



Technical and Vocational Education and Training: A Sustainable Remedy to the High Rate of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Technical and Vocational Education in Nigeria has been criticized for not reducing unemployment among citizens of the Country. This might be due to several factors hindering its proper implementation. Hence, this study was designed to review related literature on Technical and Vocational Education and Training as it helps in remedying the unemployment problem in Nigeria. It was found that TVET has double direct linkages with unemployment reduction. Both general education and Training for work skills enhance people chance of employment. Furthermore, International Organizations focused on skills development for employment generations. Skills development reduce unemployment in developing countries. The training was practically based and designed to reach a large number of beneficiaries in the shortest possible time. For instance, between the year 2004 and 2010, more than 6,500 youths were trained by International Food and Agricultural Development (IFAD) in seven TVET professions namely Automotive Repairs, Carpentry, Electronics, Handicrafts, Tailoring, Welding, Leatherworks and Footwear, and the graduates were 100% employed. It is recommended that Government should provide a stable electrical power supply and modern practical equipment to TVET Institutions like; Computer Numeric Control machines, CAD Software, and 3-D Printers so that the graduates can compete with their colleagues in the world market.

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INTRODUCTION

The daunting challenges of reducing unemployment with its severity in developing economies has been the concern of international organizations such as the World Bank and United Nations (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2007; World Bank, 2008) that focused on skills development for employment generation (World Bank, 2008; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2006).

The relationship between skills development and reduction of unemployment was strong in developing countries. Findings from 51 developing countries across the globe indicate that the skills development of 1% is associated with the decline of 1.5% unemployment rates (Asian Development Bank, 2009).

Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) skills training were also linked to employment generations in Rwanda (IFAD, 2011) to enhance the creation of jobs for

unemployed and out-of-school youth in rural areas. The training was practically based and designed to reach a large number of beneficiaries in the shortest possible time. Between the year 2004 and 2010, more than 6,500 youths were trained in seven TVET professions namely automotive repairs, carpentry, electronics, handicrafts, tailoring, welding, leatherworks and footwear. The curricula and standards were developed in 30 different areas of those seven professions by 538 participating enterprises in the 30 districts of Rwanda. The duration of the training ranges between six months and one year. About 81% of the graduates secured a job including 36% who started their own business and 46% that obtained paid employment. It implies that if the TVET skills training programme in Rwanda can generate employment for more than 80% of the graduates, then the Nigeria TVET programme should generate the same since both African countries share the same historical background.

Similarly, the Nigeria National Policy on Education has linked the skills developments in TVET with employment when it stated that, it is expected that trainees completing technical college programmes in Nigeria shall improve the economy through the following three national policy options (FGN, 2014):

- a) Secured employment in privates or governments organization
- b) Set up their own business, become self-reliant and employ others
- c) Pursue further education in advanced craft or technical programs in polytechnics, colleges of education (technical) and universities of technology

Paradoxically, TVET skills developments are being taught at university and other educational levels in Nigeria since the early 1980s, still the percentage of unemployment in Nigeria increased annually as shown in Figure 1.1. The statistics show a steady increment from 36.2% in the year 2000 to 55.8% in 2013 while the employed labour force decreased annually from 14.1% in 2000 to 2.0% in 2013. This gives the impression that the percentages of unemployment among TVET graduates increase at all academic levels.

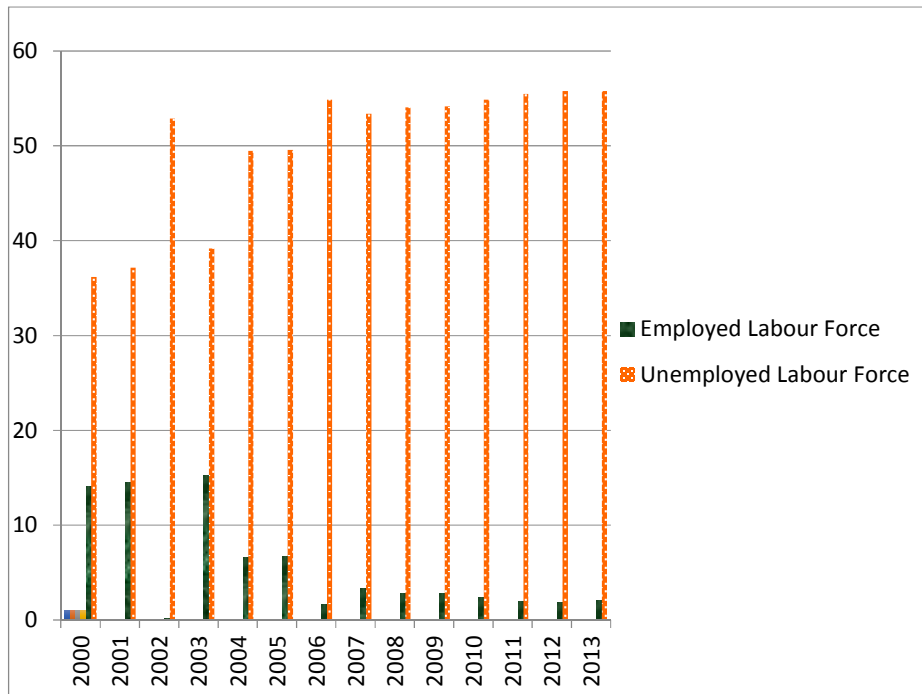


Figure 1: Employed and Unemployed Labour Force in Nigeria (2000-2013). **Source:** CBN, 2014.

It can be seen from Figure 1.1 that the rate of the employed labour force is decreasing while the rate of the unemployed labour force is increasing annually. This indicates that there are problems with the labour force training

institutions including TVET programmes in the country. Furthermore, Federal Government statistics had classified the rate of unemployment in Nigeria based on educational levels of the citizens as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Unemployment Rate by Educational Level, Sector and Gender in Nigeria

Educational Level	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Below Primary	21.5	23.7	22.7
Primary	15.6	21.9	18.7
JSS	19.5	24.2	21.7
Vocational/ Commercial	15.2	22.4	18.7
SSS	21.2	23.4	22.1
NCE/OND/ NURSING	21.9	22.7	22.2
BA/BSc/Bed/HND	22.6	28.8	24.6
MSC/MA/MAdm	12.6	17.5	13.7

Sources: National Bureau of Statistics, 2012

Table 1.1 indicates that the unemployment rate of university bachelor degree and equivalent polytechnics HND graduates was (24.6%) higher than those who had below primary education (22.7%) and NCE, OND and Nursing (22.2%) in Nigeria in 2012.

This high rate of unemployment of universities and polytechnics graduates promises the unemployment rate among TVET graduates in Nigeria. Figure 1.2 illustrates the rate of unemployment in Nigeria based on educational levels and gender.

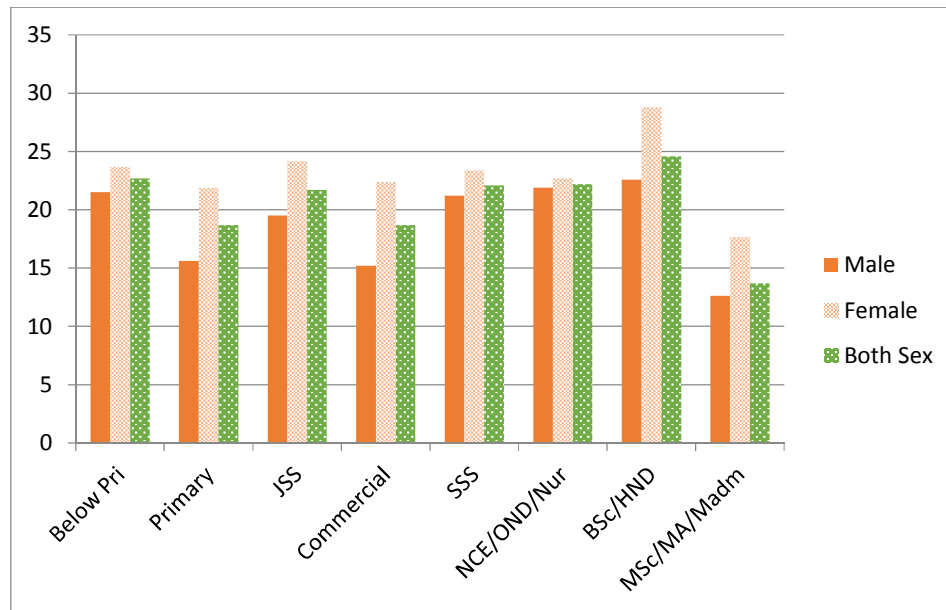


Figure 1.2: Unemployment Rate by Educational Level, Sector and Gender in Nigeria. Sources: NBS, 2012

It can be seen from Figure 1.2 that bachelor degree and Higher National Diploma

graduates have the highest rate of unemployment among all educational levels. In

addition, females have a high rate of unemployment than males in all educational levels in Nigeria.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NIGERIA

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an integral part of general education to prepare individuals for work (UNESCO-ILO, 2002, Okoro, 2006) and enhance their chances for employment (Van den Berge, 2002). TVET emphasizes the application of knowledge, attitudes and manipulative skills for specific occupational fields or clusters of related occupational fields (Palmer and King, 2006). For instance, through TVET, trainees who graduated from technical college programmes in Nigeria can secure employment in privates and government enterprises or set up their own business for self-reliance and employ others (FGN, 2014).

In Nigeria, skill acquisitions in TVET formal systems are acquired through training offered in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education (technical), technical colleges and presently at senior secondary schools as well as in skills acquisition centres of various states governments in Nigeria (FGN, 2014, National Education Research and Development Council, NERDC, 2008).

HOW TVET REDUCES UNEMPLOYMENT

TVET Reduces Unemployment in two ways, namely: knowledge-based general

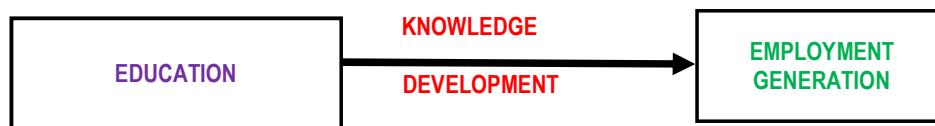


Figure 1.3: Direct Linkages of Education and Employment Generation. **Sources:** (Vander Berge, 2002; Janjua and Kamal, 2011)

Reduction of Unemployment through TVET Skill Training

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an integral part of general education which is intended for the preparation of individuals into the fields of occupations for effective participation in the world of work (UNESCO, 2002). TVET emphasizes the application of knowledge,

education and skill-based specific occupational training. Literature in the following subheadings indicates both general education and skills development contributes to employment generations.

Reduction of Unemployment through Education

Education was seen as the most statistically significant contributor to unemployment reduction for 40 developing countries from 1999 to 2007 (Janjua and Kamal, 2011) and enhances people chances for employment and their earning ability (Van den Berge, 2002).

International Labour Organization (ILO) conducted research to identify employments elasticity and education in 23 countries including Nigeria. Data were analyzed using regression and t-Test. The results indicate that education had statistically significant coefficients of over 40% variation with employment (Islam, 2004). It means the education of the general population which is the workforce contributes to employment. Similarly, between 1929 and 1982, over one-quarter of the average annual rate of increment of 1.48% in US national output per employed person was due to the improvement in the level of education of the workforce (Denison, 1985).

Figure 1.3: indicates that the linkage between education and employment generations through knowledge development.

attitudes and manipulative skills for specific occupational fields or clusters of related occupational fields for economic developments and poverty alleviation (Palmer and King, 2006). International organizations and experts state that poverty alleviations are achieved through TVET (Fien, Maclean and Park, 2009; UNESCO, 2006 and UNESCO, 2010).

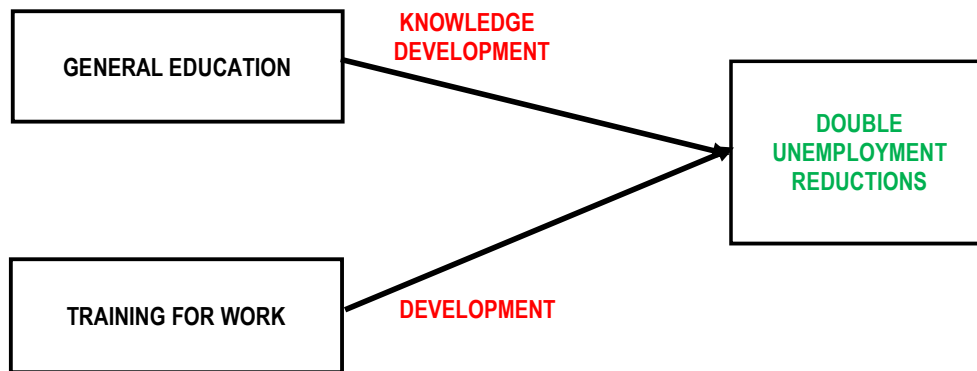


Figure 1.4: Double Direct Linkages of TVET and Poverty Alleviations; Sources: (Palmer and King, 2006; Fien, Maclean and Park, 2009; UNESCO, 2006 and UNESCO, 2010)

Figure 1.4: indicates that TVET has double direct linkages with unemployment reduction. Both general education and Training for work skills enhance people chance of employment. Therefore, the linkage between TVET and unemployment reduction is stronger than that between general education and unemployment reduction. Since the former has double linkages while the latter has single linkage.

Unemployment generates no income or low income which results in poor living. According to Mankiw (1994), Unemployed labours are lost human capital because they have the potential to contribute to national income but they cannot do so due to lack of employment. Adawo, Essien and Expo (2012) state that reduction of unemployment is the main concern of each responsible government across the world even though zero unemployment cannot be achieved because friction is always available in the labour market.

TVET enhances earning of the poor and enhances their chances for employments (Vander Verge, 2002). Among the ways that TVET generates employments in Nigeria include policy change (Olaitan, 1996 and Onu, et al 2013), entrepreneurship training (Ogudele, Akingbade and Akinlabi, 2012 and Ilemona and Akoji 2013), provision of agricultural and rural employment (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2008), training of women and girls (Hartl, 2009), adults and school dropout training (Palmer and king, 2006) and skills developments (FGN, 2014 and King and Palmer, 2007). The above literature indicates that policy change, entrepreneurship training, provision of

agricultural and rural vocational training, training of women and girls, adults and school dropout training contributes to the employments of Nigerian citizens.

Skill acquisitions in TVET formal systems are acquired through training that is acquired in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education (technical), technical colleges and presently at senior secondary schools as well as in skills acquisition centres of various states governments in Nigeria (FGN, 2004, National Education Research and Development Council, NERDC, 2008).

In addition to formal TVET institutions, Nigeria had established 38 employments generation programmes in the last 20 years including the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) in 2013 and the N-Power programme in 2016. Yet unemployment rates is high and increases annually in the country (Onu, et al, 2013; FGN, 2017).

TVET skills training is usually linked with improvements in productivity, quality, diversity, occupational safety, health and income benefits. In terms of linking skills development to unemployment reduction, much attention is on the narrower focus of individual chance of employment and less attention on the multidimensional nature of unemployment reduction (King and Palmer, 2007).

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