

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) AND THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The rising level of unemployment among youth is one of the major problems facing the Nigerian economy today. This has resulted into increased social vices such as kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, internet fraud and other socially immoral behavior, particularly among the youth in the country. Many studies have argued that technical and vocational education and training is a solution to the problem of unemployment, especially among the youth. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the role of technical, vocational education and training (TVET) in reducing the rising trend of unemployment in Nigeria. The study adopted Descriptive statistics to analyze data obtained via survey of 120 respondents drawn from the sample population of the study area. The findings from the study revealed that technical and vocational education and training is a key to reducing the upward trend of unemployment in Nigeria. The study recommended that the Federal government should give priority to technical schools such as the polytechnic and provide them with adequate tools needed to train youth with vocational skills.

Keywords: Technical, Vocational, Education, Unemployment, Youth, Training

Introduction

Unemployment has been generally agreed as one of the major problems of Nigeria today leading to increased social vices such as militancy, kidnappings, banditry, armed robbery, internet fraud and other socially immoral behaviors, particularly among the youth of the country. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2nd quarter data report 2020, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria rose from 23.4% in 2019 to 27.1% in the second quarter of 2020 and the unemployment rate among youth rose from 29.7% in 2018 to 34.9% in the 2nd quarter of 2020. This indicates that about 21.7 million Nigerians remain unemployed out of which about 7.6 million were youth of ages between 15-34 years. This has come when the economy has been hit by the impact of the coronavirus and depleting oil revenue. The situation has not only affected the security of life of the people but also retarded the economic growth potential of the country. It is worrisome that despite the educational access and attainment in Nigeria over the past decade, youth unemployment rates is increasing. However, the federal Government tried to address the problem of unemployment among youth in Nigeria through various employment generation programs such as the N-power, N-build, and the Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) programs to mention a few. The aim was to reduce unemployment among youth and to foster productivity through skills development and valuable knowledge sharing and acquisition for economic growth and social development. The impact has not been felt much in the economy.

Raheem and Ayika (2019) attributed the reason for the rising unemployment rate among youth to the growing mismatch between supply and demand for skills, which disproportionately affecting young people. They argued that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) should be recognized as a potential tool to reduce the rate of unemployment in Nigeria. This is because it equips people not only with knowledge and skills but also provides a broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are now recognized as indispensable for meaningful participation in the work of life. It also gives people the opportunity to acquire the relevant skills needed by employers, as well as the entrepreneurial skills that can enable them to be self-employed after graduation.

In the recent, many countries have realized that technical and vocational education can help people get into trades such as carpentry, welding and electronics. TVET is considered one of the foremost ways that education can help the people and societies in developing countries out of poverty (Hoslen, 2019). This can also help to reduce the upward trend of the problem of unemployment among the youth. However, poor enrolments into technical schools compared to conventional studies still persist in Nigeria. This may be due to the poor attitudes of students towards acquiring vocational skills such as welding, carpentry, hair dressing to mention but a few.

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the role of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) towards reducing the upward trend of unemployment among youth in Nigeria., with a view to ascertain whether Technical and vocational education and Training (TVET) will give students the opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge that will either make them self-employed after graduation or increasing their chance for gainful employment.

The study is of significant importance as it examines one of the major problems of the Nigerian economy, the problem of rising level of unemployment among the youth. It identifies the place of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a tool to reducing the rising level of unemployment among youth. It also identifies the reasons for the low enrolment of students into technical education in Nigeria. The outcome from the study would serve as a guide to policy makers in formulating policy towards repositioning technical education, to produce graduates who are employers of labour rather than job seekers.

In an attempt to achieve this objective, the work is divided into five sections with this introduction being section 1, followed by section 2 which is the literature review, and section 3 provides the methodology of the study. Section 4 gives the discussion of the results and lastly section 5 provides the conclusion and recommendation of the study.

Literature Review

According to Akanbi (2017), the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2007) defines Vocational education as that education that has a specific relation to working life and is similar but not identical with the concept of training (i.e vocational training) which focuses on learning specific skills that are required in a particular work place. Olajide (2015) cites the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) where it stated that Technical and vocational education refers to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge.

Raheem and Ayika (2019) defined Technical and Vocational Education as that form of education which is usually designed to equip the learners with skills for gainful employment. According to the federal government of Nigeria, the goals of the technical education is to provides trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology, and vocational skills necessary for individuals to be self-reliant economically.

There are a lot of studies on the role of technical education in reducing unemployment among youth. For instance, Raheem and Ayika (2019) studied the role of Technical Vocational Education and Training in reducing the rate of unemployment among youth in Nigeria. The study adopted conceptual approach to reveal how TVET can play a role in reducing unemployment in Nigeria. Information was gathered from internet source and other relevant documents. The study argued that despite the fact that the Nigerian government had initiated several youth empowerment programs, there is still evidence of a substantial number of youth that lack work skills-which often results to unemployment. The findings from the literature revealed that TVET could be a vitally needed solution to reducing the unemployment in Nigeria. However, the study failed to provide scientific approach to support the argument that TVET has the potential to reducing unemployment in Nigeria. Audu et. al.(2013) access the potency of Technical Vocational Education as a tool to fighting youth unemployment in Nigeria. The study identified the causes of unemployment among youth in Nigeria to include; increasing population, dwindling industrial growth, lack of relevant skills required among youth required by employers as well as for self-employment, poor attitudes towards acquiring vocational skills such as carpentry, welding, and so on. The conclusion of the study was that technical and vocational education will lead to wealth creation and employment generation in Nigeria. Emmanuel (2014) argued that the neglect of technical and vocational education have contributed to high level of unemployment and rising poverty among the youth in Nigeria. This provides a reason why many of them lack the basic job skills. The study further argued that Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) can enable people to acquire relevant skills that lead to self-employment and promote their well-being. In another study, Maduka (2015) attributed the rising unemployment level among youth to poor educational policy which give rise to negative impression on technical and vocational education. As a results, the youth graduates from various institutions without the needed skills or competencies that would enable them employable in the labour market. In line with Emanuel (2015), (Audu et.al,(2013) and (Raheem and Ayika, 2019) the study also give nod to the assertion that Technical and Vocational education can be a solution to the problem of unemployment among youth in Nigeria. however, Olajide (2015) noted that the original intention of TVET was to provide relevant skills to the workforce in Nigeria but the implementation of the programme has not yielded the desired expectation due to so many factors which include;

wide disconnection between the institutions and the industry, incessant strike, inadequate regulatory and monitoring activities and poor funding for technical education.

Methodology

This study was carried out in Ilaro town, Yewa South Local Government area of Ogun state. The local government area shares boundaries with Ewekoro, Ipokia, and Yewa North local government areas of Ogun state. The town has a total population of 46,999. The target population for this study is final year students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro who are aspiring to either further their studies, start their own business or engaged in a gainful employment. Given the situation of the closure of the school by the Federal Government as a measure to stop the spread of Covid-19, a random sampling technique was adopted. This involved the random selection of 120 respondents (students) that were residing around the town. The respondents were interviewed via the use of questionnaires administered to them.

The perception of respondents about how TVET helps in reducing unemployment among youth and reasons for low enrolment of students into technical schools were measured on a five-point Likert of “strongly agree”, “agree”, “undecided”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagreed”. Values were assigned to each category as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. The questionnaire was validated before use for the study. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) is used to measure the reliability between items in the scale. The scale reliability coefficient is expected to be greater than 70% for the scale to be considered reliable.

The data collected were processed and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, tables, and percentages to show the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The Mean value of less than 1.5 is rejected for the analysis, while a mean value above 1.5 should be accepted. The data were subjected to reliability test using the Cronbach’s Alpha. The reliability coefficient obtained from the Cronbach’s coefficients were greater than 70%. This indicates that the sets of the data were statistically reliable.

Data Presentation and Results Analysis

Data Presentation

The data presentation for this research work is divided into two sections; the demographical data which captured the first section of the structured questionnaire, presented in tables of frequency for categorical data (gender, age, and school) using STATA software, version 13.

Distribution of Biological Data of the Respondents

Table 1 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 Years and Below	2	1.16
19-24 Years	88	81.67
25-29 Years	9	7.50
30 Years and Above	11	9.19
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The table above shows that only 1.16 percent of the respondents were below 18 years. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 19-24 years (81.67%), 25-29 years (7.5%), and only 9.19 percent of the respondents were above 30 years. The average age of the respondents (i.e mean age) is 21.5 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were in the category of the labour force.

Table 2 GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	70	58.33
Female	50	41.67

Total	120	100
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Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The table revealed that 58.33 percent of the respondents were male, while the remaining 41.67 were female. This indicates that there is no significance difference as regards the gender of respondent in Tertiary School enrollment in the Southern part of the country.

Table 3 SCHOOL DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

School	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School of Communication	17	14.17
Engineering	16	13.33
Environmental Studies	15	12.50
Management Studies	46	38.33
Pure & Applied Science	26	21.67
Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The table above which provides a summary of the descriptive statistics of the respondents according to their school revealed that the school of Management studies has the largest number of students at 38.33%, followed by the school of Pure and Applied science (21.67), and school of Communication (14.17). While the school of Engineering and the school of Environmental having the smallest number of students as 13.33% and 12.5% respectively.

Table 4 Technical, Vocational Education and Training helps to Reduce Unemployment among Youth.

Response Item	SA	A	U	DA	SD	Mean Value	Remark
TVET equips students with skills that enable them become self-employed after graduation	57.50	19.17	11.65	5.00	6.67	1.841667	Accepted
TVET promotes students attitude towards self-employment	50.0	15.00	11.67	18.33	5.00	2.133333	Accepted
TVET gives students opportunity to acquire relevant skills for job	46.67	14.17	26.67	8.33	4.17	2.091667	Accepted
TVET helps to build entrepreneurship spirit among students	55.00	10.00	19.17	11.67	4.17	2.125813	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The results present on the table 4 above revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that Technical, vocational education and training equips the students with skills that enable them become self-employed after graduation as well as given them the opportunity to acquire relevant skills for job employment. The respondents also agreed that TVET promotes students attitudes towards self-employment and helps to build their entrepreneurial spirit. This provides a support to the argument of Raheem and Ayika (2019), Audu et.al (2013) and Emmanuel (2014) that Technical, vocational education and training (TVET) is a vital tool to fighting against unemployment among the youth in Nigeria.

Table 5 Challenges for poor enrolment into TVET

Response Item	SA	A	U	DA	SD	Mean Value	Remark
Poor attitude towards acquiring vocational skills such as carpentry, Welding and hair dressing	68.33	12.50	5.83	5.83	7.50	1.7166	Accepted
Aspiration towards white-collar jobs	56.67	6.67	7.50	23.33	5.83	2.1555	Accepted
Poor attitude towards graduates of non-formal education	49.17	25.00	10.83	8.33	6.67	1.983333	Accepted
Societal perception on graduates of technical schools	71.67	6.67	5.83	5.00	10.83	1.766667	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The results on the table 4.13 above revealed that poor attitudes towards acquiring vocational skills and societal perception on graduates of technical courses and non-formal education are some of the reasons for low enrolment of students into technical schools in Nigeria. This also supports the view of Maduka (2015) who argued that negative impression about technical education is one of the major causes of the rising level of unemployment among youth in Nigeria. The findings also revealed that societal perception on graduates of technical school contributed to the reasons for low enrolment of students in Technical Schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research work examines the role of technical, vocational education and training (TVET) towards reducing the rising level of unemployment among youth in Nigeria. Effort had been made to investigate the extent to which technical and vocational education can be used as a tool to tackle the problem of unemployment among the Nigerian youth. The study discovered that TVET provides students with skills that enable them to become self-employed after graduation. It also promotes their entrepreneurial spirit that can make them employers of labour rather than being job-seekers after their graduation. This will help in reducing the upward trend of the youth unemployment in the country. On this note, the study recommended that the Federal government should give priority to technical schools such as the polytechnic and provide them with adequate tools needed to train youth with vocational skills.

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