

TVET Systems: A Panacea for curbing Youth Unemployment in Nigeria through Entrepreneurship Education

by

Joseph, Samuel

Entrepreneurship Department

Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education

University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State

Correspondence: josamuelbainta@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigeria like every developing country in the world, is suffering from economic backwardness due to the high rate of unemployment which has resulted in various social vices from kidnapping, armed robbery, boko haram and internet fraudsters among others. This and many more are issues for national discuss. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and indeed Entrepreneurship Education, has the capacity to transform Nigeria economic growth, if adequately administered to compete with developed economies in this technology driven era. This paper focuses on how entrepreneurial education can help eradicate unemployment and lead to economic growth.

Keywords: *Technical, Vocational Education and Training, Youth Unemployment, Entrepreneurship Education*

Introduction

The development of any nation hinges on the Social and Economic contributions of her citizens (Okwelle & Deebom, 2017). Hence the need to develop her human resources to meet the current and future needs of the society. It has been observed that a nation's economic growth and the living standard of its people can be positively influenced by the quality and quantity of its human resources (Atsumbe, Emmanuel, Igwe & Atsumbe, 2012; in Ubom, Haruna, & Aregbesola, 2013). Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) have been identified to be the mainstay in the development of nation's human resources for sustainable growth and development. TVET is the form of education that advocates development of the head (knowledge), training of the hand (dexterity) and enriching the heart (conscientiousness and painstaking), - the 3Hs. TVET is a total deviation from the previous emphasis on 3Rs, - reading, writing and arithmetic, which was fundamentally a form of credentialing entry into elite status with its graduates/products roaming about seeking for the non-existing white collar jobs. TVET is the education for those who need it, those who want it, and those who want to progress by it. It is a result oriented form of education. It is not education for the dullards or educationally disadvantaged people (Okoye & Okwelle,

2013). TVET is also recognized to be a crucial vehicle for social equity and inclusion. However, there is system failure in the administration and implementation of TVET from pre-vocational to vocational and professional level. In Nigeria like many developing countries, education has been adopted as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. One of the goals in the national philosophy of education is based on the belief that education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; in Aja, Onoh, & Igwe, 2018). TVET and tertiary institutions by their objective of providing a high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation, as captured in the National Policy on Education, should adopt a pragmatic approach in its effort to provide the requisite technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills relevant in the 21st century for economic growth and development. One educational programme that has the mandate of producing the required and demand driven industrial/technological manpower relevant for Nigeria, is the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), (Okorieocha & Duru, 2013; in Chukwuedo, & Omofonmwan, 2015). The need therefore for effective and efficient TVET programmes in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasised.

The teeming population of unemployed youth in the society due to the non-availability of paid jobs is causing economical and psychological problem to both the individual and the nation at large. Most Nigerian youths and graduates, despite acquiring the relevant knowledge and skills, lack the initiative to go entrepreneurial. Within the context of rising unemployment rates in a skill constrained economy, rising youth unemployment is particularly worrisome. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education (2013) section 50 & 81 clearly states the goals of TVET and Tertiary institutions, to include providing trained manpower, providing technical knowledge and vocational skills for self-reliance for agricultural, commercial and economic development, while also promoting and encouraging scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service.

There is a popular saying that “nothing ventured, nothing gained”. Acquiring technical and vocational skills without the requisite knowledge of how to go entrepreneurial or commercialising it, is the reason for the sorry state of Nigeria economy. Most TVET graduates lack the initiative to go commercial with their skills, as such go in search for already made job and increasing the statistics of the unemployed workforce in the country. This paper focuses on how entrepreneurship

education as a component of TVET can be used to curb youth unemployment in Nigeria.

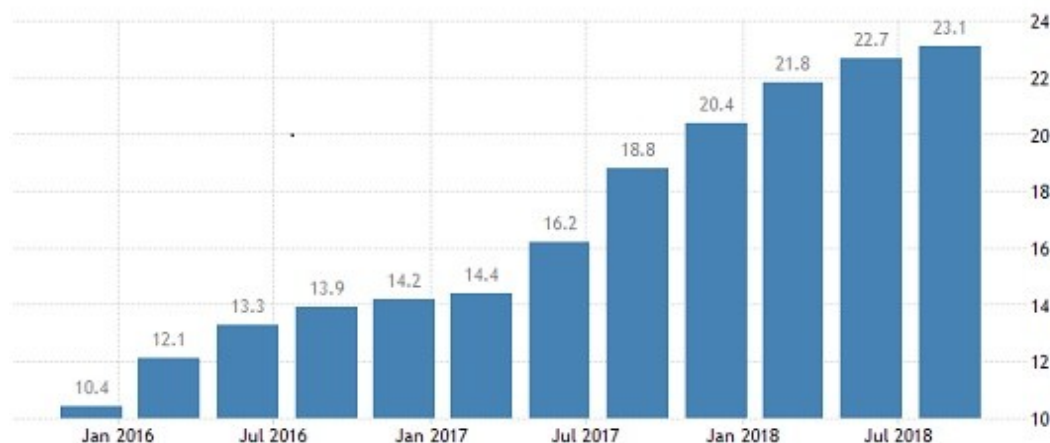
The Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment is defined by the American [Bureau of Labour Statistics](#) as people who do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the past four weeks, and are currently available for work (Kimberly 2019). It also includes people who were temporarily laid off and are waiting to be called back to their job.

Unemployment, or joblessness, is a situation in which able-bodied people who are looking for a job cannot find a job (Wikipedia, 2019). Unemployment is a term referring to individuals who are employable and seeking a job but are unable to find a job. Furthermore, it is those people in the workforce or pool of people who are available for work but do not have a job.

Unemployment is also defined as the number or proportion of the work force in a given economy who are capable and willing to work, but unable to find jobs (Oppong & Sachs, in Longe, 2017). From the foregoing, unemployment is construed to mean a condition of involuntary idleness of a nation workforce who are actively seeking for remunerative employment, but cannot find any, under the prevailing economic condition.

The Nigeria Situation



Source: [tradeeconomics.com](#) | National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria. **A Chart showing the Rate of Unemployment in Nigeria (2016-2018)**

Youth unemployment is a major development challenge in the African continent. In Nigeria, the problem of unemployment and poverty spurred the Nigerian government into developing a policy framework for youth entrepreneurship education. This saw the birth of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986, and the Work for Yourself Programme (WFYP) in 1987. Both programmes were joint programmes of training and financial support to entrepreneurs. The NDE was however more extensive and included three core programmes namely the Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Programme; the Agricultural Programmes, and the Small Scale Industries and Graduate Employment Scheme. These programmes made significant impacts on Nigeria's economy and national development as they were able to empower young graduates in the task of job and wealth creation through entrepreneurial thinking. However, the youths were also confronted with the problem of non-possession of sound knowledge of entrepreneurship (Beckley, 2018).

In recent times, the government initiated several programmes such as the National Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), Youths Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin), Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SureP), Need for Power (Npower) and the Presidential Youth Empowerment Scheme (P-YES) to mitigate the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. Despite all this efforts, the growing rate of unemployment has often been issues of national discuss.

The Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

The term "Entrepreneur" was coined from a French word "Entreprendre" which mean 'to do something' the word was first used by an Irish Economist Richard Cantillon who lived in France in the 18th century to mean a person who sees business opportunity and utilizes available resources to meet the need (Aja & et'al 2018). An entrepreneur is a person who sees opportunity and does something about it, he/she identifies a niche, use their initiative to innovate and create jobs. An entrepreneur is

futuristic in his/her approach and proffer solution(s) to identified problem(s).

Entrepreneurship on the other hand is the act of being an Entrepreneur; it is the process of identifying a need or market opportunities and combining or utilizing available resources to meet those needs with the motive of making profit both on the short and long run. According to Edobor and Imade, (2013); in Aja & e'tal (2018), entrepreneurship is the process of searching out opportunities in the market place and arranging resources required to exploit these opportunities for life-long and long-term gains.

Entrepreneurship Education according to Wikipedia (2019), seek to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Similarly, Bolarin (2012); in Nwite, (2016) further described entrepreneurship education as the education that transverse the length of business formation, management, diversification and growth and the on-going process that equip future entrepreneurs (students) with entrepreneurial skills.

Entrepreneurship education is a form of education that instil in its recipient(s) entrepreneurial skills that will prepare them for business or entrepreneurial life. The recipients of entrepreneurship education are consciously trained to be able to identify market opportunities that are advantageous to their skills with the view of making profit for their livelihood, such skills that are acquired/learned in Agric, Home-Economics, Industrial Technical, Computer Science and Business Education which are channelled into productive use through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education initiates its recipients into the reality of the business world.

However, the system of entrepreneurship education in practice in Nigeria's TVET and Tertiary Institutions focuses more on theory than practice. For young and vibrant entrepreneurs that will steer our country to economic growth and development to emerge in this 21st century for competitiveness with world economies, the following needs to be done:

1. **Mind-set Reorientation:** The poor image of TVET and indeed entrepreneurship needs to be redeemed. This could be done through conscious

efforts to reorient parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders about their perception on TVET systems as an education for the educationally disadvantaged children must be addressed, through conferences, seminars, workshops and the media (print and electronic), the internet proves to be a veritable tool for disseminating more information.

2. **Curriculum Reform:** Currently, there is no definite curriculum for entrepreneurship education, as such it is taught at the discretion of the instructor (teacher). The curriculum should be restructured and made uniform in all TVET and tertiary institutions, to include development of business models by the students and the utilisation of ICT for business, this will spur students into identifying opportunities that is of interest and relevant with their skills; thereby making them to be more creative and innovative.
3. **Funding:** TVET institutions must identify alternative source of funding to augment government effort. This could be achieved by setting up business ventures, seeking donations from philanthropist, well to do individuals and those that empathise with TVET.
4. **Mentoring:** As the current Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is not very effective. TVET institutions should partner with local businesses to mentor students according to their needs or interest areas.
5. **Capacity Development:** There is a popular parlance "You cannot give what you don't have" as such the capacity of teachers in TVET institutions needs to be developed through training and re-training to meet the need of the society.
6. **Think big, start small:** TVET students should be encouraged to "think big but start small". They should take initiative and start up business no matter how small, so doing, they will contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation, thereby creating more jobs

leading to economic growth and development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the government, teachers, parents and students all have a role to play in ensuring that TVET and tertiary institutions deliver on their objective of providing high level manpower. Hence, there is the need for collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. TVET graduates must learn how to go commercial or entrepreneurial with their skills to help address the burning issue of unemployment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. In collaboration with the ministry of information and culture, aggressive campaigns should be embarked on to re-orient parents, students and other stakeholders on the importance of TVET to national development.
2. TVET institutions should partner with local businesses to provide practical knowledge and hands-on experience to students, in other to concretise ideas.
3. Government should provide conducive business environment by way of suitable economic policy and provide necessary infrastructure to encourage new businesses.
4. TVET professionals and indeed ministry of education should work together to structure the curriculum of entrepreneurship to meet the need of the nation.
5. TVET teachers should be trained and retrained to meet current needs of the 21st century.
6. Government should offer incentive to TVET students to encourage them and spur interest from others.
7. Further research should be carried out by researchers to improve knowledge

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