

A REVIEW OF TVET AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR ERADICATING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA: THE SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

Currently, Nigeria's youth unemployment ratio is extremely high, resulting in negative psychological, social, vocational, and economic consequences. The major objective of this paper is to critically examine the pivotal role of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria especially as a panacea to the problems of youth unemployment. The paper also adopted a secondary data based theoretical analytic approach to interrogate the multi-layered problems that are associated with youth unemployment in Nigeria and it also highlighted the importance and value of the role of technical and vocation training (TVET) for resolving these challenges. The paper also made use of various literature materials to assess the results of the findings of previous publications on the topic with a view to expose some of the current trends and information on the problem in order to generate new perspectives and also offer some proactive solutions and recommendations. The paper might possibly serve as a forerunner to more in-depth future studies on the topic

Keywords: Technical Vocational Training, Youth Unemployment, Ways forward.

Introduction

With a current population of 206.1 million, Nigeria is Africa's and the world's most populous country (Worldometer 2020). In addition, Nigeria is also the world's eighth biggest oil producer, yet the country has the highest population of impoverished and jobless people in Sub-Saharan Africa and ranks 158th on the global human development index. There is widespread high income inequality, which has resulted in the nation's wealth being concentrated in the hands of a few individuals (ActionAid Nigeria, 2009).

Nigeria also has Africa's second biggest economy, with a nominal GDP of \$207.11 billion and a per capita income of \$1,401. As impressive as these statistics may appear, youth unemployment has long been one of the country's biggest problems. One of Nigeria's most pressing socioeconomic challenges is the high rate of unemployment and underemployment (Salami, 2011). While the labour market expands, with a growing percentage of young people, job opportunities remains insufficient to absorb newcomers to the market.

Furthermore, Nigerian youth are more likely to be employed in low-quality occupations, underemployed, working long hours for low income, undertaking risky tasks, or receiving only short-term and/or informal work arrangements. The abysmal level of youth employment has generated multitude of socioeconomic, political, and moral ramifications including a very high level of poverty across the country. Despite major

advances in GDP development in recent years, the proportion of the entire population living below the \$1 per day criterion of 46% is greater now than it was in the 1980s and 1990s Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa (2012).

Statement of Problem

The major aim of this paper is to identify and interrogate the various gaps that has continue to hinder the expeditious attainment of some of the laudable objectives of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria.

Some of the identifiable problems that currently act as barriers to the attainment of the goals of TVET in Nigeria include poor financing, inadequate infrastructure, societal disregard for skills training, inadequate training of TVET teachers and low institutional and personnel capability. These factors impede the execution of TVET programs in Nigeria significantly. In addition, TVET instructors, technicians, and craftsmen who possess the expertise of industrial and technical knowledge are few and not available in schools owing to poor remuneration occasioned by inadequate funding of Nigeria's education sector and so leading to graduates deprived of necessary TVET skills to become self-reliance and self-employed.

Another serious difficulty confronting the success of TVET programs in Nigeria is the rapid drop in government investment in higher education in comparison to the growth in enrolment in the higher education level. In addition, many academic institutions in Nigeria, according to Ajie (2011), have several infrastructural challenges, including inadequate learning space and lack of functioning learning facilities while constraints on available funds also limits various government's ability to effectively manage TVET program's broad scope (Oshewolo, 2010).

In addition, the societal disregard for skills training and acquisition is another factor militating against the implementation of TVET programmes in Nigeria. Fluitman (2005) argued that TVET has remained in the backwaters of development as a result of Nigeria's government focus on other developmental agenda and goals.

Objectives of the study

The major objectives of this paper are to amongst others, critically examine the pivotal role of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria especially as a panacea to the problems of youth unemployment. In addition, Nigeria's educational system needed to be completely redesigned. Investment in technical and vocational education and skill acquisition by the youth must be given premium priority. Since no nation can successfully compete in the fast developing global market with low-quality, unskilled labour force then it behooves the Nigerian government at all levels to pay better attention to the development of TVET for the Nigerian youth with a view of eradicating youth unemployment and poverty across the country.

Literature Review

Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) is a type of education that exposes students at various levels of education to the learning of tangible skills that may be used to generate income (Akerlele, 2007). Dike (2009) defines TVE as the component of education that leads to the learning of skills as well as fundamental scientific knowledge. Maclean and Wilson (2009) define it as "a structured program of courses and learning experiences that begins with career exploration and supports fundamental academic and life skills as well

as encourages high academic standards and leadership qualities necessary preparation for industry-defined jobs.

Technical and Vocational Education “is 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 sectors of economic and social life talents” (National Policy on Education, 2004).

TVET and the Challenges of Unemployment in Nigeria

Unemployment is a complicated phenomenon. It is easy to perceive but difficult to define. In general, unemployment may indicate a lack of work. Typically, the phrase "unemployment" refers to a state of being jobless. Unemployment is a condition that occurs when persons who are eager and competent of working are unable to find acceptable paid work (Emeh et al., 2012).

Unemployment has been characterized as a situation in which persons who are prepared to work at a regular wage rate are unable to find work. It is one of the problems that any responsible government is supposed to monitor and control. The greater an economy's unemployment rate, the higher its poverty rate and attendant welfare concerns. Unemployment is one of the developmental challenges that most emerging economies confront in the 21st century (Patterson et al., 2006). Nigeria is not immune to this occurrence.

Also, unemployment is a global trend, although it is more prevalent in emerging nations, with associated social, economic, political, and psychological consequences. As a result, youth unemployment in any country is a warning sign of far more complex problems for the nation (Okafor, 2011).

Unemployment in Nigeria may be divided into two groups: the older jobless, who lost their jobs due to retrenchment, redundancy, or insolvency, and the younger unemployed, the majority of who have never worked (Oyebade, 2003).

Factors Responsible for Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

Technical education aims are wasted as a result of the employment of inexperienced and unqualified technical teachers who reduce academic standards (Agbionu, 2003).

Brain Drain: This is the movement of technical lecturers, who are vital to Nigeria's socioeconomic and technological growth, from one university to another or to other professions where they believe they will have better working circumstances. About 45% of all Nigerian academic staff, including technical instructors, have reportedly departed the country over time (Bassi 2004).

Staff Development and Retention: Academic staff members are continuously trained to guarantee that the caliber of their output improves over time. They also have the option of receiving training locally or abroad. Local training within Nigeria is typically less expensive than training abroad, but more difficult due to substandard facilities, limited literature, and distractions. More frustrating is the fact that Nigerian technical education instructors get some of the lowest salaries and benefits in the world (Ojimba, 2012).

Consequences of Unemployment

Unemployment among young people has a variety of negative psychological, social, vocational, and financial consequences (Shadare & Tunde, 2012). Unemployment has major consequences for both their

current living situations and their attitude toward the future, as well as for the society of which they are a part.

People who are unemployed may feel insignificant and inadequate. With the constant sensation that they are rejected by the rest of society, youngsters may resort to illegal activity and violence. According to Bennel (Ajaegbu, 2012), urban society is becoming increasingly criminalized, particularly with the growth of young gangs.

Unemployment has created a mass of idle hands, and some of them have decided to punish the society that fails to provide them with a means of living and dignity by robbing its citizens of their property at gunpoint (Ideyi, 2010). The police are unable to function properly because they are overburdened by the volume of cases that await them on a daily basis, and the issue is exacerbated by the employment of outmoded tools that are no match for the latest sophisticated weaponry employed by criminals (Ideyi, 2010).

In addition, unemployment has also increased the number of disgruntled youngsters, resulting in the development of gangs and Almajiris who target the very society that has alienated them (Ibrahim, 2006). In a poll on the socioeconomic features of Nigeria's armed militant organizations, the Bakassi Boys, O'odua People's Congress (OPC), and Egbesu Boys were made up of youngsters aged 16 to 17 years (40 percent), 18 to 19 years (10 percent), 20 to 21 years (20 percent), and 20 to 23 years (20 percent) (20 percent). Approximately 60% of them were jobless (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010).

Furthermore, unemployed youths have been utilized as local militants in attacks, bombings, vandalism, and destruction of oil pipelines, lives, and property in Nigeria's Niger Delta area (Gilbert, 2010; Ojatorotu, 2010). For more than a decade, this gang of adolescents has comprised the majority of terrorists in the regions, harassing and kidnapping both expatriate and local oil employees and demanding enormous ransoms (Epelle, 2010).

It is worth noting that no reasonable or rational investor would wish to invest in a country marked by instability, confusion, and uncertainty. These challenges, if left unchecked, would exacerbate the problems of youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Methodology

This paper adopted a secondary data based theoretical analytic approach to interrogate the multi-layered problems that are associated with youth unemployment in Nigeria and it also highlighted the importance and value of the role of technical and vocation training (TVET) for resolving these challenges. The paper also made use of various literature materials to assess the results of the findings of previous publications on the topic with a view to expose some of the current trends and information on the problem in order to generate new perspectives and also offer some proactive solutions and recommendations. The paper might possibly serve as a forerunner to more in-depth future studies on the topic.

Findings and Discussion

According to various findings, there is a significant degree of youth unemployment in Nigeria despite government's efforts to lower the level of the problem. To eradicate or reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria, a larger emphasis and importance must be placed on TVET. There can be no meaningful youth employment opportunities and prospects in Nigeria without an efficient and successful TVET program. The

promotion of the TVET programs will result in the development of wealth, the creation of jobs, and the construction of a sustainable livelihood for millions of Nigerian youths.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is a type of education, training, and learning that gives information, skills, and attitudes that are applicable to job or self-employment. TVET has undeniable positive effects on national development, which is considered to be linked to a variety of socioeconomic imperatives such as poverty and unemployment. The lack of long-term educational strategies is a key contributor to Nigeria's deficit of TVET personnel, particularly educated instructors.

Nigerian youths continue to experience intergenerational poverty, which drives them to engage in criminal enterprises and commit violent crimes. When TVET is effectively supported, poverty can be minimized, and the nation will invariably develop. TVET implementation is centered on the development that has to be implemented to broaden social standards on how learners and people in general are to be managed. TVET does not produce jobs on its own; therefore, policymakers in Nigeria must also put in place necessary policies and circumstances to support TVET development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

TVET, without doubt, promises to provide more opportunities for Nigerian youths, especially in the industrial sector, which is rapidly expanding, as is the case with information and communication technology (ICTs). The prospects of TVET for sustainable economic development in Nigeria can be adequately realized by ensuring that: TVET is more market driven, ensuring high quality TVET delivery to Nigerian recipients, ensuring the availability and sustainability of TVET Institutions (Vocational Enterprise Institutes, Vocational Training Centres, Technical colleges, and so on) with a view to providing technical and vocational education and training that can meet the needs of the global society.

Above all, government at various levels in Nigeria should improve on their current collaborations with Non-governmental and international organizations, as well as participate in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) programmes and agenda and global TVET policies for 2016-2021, to assure the achievement of these goals. There is also a need for the government to promote private sector engagement by creating an enabling climate, giving free taxation for enterprises that engage in TVET training and development of youths, and subsidizing training expenses and apprenticeship pay for Nigerian youths.

Governments must adopt TVET program policies in order to address the plague of poverty in Nigeria and improve the country. The following measures are proposed:

To boost national growth in Nigeria, government at various levels need to review their vocational education programs and ensure that funding is made available for vocational institutions and vocational training centers in order for the country's educational institutions to function properly. Also, vocational education should be incorporated into general education, and nationally accredited tertiary in education programmes.

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