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Abstract
To meet with rapid technological advancement and the challenges in this global era, Nigeria, being a developing nation needs to strive very well. Vocational and Technical Education has fundamental support or is the backbone for the national development of most nations because of its impact or effect on productivity, human resources and economic development. Developed or highly industrialized nations have recognized Vocational and Technical Education as the transformational and developmental legend for a nation’s technological advancement, economic accomplishment or achievement and development in general. Despite its contribution to national development in general, Nigeria has not given Vocational and Technical Education the desired attention. Apart from explaining the concept of Vocational and Technical Education and outlining its objectives, this paper tends to critically examined some of the issues, challenges and the way forward in revitalizing Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria for sustainable youths and National development. It also explained the relevance of youth in general, and depict or show in a tabular form, some attainable Vocational and Technical Education investments for sustainable Youth and National Development. Recommendations about
ways of enhancing the teaching and learning of Vocational and Technical Education with great curiosity or interest were also proposed.

**Keywords.** Revitalizing, Vocational, Technical, Sustainable, Development.

**Introduction**

Certainly, it is not possible to doubt or contradict the fact that no sane country will jeopardize or endanger the education of her youths and national development. No nation can confidently exhibit good reasons to think of developing or advancing technologically without focusing on trained individuals with relevant skills, attitudes, knowledge and abilities needed to form an effective workforce in every sector of her economy. Throughout the country, there is a growing awareness about the need for vocational and technical education (Uwaifo, 2009). The emphasis placed on sound vocational and technical education programme stems from the fact that the development and advancement of any nation revolves around effective vocational and technical education policy and its implementation (Assoc. Prof. Livinus et al, 2014). Education is the process or art of imparting knowledge, skills and judgement. It is a right of every individual. Okolocha et al (2016) conceived that education unlocks the development of personal and national potentials of citizens of a country or world at large. As a matter of fact, apart from practical skills, vocational and technical education is also intended at developing the attitudes and habits that make the recipient to become very creative, innovative and resourceful individual. According to Balogun (2010), education is the light without which the world will be in darkness. It is a staple requirement for scientific and technological discovery and also the staple requirement for modernity which has made all nations of the world to concur its immense or extremely large priority, even though the level of priority differs from one country to another. Uwaifo (2010) stated that technologists are supposed to solve societal problems in sustainable ways. He opined that for them to do so, they need to be sufficiently inform in concepts of vocational and technical education and the application of its theoretical principles to practical problems.
Regrettably however, as a result of public prejudices against vocational and technical education, that goals suffered a crushing or humiliating defeat which has resulted to the prevalence of poverty, unemployment, hunger, drug abuse, insurgency, violence, armed robbery and other forms of moral faults or bad habits in Nigeria today. It is in this regard that the National Policy on Education (2004) places determined emphasis on the development of vocational and technical education for general development of the nation. However, many of the so-called expatriate engineers who are being paid huge sum of money in foreign currencies to construct the roads and bridges in Nigeria are graduates of vocational and technical colleges, yet, Nigeria is not taking this sector seriously (Kehinde et al, 2015). Professor Reko et al (2016) added that vocational and technical education contributes so much ranging from Electrical/Electronic Technology, Metalwork Technology, Mechanical/Automobile Technology, Building Technology, Woodwork Technology, etc., but unfortunately, despite all the obvious contributions of vocational and technical education, Nigeria has not yet accorded this type of education with the mental focus or attention it deserves. This paper is an attempt to investigates or examine the issues, challenges and the way forward of revitalizing vocational and technical education in Nigeria for sustainable youths and national development.

**Concept of Vocational and Technical Education.**

The National Policy on Education (2004) portrayed or described vocational and technical education as that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. It is a comprehensive term referring to the education process when it involves, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge relating to occupation in various sector of economic and social life.

Assoc. Prof. Livinus et al (2014) conceived that vocational and technical education prepare the learners to enter an understanding of the laws of science and technology as applied to modern design and engineering. The task of vocational and technical education is to impart appropriate skills and competencies to the learners to enable them combat unemployment, poverty and further contribute to social transformation. Vocational and technical education is crucial for technological and economic advancement.
According to Ojimba (2012), vocational and technical education is a form of education whose primary aim is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation and this encompasses field of study like Agricultural Education, Fine and Applied Arts Education, Business Education and Vocational Trade in soap making, hair dressing, computer training among others. Olaitan (2009) viewed vocational and technical education as the type of education designed to prepare skilled personnel at lower level of qualification from one or group of occupations.

**Objectives of Vocational and Technical Education.**
The objectives of vocational and technical education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2004) are:

i. To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub-professional grades.

ii. To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

iii. To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.

iv. To give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies.

v. 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.

vi. To enable our young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

**Relevance of Youth.**
In any society, youth occupy a very important or prominent place. Onyekpe (2007) added that “apart from being the owners and leaders of tomorrow, they outnumber the middle-aged and the aged”. Beside numerical superiority, youth have energy and ideas that are society’s great potentials (Onyekpe 2007). The National Youth Development Policy (2001, p.1) stated that youth are the foundation of a society. Their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation defines the pace of development and security of a nation. Through their creative
talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation found her motivation and because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured. Stella (2010) added that “peace is a prosecutor of development”. Where peace is absent, it implies that there will be no meaningful development that can take place. The National Youth Policy (2001) states that the extent of youth’s “responsible conducts and roles in a society is positively correlated with the development of their country”.

**Vocational and Technical Education and Youths Development.**

According to Okafor (1985), the pursuit of scientific and technological development is global and Nigeria youths needs to be relevant and productive if they are to meaningfully contribute to the country’s development. Making the youths productive and beneficial lies in the competency of the government to implement sound vocational and technical education policy as a member of the committee yearning for development. Okafor (1985) postulated that “Nigeria today is a member of the committee of nations in a world characterized by technological revolution. Unless she wakes up and act in concert contextually, she may be left standing in the platform while the world revolves around the orbit and beyond.

Manilla (2003) added that when youths are given diverse skills that can make them compete conveniently and fully participate in food production, manufacturing and assembling or coupling of parts, installing and maintenance of engines, etc., the likelihood to depend on the government will be reduce and the society at large become more enjoyable in terms of employment opportunities, food production, health, security, etc. Certainly, poor concept of vocational and technical education system yields unskilled youths who in turn contribute to the underdevelopment of the nation.

**Table Showing Some Investments That Can Be Attain Through Revitalizing Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria for Sustainable Youth and National Development.**

The table below depicts or shows some attainable Vocational and Technical Education investments for Sustainable Youth and National Development (K.O. Imarhiagbe et al, 2011).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Types of Investments</th>
<th>Training Needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GSM business (e.g. phone boot, sales and repair of mobile phones, sales of starter pack and phone accessories.)</td>
<td>Vocational business competency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Projects and Books binding.</td>
<td>Vocational competency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Business Centre (Word Processing).</td>
<td>Vocational (Secretarial and computer competency).</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Buying and selling of office machines, equipment and stationaries.</td>
<td>Vocational competency.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Private commercial school establishment.</td>
<td>Vocational business course competency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Book keeping and auditing firm.</td>
<td>Vocational (Accounting competency).</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Establishment of fish farm.</td>
<td>Vocational (Agricultural competency).</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Establishment of piggery farm.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Establishment of poultry farm.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Establishment of grass-cutter and snail rearing agro-business items (food stuff, feed, etc.).</td>
<td>Vocational (Agricultural competency).</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Establishment of day care.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>School and staff canteen.</td>
<td>Vocational (Home Economics course competency).</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Production and distribution of fast food, snacks and drinks.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Undertaking of catering services for occasion.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Establishment of plumbing and pipe fitting company.</td>
<td>Technical (Building Technology course competency).</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Establishment of painting and decoration company.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Establishment of block moulding company, sales of building materials (e.g. cement, tiles, roofing sheets).</td>
<td>Technical (Woodwork Technology course competency).</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Establishment of carpentry workshop (Furniture making, roofing, etc.).</td>
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Establishment of auto-mechanic workshop.
Establishment of auto-spare parts shop.

Establishment of welding workshop.
Establishment of panel-beating and painting workshop.
Establishment of foundry and forging workshop.

Establishment of electronic sales and repair shop.
Establishment of Industrial/domestic wiring services.

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**Issues to consider in revitalizing Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria.**

Notably, vocational and technical education is designed to proffer opportunities for people to increase the value of their general proficiency particularly in relation to their present or future occupation. Thus, the neglect of vocational and technical education is socially injurious as it rubs the nation of contribution the graduates would make on national development (Ojimba, 2012). Nuru (2007) stated that changes in any nation’s economy is required to prepare young people for future jobs of which vocational and technical education have important roles to play. Oranu (2010) observed that trade, removal of key industries, decline of unions, technological and organizational changes are some of the factors that has resulted to the ever rising demand for skills in labour market. The poverty level of the nation has increased to about 70% that many Nigerians now live on less than one dollar a day (Professor Reko Okoye, 2016). According to Diogwu et al (2007), Nigeria’s attention to be redirected towards self-reliant and sustainable means of livelihood which vocational and technical education provides, need to be given immediate attention. Nigeria’s higher institution lacks the tools to give students the skill employers need (Ojimba, 2012). It is evident that Nigeria has quite enormous challenges/problems in vocational and technical education.
Challenges/Problems of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria.

Eze (2013) opined that vocational and technical education cannot contribute greatly to the reduction of abject poverty, hunger and unemployment because it is handicapped by numerous challenges/problems. Among these challenges/problems are;

(i). Inadequate Funding: Certainly, vocational and technical education has made some profitable or useful contributions on Nigeria society. Inadequate funding of vocational and technical institutions has resulted to turning out of half-baked graduates because there is no fund to build and maintain workshops, laboratories or even purchase modern equipment (Agbenta, 1985). Poor or inadequate funding has equally lead to inadequate staffing of vocational and technical education. Even though vocational and technical education is a necessary tool for tackling poverty and unemployment in the society, the government have not fully appreciated its contribution to the national economic development.

(ii). Inadequate Facilities: According to Ojimba (2012), most technical education departments in Nigerian Universities do not have laboratories or workshop space, let alone usable equipment and where they exist, they are grossly inadequate as the workshops only have items or equipment that were provided when the departments were first established, of which most of them are already obsolete or grounded. It is however most surprising to know that most technical education departments still depend on engineering workshops and lecturers to teach technical education concepts in this global era.

(iii). Brain Drain: In the context of this paper, brain drain refers to the movement of vocational and technical education teachers and lecturers who are very much needed for socio economic and technological advancement of the country from one university to another or to other professions including politics, where they feel they will be offer better conditions of service. Akintunde (1989) established or identified five different components of brain drain viz;

a. Experts in academics who moved to industries where they get better pay for their services.

b. Lecturers and students who leave the country to acquire more knowledge and skills but later refuse to return.

c. Lecturers who move from one country for other condition of service.
d. Skill professionals who abandon the practice of technical education in favour of other more lucrative economic activities and political appointments which are not related to their training.
e. Skill professionals, although in their field of training who do not devote their full attention to their jobs because of their efforts to supplement their earnings through other unrelated economic activities.

(iv). Staff Training and Retention: Ordinarily, the training of academic staff is a continuous exercise so that consistent improvement in the quality of their products should be assure or guarantee. The training could be acquire or attain either nationally or internationally. Most often, the national training within the country is cheaper but more resolute or unyielding than the international training because of inadequate facilities, literature and distractions rising from the need to meet the necessary demands. A lot of foreign exchange is needed for international training but there is existence of enabling environment which leads to achievement of success in a record time. The salary and service benefits paid to technical education teachers in Nigeria is about the lowest in the world (Ojimba, 2012). This is why it has always been cumbersome for the trainees to get back to their respective countries after the completion of their study.

(v). Staff Situation: Uwaifo (2005) agreed that it is difficult to get people train to Ph.D. level because academic is not as attractive and commensurate to the effort, commitment and finances put in to acquire it; whereas, a first degree graduate can function well in the industry and politics etc. and earn good money. Many universities across the country are inadequately staffed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In technical education departments especially, the proportion of staff without Ph.D. is more than those with Ph.D.

(vi). Curriculum of Technical Education: The increasing gap between science and technology as a result of the inability of technical education to sufficiently exploit the scientific ideas to elevate technology can be attributed to the low pace of industrialization and technological advancement in Nigeria. This propose the need to completely revise technical education curricula in Nigeria. Ojimba (2012) established or identified six problems associated with the current curricula in Nigeria. They are;

   a. The curricula are based on foreign model which have evolved under ideal condition (staff, equipment, infrastructure, training opportunities, etc.).
b. There is a basic lack of textbooks in the area and most of the available textbooks have foreign backgrounds and often illustrated with examples from outside the local environment.

c. There is usually a shortage of highly competent indigenous teaching and support staff with sufficient practical experience of technology.

d. The curricula are adjudged to be too academic and overloaded with intellectual contents in pure science and mathematics at the expense of basic engineering and technology.

e. Inadequate provision of humanities, social sciences, business management concepts and entrepreneurial skills development. Because of the inadequate preparations of the students for the industry, some employers retain the graduates to make them productive in their organizations.

f. The technology approach follows the conventional method of transferring knowledge across through the lecturer reading out to the students, who would then take down notes. The educational system continues to place considerable value on this method of teaching.

(vii). Lack of Interest of Political Office Holders’/Law makers: Generally, education, vocational and technical education programmes inclusive, has been greatly neglected in Nigeria. Convincing political office holders’/law makers on how they should give much attention to vocational and technical education programmes in resource allocation has become the greatest challenge of technical educators. If this negative attitude and direction are not reversed, Nigeria will continually remain a technologically backward and dependent nation.

(viii). Nigeria Value System: The value system of developed or advanced countries depends on the person’s skills and knowledge and not on the academic degree one has. Those with technical degrees are highly respected in developed or advanced countries. In Nigeria today, special attention or prominence is placed on university qualifications not mindful of whether the holder possesses the required skills and knowledge. For this cause, parents and secondary school leavers prefer university education to technical education (Nworlu Elechi, 2013).

Conclusion.
Like most developing countries, Nigeria needs well-articulated and well implemented vocational and technical education in order to succeed in
technological advancement. Individuals, societies and the nation at large will develop if the roles of vocational and technical education were successfully achieved. For this to be achieve, the government have to discard or eradicate the bad image on vocational and technical education, improve the knowledge of more teachers who have practical skills to impart at the universities, polytechnics and other institutions of learning. This can be achieve by making available, the correct and necessary teaching and learning facilities and resources needed. Investment in vocational and technical education and skills training must be accorded priority attention since no country can favourably compete in emerging global market place with poorly and unskilled labour (Professor Reko et al, 2016).

**Recommendations.**

It is not exaggerating to say that vocational and technical education has fundamental support or is the backbone of a country’s economic growth. In the absence of well-equipped vocational and technical institutions, Nigeria remains underdeveloped. In quest of economic growth or advancement, the nation must invest heavily in education, giving much concern to vocational and technical education. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and teachers in this area should take up the campaign for more funds for vocational and technical education and to launder its image in the society, it has been this way in many societies (Ojimba, 2012). Nigeria should begin to implement policies intended at revitalizing vocational and technical education for effective competition in the emergent or forthcoming global market. The United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has noted that revitalizing this sector is among ways to increase economic opportunities for the youths. Improvement of worker’s skills will result in improvement of their productiveness and attract better pay packages (salaries, allowances and other benefits). The World Bank Policy of 1991 placed much emphasis on the development of skilled labour force as a relevant factor for technological advancement of any nation. Skills of the workforce can develop most effectively and efficiently by involving the private sector, training institutions and employers of labour.

In addition, the following recommendations were also proposed;
❖ The government should make policies that are favourable to vocational and technical education such that sufficient resources are distributed or allocated to vocational and technical education.

❖ Industries, communities, labour unions and influential individuals should be encouraged to assist generously for the advancement of vocational and technical education.

❖ Certificate segregation or dichotomy should be abolish or cancel by employers in the labour market as this discourages students to attend vocational and technical institution and go for acquiring university degrees.

❖ Necessary vocational and technical training should be given to youths, since this will keep them engage or occupy, hence reducing the alarming rate of crime.

❖ Individuals in the field of vocational and technical education should be given scholarships and grants so as to assist the programme of vocational and technical education to advance academically and also to meet the target of sustainable youths.

❖ Vocational and technical education’s curricula should be reviewed so as to meet the needs and demands of the labour market.

❖ Regular accreditation exercise should be carried out in Technical Colleges so as to check the declining situations in our Technical Colleges.

❖ There is need for frequent organization of Career Talks (Seminars or Workshops) for learners. Parents should also be persuaded or convinced to stop deciding Careers or Professions for their children.

References.


