

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS A PANACEA FOR SOLVING THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This paper focuses on vocational education as a panacea to solving the economic problems in Nigeria. Vocational and Technical Education is understood to comprise of education and skill developments relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production services and livelihoods. The study adopted a survey research design in which questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. 130 students from the 5 different departments in School of Vocational and Technical Education of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin were selected using purposeful sampling technique. Data obtained were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and chi-square. The null hypotheses were rejected after testing with chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that lack of equipment and training facilities is a major factor that caused unemployment in Nigeria. Also, awareness of vocational training can help to curb the problem of unemployment among youths in Nigeria. This study recommended that government should re-train vocational and technical education teachers and employ experts to operate complex machines and equipments during training of vocational students, also the need to carry out regular accreditation exercise in every approved vocational and technical schools, so as to achieve quality teaching and learning of vocational studies among the youths.

Keywords: Vocational and Technical education, panacea, economic problems, equipment facilities.

Introduction

Vocational education can be defined as all experiences where an individual learns to carry out successfully, a useful occupation. Wikipedia defined vocational education as an education that prepares people to work as a technician or take up employment in a skilled craft or trade as a trade person or artisan. It can also be seen as the type of education given to an individual to prepare that individual to be gainfully employed with requisite skills. Raheem and Ayika (2019). The vocational and technical education is understood to comprise of education and skill development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production services and livelihoods. In Nigeria, the federal government has identified education in her policy on education as the process that helps the whole man to change and develop physically, mentally, morally and technologically. The purpose is to enable him/her function effectively in any situation that he or she may find himself or herself so as to become productive, self-fulfilling and attain self actualization. The Federal Government of Nigeria also adopted education as an instrument for national development and change (Thompson, 2002).

Narling-Hammond (2010) reported that quality education is believed to be a key that is viable for survival in Nigeria in competitive economy. He stated further that practitioners, policy makers, parent agrees that the key to transformation of nation's economy is to improve quality of education with more emphasis on vocation and technical education (Tyowuah and Chen, 2019). Fafunwa (1997) also reported that education is believed to be an aggregate of all the processes by which a child, the young or adults develop the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviours which are of positive value to the transformation of the society in which

he lives. Therefore education can be expressed as a process of learning and re-learning, transculture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge. The national policy on education specifically stipulated that education in Nigeria aims at the acquisition, development and inculcation of proper value, orientation, knowledge and skills for the survival of an individual and transformation of society.

Vocational education is a form of education that has its primary purpose as to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations, it provides the skill, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary for effective employment in specific occupation. Okoro (2006) defines vocational education as education that provides a special programme offered at secondary and post secondary levels. It is an education for occupational preparation. It can also be regarded as that aspect of total education process that focuses on individual occupation. Eneyoh, Okon and Okeng (2012) analyzed the six major areas of vocational education viz. Agricultural Science Education, Fine and Applied Arts, Technical Education (Building, electrical and civil art work), Home Economics Education, Business Education, and Music education.

Vocational and technical education, according to FRN (2004) and Leversque (2000), vocational and technical education is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge related to the occupation in various sectors of economic and social life, they both submitted that vocational preparation must always be viewed against the backdrop of the needs of society and of individual, while meeting the demands of the economy, the abilities of the individuals must be utilized to the fullest, meeting the job needs of individual is crucial objective of vocational and technical education for solving economic issues in Nigeria.

The neglect of technical education is injurious because it is robbing the nation, the contributions of graduates to the economic improvement of the nation. Nigeria's current preoccupation with university education reduces economic opportunities of those who are more oriented towards work than academic. The epileptic situation of Nigeria's tertiary institutions which leads to lack of employment by graduates would easily be acquired from technical and vocational colleges. It can be observed that the nation's youth unemployment rate has risen up beyond necessity. In 2021, the rate of unemployment of youth in Nigeria was recorded at 9.79%, 2020 it was 9.71%, while 2019 it was 8.53% (www.macrotend.net NGA. 5.49pm 21/9/2022). The economy has not been in good shape for the past five years and this went to a recession in 2016. In 2020 in the wave of COVID-19 pandemic, it plunged into another recession. This is worst in four decades. It recorded gross domestic product contraction of 3.62% in the third quarter of 2020. There has been a lot of uncertainty largely due to policy inconsistencies, about where people should invest. This cuts across various economic sectors (Ndubusi, 2021).

This paper aims to focus on the role of vocational education as a panacea to economic issues in Nigeria, a case study of Kwara State College of Education Ilorin.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the influence of lack of facilities and equipments for training in vocational education in colleges of education in Nigeria.
2. To determine the influence of lack of awareness of vocational education as a mean of solving economic problems in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- 1) What influence does lack of facilities and equipments have on training vocational education in colleges of education in Nigeria?

- 2) What is the influence of lack of awareness of vocational education as a mean of solving economic problems in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated in line with the objectives of the study.

- 1) Acute lack of facilities and equipments have no significant influence on training vocational education in colleges of education in Nigeria.
- 2) Acute of lack of awareness of vocational education have no significant influence in solving economic problems in Nigeria.

Research Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, collection of data was carried out in one location. The research study was carried out at Kwara State College of Education Ilorin. The college comprises of six schools which are school of languages, school of vocation and technical education, school of education, school of science, school of Art and social science and school of early childhood care. The research is practically using school of vocational and technical education that is made up of 5 different departments; which are Department of Agricultural Science Education, Business Education Department, Home Economic Department, Fine and Applied Arts, and Technical Education Department. One hundred and thirty (130) NCE students were sampled and a purposeful sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) students each from Agricultural Science Education and Business Education Departments. While the remaining thirty were distributed ten each in the remaining three departments.

Data were collected through self-structured questionnaire of ten (10) items, designed as a four point scales of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed with values of 4, 3, 2, and 1. Test retest method was used to test reliability of the instrument and co-efficient value of 0.82 was obtained using Pearson moment correlation co-efficient. The research questions were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation. The cut-off point was retained at 2.51. Any score that ranged below 2.5 was regarded as disagreed. Finally, the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using chi-square.

Results

Table 1: Responses on the influence of lack of facilities and equipment for training vocational educators contributed to unemployment and poor economic problem in Nigeria

S/N	Item	$\bar{x}$	STD	Decision
1.	Unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria survive due to lack of facilities and equipment for training vocational education in Nigeria	2.8	0.9	Agreed
2.	Lack of training facilities and equipment in teaching vocational education in Nigeria enables improper allocation of resources to reduce unemployment in the society.	2.9	1.1	Agreed
3.	Shortage of instructional personnel to make use of the little facilities and equipment for training vocational education as a means of solving unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria.	2.9	1.0	Agreed
4.	Acute shortage of training facilities and equipment at all levels of vocational and technical education provides opportunity unemployment in Nigeria	2.7	1.2	Agreed
5.	Lack of training equipment and facilities in teaching vocational education increases unemployment rate and economic problems in Nigeria.	2.9	2.8	Agreed
	Grand mean	2.8	1.0	Agreed

Source: Filed Survey, 2022.

The result from Table 1 shows that mean score of all the five (5) items were found to be greater than fixed score of 2.5 which is agreed. It can also be ascertained that the grand mean value found to be greater than fixed score for agreed ($2.8 > 2.5$) with standard deviation of 1.0. The analysis therefore revealed that lack of facilities and equipment for training vocational education contributes to unemployment and poor economic problems of Nigeria.

Table 2: Responses on the lack of awareness of vocational education contributes to unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria

S/N	Item	$\bar{x}$	STD	Decision
6.	Lack of awareness of vocational education increases unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria	2.7	1.0	Agreed
7.	Modern training facilities and equipment to be accessed by students and facilitators increases unemployment rate in Nigeria.	2.8	1.2	Agreed
8.	Unemployment and economic problems are caused by lack of awareness of vocational training in some schools.	2.8	0.9	Agreed
9.	Record keeping of routine maintenance of available resources and training facilities improves the productivity of learners which reduce unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria.	2.8	1.2	Agreed
10.	Awareness of vocational training is indispensable for curbing unemployment and promoting economic problems in Nigeria	2.9	1.1	Agreed
Grand mean		2.8	1.1	Agreed

Source: Filed Survey, 2022.

Table 2 reveals that mean score of question number two that stated lack of awareness of vocational education contributes to unemployment and economic problems of Nigeria.

The mean score of the questionnaire items were greater than 2.5 index score for agree. Also it can be seen in the grand mean of score which is 2.8, that was found to be greater than fixed index score of 2.5, with standard deviation of 1.1. Based on the analysis, it was discovered that lack of awareness of vocational education contributes to unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis

The null hypotheses were tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. Null hypothesis (1) Lack of facilities and equipment for training vocational education have no significant effect on unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria

Table 3: Chi-square on the lack of facilities and equipment for training vocational education have significant effect on unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1. Unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria survive due to lack of facilities and equipment for training vocational education in Nigeria	230	120	80	60	490
2. Lack of training facilities and equipment in teaching vocational education in Nigeria enables improper allocation of resources to reduce unemployment in the society.	250	150	60	55	515
3. Shortage of instructional personnel to make use of the little facilities and equipment for training vocational education as a means of solving unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria.	222	141	70	60	493
4. Acute shortage of training facilities and equipment at all levels of vocational and technical education provides opportunity unemployment in Nigeria	266	198	50	50	564
5. Lack of training equipment and facilities in teaching vocational education increases unemployment rate and economic problems in Nigeria.	170	237	72	40	519
Total	1,138	846	332	265	

Critical value of chi-square at 12 df and at 0.05 level of sig = 21.03.

Table 3 reveals that lack of facilities and equipment for training vocational education have significant effect on unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria. This is because the chi-square calculated in the test is 161.26 which is higher than critical value of 21.03 measured at 0.05 level of significance as shown at the bottom of table 3. With this value the null hypothesis is rejected.

Null hypothesis 2 :Lack of awareness of vocational education have no significant effect on solving unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria.

Table 4: Chi-square on the lack of awareness of vocational education have no significant effect on solving unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total
6. Lack of awareness of vocational education increases unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria	174	186	70	57	487
7. Modern training facilities and equipment to be accessed by students and facilitators increases unemployment rate in Nigeria.	258	114	74	58	504
8. Unemployment and economic problems are caused by lack of awareness of vocational training in some schools.	170	207	72	50	499
9. Record keeping of routine maintenance of available resources and training facilities improves the productivity of learners which reduce unemployment and economic problems in Nigeria.	226	150	60	61	497
10. Awareness of vocational training is indispensable for curbing unemployment and promoting economic problems in Nigeria	242	144	78	50	514
Total	1,070	801	354	176	2,501

Critical value of chi-square at 12 df and at 0.05 level of sig = 21.03.

Table 4 reveals that lack of awareness of vocation education have significant effects on unemployment and economic problems of Nigeria. The chi-square value obtained in the test is 116.48, which is greater than the critical value of 21.03 as it was indicated at the bottom of the table. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Results

The findings of the research revealed that lack of equipments and training facilities is one of the major causes of unemployment in Nigeria, which is in line with Dike and Ola (2013) reported that private enterprise, non-governmental agencies and industries should provide laboratories equipments, workshop facilities, and machines in the existing technical colleges.

The finding of the study also revealed that awareness of vocational training is indispensable for curbing unemployment and solving economic problems in Nigeria. The finding is in line with the view of Abdullah *et al.* (2003) that awareness of vocational training will convey a meaningful information that will have long lasting effect in curbing unemployment and promote economic status of Nigeria.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that vocational and technical education can be use to solve Nigeria economic problems if there is proper training of students of vocational and technical so that they can be self reliant after graduation.

Recommendations

The researchers will like to submit the under listed recommendations.

- i. The government needs to carry out regular accreditation exercise in every recommended and approved higher technical schools.

- ii. The government should train qualified vocational and technical education teachers and experts to operate complex machines and equipment during the implementation of technical college programme and use such skills acquired by teachers to educate and empower the youths of Nigeria.
- iii. The federal government can assist all state governments in operating a technical college and entrepreneurship like the one operated in Kwara State in order to create awareness and broaden youths knowledge in the importance of vocation and entrepreneur skills.
- iv. The approved school fees should be on a moderate range in order to give chance for any interested candidate to attend.

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