STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING THE FUNDING OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ABIA STATE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION (TECH) AROCHUKWU

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to determine strategies for funding of technical and vocational education and training in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 32 technical and vocational lecturers and technologists in schools of business education, vocational education and technical education in Abia State College of Education (Technical), Arochukwu. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. No sample and sampling technique for the study as the population of the study was small and manageable. The instrument for data collection, questionnaire was validated and its reliability using Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.73. Copies of a 25-item questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. The data collected from the questionnaire were then analysed. The findings from the data analysis revealed the strategies for funding technical and vocational education and training in the College. Based on such findings, the following recommendations among others were made; College alumni association should fund some aspects of technical and vocational education, College should set up a consultancy service unit where the money realized from the unit should be used to fund technical and vocational education and training, College should approach Philanthropists for donation in cash or materials to support technical and vocational education and training, College should have endowment fund where the money realized from endowment exercise will be used to support technical and vocational education and training, College should approach companies to fund some aspects of technical and vocational education and training as part of their corporate social responsibility, College should look for international donor agencies for funding some aspects of technical and vocational education and training and Nigerian associations in diaspora should be approached to fund some aspects of technical and vocational education and training.

Keywords: Strategies, Vocational Education, Technical Education, Training, Funding Education.

Introduction
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) aimed at preparing youngsters for gainful employment in various occupations. Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN (2013) refers TVET as a ‘comprehensive term referring to those aspects 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 occupations in various sections of economic and social life’’. TVET is therefore of vital importance in national development (Shabir,Abbas, Hamad ,Iqba, Saif & Alamgir 2014). TVET leads to improved quality of life since it helps individuals to become economically productive
and thus escape poverty and bring about reduction in unemployment (Ngugi & Muthima, 2017). Mengistu (2017) maintained that TVET builds competent workforce, stimulates and sustains socio-economic development. TVET lead to the acquisition of variety of skills.

Students’ acquisition of practical skills is the heart of TVET and requires substantial educational inputs such as enough qualified teachers, facilities, instructional materials, training and re-training of teachers and good management among others (Itua, 2013). Acquisition of enough teachers, provision of facilities and instructional materials to a large extent depends on proper funding of TVET. In other words, for TVET to achieve her goal of producing skilled workforce, it must be funded adequately. Inadequate funding of TVET on the other hand affects the quality of teaching and learning in TVET Institutions. TVET Institutions in Africa and other developing countries are underfunded. Kingombe (2011) noted that despite the importance given to TVET by many governments, the training system in Africa is largely underfinanced. Kingombe (2011) further noted generally that, the provision of technical and vocational skills and especially formal TVET is expensive, since facilities, material, equipment and maintenance costs are high. Seyi (2014) made similar assertion by stating that the low level of funding vocational and technical education has been a problem in the implementation of quality teaching and learning of technical and vocational education in Nigerian schools and colleges. It is in this context that funding became the cornerstone of TVET in particular and education in general.

Funding is the act of providing money for a specific purpose. The purpose of providing money in education could be building of schools, payment of teachers’ salaries, procurement of instructional materials and operating cost among others. Educational institutions must therefore be funded in order to achieve their objectives. Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu (ASCETA) as an educational institution therefore needs proper funding for survival. Abia State government remains the major source of funds for ASCETA. The funding of ASCETA is witnessing steady decline in recent years. The situation becomes worst with the advent of covid-19 which resulted to lockdowns and fall in oil prices in international markets. These factors further reduce the level of funding of TVET in general and ASCETA in particular. Presently, Abia State Government finds it difficult to maintain regular payment of staff salaries let alone funding other issues related to teaching and learning. This situation leads to underfunding of TVET in ASCETA. Some of the consequences of underfunding of TVET in ASCETA and other TVET institutions manifest in the area of production of half-baked graduates (Okoeye & Arimoni, 2016). The success of TVET to a large extent depends on proper funding. Although tertiary education trust fund (TETFUND) is playing active role in funding ASCETA, but has limited areas of funding.

One obvious way of complementing the effort of Abia State government in the area of funding TVET in ASCETA is through funding diversification measures. Such measures according to Ziderman (2002) include training levies on enterprises and enhanced income generation by public training institutions. Shah, Ajmal and Rahman (2004) opined that there is a need to broaden the financial base of existing Polytechnics and Colleges through budget increases, outsourcing, resource generation, cost recovery measures and external assistance as measures for tackling underfunding. Ahadzie (2009) in Kingombe (2011) on the other hand was with the view that resources should be mobilized from both local and international sources for the development of TVET. Arubayi (2014) advocated the use of multinational companies such as Shell, TEXACO, and Chevron as well as international development agencies to include World Bank, UNICEF (United Nations Children Fund), UNESCO (United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization), DFID (Department for International Development) and USAID (United States Agency for International Development). Other sources of funding TVET within funding diversification context according to Amadi and Jofzwest (2016) include endowment fund/donation, companies, non-governmental organizations, sales and services, alumni associations, host communities and international aids.

With regard to training levies on enterprise measure as suggested by Ziderman (2002), Nigeria has so far implemented training levies on enterprises measure which led to remittance of taxed monies collected from enterprises into Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND ) and Industrial training Fund (ITF) respectively. These two funds have greatly complimented government’s efforts in funding education in general and TVET in particular. However, it is imperative to note that despite the adoption of training levies on enterprises measure, TVET in Nigeria and ASCETA is still underfunded. To increase the level of TVET
funding in ASCETA, the College need to evolve some strategies for increasing the funding of TVET in the College.

Strategy is defined as a plan of action geared towards achieving specific objective(s). Over the years, educational professionals have evolved a number of strategies for increasing the funding of education (Ziderman, 2002; Shah, Ajmal & Rahman, 2004; Kingombe, 2011; Arubayi, 2014; Amadi & Johnwest, 2016). These strategies can be categorized into College-based funding strategies, Community-based funding strategies and foreign-based funding strategies. College-based funding strategies as the name implies are those strategies put in place by the College management in order to increase funding of education. Request for financial and material resources from College or university alumni association, setting of College business enterprise and production unit in the College are a few examples of College-based funding strategies that can lead to substantial increase in funding of TVET.

Community-based funding model or strategy on the other hand is hinged on provision of money or materials by the members of the community to fund education. Communities have been playing active role in funding TVET (OECD/ADB 2015). Funding of education through community wealthy individuals, community development associations, Philanthropists and endowment fund are typical examples of community-based funding strategies (Offiong, Akpan & Usoro, 2013). Asking for monetary or financial assistance from foundations set up by individuals is also another community-based funding strategy. Bamiro (2012) reported that Mac Arthur foundation supported four universities in Nigeria. University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Port Harcourt and Bayero University, Kano in the key areas of staff development, development of ICT infrastructure, etc. Carnegie foundation on the other hand gave substantial support to Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Obafemi Awolowo University and University of Jos. Asking companies to donate money or materials to schools as part of corporate social responsibility is yet another community-based funding strategy. Dangote group of companies donated ₦200 million to Kastina State University in 2011.

While College-based and Community-based funding strategies are ways of increasing funding within a country, foreign-based funding strategy on the other hand concern ways of increasing funding of education through financial and materials assistance from foreign individuals, companies, financial organizations, international donor organisations as well as international faith-based organizations (Nyerere, 2009) among others. African Development Bank, USAID, World Bank and community association in diaspora are some examples of international donor agencies. African development bank for example, supports country specific projects, multinational projects and micro financing schemes (African Union, 2007). African development bank funded the building and equipping of skill acquisition center at faculty of vocational and technical education, university of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Previous studies conducted in the area of increasing funding of education provided a few strategies for increasing funding of TVET institution (Offiong, Akpan & Usoro, 2013). To provide a comprehensive list of funding strategies as well as making implementation of such strategies easier, the researchers proposed three funding strategies: college, community and foreign-based strategies. This study therefore, sought to identify the strategies for increasing the funding of TVET in ASCETA.

Statement of the Problem

Last three decades witnessed steady increase in the demand for TVET as result of the belief that both economic and technological development of a country to a great extent depend on them. This demand led to the expansion of technical and vocational education and training in terms of building of more technical and vocational schools, employment of teachers, providing specialized facilities, equipment, machines and materials for practical training among others (UNESCO, 2013). In Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu, more and more training equipment and machines are being supplied on yearly basis. However, rapid changes in technology rendered some of the training equipment and machines obsolete. This implies that the College must be replacing training equipment and machines periodically to reflect the changes in industries and other sectors of human endeavours. The training equipment and machines that are not obsolete need regular maintenance for effective functioning. There is the need for the supply of raw materials and other consumables for students’ practicals on semester basis in the College. Lecturers and
technologists on the other hand need to be trained on how to use new training equipment and machines acquired by the College. All these requirements increase the level of funding of technical and vocational education and training in the College.

Abia State governments as a major source of funds for technical and vocational education and training in the College has been playing active role in providing necessary educational inputs for smooth teaching and learning in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu, but short fall in government revenue at both federal and state levels in turn decreases their financial commitments in terms of running TVET institutions in Nigeria. The impact of the short fall in revenue can be seen in the areas of Abia state government is not able to maintain regular payment of staff salaries, the College cannot maintain the equipment and machines supplied by TETFund (Tertiary Education Trust Fund) and inability to supply raw materials and consumables for students’ practicals on yearly basis as well as run the College effectively among others. This scenario clearly shows that Abia State government and indeed ASCETA alone cannot fund vocational and technical education and training properly and hence the need for new ways or evolution of strategies for increasing the level of funding.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to determine the strategies for increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training. Specifically, the study sought to identify:

1. College-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training.
2. Community-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training.
3. Foreign-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the college-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training?
2. What are the community-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training?
3. What are the foreign-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training?

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. Such design enabled researchers to seek the opinion of respondents on the strategies for increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. The study was carried out in schools of business education, vocational education and technical education all in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. The population of the study consisted of 32 technical and vocational lecturers and technologists in schools of business, vocational and technical. There was no sampling for the study as the population was small and manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured validated questionnaire with Cronbach alpha of 0.73. Mean and Standard deviation were used for data analysis. Any item with a mean of 3.50 and above represents a strategy for increasing the funding of vocational and technical education and training. Items on the other hand with mean values of less than 3.50 are not strategies for increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training.

Findings of the Study

Research Question One
What are the college-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and Training?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the College-based Strategies of increasing the funding of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Funding technical and vocational education and training through Alumni Association</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>College-based enterprise (eg. Carpentry workshop)</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Running consultancy services</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Running Satellite Campuses</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Attracting special financial interventions from industrial training fund</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Attracting special financial intervention from tertiary education fund</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Organising skill acquisition programme to unemployed youth</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Liaising with NDE (National Directorate for Employment) for training their students</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Increasing students enrolment in vocational and technical education</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cluster Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.77</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.77</strong></td>
<td><strong>Agreed</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table1 shows the responses on ways the College can increase the funding of vocational and technical education and training. A mean of 3.50 was used as the critical mean in taking decision. Any item that is less than 3.50 cannot be used for enhancing the funding of technical and vocational education and training. In this table, items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 9 have mean response above 3.50 and therefore represents college-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training. Items 4, 5 and 8 on the other hand have mean of less than critical mean of 3.50 and therefore are not college-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training.

Research Question Two
What are the community-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Community-based Strategies of increasing the funding of Vocational and Technical Education and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Funding technical and vocational education and training through
10 Philanthropists’ donation 4.54 0.71 Agreed
11 Foundations (eg. Bill and Melinda Foundation) 4.71 0.54 Agreed
12 Endowment Fund 4.38 0.81 Agreed
13 Corporate social responsibility funding 3.86 1.25 Agreed
14 Faith-based organizations 2.96 1.60 Disagreed
15 Asking local governments to assist in funding vocational and technical education within their area 2.46 1.36 Disagreed
16 Asking wealthy individuals within the community to sponsor the education of vocational and technical students 2.71 1.49 Disagreed
17 Asking wealthy individuals within the community to donate equipment, machines, consumables, cash or build workshops to vocational and technical institutions within their community 2.71 1.63 disagreed
18 Taxing wealthy individuals to fund vocational and technical education within their community 2.04 1.49 Disagreed

Cluster Mean 3.49 0.93 Disagreed

Table 2 reveals the responses of the respondents on ways of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training using community-based strategy. Items 10, 11, 12 and 13 had means above 3.50. This implies that they are community-based strategies of increasing the funding of vocational and technical education and training. Items 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 on the other hand had means of less than 3.50. These items are not therefore community-based strategies for increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training.

Research Question Three
What are the foreign-based strategies of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Foreign-based Strategies of increasing the funding of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Funding technical and vocational education and training through international donor agencies</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nigerian Associations in Diaspora</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Corporate international organizations</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Foreign Governments (sponsoring education of vocational and technical teachers or students)</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Requesting foreign companies (eg. Ford foundation) to train vocational and technical students</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Requesting UNESCO to be conducting periodic capacity building programme to vocational and technical teachers</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Organising international exhibitions where some of the artifacts produced by vocational and technical students will be sold</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cluster Mean</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>Disagreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 reveals that items 19, 20, 21 and 24 had means of 4.08, 3.75, 4.08 and 3.71 respectively that is above 3.50. These items represent strategies for increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training. Items 22, 23 and 25 with means of 2.38, 3.25 and 3.00 are not foreign-based strategies for increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training as they have means less than 3.50.
Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study on college-based strategy of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training in table 1 revealed that the College can through the following ways increase the funding of technical and vocational education and training; the alumni association can fund the programme through any means they deem fit, so that the programme will not collapse. This could be in form of provision of material resources and giving scholarships among others. The College can equally open up workshops where manufactured goods like chairs and window burglary proofs can be sold to the general public. The College can equally run consultancy services, attracts special intervention funds, organise skill acquisition programmes to unemployed youth and finding ways of increasing the enrolment. In support of this claim, Amadi and Johnwest (2016) captured the above as strategies for increasing funding of TVET.

On community-based ways of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training, the study revealed that there are possible ways that community can employ to increase the funding of TVET in their domains. These could come in the following ways; through philanthropists, foundations, corporate social responsibility, wealthy individuals, community donating equipment, materials, consumables, cash or build workshops and classrooms. This supported what (FRN, 2004) stipulated that the local community could help in cash or kind through erecting lecture halls and provision of equipment and facilities. The federal government knowing what education is an expensive social service requiring financial provisions welcomes and encourages the participation of local communities, individuals and other organizations. Offiong, Akpan and Usoro (2013) suggested the use of philanthropists, religious bodies, Alumni associations, clubs and other willing bodies as strategies for increasing funding of TVET in Nigeria.

With regards to table 3 on foreign-based ways of increasing the funding of technical and vocational education and training reveals that foreign-based agencies can increase the funding of TVET through international donor agencies, Nigerian Associations in diaspora, corporate international organizations, requesting UNESCO to be conducting capacity building programme to TVET teachers. This finding is in line with the assertion of Ahadzie (2009) in Kingombe (2011) that resources should be mobilized from both local and international sources for the development of TVET. Shah, Ajimal and Rahman (2004) towed the same line when they opined that there is a need to broaden the financial base of existing Polytechnics and Colleges through budget increases, outsourcing, resource generation, cost recovery measures and external assistance.

Conclusion

Technical and Vocational Education and Training are skill-based programmes and as such require substantial funding in order to achieve their goals and objectives. Funding in the areas of regular payment of teachers salaries, purchase of instructional materials, periodic retraining of teachers and regular maintenance of workshop equipment and machines are critical to students’ acquisition of skills in various areas of technical and vocational education and training. However, the present economic down turn seriously affected the funding of technical and vocational education and training in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. To increase the funding of technical and vocational education and training in Abia State College of Education (Technical), the paper proposed three broad strategies, namely, college-based, community-based and foreign-based strategies. Respondents were asked to respond to items in a questionnaire containing items concerning the three categories of strategies. Data from the questionnaire were then collected and analysed. The findings from the study revealed the strategies that the College can use to increase the funding of technical and vocational education and training. Furthermore, from the findings of the study, it is obvious that the College-based strategies have higher mean scores. This indicates that the College should make frantic efforts using the above strategies to increase their financing not neglecting the other strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:
1. College alumni association should fund some aspects of technical and vocational education and training
2. College should set up college-based enterprise. The money realized from the enterprise should be used to fund technical and vocational education and training
3. College should set up a consultancy service unit. The money realized from the unit should be used to fund technical and vocational education and training
4. College should organize skill acquisition programme to unemployed youth. The money realized from the programme should be used to fund technical and vocational education and training.
5. College should approach Philanthropists for donation in cash or materials to support technical and vocational education and training
6. College should have endowment fund where the money realized from endowment exercise will be used to support technical and vocational education and training
7. College should approach companies to fund technical and vocational education and training as part of their corporate social responsibility.
8. College should approach various faith-based organizations to fund some aspects of vocational and technical education and training
9. College should look for international donor agencies to fund some aspects of technical and vocational education and training
10. Nigerian associations in diaspora should be approached to fund some aspects of technical and vocational education and training
11. UNESCO should be approached to sponsor periodic capacity building programme for vocational and technical teachers

References


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