

Comparative Analysis of Vocational and Technical Education at the Senior Secondary School Level in Nigeria and United Kingdom

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Abstract. This paper is a comparative study of vocational and technical education at the Secondary School Level in Nigeria and United Kingdom. Thus it is interested in comparing this type of education in the two countries. The interest is important because vocational and technical education helps in the socio-economic and political development of individuals and the society. Nigeria is a former colony of Britain. Nigeria professes policy of vocational and technical education in its policy on education. United Kingdom also professes policy of vocational and technical education in its policy on education. Yet while Nigeria has less progress in socio-economic and political development, United Kingdom has great socio-economic and political development. Why are Nigeria and Britain not making about the same level of progress in this context? This is why this study is important. The research method used is comparative analysis with emphasis on Historical approach in Comparative Education Studies. Policies, journals, reports, educational magazines and related official educational websites are used for the content analysis in Historical approach. It was found that Nigerian vocational and technical education at the Secondary School Level achieves less than the education in the United Kingdom. This is because the emphasis on the education in the United Kingdom goes up to the end of Senior Secondary School education. Thus it is recommended that Nigeria pursues free secondary education up to the end of senior

secondary school level whereby vocational and technical education would be free up to the end of senior secondary school level.

Keywords: Comparative Education study, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Historical approach, Vocational and Technical Education.

1. Introduction

This study is interested in a comparative analysis of Vocational and Technical Education at the Senior Secondary School Level in Nigeria and United Kingdom. This is because vocational and technical education helps nations in socio-economic and political development. Moreover nations that emphasise vocational and technical education up to the end of Senior Secondary School education largely have more socio-economic and political development in the world than the nations that do not have such emphasis. In addition Nigeria and the United Kingdom have a lot of things in common. Nigeria was a former colony of Britain; it gained independence from Britain in 1960.

Nigeria patterned its education after that of Britain for many years after independence before incorporating the features of American education lately. So it would be expected that if British education, particularly vocational and technical education, could contribute to the development of the United Kingdom, Nigerian education which is derived largely from British

education should also enable remarkable development in Nigeria.

However although British education enables great vocational and technological development in the United Kingdom, the same type of education practised in Nigeria could not achieve the same developmental results. Since education helps in the development of individuals and the society it would be important to find out what the peculiarities of vocational and technological education in the United Kingdom are whereby the vocational and technological education in the United Kingdom enables greater achievement than the vocational and technological education in Nigeria.

Moreover it would be important to find out what the peculiarities of vocational and technical education in Nigeria are whereby the education has less achievement in equipping the recipients with great socio-economic and political abilities in Nigeria. The examination of the peculiarities would provide data about the details and what could be done to improve upon this type of education in Nigeria for greater achievement of individuals and the society. There may also be some aspects of Nigerian education that could be beneficial for certain aspects of educational development of the United Kingdom. All these are expected to be looked into in this study.

Thus this study is a comparative study of education (particularly vocational and technical education) at the secondary school level. It involves the study of Nigeria and the United Kingdom in this context, with particular focus on certain factors of vocational and technical education influencing great achievement of the education in the society.

The factors include:

- i. the national policy on education, particularly in the context of:
 - (a) philosophy and objectives of vocational and technical education at the secondary school level.
 - (b) curriculum content of vocational and technical education at the secondary school level

(c) administration and funding of vocational and technical education at the secondary school level; and finally

- ii. historical, economic, political, and cultural factors that could affect the realistic pursuit of the philosophy, curriculum, administration and funding of the education (i.e. the realistic pursuit of a, b, and c, above).

The historical, economic, political and cultural factors are important because if the philosophy (for instance) is good and the political will of the people to pursue the philosophy realistically is weak the educational achievement would be weak; similarly if the philosophy is good and the political will of the people to pursue the philosophy realistically is strong the educational achievement is likely to be strong and remarkable.

Thus this study would examine the factors listed in (i) a – c above, and (ii) above, for the comparative study of the vocational and technical education at the secondary school level in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. By so doing the peculiarities of this type of education in Nigeria and the United Kingdom can be highlighted, and the levels of educational and societal achievements can be known; finally what can be done to encourage achievement in less achieving society can be recommended.

2. Research Method

The nature of the research indicates comparative study of education in two countries: Nigeria and the United Kingdom. The study focuses on the comparison of vocational and technical education at the Senior Secondary School Level in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Therefore the research method involves comparative education research method. This would include comparative analysis of the philosophy and objectives, curriculum content, administration and funding of education in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. It would also include analysis of the factors that could affect the realistic pursuit of the philosophy, curriculum, administration and funding of the education in both countries. These factors include: historical, economic, political, and cultural factors.

The research method would help in analysing the relative strength, advantage or value of one country's education over another, with the view to make recommendation for better achievement in the relatively less achieving country.

The research method would feature the use of documents such as reports, policies, journals, educational magazines, reference books, and related data from official websites in the collection of data. These data would be analysed using historical approach in comparative education. Historical approach helps to know the past, in order to understand the present better, and project for better future achievement; by hinting on those factors which may be more useful. The historical approach in comparative education emphasises content analysis as would be found in subsequent sections of this paper.

3. Secondary Education

In Nigeria secondary education is the education students receive immediately after primary education and before tertiary education. In Nigeria it takes place in the last three years of Basic education and in the three years of senior secondary school education. In United Kingdom (UK) it takes place in the three years of Key stage 3, two years of Key stage 4, and optional two years of advanced level.

4. An Examination of the Philosophy and Objectives of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria and United Kingdom

According to Nigerian National Open University (NOUN) (2015:8), the philosophy of Technical and Vocational Education is basically to enhance human dignity and enthrone work and labour by making individuals acquire and/or develop enough saleable and employable skills, competencies, attitudes as well as knowledge to enable them gain and maintain basic employment or self-reliance for comfortable living. In Nigeria, vocational and technical education is believed to be:

- an integral part of general education;

- a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work;
- an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship;
- an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development;
- a method of alleviating poverty (FRN, 2004:19; 2013:36, 37).

Vocational and technical education throughout the world has one main aim: producing graduates who would have opportunities of securing jobs that are well-paid for, and or creating employment for themselves by using their acquired skills (Adogpa, 2015:1-5). As part of goals of education in Nigeria, vocational and technical education intends to promote functional education for skill acquisition, job creation and poverty reduction (FRN, 2013:14, 15). The goals of vocational and technical education as stated in the National Policy on Education are as follows (FRN 2013:36)

- To provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels;
- To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;
- To give training and impart the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically.

The philosophy of vocational and technical education in the United Kingdom is based on the ideology to develop manpower (Agbulu & Olaitan, 2002:8).

The objective of secondary education in the United Kingdom is to:

- develop scientific aptitude;
- expand the vocational skill and achievement in the knowledge of language.

5. Structure

Presently, Nigeria has 1-6-3-3-4 system of education, comprising the basic education years

(1 year of kindergarten, 6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary education), 3 years of senior secondary education and 4 years and above of tertiary education (FRN, 2013:18). Vocational and technical education is structured to be alone, or as part of general education, and is practised according to the following schemes of education.

- Pre-vocational (practised as part of general education at the junior secondary school level);
- Vocational (practised as part of general education at the senior secondary school level);
- Technical colleges (practised alone at the senior secondary school level);
- College of Education (Technical)
- Polytechnic and
- Universities (Odu, 2011:53).

The structure of vocational and technical education is slightly different in the United Kingdom (UK). This is because senior secondary education in the UK covers a period of two years followed by two years of advanced learning. Moreover there is little variation in the system of education in UK as Scotland has one year less in secondary education than Northern Ireland, Wales and England. Besides, the senior secondary school known as Key Stage 4 in Northern Ireland, Wales, England constitute S3 and S4 in Scotland (Understanding the UK education, 2007; Technical vocational education ...in UK, 2017).

6. An Examination of the Curriculum of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria and United Kingdom

The curriculum of Vocational and Technical education at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria consists of general education, theory and related courses, workshop practice, industrial training / production work, and entrepreneurial training (comprising of thirty eight vocational and technical courses) (FRN, 2013:31-37).

The curriculum of Vocational and Technical education in the United Kingdom, is structured in such a way that both the adult and young

adults can fully participate in the education process. However, there is a little distinction between those going on to higher education and those who just want a course and are able to profit by it (Agbulu & Olaitan, 2002:15).

7. An Examination of Administration and Funding of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria and United Kingdom

In Nigeria, most vocational and technical education institutions are government establishments from the onset, and are mainly controlled and administered by the government. Only few vocational and technical education institutions are privately owned. The government helps in building and supply of educational facilities: including building of classrooms, laboratories and workshops. It also helps in building and supply of auxiliary facilities such as students' halls, teachers' quarters, recreation and sports facilities. Besides, it provides the expatriates and local staff administrative expenses, students' maintenance allowances, and building maintenance (Agbulu & Olaitan, 2002:39). Secondary level vocational and technical education is controlled by the Ministry of Education. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) controls the education in polytechnics and monotchnics. The Federal government also established Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) to assist in the development of technological education in the country (Offiong, Akpan & Usoro, 2013:152).

The Nigerian government is interested in spending a lot of money on vocational and technical education "...a greater proportion of education expenditure shall continue to be devoted to vocational education at federal and state levels" (FRN, 2004:23). In reality however for many years vocational and technical education has not been receiving the kind of attention it deserves in terms of funding. Nevertheless, the current political dispensation under President Mohammadu Buhari has made robust provision, including working with the private sector and State Governments, to establish and operate model technical and

vocational education institutes (Buhari, 2016:2, 3, 45).

In the United Kingdom there is partnership in the administration of vocational and technical education. This aspect of education is controlled by the Department of Education and Science together with the Local Authorities. There is a partnership system of administration that can be seen in the establishment of industrial training board in 1964 in agreement with technician and business education council in 1973 (Agbulu and Olaitan, 2002:19).

In the United Kingdom, the remuneration and salary of teachers and instructors of vocational and technical education are responsibility of the government while the well-to-do and philanthropists could assist in the provision of facilities and workshops. The parents also contribute to certain extent (Agbulu and Olaitan, 2002:20).

8. An Examination of the Historical, Economic, Political and Cultural Factors that Could Affect the Realistic Pursuit of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria and the United Kingdom

8.1 Historical Factors

Daso (2013:12) stated that in Nigeria, western education made Nigeria to have less interest in Nigerian indigenous vocational and technical education. Moreover the government over the years has laid more emphasis on western technology education than on indigenous technology education. This is probably because of the immense contribution of western science and technology to the development of economy and socio-political realities in the world over the years.

However if Nigeria does not pay more attention to its indigenous technology it might not be able to get the good aspects of the technology (which might even sometimes be better than certain western technology) for the development of the socio-economic milieu in Nigeria.

In the United Kingdom, vocational and technical education could be traced back to the 19th century when two religious bodies, the National Society (Church of England) and the British and foreign School society, established some elementary schools for boys and girls where the children were taught various skills in different trades. This system was controlled by teachers and monitors. During the two world wars in the 20th century, soldiers and youth were recruited and trained in various technologies and skills. These factors affected positively vocational and technical education in the United Kingdom. The education proved to be very relevant for socio-economic and political development. It continues to be very relevant up till today.

8.2 Economic Factors

Nigeria has many unemployed graduates, who do not possess relevant employable, and entrepreneurial skills needed in the society for socio-economic and political development. Moreover, Nigeria has remained economically dependent on the economically viable nations like the United States of America, United Kingdom, China, India, Japan, and Germany. Nigerian education therefore needs realistic emphasis on vocational and technological education to get out of the unemployment society to that of gainfully employed society. Various developed nations have witnessed industrial revolution whereby they get their vocational education priorities right. Nigeria needs to be more serious about the relevance of vocational and technological education too, for societal development.

There is low level unemployment in the United Kingdom because the relevant skills taught the students during the secondary school education help them to be vocationally resourceful immediately after the secondary school education.

8.3 Political Factors

Over the years various political dispensations have various emphasis on vocational and technical education in Nigeria. This affects,

usually adversely, the realistic pursuit of vocational and technical education in Nigeria. Consequently the education suffers and so is employment propensity of Nigerian students. So the political leaders need to consistently give vocational and technical education the serious attention that it deserves. In the United Kingdom the situation is largely different because education has traditionally been the main focus of all governments for national development. Moreover governance is done based on the interest of the people. Thus when students leave school they have the propensity to have gainful employment. This helps the development of the individual and the society.

8.4 Cultural Factors

Generally, there is a great influence of foreign culture on Nigerian education (especially British and American cultures) and this makes Nigerian education to de-emphasise Nigerian culture in the vocational and technical education. This is probably because the culture of the developed nations features more in the technological development of the world today. However if Nigeria does not look inward it might not be able to detect what is good in its culture and utilise it for educational and societal development.

As for the United Kingdom its education generally, and its vocational and technical education particularly rank among the best in the world, so its education does not submit unduly to the influence of other peoples' culture. Besides, while Nigerian culture appears to look down on Nigerian indigenous technology, the culture of United Kingdom does not look down on the technology of the citizens of United Kingdom.

9. Conclusion

Vocational and technical education helps in socio-economic and political development of any nation. Therefore, this education needs to be pursued vigorously in Nigeria as it is done in the United Kingdom. The philosophy and objectives need to be carefully implemented and the curriculum content need to be considered with

seriousness. Moreover the administration and funding of the education need to reflect great desire by the government and the people to have the students employed after schooling in vocations that would enhance their development and the development of the society. The United Kingdom pursues the education with great vigour and achieves greatly in vocational and technical dimensions. Nigeria can do the same for similar development.

10. Recommendations

Vocational and Technical Education is good for the socio-economic and political development of individuals and the society. So the government and the people of Nigeria should pursue the education at the secondary school level with great vigour for the development of the nation.

The philosophy and objectives of the education in Nigeria appear to be good, so also is the curriculum content. But the administration and the funding are not good enough. So for the students to have robust vocational and technical education, the government and the people have to pursue the administration and funding of the education more seriously in Nigeria. The education should be funded freely up to the end senior secondary school.

Moreover the culture of disregard for indigenous technology should be discontinued, such that good aspects of Nigerian indigenous technology are taught and utilised for socio-economic and political development as it is done in developed nations.

Finally the current political dispensation of President Buhari in Nigeria appears to be interested in the encouragement of vocational and technological education (Buhari, 2016:2, 3, 45). It is recommended that the government continues in this effort and that subsequent governments regard vocational and technical education as a serious matter. The United Kingdom has a great cultural disposition for education and more education. Nigeria can assume the same disposition for great societal development.

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