALTERNATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES FOR REPOSITIONING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DURING ECONOMIC CRISIS IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA

IDRIS Benuh Adama, Ph.D

Department of Business Education (Accounting Unit), Federal University of Education,
Kontagora

08034156893: idrisbenuadam@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14648262>

Abstract

This study investigated the alternative funding strategies for repositioning vocational education during economic crisis in North-Central, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted. The area covered was three states out of the six states in the North-Central. The population of the study was 140 respondents (lecturers of vocational education in tertiary institutions in North-Central), out of which 114 lecturers of vocational education in federal and state tertiary institutions were sampled using purposive sampling technique. Structured questionnaire which was validated by four experts was used for data collection and the internal consistency of instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha with a coefficient value of 0.85. Data were analyzed using mean Scores (Grand mean 3.33 > the assumed mean 2.50; SD=0.70) and the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics [$\alpha\text{-val. } (0.85) < t\text{-table } (1.96)$]. Findings showed that the respondents agreed with all the alternative funding strategies listed in the questionnaire. Also, there was no significant difference between the mean rating of the respondents in federal and state tertiary institutions on the alternative funding strategies. It was concluded that since government alone cannot adequately fund vocational education in tertiary institutions, alternative funding has to be sourced. It was recommended among others that heads of institutions where vocational education is offered should liaise with the political figures in their areas for benefit of using constituency development fund as a means of funding vocational education.

Keywords: *Alternative funding strategies, economic crisis, funding, Vocational education*

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education is a vital component in the economic development of any country. However, this training system can only be effective where sustainable methods of funding are in place. Also, vocational education like any other sector needs financial support to succeed. Most of the vocational education schools are ill-equipped to produce skilled professionals and in line with this, Oviawe (2019) stated that vocational education has been developed in various nations of the world to aid rapid changes to the technological advancement of the 21st century which has led to a relevant integral part of national development, skill development and resilient economic growth. Furthermore, the growth of vocational education has raised a skilled workforce and self-reliant youth which have contributed to the national development of both rural and urban centers of Nigeria (Cedefop, 2021). The secret behind some countries becoming developed, while some are stagnated and others importing and borrowing depend largely on varying level of involvement in vocational education.

John, Igwe and Emmanuel (2022) stated that unpleasant economic condition is not a sudden occurrence but a gradual process which when not attended to becomes complicated and degenerate into economic crisis. At this point, signs like unemployment, inflation, loss of income, insufficient food provision, inadequate clothing, dilapidated shelter, non-functional healthcare system; inadequate funding of the education sector become more obvious in the society just like what is happening in Nigeria presently. In coping with the economic crisis in Nigeria, vocational education is very cardinal to economic development of the country since vocational education in general has potential benefits which accrue to an individual, to an organization and to the country as a whole. To individuals, vocational education enhances their future earning potential, career progression and employability. To the unemployed, vocational education offer them capacities to find ways of earning a livelihood; this can be through self-employment or setting up of business, while at organizational level, vocational education results in company productivity, profitability and competitiveness, this in turn enhances its existence (Ekpo & Onweh, 2012). With productivity and high profits, the company will contribute to the wealth of the country through taxes. Vocational education, therefore, serves to prepare learners with the skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

However, Ekpo and Onweh (2012) further stated that a country's development and progress, that is, ability to combat economic crisis largely depends on the availability and quality of its

human resources, people with the right skills through vocational education and the right attitude. It is conventional knowledge that education and training of any kind require financial resources if specified learning outcomes are to be attained. Vocational education by its nature, structure and composition in terms of the occupational standards and curriculum, is expensive compared to general education (Mubanga, Hock, Karim & Mulenga, 2019). Staffing, buildings, other critical infrastructure, machinery, tools, equipment, learning materials are important resources that should be financed and made available in vocational institutions of learning. According to United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2019), vocational education has a cardinal part to contribute to the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It is a formidable instrument to support entry to respectable work to the world of work. It offers individuals opportunities for lifelong learning and enables personal development, as well as civilized, developed and sustainable communities and economies.

Many countries view investing in skills development as a priority responsibility due to the significant socio-economic benefits that can accrue to individuals, businesses and the country as a whole. However, numerous challenges are encountered in developing workable financing mechanisms to charge vocational education system to yield the desired developmental outcomes, mainly due to inadequate parliamentary appropriations to vocational education compared to other forms of higher education (Shi & Bangpan, 2022).

All around the world the importance of vocational education has been acknowledged as a medium for economic and industrial growth (Hanni, 2019), it is also established that implementing vocational education is expensive owing to the capital intensive nature of the education. Hanni (2019) also opined that African leaders, despite being aware of the value of vocational training, they do not take serious measures to lift vocational education to the position that it rightly deserves. Furthermore, most of the vocational training systems in Sub-Saharan Africa experience plummeting government funding (Kintu,2019). Sustainable methods of financing and reinforced resourcing of vocational education can ensure the proper functioning of vocational education institutions, able to produce high-quality graduates competent and prepared for today's changing world of work.

Oviawe (2018) posited that adequate provision of funds is a vital variable in the success of any education system since funds provide the fundamental resources for the system to acquire material and human resources. Oviawe (2019) also asserted that the following justify greater funding needed for vocational education programmes: purchase of tools, equipment and machines; regular repairs and maintenance of equipment; manpower development; provision of consumables goods; equipping the library; salaries and allowance of staff; building of workshops and classrooms; security needs and research in vocational education.

In Nigeria, colleges and universities that are offering vocational education programmes find it difficult to implement vocational education curriculum for its core areas (Agricultural Education, Business Education, Home Economics and Fine and Applied Arts) to its fullness due to inadequate funding, in line with this, Okeke and Eze (2010) stated that insufficient finance is a realistic and practical factor inhibiting the implementation of vocational and technical education in tertiary institutions. The amount of money Nigerian government devotes to education, which is far lower than the 26% of government expenditure as recommended by UNESCO (2017), illustrates her poor commitment to the development of education, vocational education inclusive and this explains in part the little progress that has been made in this sector since 1990. To mitigate the effect of lack of adequate financing, other alternative sources have to be sought in education financing in Nigeria (Thomas, 2020).

Funding plays a major role in any educational institution which vocational and technical education cannot be exempted. Akpan (2010) opined that if vocational education is to be seen as the key for national development it is imperative for the sector to be adequately funded to make it result-driven. This is because vocational education by its comprehensive nature provides the beneficiaries with knowledge, competencies, skills and aptitudes necessary to be useful members of the society. Also, Offiong, Akpan and Usoro (2013) stated that the increasing demands for quality vocational education, better management and competent teachers to teach vocational education imply a need for substantial and consistent resource allocation.

The task of developing human capacity building cannot be achieved without adequate funding. Since the 26% of budgetary provision of the federal government of Nigeria is inadequate, there is need for institutions to make alternative arrangement of how to finance vocational education

for effective development of students through adequate provision of instructional materials and facilities for effective instruction (Oviawe, 2020). Similarly, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) having realized the huge burden of funding education stated in her national policy on education for the participation of the private sector, individuals and organizations to jointly fund education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Currently, the problems of funding and over-dependence on government subventions have become the most persistent and recurrent issues militating against most institutions' ability to maintain existing services in all states of the federation. The problem of financing vocational education in public institutions in Nigeria has become a recurring dilemma to the heads of the institutions. Poor funding has led to the deplorable state of schools and faculties of vocational education characterized by poor and inadequate physical facilities and inability to purchase current technological instructional materials, the outcome which has led to the churn out of graduates who do not have the specific skills development and knowledge that is required by the job market.

Also, according to literature searched, many studies relating to vocational education and funding used content analysis as methodology, such studies include: Offiong, Akpan and Usoro, 2013; Eimuhi, 2018; Chinakwe and Njoku, 2019; Dopemu and Adeyefa, 2019; Thomas, 2020; Odike, Akpogarian and Ukeje, 2020; Carruthers and Jepsen, 2020; Akpoyibo and Ezechukwu, 2021; Kolade, Ilori and Oke, 2024. However, to cover the methodological gap, this study adopted survey method that resulted in empirical study. It is against this background that this study examined alternative funding strategies for management of vocational education in public tertiary institutions in the era of economic crisis in North-Central, Nigeria as its main objective.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

Research Question

What are the alternative funding strategies for repositioning vocational education during economic crisis in North-Central of Nigeria?

H0: (Null Hypothesis)

Significant difference does not exist on the mean responses of federal and state institutions' vocational education lecturers on the alternative funding strategies for repositioning of vocational education during economic crisis in the North-Central zone of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design due to the instrument used and the wide distribution of the respondents. The population comprised 140 vocational education lecturers (54 vocational education lecturers in State owned tertiary institutions and 86 vocational education lecturers in Federal owned tertiary institutions) in six tertiary institutions in North-Central zone, comprising of three State owned tertiary institutions: College of Education, Katsina-Ala (Benue State); Kwara State University, Malete (Kwara State); College of Education, Gindiri (Plateau State) and three Federal owned tertiary institutions: Federal University, Lokoja (Kogi State); Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (Benue State); Federal University of Education, Kontagora (Niger State). Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size for this study which comprise of 114 vocational education lecturers across the sampled States.

The data collection was carried out using 10 item questionnaire developed by the researcher from literature reviewed. The instrument was structured in four point response scales of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with numerical values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by four experts from the faculties of vocational education, Federal University of Education, Kontagora and Kwara State University, Malete. Their corrections and suggestions were used to produce the final instrument. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a coefficient value of 0.85, an indication that the instrument was adequate to be used for the research. Out of 114 copies of the questionnaire distributed 104 copies were returned giving 91.23% return rate. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research question. Decisions were made using the lower and upper limits of the real numbers 1 to 4 on a four point scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) - 3.50- 4.00; Agree (A) - 2.50– 3.49; Disagree (D) - 1.50 – 2.49; Strongly Disagree (SD) - 0.50 – 1.49

The mean ($\bar{x} \geq 2.50$ Agree and $\bar{x} < 2.50$ Disagree) and standard deviation (S.D > 0.50 Agree and S.D < 0.50 Disagree) were used to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the opinions of the respondents. To test the hypothesis, the author used t-statistical value and p-value to test the hypothesis to determine whether it is acceptable or otherwise. The criteria for either accepting or rejecting the hypothesis are as follows: if the t-statistics value is greater than the t-table (t-statistics > 1.96) and the p-value is 0.05 with a 5% margin of error ($\alpha = 0.05$), H_0 is rejected and if the t-statistics value is less than the t-table (t-statistics < 1.96) and the p-values are greater than 0.05 with an allowance error of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$), H_0 is accepted.

RESULTS

The results of the study obtained were presented in Tables based on the research question and hypothesis that guided the study (Tables 1 & 2).

Research Question

What are the alternative funding strategies for repositioning vocational education during economic crisis in North-Central of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of responses of the respondents' opinion

S/No	Alternative Funding Strategies	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Non-governmental organizations through provision of equipment.	3.37	0.67	Agree
2	Internally generated revenue projects: agricultural based, commercial based, and service based.	3.26	0.86	Agree
3	Endowment Fund.	3.51	0.70	Strongly Agree
4	Constituency Development Fund (CDF).	3.64	0.62	Strongly Agree
5	Mobilization of Alumni Association.	3.31	0.76	Agree
6	Students' fees	3.22	0.84	Agree
7	Rent for the use of institutions' facilities	3.39	0.56	Agree
8	Income from Entrepreneurship Centre	3.39	0.68	Agree
9	Proceeds from vocational education students' practical	3.15	0.81	Agree
10	Interest on investment	3.01	0.52	Agree
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	3.33	0.70	

Assumed $\bar{x} = 2.50$ ($\bar{x} \geq 2.50$ Agree and $\bar{x} < 2.50$ Disagree)

Table 1 revealed that all the ten (10) items had their \bar{x} values of vocational education lecturers ranged from 3.01 – 3.64 which were greater than the assumed \bar{x} score of 2.50. The standard

deviation values of all the ten (10) items ranged from 0.52 – 0.86. On the whole, the grand mean score of 3.33 was also greater than the assumed mean score of 2.50 and with the grand standard deviation score being 0.70. This implied that all the respondents agreed that the ten (10) statements can serve as alternative funding strategies for management of vocational education in public tertiary institutions in the North-Central zone of Nigeria during the era of economic crisis.

H0: (Null Hypothesis)

Significant difference does not exist on the mean responses of federal and state institutions' vocational education lecturers on the alternative funding strategies for repositioning of vocational education during economic crisis in the North-Central zone of Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of the t-test comparison of the opinions of vocational education lecturers sampled in the federal and state public institutions in North-Central, Nigeria

Variable	\bar{x}	SD	N	Df	alpha val.	t-table	Decision
Federal institutions	3.49	0.71	86	104	0.85	1.96	Retain null hypothesis
State institutions	3.32	0.62	54				

alpha val. (0.85) < t-table (1.96) Not significant

The result in Table 2 revealed that alpha value of 0.85 is less than the t-tabulated of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 104 degree of freedom. Hence there is no significant difference between the mean rating of the lecturers of vocational education in federal and state tertiary institutions on the alternative funding strategies for repositioning of vocational education during economic crisis in North-Central, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the study showed that all the respondents agreed with the listed items on the alternation funding strategies for repositioning vocational education in North-Central, Nigeria. Among the identified alternative strategies under the research question include: income from entrepreneurship centre; internally generated revenue projects through agricultural based, commercial based and service based activities; endowment fund; constituency development fund and mobilization of alumni association. The findings of the study were in agreement with Mbah, Nnadi, Nwachukwu and Onoh (2017) who stated that alumni associations should be encouraged to assist the institutions in facilities provision and donations to reduce the funding challenges faced by institutions offering vocational education programmes. Furthermore, the study is in agreement with

Obiyai and Olisa (2020) who stated that endowment funds should be sought and judiciously used for relevant projects and that non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to support vocational education through non-monetary and monetary means in order to boost the quality of skill development through vocational education in the era economic crisis.

CONCLUSION

The current economic crisis in Nigeria has made it more difficult for the government to fund vocational education alone. The fact remains that since government alone cannot adequately fund vocational education in tertiary institutions, supplementary funding has to be sourced. The alternative sources identified in this study include collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), establishment of internally generated revenue projects through agricultural based, commercial based, and service based activities, endowment fund, constituency development fund (CDF), mobilization of alumni association, interest on investment

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Heads of institutions where vocational education is offered should liaise with the political figures in their areas for benefit of using constituency development fund as a means of funding vocational education.
2. The government should partner with non-governmental organizations, World Bank, United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nation International Children Education Fund (UNICEF) to play a more proactive role in funding vocational education.
3. Alumni associations should be encouraged to assist the institutions offering vocational education in facilities provision and donations to reduce the funding challenges faced by such institutions.

4. Institutions involved in vocational education should market their manpower through consultancy services as well as operate hiring and rental services of school halls, canopies, plastic chairs, tables and buses for supplementary fund generation.

REFERENCES

- Akpan, G. A. (2010). Approaches for involving communities in providing financial resources for vocational education. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, 1(1), 154-159.
- Akpoyibo, F. E. & Ezechukwu, O. A. (2021). Rethinking vocational education in Nigeria. *Iconic Research and Engineering Journals*, 4(9), 64-70
- Carruthers, C. K. & Jepsen, C. (2020). Vocational education: an international perspective. *Edworking paper No. 20-237*, 1-57.
- Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on vocational education and training systems in Europe: Luxembourg. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4189>
- Chinakwe, P. C. & Njoku, L. U. (2019). Funding technical vocational education and training: emerging issues and strategies for sustainable national development. *International Academic Journal of Africa Development*, 7(2), 15-22.
- Dopemu, O. A. & Adeyefa, M. A. (2019). Techniques for improving generation of funds for adequate provision of educational facilities in tvet tertiary institutions in Nigeria. *Journal of Library, Science Education and Learning Technology*, 1(1), 164-172.
- Eimuhi, J. O. (2018). Managing education in a depressed economy for national development. *African Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 11(2), 163-174.
- Ekpo, A. B. & Onweh, V. E. (2012). Coping with the global economic crisis: a challenge to technical vocational education and training in Nigeria. *African Research Review, Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(3), 165-175.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). *National policy on education*. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Hanni, M. (2019). Financing of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*. Retrieved from <https://repositorio.cepal.org/> on 15th March, 2023.
- John, A., Igwe, E. F. & Emmanuel, A. (2022). The effect of economic recession on Nigeria educational system: the way out. *Discovery*, 58(313), 68-75.

- Kintu, D. (2019). Technical vocational education and training institutions' contribution to promoting sustainable development. *Kyambogo University, Uganda: Kyambogo*. Retrieved from <http://ir.mksu.ac.ke/handle/123456780/4443> on 24th October, 2022.
- Kolade, A. A., Ilori, T. J. & Oke, B. B. (2024). Funding: a bane to mainstreaming TVET for skill development, mobility and resilient economy in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(4), 2988-2996.
- Mbah, C. O., Nnadi, K. J., Nwachukwu, C. C. & Onoh, C. E. (2017). Alternative funding strategies for repositioning technology education for sustainable skill and economic development in South-East States of Nigeria. *Journal of Technology & Vocational Education*, 2(1), 169-181.
- Mubanga, P., Hock, O. Y., Karim, A. M. & Mulenga, I. M. (2019). Methods of financing technical and vocational education and training, and entrepreneurship education to support skills development in Lusaka province, Zambia. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*, 6(6), 96-107.
- Obiyai, K. K. & Olisa, P. Y. (2020). Alternative sources of fund for management of vocational education in public secondary schools in the era of economic recession in Bayelsa State. *Benue State University Journal of Education*, 20(2), 93-100.
- Odikey, S. S. B., Akpogarian, B. E. & Ukeje, N. C. (2020). Trends and issues in funding vocational and technical education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*, 7(2), 174-178.
- Offiong, A. A., Akpan, A. G., & Usoro, S. H. (2013). Funding of vocational and technical education in Nigeria in times of global economic recession. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2(2), 149-158.
- Okeke, B. C., & Eze, C. P. (2010). Repositioning vocation and technical education for the 21st century: implications and challenges. *Journal of Vocational and Adult Education*, 7(1), 58-67.
- Oviawe, J. I. (2018). Revamping technical, vocational education and training through public-private partnerships for skill development. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education*, 10(1), 73-91.
- Oviawe, J. I. (2019). *Funding Technical, Vocational Education and Training Programmes for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria*. Osogbo: Atman limited.
- Oviawe, J. I. (2020). Strategies for funding technical vocational education and training for achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria in post oil boom economy. *Vietnam Journal of Education*, 4(2), 1-10.
- Shi, Y. & Bangpan, M. (2022). Young people's participation experiences of technical and vocational education and training interventions in low- and middle-income countries: a



systematic review of qualitative evidence. *Empirical Research in Vocational Education Training*, 14(8), 63-75.

Thomas, J. O. (2020). Advanced education financing in Nigeria: issues and patterns. *Annals of Educational Research and Reviews*, 8(2), 24-30.

UNESCO (2017) Diversifying the funding sources for TVET: report of the virtual conference. Retrieved from https://unevoc.unesco.org/up/vc_fin_synthesis.pdf on 18th December, 2022.

UNESCO (2019). TVET Country Profile Nigeria. Compiled in collaboration with the National Board for Technical Education, Nigeria. Retrieved from www.unevoc.unesco.org/1/589 on 16th June, 2023.

