

The Effect of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on School Leavers in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is understood to include education, training and skills development related to a wide range of occupational fields, production and livelihoods. It is in this context that this study seeks to find out the effect of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on school leavers in Adamawa State, Nigeria: 109 small-scale informal sector technical employees, graduates of technical, and vocational schools in Adamawa State were used as the population of the study. The study found out that the recession in the economy, explosion in the population and poor state of the education sector could not allow graduates of technical and vocational schools to be self-employed. Highlight of the recommendations is that, technical and vocational schools should re-structures their training to market demand by making strenuous effort to employment opportunities and improving their chances of becoming self-employed.

Key Words: School Leavers; Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

1.0 Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to all forms and levels of education and training that provide knowledge and skills relevant to occupations in all sectors of economic and social life through formal, non-formal and informal learning environments (UNESCO-UNEVOC, What is TVET? 2017) [1]. Likewise, TVET, can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels as part of lifelong learning, including work-based learning and continuing training and professional development which may lead to qualification. Furthermore, TVET also includes a wide range of skill development opportunity attuned to national and local context, learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills which are integral part/component of TVET ([UNESCO (GC) 2015) (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2012) [2][3]. Therefore, TVET is recognized as panacea for unemployment, training individuals or groups to acquire skills and knowledge in different fields/vocations in order to become fully self-reliant, but the opposite is true as certain challenges hinder the process in some of the developing countries in the world especially in African.

Several studies have shown that hunger, disease and unemployment have been the bane of many developing countries in Africa. A major challenge facing governments in these countries is how to provide employment

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opportunities for functional living. (Manabete, 2018) [4] Therefore, there are many reasons for going to school, but the most prominent is access to income-generating/employment opportunities. However, like in several other countries, Nigeria is looking for jobs for its growing educated population that continue to prove one of the knottiest problems despite the many years of effort (Apagu, 2003) (Diraso, 1998), (Chime, 1988), (Yusuf, 1988) (Callaway, 1964) [5][6][7][8][9]. Scholars and public communicators alike never tire or lack suggesting remedies, some of which have been tried. Recently, however, considerable attention has been paid to the concept of stimulus as a way of absorbing and channelling its enormous energy towards improving national productivity, generating economic growth and promoting national development. Most importantly, it is hoped that, as large number of young persons take up self-employment, the large and growing army of the unemployed will be demobilized making it easier for the remaining few to be adequately placed into jobs in the formal sectors.

However, experience often shows that the choice of self-employment is not easy either. For an individual or group to muster courage and venture into the uncharted waters of self-employment, the individual or group must first have the necessary skills, habits and attitudes to successfully seize the available opportunities (OKusami, O.F.,1998); Yusuf, OP. Cit, (Meredith, 1991), (Moorman, 1993) [10][11][12]. To prepare school leavers for the challenges of self-employment, government, policy makers, scholars and public commentators have long argued that TVET is, inter alia, an ancient tool which provides the most effective way in which individuals are prepared to accept wage or self-employment (Clahane, 1997) [13]; Diraso, Op. Cit.; World Bank,1991). Perhaps, it is from this of view that the architects of the 6-3-3-4 system of education gave so much prominence to TVET in the schools' curricula. Also, the new National Policy of Education states clearly, among other things, that TVET is to give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians, technologists, and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.

The policy also specifies that pre-vocational programs be introduced in the Junior Secondary Schools, while some parts of the Senior Secondary Schools, the technical schools, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education (Technical) and similar institutions should provide TVET programs. (Wahba, 2013) [14].

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Since the inception or introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, many young people have received some form of TVET, at least within the context of the diversified council. Nonetheless, large number of unemployed educated people continue to congregate without any problems to convey away the mass. The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) reported that the composite rate for Adamawa/Taraba States alone was 0.7% during the quarter April-June, 1995. Of this mass, about 0.3% were in rural sectors of the two states while 11.5% were to be found in the urban sectors. In addition, previous research has shown that unemployment has become rampant, especially that TVET graduates of most Nigerian youth tend to fall into poverty (Lawrence, 2016) (Abubakar, Jul.-Aug. 2013) [15] [16]. This situation has led to stagnation in productivity, wealth creation and overall quality of life, with the consequent result that we are now witnessing a wave of anti-social activities such as looting, robbery, banditry, kidnapping, Boko haram, burglary, theft, vandalism, hooliganism, drug peddling, and drug abuse etc. The natural question that arises is: Has the widespread provision of TVET failed to meet the goals and objectives of the new National Policy? Or as (Akinkugbe, 1994) [17] put it, have we failed to achieve our goals and objectives? This project seeks to shed light on the fact that TVET has been an important factor in the development of private small-scale income-generating initiatives in Adamawa States.

1.2 Objective of the Study

Find out the effect of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on school leavers in Adamawa State

1.3 Research Question

What is the effect of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on school leavers in Adamawa State?

2.0 Research Methodology

After reviewing the literature on this issue, this study of 109 small-scale informal sector skilled employees was conducted in all local governments of Adamawa State to understand the impact on school leavers who benefited from TVET and to understand how it has boosted their self-employment amid shrinking economy and lack-jobs. Fieldwork was conducted from March-April 1995. The researchers worked on randomly selected streets in various parts of the state. The first establishment was randomly selected, including the type of activity that establishment was carrying out. Then find and interview the first five workers as possible, including the proprietor and apprentice. Respondents were asked about their education, training and previous employment as well as their current income. Several other questions were also raised. The interviews took 10 minutes and cooperation was good and cordial. Refusals were less than three percent.

Table 1 Profile of Small Entrepreneur and their Workers in Adamawa State, 2000

S/ No.	Characteristics	Masters%(N)	Workers%(N)	Apprentice % (N)
1	Position in establishment	29.4 (32)	37.6 (41)	33 (36)
2	Reasons for starting/joining the establishment			
	a. Realization of business potential and self actualization	41 belong to	all the group	
	b. Inheritance	6 belong to	all the group	
	c. As last resort	15 belong to	all the group	
	d. Others	38 belong to	all the group	
3	Highest level of education			
	a. Tertiary	—	2.4(1)	2.8(1)
	b. Technical School	—	4.8(4)	2.8(1)
	c. Senior Secondary School	25(8)	31.7(13)	25(9)
	d. Junior Secondary School	21.9(7)	2.4(1)	22.2(8)
	e. Primary School	43.8(14)	36.6(15)	41.7(15)
	f. No formal education	9.3(3)	17.7(7)	5.6(2)

(Continued)

Table 1 Profile of Small Entrepreneur and their Workers in Adamawa State, 2000—cont'd				
S/ No.	Characteristics	Masters%(N)	Workers%(N)	Apprentice % (N)
4	Mode of TVE Training			
	a. Apprentice to master	90.6(29)	75.6(31)	100(36)
	b. Trainee in company	—	4.8(2)	—
	c. Government work	—	—	—
	d. Government sponsored scheme	9.4(3)	4.8(2)	—
	e. Trainee in formal education	—	14.6(6)	—
5	Previous job experience			
	a. Start/joined establishment	31.3 (10)	48.8(20)	44.4(16)
	b. Merchant/Trader/Owner of other business	6.3(2)	14.6(6)	19.4(7)
	c. Employee of this line of business	15.6(5)	12.2(5)	2.8(1)
	d. Others	25(8)	7.3(3)	22.2(2)
6	Years spent in establishment			
	a. Less than one year	3.1(1)	7.3(3)	30.6(11)
	b. More than one year but less than two years	—	4.9(2)	30.6(11)
	c. More than two years but less than 5 years	15.6(5)	26.8(11)	22.2(8)
	d. More than 5 years	81.3(26)	63.4(26)	16.7(6)
7	Average Month's income			
	a. Under ₦500.00	6.3(2)	12.2(5)	38.8(14)
	b. ₦500.00-1000.00	15.6(5)	17(7)	22.2(8)
	c. ₦1000.00-N3000.00	21.9(7)	14.6(6)	—
	d. ₦3000.00 and above	50.0(16)	56.1(23)	27.8(10)
	NA	6.3(2)	—	—

Table 2 Type of Training to be most helpful			
S/No	Item	N	%
1	General schooling	19	18
2	Technical/Vocational (Formal)	48	45
3	Previous Job	13	12
4	Apprenticeship	26	24
TOTAL		106	100

Table 3 Type of Employment and Most Preferred			
S/No	Item	N	%
1	Government work	18	17
2	Private company	24	22
3	Self employed	65	61
TOTAL		107	100

Table 4 Source of Information about the Existence of TVET Opportunities			
S/No	Item	N	%
1	Acquaintance with practitioners	11	19
2	Advice from relations/peer	31	54
3	Through teachers/School work	2	4
4	Others	13	23
TOTAL		57	100

3.0 Results of the Study

There is often consensus in the literature that the rise in unemployment in Nigeria can be traced directly to:

1. The nature of the Nigerian economy, which is profit oriented and does not take into account the motive - the satisfaction of human needs;
2. Economy recession caused by oil glut, balance of payments problems, falling agricultural prices etc.;
3. Discrimination of unemployed people over in terms of employment choices and workplaces;
4. Explosion in the population of Nigeria and the corresponding rapid development of education; and
5. The poor state of the education sector

(Chime, 1988), (Akintola, 1984) [18], (Olusanya, 1981) [19], (Yesufu, 1969) [20]

People, who are self-employed or workers in the informal sector, however, think differently. When the question on the causative factors of unemployment was put to the respondents in the survey, 54% of them thought that most young persons are today unemployed because they (the youth) don't have the right habits and attitudes. The respondents thought that many of today's youth who are roaming the streets are lazy, spoilt, and undisciplined. No well-meaning employer can hire such calibre of workers and neither could they make it on their own as entrepreneurs. In addition, training, qualifications, and competencies, 8% thought that since the society is so generally corrupt and the government negligent, any person who does not have a godfather or cannot afford to give bribes is not likely to get a job. Only 13% of the respondents

gave some of the usual reasons cited for unemployment in the literature such as the poor state of the economy etc.

When asked which type of training would be most suitable preparation for someone aspiring to be self-employed or working in the informal technical sector, 45% mentioned formal technical/vocational schooling while 24% thought apprenticeship under a master was to be preferred. 18% thought that general schooling could help and 12% said experience gained from a previous job can be helpful. The contrasts between technical training in school and training under apprenticeship to a master in the informal sector are however not lost on the respondents.

3.1 Technical/Vocational Skills Training Services

At present, Adamawa state has three technical colleges, two polytechnics and University of Technology which provide technical/vocational oriented education in addition to the pre-vocational courses offered at the junior secondary school level. Technical colleges run a three-year craftsman/artisan training program; polytechnics provide advanced skills training for candidates who have already received secondary education. At the very top is Federal University of Technology, Yola also known/Changed to Modibbo Adama University of Technology and now to Modibbo Adama University, Yola which offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in engineering and technology. Courses offered by polytechnics and university include industrial training attachment (training internships) of 4-6 months duration in companies, factories or government establishment. However, the regular courses of this government-established institution are used almost exclusively by applicants working or aspiring for a career in the formal wage sections. Table 1 show that only 6% (six percent) of the sample in the survey had been to technical education institutes. Although the fee charged by these institutes is moderate- a maximum of two thousand Naira (₦2000) as of then, those presently employed in the formal sector of Adamawa State claim they cannot afford to pay the fees in addition to providing for their board, feeding and books as is the requirement.

Furthermore, while only a quarter of informal sector workers have an education above the Junior Secondary School level (see Table 1), polytechnics and university often require applicants to provide a Senior Secondary School certificate. Adamawa Sate also provides formal technical and vocational skills to other government agencies with the stated goal of training entrepreneurs and workers for self-employment. Notable among these are the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the Works Training Centre (WTC). According to (Abdulraheem,2014) [21], (Chime, 1988), NDE was established through the Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Program (YEVSD), Small scale industry and graduate employment scheme (SS1), Agricultural Program and Special Public Works (SPW). For entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector, the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOSA) and the school on Wheels Project on NDE were designed to provide employment. However, Table 1 shows that only about 3% of the population in our survey was trained in these government sponsored schemes. Many of the people working in the informal sector are either seen as not unaware of the training and services provided by these agencies or discouraged by the lack of flexibility in admitting applicants and managing their training needs.

The limited impact of training provided by government agencies and formal technical training institutions on the production of entrepreneurs and informal sector workers can be attributed to several factors.

First, trainees under these schemes appear to have become too mature for employment in the informal sector and therefore prefer to seek employment elsewhere for promotions and higher wages.

Second, the limited hands-on practical training provided by educational institutions is not likely to build in the graduates' sufficient confidence to venture out on their own as entrepreneurs.

Third, institutions and institutional trainees lack quality skills and business experience that can be imparted to trainees.

Fourth, most of the latest equipment used by these colleges for training is hard-earned, so the graduate feels that he needs to wait for a long time to get funds to buy the equipment and setup.

Finally, a lack of flexibility in adapting training needs to market demands, can also be an obstacle (Apagu, 2003); Saha and Sallah, 1984). The foregoing perhaps explains the popularity of the apprenticeship under an informal sector master as a mode of vocational training for those in self-employment.

3.2 The Apprenticeship System in the Technical Trades Industry of Adamawa State

Most of the sample firms in the survey appear to have survived the high mortality rate characteristic of the establishment. More than three-quarters of them have been in operation for more than five years. In the past two years, only two 2% of companies have been established.

As for the nature of their work, the most common are metal engineering, engine repair, welding, welding and fabrication, auto body, blacksmithing and scrap metal, smelting and tinkering. Between them they employ 69% of the informal sector workers.

The rest of the sample firms are repairing batteries and other auto electrical parts, refrigerators, home appliances, generators, radios, televisions etc. others are engaged in woodwork and furniture making.

Masters/entrepreneurs, who own and operate these small-scale business deals with hiring workers who have professional skills and have been trained elsewhere, especially in formal technical training institutions. Only about 15% of the wage workers were found to have been trained or receiving training at a technical school. Those referred to as workers in this sector are mostly former apprentices who are either unable to set up shop immediately or those who have failed in a previous attempt at self-employment. The few who report had formal technical schooling said they were working here to acquire practical "business sense" and also to save enough money and buy tools.

Although the number of apprentices in the formal sector is many times higher than that of the wage workers who are sometimes referred to as "job men", the number of the job men appears to be higher in the sample compared to the apprentices 38% against 33%, chiefly because the master/entrepreneurs permitted their apprentices to respond to the questionnaires less than the job men.

The way apprenticeship system works is that the master/entrepreneur takes an apprentice, on a fixed-term-contract, usually three to four years. At the start of the contract, the sponsor of the applicant usually brings the master/entrepreneur a deal. If the deal fails and the applicant is accepted to train under the tutelage of the master/entrepreneur, the trainer is paid. A formal contract is usually only signed after a six-month probationary apprenticeship to ascertain whether the applicant is trainable. At the end of this probationary

period, the terms of apprenticeship contract will be spelled out, including the rights and obligations of the trainer and the means of “settling” during the same apprenticeship.

Typically, the apprentices perform other chores and a run errand for the master, while the master feeds and spends hours each day demonstrating to his apprentices how to do the job. The apprentices just watch until the demonstration was repeated enough time for them to do the job on their own. Master has nothing to do, he spends more time teaching. A master is not only instructor/mentor. Mentor is also supplemented by experienced apprentices with more than two or three years of training. The same goes for junior masters or job men, wherever they are.

There are two forms of settlement at the end of the apprenticeship. In one case, a party was held for a graduating apprentice, and the master presented the apprentice with tools and some cash so he could set out his own. In the second form of settlement, the master can set up the graduate apprentice in what is commonly referred to as a “joint venture”. From time to time, the master monitors the progress of the business, provides counseling and injects additional capital/funds as into it as needed. At the end of two years, the business is liquidated and the profits are divided between the now mature entrepreneur and his former master and partners.

Available literature assumes that only school leavers who have unsuccessfully attempted to secure jobs in the formal wage sector will re-rely on the apprenticeship to acquiring skills that will enable them to become self-reliant and /or employable. On the other contrary Table 1 shows that only apprentices in the sample admitted to joining the master/entrepreneur to learn skills as a last resort. The rest gave other reasons such as inheritance and self-actualization desires and the realization of a business potential.

In any case, more than half (about 56%) of the apprentices interviewed were aged below 18 years and like their masters only about a quarter of the apprentices were educated beyond the junior secondary school level. This suggests that even if all things were equal, the problem of unemployment would still have been much greater among this category of youth without the apprenticeship system.

To further underscore the importance of the apprenticeship system to skills and entrepreneurial development in Adamawa State it is worthy of note from Table 1 that more than 90% of the masters/entrepreneurs in the survey had previously served as apprentices. While other master/entrepreneurs admitted receiving training under a government-sponsored scheme (NDE and WTC), none of the proprietors had benefited from formal technical/vocational training and only one quarter had been educated beyond the junior secondary school level.

3.3 Prospect for Informal Sector Technical/Vocational Trainers

As noted somewhere in this report, informal sector jobs are considered by many to be primarily inferior jobs, and as formal sector wages increase, demand for and participation in these jobs will tend to decline. Despite seemingly distorted earnings reported by respondents, half of the masters and half of the workers reported incomes above the Adamawa State minimum wage due to apparent fear of tax assessments, of ₦3000.00 as of then in an average month (see Table 1). Even some of the apprentices (about 28%) though not paid by their masters reported receiving more than three thousand Naira a month from their aside deals.

Regarding the time lapses between when they completed their training and when they joined or started the present establishment 31% of the masters and 22% of the workers reported engaging in other forms of

employment in a line not related to what they are currently doing. And only less than 10% of the masters and workers have been with the present establishment for less than two years.

When asked which type of employment they would have preferred, the majority of the respondents (61%) named self-employment while 22% would love to work with a private company. Only 17% thought government work would be most desirable (see Table 3).

Finally, it does appear that often claimed suspicion that school leavers regard technical/vocational courses and skilled employees as the second class have no basis in reality. Table 4 shows the majority of the respondents in the survey were influenced by their parents, relations, and peers to take up training in technical/vocational skills (54%) while 19% did so because they were acquainted with technical trade practitioners.

4.0 Conclusion

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), once considered inferior, now holds great promise for making young people employable. It is designed to develop learners' ability to solve technical problems and make individuals aware of the place of technology and industry in our society.

The government has so far invested heavily in providing TVET to its citizens, hoping to build a workforce of tech-savvy entrepreneurs to solve the nation's employment problems and improve general productivity. Although statistics are not readily available, it is believed that a significant portion of the Nigerian population has benefited from one form of TVET or the other. In Adamawa State, several educational institutions withdrew, with hundreds of technically educated school leavers annually. In addition, other government agencies in the state provide technical/vocational training services.

However, the unfortunate observation is that rather than producing self-reliant technical masters/entrepreneurs, it appears that the impact of formal technical/vocational education on young people is to shift them from self-employment to white-collar wage employment in the formal sector. A classic case of Callaway's "vocational school fallacy". The main reason for this phenomenon is that the technical education passed in these formal institutions is actually narrow-band general education suitable for school leavers, rather than further training. Such people will not be able to enter competitive realm of free market enterprise because they lack the technical skills, entrepreneurial ability, and the target knowledge that is needed today.

Additionally, research indicated that most of school leavers who receive some form of pre-vocational education in a diverse curriculum lack the right habits and attitudes to get a job or settle down to acquire marketable skills. There is no doubt that such opportunities exist, whether in Adamawa State start-ups or in existing workplaces. But to successfully seize these opportunities, an individual must proactively acquire the necessary skills that the opportunity calls for. Furthermore, he must be able to cultivate the correct work habits and attributes such as the ability to work with other people, assume responsibility, interact acceptably with fellow workers and customers etc.

Fortunately, in addition to the training provided at formal technical/vocational institutions and agencies, another mechanism exists in Adamawa State to develop skills. Apprenticeships provide most of the specific technical and business training needed by those seeking a career in self-employment. Where formal sector jobs have become difficult to find, graduates of formal school can move to the informal sector and adopt

or acquire skills suited to different conditions. These people will of course be privileged, as they will be able to use their general education background to modernize this traditional industry where technology is often outdated and standards are extremely low, especially in manufacturing, accounting and finance, where working conditions are terrible and operations are mainly engaging in illegal activities such as material and parts theft, tax evasion, etc. in addition, these persons will have greater mobility to be able to change their occupations and industry whenever necessary.

5.0 Recommendations

On the other hand, what technical/vocational institutions and agencies in the public sector can do to improve their courses offerings and the opportunities for their graduates to become self-employed are:

1. By striving to link these forms of technical/ vocational training to employment opportunities, structuring their training to respond to market needs, and
2. Reorganizing their councils to identify, plan and manufacturing products and systems that meet those needs and opportunities. This is what actually happens in the world outside the classroom anyway.

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