

Nigeria beyond Job Scarcity: The Role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

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ABSTRACT

The increase in abled and employable Nigerians has limited the chances of being employed as available jobs are limited and scarce. As a result of this, these category of people fight for survival and integration into the economic society of the country. At this point, creating jobs is the only way the graduates and undergraduate skilled personnel can be self sustained and end up being employers of labour rather than been employed. TVET, with the objective of equipping individuals with required marketable skills will empower them to make a living from the acquired skills. TVET skill enhances productivity and boost competitiveness among cottage industries and in the global economy. It is concluded that acquired technical skills will enable individuals to be gainfully employed, employers of labour and reducing the search for white collar jobs. Therefore, it is recommended that TVET stakeholders should ensure that aids are given to those who have chosen TVET as a career at the expense of general education only.

Keyword: *Unemployment, Job Scarcity, TVET and skill training*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is currently faced with diverse problems including unemployment and job scarcity. University graduates search for white collar jobs and sometimes end up bargaining for lower than they expected, or rather they get jobs that do not fit their field of study and some do not get jobs at all. This leads to high level of unemployment in the country culminating into diverse economic problems and insecurity. Ajiboye, Oyebanji and Awoniyi (2013) define unemployment as the share of the labour force that is without work but available and seeking employment. It could also be seen as an economic condition in which individuals seeking jobs remain unhired (Eurostat, 2014). More worrisome is the problem of graduate unemployability, which has rendered many Nigerian graduates useless without hope. This is because it is one thing for tertiary institutions to produce graduates, it is another for the products of these schools to meet up with employers' requirements, skills or competences for employment (Edinyang, Odey and Gimba, 2015). Sodipo (2014) buttresses further that employers of labour often complain that some of these graduates though professionally

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or technically qualified are unemployable, in that they lack the requisite, essential skills or competencies needed in the job or for sustainable employment. These skills create a gap in their knowledge which must be filled to make them suitable to compete for few, existing vacancies that crop up from time to time.

Akanmu (2011) notes that employers want their graduate recruits to be competent technically in their chosen fields. They also want them to come out of school well equipped with complementary life skills such as problem solving, reflective and critical thinking, interpersonal and teaming skills, effective communication, character, integrity and high level of personal ethics, self esteem, self-discipline, organizing skills and abilities to translate ideas to action. The factors responsible for unemployment have not been limited to employee's education level or skills only. Ewumi (2014) states that the factors responsible for unemployment in Nigeria include: poor leadership, corruption, profligacy, poor work ethics, incompetent management, lack of saving and investment culture, lack of infrastructures and incompetent education policy. These at the end will lead to migration of youths to search for green pastures, conflict among members, increase in crime rate, low national industrial output, high level of poverty, kidnapping and robbery, and lawlessness in the country.

Creating Jobs in Nigeria

Job creation is the notion that jobs are created in response to some sort of events or situations. Conceptually, it is the proactive opposite of unemployment. Job creation, according to Muhammed (2011), often refers to government policies intended to reduce unemployment. Job creation is developing/tapping into a fresh idea or existing ideas to compete with several others that make the individual unique while investing financially and other resources to make it successful. After 56 years of achieving independence from the colonial masters it cannot be argued that Nigeria has attained her optimum level of development. The Nigerian government seems to have woken up to the reality that the country needs to break away from the vicious cycle of poverty, infrastructure neglect, corruption and other problems. Kolawole and Omolayo (2006) note that many individuals have difficulties in translating their business ideas to realities and creating new business ventures because of lack of necessary information and skills to achieve their targets. PRNewswire (2009) identifies four various ways to which jobs can be created. These include:

- I. Job creation by government spending/stimulus:** The Government can stimulate job creation when it invests in projects that improve or create new services. These activities could include releasing contracts to the private sector for infrastructure, defense, engineering, justice, etc. Other ways that the government creates jobs is by issuing special grants for privately run programmes. These are often for special studies and research. Grant receivers do employ people. However these grants are often connected to special favours called earmarks. These seemingly good gestures destroy independent innovation that is developed by unconnected science communities and can cause discouragement to innovate by others. The government

also often decides to grow itself and hires new government employees. Some people argue that the bigger government gets; the more overhead private taxpaying industries must pay to support the costs of government.

- II. Job creation influenced by legislation and monetary policy:** A change in monetary policies, tax incentives and changes in regulations affects employment. The government needs tax revenues and walks a fine line trying to measure the complicated causal effects of their actions. Good intentions can stray an economy as the actors in the theatre of the economy react to a multitude of conditions at once. These rules and regulations are what established businesses love or hate. The more often there are major changes to tax structure and regulation, the more often there are major movements in rates of employment, either job creation or job destruction.
- III. Job creation, a market share approach:** Job creation can occur when the unemployed become ambitious and start their own business in easy entry industries and markets. This is usually accomplished when an unemployed person turns into an entrepreneur and goes into business to compete in the industry they were familiar with for many years. These new businesses' create jobs simply by innovating and implementing the ideas that were ignored when they were employed. Most small businesses that begin come to the rude awakening that "it's not that easy" but survivors tend to change entire industries that were stuck in operating the "same old way" for years. This also leads to lower prices, stable wages, higher revenues and growth for services in that industry.
- IV. Job creation through ideas:** Innovate, create, invent, and invest. The most difficult but most effective way to create long-term employment is to create new industries. It truly is the hardest way but the best way to continually grow an economy that can support its citizens with employment.

Key barriers to Job Creation in Nigeria

UNESCO-UNEVOC (2013) during the online conference, noted that the following are the barriers encountered in creating jobs.

- I. Lack of relevant skills:** The young participant told the forum that young people often have difficulties creating jobs because they lack the skills needed to establish such.
- II. Lack of information about the labour market:** Another issue was lack of information about the labour market. Students generally receive such information in the form of career guidance and counseling in their schools and universities.
- III. Lack of entrepreneurship skills to create new jobs:** In some cases young people have no choice but to relocate in the face of job shortages, because they lack the entrepreneurial skills required to start their own businesses. These skills include: confidence, communication and persuasion, courage, learning skills etc.
- IV. Inhospitable investment climate discouraging entrepreneurship and job creation:** Despite the challenges stated by the UNESCO-UNEVOC, Muhammed

(2011) viewed the challenges encountered in job creation in a different way. He state that these challenges range from poor state of infrastructure, lack of access to productive inputs such as finance and workspace, lack of access to Business Development service (BDS), lack of sufficient government stimulus, changes in government policies, lack of the right attitude by Nigerians.

The Role of TVET in Job Creation in Nigeria

It has become necessary that there must be a change in the system of education in Nigeria, because many school leavers at all levels had to struggle for a very few vacancies in the employment market after school. It is now key important for people to embrace Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as the sure means to create jobs and solve the problem of unemployment.

Technical Vocational Education and Training, as spelt out by Danko (2006) is an education programme that prepares students mainly for occupations requiring manipulative skills or non-technical occupations in such fields as Agriculture, Business Education, Home Economics, Painting, Decorating and others, organized to secure confidence and experience by the individual students. It is also designed to develop skills, abilities, understanding, attitudes, work habits and appreciation encompassing knowledge and information needed by a worker to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis. Skill training enhances productivity and sustains competitiveness in the global economy. Countries are renewing efforts to promote technical and vocational education and training, this is because it is the only way to prepare young people for world of work, which reaches out to the marginalized and excluded groups to engage them in income-generating livelihoods (Alhasan and Abdullahi, 2013).

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is increasingly being viewed as a potential solution to the youth employment crisis and job scarcity. TVET's orientation towards the world of work and the acquisition of employable skills means that it is well placed to overcome the skills mismatch issues that have impeded smooth education-to-employment transitions for many young people. Recent evidence suggests that TVET yields higher returns than either general secondary or tertiary education, mainly because its focus is on providing work-relevant skills (Kuepie, Nordman and Roubaud, 2009).

The government initiated TVET for two objectives: First, it is to provide training opportunities and career advancement avenues for the growing numbers of school leavers joining the workforce. Second, it is expected that the graduates will provide the much-needed skilled manpower to all levels of the economy. In the absence of employment opportunities, TVET training can lead to self-reliance, thus playing a role in industrialization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is no gainsaying that unemployment has caused great havoc to the country, its economy and industrialization among others. This challenge has made successful entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations and government to encourage the citizens to be empowered

with formal, informal and non-formal skill(s). These skills would enable individuals to be self employed and some to be employers of labour thereby reducing the average number of the unemployed and reduce the weight of job provision on government. The following recommendations are made so that TVET could meet up with the demand of creating job and ending job scarcity in Nigeria.

- I. TVET stakeholders (government, NGO's, Microfinance bank, BOI etc) should ensure that aids are given to those who have chosen TVET as a career.
- II. Individuals should not only be trained in TVET but should be empowered by the government, NGO and other TVET stakeholders with tools, machineries and financially so as to be able to practice.
- III. TVET should be adequately funded to help individuals have access to infrastructures thereby exposing them to the ethics of the chosen career.
- IV. There should be a collaboration of the TVET institutions with the media towards massive campaign of TVET programmes at the grassroot level so that the non-educated can participate in informal TVET (i.e such individuals can learn a trade)
- V. TVET subjects should be made compulsory at all secondary level (both junior and senior) by the ministry of education. This will enable students who could not further their senior secondary education to be skilled.
- VI. Teaching theoretical aspect of TVET only should be discouraged and encourage the teaching of both theory and practicals in TVET institutions especially at the tertiary level, as most institutions suffers lack of equipment to carry out teaching and learning activities

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