



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: THE MISSING LINK

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Abstract

This paper examined the effect of vocational education and security challenges in Nigeria. Qualitative research methods were adopted to analyze the major causes of insecurity in the country. However, Unemployment illiteracy, and poverty has been identified as the major causes. The study revealed that vocational education can play a vital role in reducing security challenges in the country as well as reducing poverty and unemployment by equipping youths with necessary skills. Based on the findings, the study therefore recommended that technical and vocational education needs to receive enough funding. All hands must be on deck to address the enormous security challenges so that we can all live in a better country, one where peace and tranquility will rule and which future generations will refer to as their fatherland.

Keywords: Education, Unemployment, Vocational Education, Insecurity, Poverty

Introduction

Any country's social and economic contributions to its development and security are crucial. Researchers have become interested in the situation of the insecurity of lives and property in Nigeria. National progress and development are threatened by insecurity, which has reached an unprecedented level in Nigeria recently. The government has been devoting a sizable portion of the national budget on security for a number of years. Even with all the government's efforts, a lot of lives are lost, a lot of property is damaged, and practically everyone feels insecure in their bedroom. Otto and Ukpere (2012) noted that criminal activity is increasing in Nigerian society, and that criminals are growing more brutal, desperate, and intelligent. In the past 15 years, Nigeria has experienced an unparalleled number of agitations, including kidnapping and abduction, armed robberies, bombings, militancy, banditry, and devastation in all its manifestations.

To address the unrest, the government has implemented a variety of measures, including curfews. Recently, Olajuwon (2017) revealed that the United States offered N3.6 billion to Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram leaders, as well as tasked several organizations and agencies with the duty of ensuring the safety of people and property. These organizations include, among others, the police, state security organizations, the civil defense corps, and immigration. The promotion of community and national development, including the maintenance of security, is greatly aided by vocational and technical education (Oguntuyi, 2013). Any type of education that aims to educate students for employment in a particular occupation or group of occupations can be categorized as vocational and technical education. There is a rising understanding of the need of technical and vocational education across the nation. Demands for modifications to the content, structure, and delivery of vocational and technical curriculum to reflect a new emphasis on technology are the result of the increase in society perception and interest.

The acquisition of practical abilities and fundamental scientific knowledge is facilitated by vocational and technical education. It is a carefully thought-out curriculum of classes and learning opportunities that starts with job exploration, promotes fundamental academic and life skills, and facilitates the attainment of high academic standards, leadership, career preparation, and continuing education (Career and Technical Education, 2009). Unfortunately, vocational and technical education does not appear to receive the support it needs in Nigeria. This appears to be the cause of the rising rates of poverty and unemployment in society, which have further exacerbated the nation's problems with insecurity. Olaitan (2016) argues that this is due to the fact that young people and recent graduates from postsecondary institutions lack the necessary skills to take advantage of the natural resources that abound in Nigeria. He also contends that the lack of employment breeds frustration and disillusionment, which may lead to



crime or drug abuse in a fruitless effort to forget the suffering and humiliation brought on by poverty, which has gotten worse as millions of school dropouts and graduates from tertiary institutions are not employed in gainful employment. They are unable to be self-employed and effectively perform in the workplace today because they lack the requisite occupational skills.

Youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria are significant contributors to violent crime and insecurity (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014). Youth unemployment in particular has led to the rise in violent conflict in Nigeria. Nigeria's jobless rate climbed geometrically from 18.8 percent in the third quarter of 2019 to 23.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020, according to the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, and it is this increase in unemployment that has further pushed Nigeria into poverty. According to the results of the world poverty clock in June 2020, Nigeria has the highest proportion of extremely poor people worldwide, surpassing India. It is stated that idle hands are the devil's workshop, and millions of young people in Nigeria today are in this condition. They are enthusiastic kids who have nothing important to do.

Unemployment and poverty are related to the high rate of insecurity, which is demonstrated by kidnapping, prostitution, and violent robbery. The main reason why primary and secondary schools were first established by the missionaries themselves was because of the need for teachers and preachers that the missionaries had, as well as the government's need for clerical personnel in government offices (Fafunwa, 2014). Unemployment and poverty are related to the high rate of insecurity, which is demonstrated by kidnapping, prostitution, and violent robbery. The main reason why primary and secondary schools were first established by the missionaries themselves was because of the need for teachers and preachers that the missionaries had, as well as the government's need for clerical personnel in government offices (Fafunwa, 2014). There were no initial technical or vocational schools established. Due to this, education gradually turned into a way to avoid manual labor. As a result, the educational system came under heavy fire, not only for ignoring vocational technical education, which could have helped people become independent and contribute to the development of their country, but also for not being relevant to peculiar needs of Nigerian pupils.

Nigeria is one of the emerging nations with the worst economic and security conditions. Citizens typically look to the government to provide political stability and socio-economic security, including employment, education, healthcare, environmental protection, housing, infrastructure, and other amenities; failure to do so can result in unhappiness, social unrest, or even serious political difficulties. Unfortunately, Nigeria is currently beset by a number of problems including insecurity, poverty, illiteracy, corruption, criminality, and religious disputes.

The complex issues of corruption, poverty, and unemployment that are so prevalent in society are the security difficulties. Commercial vehicle owners must pay gratifications on the roadways before they are allowed to conduct business, and some corrupt security agents take advantage of the situation to demand money from the public. The number of people who are so poor they can hardly feed themselves is growing, and unemployment is also rising as more people lose their jobs as a result of some firms failing. According to Owenbiugie (2017), the inability of the Nigerian government to address the problems of poverty, unemployment, and unequal wealth distribution appears to be the cause of insecurity in that country. The nation has lost a great deal of people and property as a result of insecurity. Insecurity in Nigeria can take many different forms, including suicide bombings, vandalism, terrorism, kidnapping, farmers' and herders' disputes, assassinations, armed robberies, violent crimes, ethno-religious conflicts, and environmental degradation. But if the government doesn't shift its focus from the conventional methods of reducing insecurity to a more technical approach, this issue might continue. In light of these factors, this study tends to examine the relationship between Nigeria's security concerns and vocational and technical education. It also tends to look into how these programs might help young people become self-sufficient and find profitable employment.

Research Questions

The following questions are synthesized from the objectives of the paper.

- i. To what extent can functional vocational and technical education make the youth self-reliant and gainfully employed?
- ii. Does vocational and technical education solve security challenges in Nigeria?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This literature review attempt to discuss the various literature related to examine Technical/ Vocational Education and Security Challenges in Nigeria. This chapter reflects point of view of another scholar about this topic.



Concept of Technical/ Vocational Education

Vocational and technical education were viewed as an essential component of general education in Nigeria by the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004). As a result, it was defined in the manner below. The term "technical and vocational education" is used to refer broadly to all of the components of the educational process. the study of technology and allied sciences, as well as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and expertise pertaining to professions in many spheres of the economy and of society. Given this, vocational and technical education prepares students to gain both practical skills and a foundation in science. It also increases the number of skilled workers in the country by producing people with specialized talents as a result of effective vocational and technical education as they are trained, equipped, with workable practical/skills, knowledge, aptitude and competencies required in specific occupations.

While National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) defined vocational and technical education as that aspect of education that results in the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as fundamental scientific knowledge, Ugwuja (2010) described it as an aspect of education designed to prepare students for industry, agriculture, commerce, and home economics. It is a type of education intended to make students self-sufficient by preparing them for lucrative employment as skilled or semi-skilled employees in a recognized occupation. Due to its effects on productivity and economic development, it is a crucial component of many nations' national development strategies (Dike, 2009). Therefore, vocational and technical education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to live, learn, and work as contributing members of a global society (Nwogu and Nwanoruo, 2011).

Vocational and technical education, according to Lawal (2010), are those sorts of education that prepare students to utilize relevant practical skills to make positive changes in their community and support a self-sufficient lifestyle. Numerous studies have proven that this type of schooling promotes independence, productivity, and self-reliance. It tempts school graduates to lean too heavily on government employment. Individuals receive the skills they need from vocational and technical education to live, learn, and work as contributing members of a global society.

Concept of National Security

The concept of "security" might be interpreted as a state of protection against threat or anxiety. For a nation, security entails a state of tranquility, stability, order, and advancement. Different definitions of national security have been used, each of which has placed an emphasis on fundamental principles. While Ray (2017) contends that national security should be viewed in terms of the capacity and desire for self-defense, Brennan (2011) maintains that national security is the safeguarding of national survival. According to Ochoche (2018), national security is primarily concerned with the accumulation of military assets, people, and spending. The above definition highlights over time, national security has evolved. It was widened to incorporate global economics, reconciliation, and long-term objectives of national development. They are crucial to the security of every country.

Asad (2017) asserts that national security cannot be reduced to a purely military concept using this strategy. "National security must be expanded to accommodate economic, environmental, and demographic issues as they are important in understanding the new causes of intra-state conflicts. Socioeconomic and cultural aspects, problems of development and modernization, and national integration should be deemed important in considering." Pollution, poverty, criminality, and underdevelopment are additional threats to national security that all contribute to conflict (Onigbinde, 2018).

Human security, according to the United Nations Development Programme (2014 and 2016), is "freedom from fear and freedom from want" as well as "safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life - whether in homes, at work, or in communities."

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the academic notion of national security mentioned above. This essay defines national security as "protection from the threat of sickness, starvation, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental threats."

Concept of Insecurity

The term "insecurity" has a variety of connotations, including "absence of safety," "risk," "hazard," "uncertainty," "lack of protection," and "lack of safety." Insecurity, according to Beland (2015), is a feeling of dread or worry brought on by a lack of protection. Insecurity is defined by Achumba (2013) from two angles. Insecurity is firstly the condition of being exposed to risk or the threat of danger, whereas danger is the state of being vulnerable to harm or injury. The second definition of insecurity is the condition of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a generalized



negative emotion felt in expectation of some unfavorable event. These expressions of insecurity highlight the crucial idea that persons who experience it are not only unsure or uninformed of what would happen, but also exposed to threats and hazards when they do. A breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethnoregional, civic, social, economic, or political, is characterized as insecurity in the context of this essay as long as it fuels recurrent conflicts and causes willful destruction of people's lives and property.

Insecurity, according to Nwagboso (2012), is the risk that business owners and executives take while moving their operations from an unsafe environment to one that is more secure. This perspective is relevant to Igbo and Yoruba businessmen who returned to their home countries after the Boko Haram Insurgency, according to Suileman (2012), referenced in Adegbami (2013). The viewpoint is also relevant to the numerous manufacturing firms that left Nigeria's Northeast geopolitical region for other nations due to the high level of insecurity brought on by the Boko Haram Insurgency (Ajodo-Adebanjo and Okorie, 2014).

As a result, wars and insecurity are more prevalent in nations with low levels of education, rapid population expansion, and declining economies. Aderoju also stated this opinion (2017). According to this study, insecurity refers to any of the following: a lack of protection, danger, hazard, uncertainty, and safety (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014). Security issues do not appear out of nowhere. Crimes like armed robbery, abduction, hostage-taking, banditry, insurgency, terrorism, fights between herders and farmers, the indigenous-settler divide, etc. are what cause them. There is no denying that Nigeria has had to deal with a number of security issues, including armed robberies, militancy, insurgency, and religious disputes.

Theoretical Framework

David Snedden's (1987) behavioral learning theory is used in this paper to describe the difficulties in technical/vocational education and security. According to the behavioral learning theory, the environment has a significant impact on behavior (Rabinowitz, 2004). Events or activities in the environment can trigger mental processes that lead to specific behaviors (Rabinowitz, 2004; Flanagan, 1991). In order to alter the effects of various behavioral responses, this idea was adopted by paying attention to the environment in which events or activities take place (Rabinowitz, 2004).

This theory was founded on the notion that only an effective society could foster a favorable environment in which a person may flourish and find fulfillment. Snedden and Prosser believed that vocational and technical education was one of the pillars of social efficiency since a well-trained, compliant workforce was a sine qua non of an effective society (Wirth, 1972).

The Importance of Vocational and Technical Education to the Society

Vocational and technical education is extremely important, and many developed economies throughout the world have realized this and are giving it the attention it really deserves. Vocational and technical education has been viewed as the cornerstone of industrial and technological growth. They viewed technical and vocational education as a tool for job creation and as a component of the educational process that includes, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, as well as the acquisition of relevant practical skills, attitudes, and knowledge relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life (Apugu & Andural, 2007).

Several nations that have made technical advances recently are those that have given vocational and technological education more attention, invested systematically in it, and had good planning and sensible policy (Adepoju & Famade, 2010).

The following list highlights the significance of vocational and technical education:

- a) It helps individuals to be independent, autonomous; ambitious that takes responsibility for their own future.
- b) They are valued by employers, because the impact they give is valuable and productive.
- c) It helps people learn skills to gain jobs.
- d) It allows you a hand on approach to learning.
- e) Helps individuals to get out of high school and be ready to start a career.
- f) It provides information to individuals that will allow them to be successful in a job. It can involve training on how to get the job.
- g) Because not all people are college bound, many individuals find vocational education training to be a necessary part of high school education, whether it is a person with disability.



- h) According to Anusha (2012), vocational education training is primarily nonacademic in nature, and offers practical training and skills needed to pursue an occupation straightway.
- i) It provides students with courses directly aligned to land a job in a chosen profession or a skilled trade; to enable the individual to attain self-employment. j) Candidates with vocational training can find employment in a number of state and federal government agencies, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and occasionally even private businesses. Those with a solid background in vocational education also choose lecturing and teaching positions at polytechnic institutions and vocational training facilities that align with the pay schedules of the government (Anusha, 2012).
- j) Candidates with vocational training can find work in several states and central government organisations, non-profit groups, academic institutions and sometimes even in private companies. Those with strong vocational education background also opt for lecturing and teaching roles in the polytechnic colleges and vocational training institutes which match the government job scales (Anusha, 2012).
- k) Vocational/technical education and training trains students for careers that typically do not require academic preparation and are entirely related to a particular trade, occupation, or vocation. In other words, it is instruction intended to foster professional abilities. Consequently, vocational and technical education equips students with the abilities to live, learn, and work as contributing members of a global society.

The role of vocational/technical education in curbing security challenges in Nigeria

If given nothing to do in the community, it has been found that youth are more likely to be persuaded to commit crimes that pose security risks to the community. The impact of technical/vocational education on a nation's security issues has made it a crucial component of many societies' national development strategies. Vocational and technical education is a more effective tool in the hands of any government or nation to curb the problems of unemployment and insecurity because a large percentage of Nigerian youths are unemployed and frequently serve as the ready tool in the hands of unscrupulous individuals or groups to perpetuate a state of insecurity in the country. Hence, it is important to consider how we can reform vocational and technical education in Nigeria and use it effectively. (Uwaifo, 2011).

Ayodele (2016) asserts that the high rate of insecurity, as demonstrated by kidnapping, prostitution, and armed robbery, is linked to unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and, most significantly, a lack of occupational skills that can be obtained from vocational and technical education, which is defined as any type of education that aims to prepare students for employment in a particular occupation or group of occupations.

This suggests that vocational and technical education is crucial for sustaining life in Nigeria during this time of security challenges. This is accurate in that a technical or vocational education can help a person become independent, self-sufficient, ambitious, and capable of taking charge of their own destiny. Most notably, applicants with vocational training can find work in numerous states and central government organizations, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and occasionally even in private firms. It can help people learn skills to get employment and become independent. Therefore, vocational and technical education equips students with the knowledge and abilities needed to live, learn, and work as contributing members of a global society.

However, According to Uwaifo and Victor (2009), Vocational and Technical Education has some implications for sustenance of living such as:

- **Psychological Implication:** Technical and vocational education can help those who are jobless and hopeless by bridging the gap between them. Employment is assured for those who are able to obtain training in vocational education. On the other side, a nation with a shortage of laborers will experience the issue of unemployment, which results in poverty, which then results in insecurity.
- **Sociological Implication:** Many societal issues can be solved through vocational education. Without its multiple distant effects like hooliganism, insecure housing, and other anti-social vices, unemployment is a significant societal evil. By producing students who are easily hired, vocational and technical education contributes to their elimination.
- **Economic Implication:** The purpose of vocational education is to prepare students for specific types of jobs in the economy. The training is carefully matched to the requirements of the profession in order to encourage the trainee's initial production performance. Trainees can start earning a living, developing into more helpful and productive individuals who will be assets rather than liabilities to society.



The Challenges of Vocational Education on security challenges in Nigeria

Given the severe obstacles it faces, technical and vocational education cannot significantly reduce unemployment, poverty, or insecurity (Eze, 2013). The excellent intentions of Nigeria's successive governments regarding technical and vocational education are still beset by a number of challenges, according to Oranu (2014). These difficulties include;

- i. Inadequate funding of Technical and Vocational Education:** Vocational technical education has undoubtedly had a significant impact on Nigerian society, particularly with regard to those who are actively participating in the country's economic development and security (Odu, 2013). Because there is not enough money to establish and maintain workshops, laboratories, or even buy current equipment, vocational institutions receive inadequate support, which results in the production of graduates who are only halfway competent (Aghenta, 2015). Additionally, Momoh (2012) and Mohammed (2001) noted that technical education in Nigeria has been hampered by the government's lack of commitment and insufficient funding. This has the direct effect of increasing general education enrollment while decreasing the number of technical education institutions (Momoh, 2012).
- ii. Apathy of Political holders/law makers:** In Nigeria, the general state of education, particularly technical and vocational education, has been egregiously ignored. The biggest obstacle for technical educators is persuading legislators that the program deserves priority consideration when resources are allocated. Many strategies for achieving success have been put out in various forums, including lobbying, technical educators' involvement in governance, wooing, etc. However, the government continues to take a biased approach to the correct development of the program in Nigeria. Therefore, if this unfavorable mindset and trend are not changed, Nigeria will always be a technologically backward and dependent country.
- iii. Nigerian Value System:** In Nigeria today, university degrees receive far too much attention, regardless of whether the holder has the necessary knowledge and skills. However, those with technical degrees are highly valued in sophisticated societies. In actuality, the value system in such nations is based more on a person's knowledge and talents than it is on the number of academic degrees they possess. Technical education graduates frequently face discrimination and have restricted career options in the public sector. Due to this, parents and secondary school graduates favor a university education over a technical one (Nworlu- Elechi, 2013.)
- iv. Quality of Education:** Nigerian education is of poor quality because of unscrupulous officials and ineffective leadership. According to Babalola and Tihamiyu (2012), poor educational quality is caused by a lack of teacher motivation, acknowledgement, and incentive. The Nigerian government does not place a high emphasis on education, and their annual budget reflects that. They allocated relatively little money for education, which hampered its performance in terms of security. They don't provide enough money to purchase and maintain the lab and workshop equipment. Babalola and Tihamiyu (2012) noted a lack of resources to purchase the necessary spare parts to maintain the technical education equipment. According to Adedibu (2001), the inability of our government to formulate sound goals and the best answers to our challenges has led to improper resource management, improper planning, and improper placement of developmental priorities;

Causes of Security Challenges in Nigeria

It is known that Nigeria has faced severe and urgent security challenges in recent years. These crises come in a variety of shapes—communal, religious, political, and socioeconomic—and they often result in innocent Nigerians losing their lives. However, the following can be considered the reasons of insecurity:

- **Illiteracy:** One of the main things working against this nation's peaceful coexistence is illiteracy. Over 150 million people live in Nigeria, the majority of whom are youngsters who are either partially or completely ignorant. One of the key differences between developed and developing nations, such as Nigeria, is the percentage of illiteracy. As a result, every citizen must be given the chance to pursue formal education. Through this formal education, society will be rid of ignorance and all types of excessive and barbarous behavior. A citizen's behaviors and responsiveness to civic duties would improve if they were granted the privilege (i.e. sponsorship of going to school).
- **Lack of Corporate Responsibility by Companies:** A series of behaviors that raise externalized costs and/or encourage distributional conflicts are referred to as corporate and social irresponsibility (Kotchen & Moon, 2011). Corporate social responsibility is a strategy used by businesses to counteract social irresponsibility. The



rise of terrorist organizations in some areas of the nation is directly tied to businesses' disregard for their social obligations to the communities in which they operate. The Niger Delta Crisis is the instance here.

- **Rural/urban drift:** One of the factors contributing to insecurity in Nigeria is the movement of unemployed youth from rural areas to urban centers (Onuoha, 2011). One of the nations in the world with the highest rates of rural/urban drift is Nigeria. Most Nigerian metropolitan areas have developed beyond their ability to support the environment and their current infrastructure, which has worsened the quality of living there (Adedeji & Eziyi, 2016). (2010). The youthful people are driven into crime out of frustration.
- **Poverty:** It is now common knowledge among development professionals that the greatest way to alleviate poverty is to involve and empower the most vulnerable groups by granting them the right and the chance to make their own economic decisions and achieve self-actualization. The success of development is heavily dependent on strong political ties as well as an engaged and effective public that can support forceful and coordinated action. This can undoubtedly lead to social justice, equity, accountability, transparency, and good governance, as well as more efficient and better focused public services.
- **Unemployment:** Akwara (2013) asserts that poverty and insecurity are both caused by unemployment. People who are unemployed in huge numbers would live in poverty, which would make it more difficult for them to participate meaningfully in the socioeconomic life of the country, which would increase the risk to people's lives and property. They would focus their energy on illegal activities to make a living for themselves, endangering people's lives and property while they did so and driving up the expense of government.

Conclusion

The study looked into how technical and vocational education may actually be a weapon against Nigeria's security issues. The study found that poverty and unemployment are the main causes of insecurity in Nigeria, and it was concluded that there is a high degree of insecurity in the nation. As a result, vocational technical education must receive more attention if poverty and unemployment are to be eliminated or reduced in Nigeria. The seductive promise made by terrorist youth leaders will no longer be valued by youth. Conditions that will inevitably and severely reduce, if not completely eradicate, the purposeful young threat to Nigerian national security. It is the panacea for socioeconomic security problems of Nigeria. Thus vocational and technical education is the gateway to the nation's industrialisation and security stability.

Vocational and technical education must receive more attention since it is essential for a country's stability, security, political progress, and economic prosperity. All evidence point to poverty and unemployment as social ills that threaten national security in Nigeria. Evidently, poverty results from unemployment, and insecurity comes from poverty. So it stands to reason that both unemployment and poverty have an impact on national security. On the basis of the aforementioned, it can be seen that vocational and technical education plays a significant role in sustaining life in Nigeria during this time of security challenges.

Recommendations

This paper therefore recommends the following based on the conclusion:

- i. While acknowledging the government's efforts in the field of security, all hands must be on deck to address the enormous security challenges so that we can all live in a better country, one where peace and tranquility will rule and which future generations will refer to as their fatherland.
- ii. To ensure that vocational and technical schools are functioning, the government should give them access to sufficient human, financial, and material resources that will support the teaching and learning processes in the nation's technical schools.
- iii. Technical and vocational education needs to receive enough funding. Lack of funding makes it difficult to provide necessities like well furnished laboratories and workshops, pertinent textbooks, and instruction manuals.
- iv. It is important for our technological institutions to build strong ties and connections with institutions of a similar nature abroad, as this will encourage the cross-fertilization of ideas and improve technology transfer. By doing this, the technical institutions will have access to new advancements, exchange programs, and a host of other advantages offered at those schools with highly established technical programs.
- v. One practical solution to reduce political thuggery and redundancy is to provide community vocational training for the traveling youths and dropouts.



- vi. The unemployed graduates should be provided with further opportunity of business frame work through micro finance institutions;
- vii. Policy should be evolved to bring down the thuggery practices by the politicians.