



**BSP JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH**
www.iahiservices.com



**FACTORS INHIBITING VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION IN REDUCING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA**

HIME Isaac Iboabee¹ UPWA Emmanuel Fanen² NULE Joseph Shimagande³
Department of Industrial Technology, Faculty of Technology and
Industrial Studies, Benue State University, Makurdi.

Correspondence email: himeisaac@gmail.com

Abstract

Worried by the fact that many graduates of technical colleges, polytechnic, colleges of Education (Technical) and Universities of Technology as well as department of vocational and technical education are without employment, the researcher decided to investigate the factors inhibiting vocational and technical education in reducing youth unemployment in Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study was 486 technical teachers across Benue State. A sample of 100 teachers from technical colleges was randomly selected from ten colleges. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire tagged: Factors Inhibiting Vocational and Technical Education in Reducing Unemployment Questionnaire (FIVTERUQ). The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions. The study revealed that respondents identified factors inhibiting vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among youth in Benue State which include; inadequate vocational and technical education equipment, inadequate vocational and technical teachers, inadequate funding and students' negative attitude towards vocational and technical education among others. The study identified that provision of the necessary vocational and

technology laboratories and equipment, employment of more qualified teachers, increase budget allocation to education sector and in-service training of teachers to keep abreast with modern technologies are measures to enhance vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among youth in Benue State. It was recommended among others that government should increase the fund allocated to the education sector up to 26% of the annual budget and more qualified vocational and technical teachers should be employed and those in service should be trained to keep abreast with modern technologies.

Key Words: Factors inhibiting, vocational and technical education, unemployment

1.0 Introduction

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria states that the goals of education are building; a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, a just and egalitarian society, a land full of bright and full opportunities for all citizens and a free and democratic society [1]. At least three of these educational goals may not be achievable without a solid and sustainable vocational and technical education system. The importance of vocational and technical education in national development cannot be over emphasized. Vocational and technical education has been an integral part of national development strategies in industrialized societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development. It is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and skills for employment and sustainable livelihood. Vocational and technical education is used, as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life [1]. Vocational and technical education is defined as that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge that would enable an individual learner to earn a living or employment in science and technology related occupations [2]. It can be deduced from the aforementioned definitions of vocational and technical education that it is concern about training the individual to acquire skills and knowledge

needed to work in a particular occupation either as self-employed or employed in public or private sector.

The Nigeria National Policy on Education [1] sets the aims of vocational-technical education as follows:

- i. the provision of trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub-professional grades;
- ii. the provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development;
- iii. the provision of people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the convenience of man;
- iv. the giving of training and imparting the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant; and
- v. the enabling of young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

From the aforementioned objectives, it is very clear that science and technology education in Nigeria is expected to produce young men and women who have the capacity to be self-reliance, self-employed and entrepreneurs who create jobs. It is meant to enhance employability, tackle poverty and enable people to participate fully in economic and innovation processes. Vocational and technical education equips learners with skills to employ themselves and create job opportunities for others [3]. Despite these laudable objectives, youth unemployment continues to rise in Benue State, highlighting gaps in vocational and technical education. Soaring unemployment has been recognized as a potential trigger for social instability in Nigeria. Nigeria in particular faces similar challenges as the rank of the unemployed population increases as access to employment continues to be difficult. In addition, the global economic crisis threatens to further strain labour markets and worsen the situation for youth. Unemployment has been described as a situation in which the segments of the labour force willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find employment.

In Benue State today, majority of college of education, polytechnic and university graduates are unemployed. The prevailing unemployment situation in Benue State among tertiary education graduates is worrisome. This may be because of over dependence on government jobs or white-collar jobs, poor industrial-school curriculum link, inadequate funding of science and technical education which has also resulted to inadequate laboratory equipment for practical acquisition of the necessary skills that would be used for job creation [4]. The operation of vocational and technology education in Nigeria is characterized by inadequate facilities, inadequate funds and inadequate opportunities for supervised industrial experiences [5]. Students have continued to graduate under these conditions. In Nigeria today, graduates of vocational and technical education cannot create jobs, they strive to be employees of labour rather than being self-employed or employers in their various fields. It is more worrisome that even graduates of vocational and technology education who are trained to be self-employed using their skills are still unemployed. This problem is attributed to poor teaching as a result of inadequate laboratory equipment, poor funding as well as students' negative attitude towards vocational and technology education [6]; [7]. Several scholars have revealed that society and students in particular still have negative attitudes toward vocational education. They accept the superiority of socially prestigious professions like Law, Medicine, Engineering and Accountancy over technically oriented jobs [8]. Vocational and technology education in Nigeria is perceived to be for the poor who have low socioeconomic status, for lower primary and secondary academic result achievers and it is a kind of education acquired as a last resort after one fails to progress to other academic forms of education [9]. Society also perceives it as education for preparing people to work in a lower-status and less decent jobs with no possibility of progressing to a higher education level. This negative attitude towards vocational and technical education could also be a factor responsible for the increasing unemployment in Benue State.

Unemployment in Benue State has led to many graduates involving in crimes such as youth restiveness, kidnapping, prostitution, armed robbery and drug abuse among others. These vices are detrimental to investment

promotion, economic growth and consequently have a negative feedback effect on employment. The absence of sustainable economic growth and job creation, which are considered very instrumental in poverty eradication are the pressing challenges facing Benue State in particular and Nigeria at large [9]. The problem keeps crying for solutions and government feels that something must be done to get out of the waterloo and so one of the measures put in place by the federal government of Nigeria is to mandate schools from secondary to tertiary level of education to include vocational and technical education in their curriculum. Vocational and technology education is one of the instruments for achieving sustainable development as well as employment creation and thereby reducing the level of unemployment. The massive rate of unemployment and the changing face of the economic, social, political and labour market worldwide have led to new education reforms/policies with emphasis on vocational and technical education geared towards helping the youths and adults to be self-dependent. [10] argued that for vocational and technology education to produce graduates who will be self-employ and employers require adequate funding and provision of the necessary laboratories and equipment as well as stable supply of electricity and security of life and property. Employment of qualified teachers and re-training of teachers to be up to date with new scientific and technological development is key to a successful science and technology education [11]. This is because no nation would endure the pace of development if her technology is not geared towards solving her problems, mostly economic problems and that no nation can develop beyond the level of her teachers [10].

The challenge of graduates' unemployment is on the increase in Benue State. However, there are no much research concerning in this area of concern. It is in the light of this background that this study focuses on identifying the factors militating against science and technology education in achieving the objectives of wealth and jobs creation which could reduce unemployment among graduates in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

Vocational and technical education was introduced into the Nigerian educational system with one of the objectives of training and imparting the

necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant. Vocational and technical education was intended to be an avenue for jobs creation for students who have passed through it. To achieve this, many technical colleges, universities of technology, polytechnics, Colleges of education (Technical) were established to provide the citizenry with vocational and technical education. In addition to the technical institutions, in 2011, the senior secondary school curriculum was re-aligned and designed to meet the target of the reforms in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the targets of value-orientation, poverty eradication, job creation, wealth generation and the empowerment of people through education. Senior secondary school students are required to offer and register one trade/entrepreneurial subject in which they will be assessed in a public examination (NECO or WAEC).

With these technical and vocational institutions as well as innovation in senior secondary school curriculum to include vocational or entrepreneurial subjects, one would expect that youth unemployment should be a thing of the past in Nigeria. However, unemployment among the youth is rather on the increase as many technical school leavers, graduates of Polytechnics, Colleges of Education (Technical) and Universities of Technology are not self-employed or employed in public or private sectors. Many of these graduates are still waiting for white collar jobs that are very few. Thus, it is imperative to investigate and identify the factors inhibiting vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment in Benue State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to identify the factors inhibiting vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify factors inhibiting vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among graduates of technical institutions in Benue State.
2. Determine measures to be adopted to enhance vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among graduates

of technical institutions in Benue State.

Research questions

The study was guided by two research questions:

1. What are the factors inhibiting vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among graduates of technical institutions in Benue State?
2. What measures can be taken to enhance vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among graduates of technical institutions in Benue State.

Research Method

The study adopted a survey research design. The population consisted of 486 teachers in technical colleges in Benue State. A sample of 100 teachers from technical colleges was randomly selected from ten technical colleges in Benue State. The rationale for selecting 100 respondents was to ensure that a least a minimum of 20% of the population participated in the study. A structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher and used for data collection. The questionnaire was tagged: Factors Inhibiting Vocational and Technical Education in Reducing Unemployment Questionnaire (FIVTERUQ). The FIVTERUQ has two sections. Section A elicited opinions on the factors that inhibit vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment and Section B elicited opinions on measures that could be taken to enable vocational and technical education create jobs for its graduates. The Likert type scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed was used in structuring the questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Benue State University, Makurdi. The instrument has a reliability coefficient for the questionnaire which was found to be 0.87. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of three research assistants and all copies of the administered questionnaire were returned. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions. Items with mean score of 2.5 and above were adjudged agreed and items with mean score of 2.49 and below were regarded as disagreed.

3.0 Results of the Study

The results of the study are presented according to the research questions.

Research Question One

What are the factors inhibiting vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among graduates of technical institutions in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of factors inhibiting the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment in Benue State

S/no	Item statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate vocational and technical education equipment for effective practical learning.	4.28	0.67	Agreed
2	Inadequate vocational and technical institutions	1.24	1.8	Disagreed
3	Inadequate vocational and technical teachers	3.88	0.71	Agreed
4	Inadequate funding of vocational and technical education	4.00	0.68	Agreed
5	Students' negative attitude towards vocational and technical education	3.56	0.69	Agreed
6	Low enrolment of students into vocational and technical institutions	2.42	1.20	Disagreed
7	Poor industrial-school curriculum link	3.48	0.70	Agreed
8	Preference for foreign expertise and none patronage of locally trained graduates for high technology jobs	2.46	1.18	Disagreed
9	Irregular electricity supply in technical colleges	3.26	0.74	Agreed

Table 1 shows the responses of teachers on the factors inhibiting the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among youth in Benue State. Table 1 indicated that items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 have means above 2.5 which indicate agree while items 2, 6 and 8 have means below 2.5 which indicate disagree. This means that the respondents agreed that inadequate vocational and technical education equipment, inadequate vocational and technical teachers, inadequate funding, students' negative attitude towards vocational and technical education, poor industrial-school curriculum link and irregular electricity supply are the factors inhibiting the role of vocational and technical education in curbing

unemployment among youth in Benue State. Table 1 also indicates that the respondents disagreed that inadequate vocational and technical institutions, low enrolment of students into vocational and technical institutions and Preference for foreign expertise and none patronage of locally trained graduates for high technology jobs are not factors inhibiting the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among youth in Benue State.

Research Question Two

What measures can be taken to enhance vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among graduates of technical institutions in Benue State.

Table 2: Measures are to be adopted to enhance the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among youth in Benue State

S/No	Item statements	Mean	SD	Decision
10	Provision of the necessary vocational and technology laboratories and equipment	4.20	0.58	Agreed
11	Employment of more qualified vocational and technical teachers	3.80	0.70	Agreed
12	Increase budget allocation to education sector to a minimum benchmark of 26% can provide more funding for vocational and technical education	4.00	0.68	Agreed
13	Proper linkages between industrial needs and school curriculum content	3.60	0.65	Agreed
14	In-service training of vocational and technical teachers to keep abreast with modern technologies	4.20	0.58	Agreed
15	Stable supply of electricity to all technical colleges	2.70	0.83	Agreed

Table 2 shows the responses of the technical college teachers on measures to be adopted to enhance the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among youth in Benue State. Table 2 indicates that the respondents agreed with all the items from 10 to 15 as key measures that can be taken holistically to enhance the role of vocational and technical education in reducing unemployment among youth in Benue State. This means that the respondents agreed that provision of the necessary vocational and technology laboratories and equipment, employment of more qualified vocational and technical teachers, increase budget allocation to education sector to a minimum benchmark of 26% can provide more funding for vocational and technical education, proper linkages between industrial needs and school curriculum content, in-service training of vocational and technical teachers to keep abreast with modern technologies and stable supply of electricity to all technical colleges

4.0 Discussion of Findings

The results of the study revealed that the respondents identified the factors inhibiting the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among youth in Benue State to include; inadequate vocational and technical education equipment, inadequate vocational and technical teachers, inadequate funding, students' negative attitude towards vocational and technical education, poor industrial-school curriculum link and irregular electricity supply are the factors inhibiting the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among youth in Benue State. This finding is in agreement with that of [6] and [4] who earlier identified these factors and inhibitors of vocational and technical education from achieving the desire goal of employment generation. Inadequate funding is a major factor that inhibit the role of vocational and technical education from curbing unemployment among youth. This is because poor funding give rise to inadequate laboratory equipment, shortage of qualified teachers and poor infrastructural development. Commenting on the issue of poor funding of education in Nigeria, [12] pointed out that rather than progressive movement towards the minimum standard of 26% budget for education as recommended by the [3] for developing countries, Nigeria has witnessed gradual and systematic reduction of budgetary allocation to education. The fund allocated to education generally is not enough to provide the necessary

vocational and technical education laboratories and equipment and at the same time maintain highly qualified staff. Also the result indicated that poor industrial-school curriculum link and poor electricity supply are other factors inhibiting the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among graduates of tertiary institutions. This finding also corroborate the assertion by [1] that for vocational and technical education to produce graduates who will be self-employ and employers require adequate funding and provision of the necessary laboratories and equipment as well as stable supply of electricity and security of life and property.

The finding on measures to be taken in order to enhance the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among youth in Benue State indicates that provision of the necessary vocational and technology laboratories and equipment, employment of more qualified vocational and technical teachers, increase budget allocation to education sector to a minimum benchmark of 26% can provide more funding for vocational and technical education, proper linkages between industrial needs and school curriculum content, in-service training of vocational and technical teachers to keep abreast with modern technologies and stable supply of electricity to all technical colleges. This finding collaborate that of [11] and [12] who found that for vocational and technical education to produce graduates who will be self-employ and employers require adequate funding and provision of the necessary laboratories and equipment as well as stable supply of electricity and security of life and property. Adequate funding of science and technical education can solve series of problems militating against the sector. If there are funds available, infrastructures such as laboratories, equipment and libraries will be adequately provided for effective teaching and learning through practical activities that will result in acquisition of skills needed for self-employment. Employment of qualified teachers and re-training of teachers to be up to date with new scientific and technological development are key to a successful vocational and technical education.

The implication of these findings on educational policies in Benue State and by extension Nigeria, is that government increase the funding for education in order to provide the equipment, employ and train more

teachers for the technical education. The finding is also a call for curriculum review towards ensuring that there is proper linkage between technical education curriculum and the industrial needs.

5.0 Conclusion

Vocational and technical education is capable of reducing unemployment among youth in Benue State. However, there are a number of factors inhibiting the role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment among youth in Benue State and Nigeria generally. This study identified factors such as inadequate vocational and technical education equipment, inadequate vocational and technical teachers, inadequate funding, students' negative attitude towards vocational and technical education, poor industrial-school curriculum link and unstable electricity supply. These factors are surmountable through provision of the necessary equipment for vocational and technical education, employment of more qualified vocational and technical teachers, increased budget allocation to education sector, proper linkages between industrial needs and school curriculum content, in-service training of vocational and technical teachers to keep abreast with modern technologies and stable supply of electricity to all technical colleges.

6.0 Recommendation

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

1. Government of Benue State should increase the fund allocated to the education sector up to 26% of the annual budget as recommended by UNESCO.
2. Government should prioritize provision of vocational and technical equipment.
3. More qualified vocational and technical teachers should be employed and those in service should be trained to keep abreast with modern technologies.
4. Government should ensure stable supply of power to all technical institutions through alternative energy sources such as solar energy to enhance learning and acquisition of practical skills.

References

- [1] Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education. Abuja: Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) Press
- [2] J. O. Ikpe, The challenges of teaching science and technology in Nigerian Schools. Nigeria: Gold Ink Company (2010), 56-70.
- [3] F. A Saka, Issues and Problems of vocational and Technical education. *Journal of Educational Development*, Vol 5, pp. 97, 2014.
- [4] C. A. Nwankwo and A. P. Ifejiolor. Impact of unemployment on Nigerian economic development: A study of selected local government area in Anambra State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Business and Management*, vol. 6, pp. 103-112, 2014.
- [5] L. Achimugu and E. E. Otor. Identification of factors inhibiting the role of chemistry in national development. *BSU Journal of Science, Mathematics and Computer Education*, vol 1, pp 33-38, 2020.
- [6] J. A. Kola, Importance of science education to national development and problems militating against its development. *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol 1 no.7, pp. 215-229, 2013.
- [7] E. Lawrence and A. C. Abraham, The challenge of effective teaching of chemistry, Nigeria, Selfers Academic Press Ltd, 2023.
- [8] C.S. Oguejiofor and A. C. C. Ezeabasili, Imperatives of vocational education and sustainable development in Nigeria. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, Ethiopia, vol 8 no.1, pp. 42-52, 2014.
- [9] H. Ayub, Parental influence and attitude of students towards technical education and vocational training. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, vol.7, no. 7, pp. 534-538, 2017.
- [10] J. K. Aina, A. O. Ogundele and A. S. Rafiu, Science and Technical Education as Mechanism for National Development. *Current Advances in Education Research*, vol 1, no.1, 32-36, 2014.
- [11] I. Osam, Managing the role of programmes in promoting enterprises for national development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education (IJRE)*, vol. 9, no.2, pp 97-104, 2016
- [12] G. O. Ariguzo, I. C. Anyakoha and M. Best-Njoku, The place of tertiary education in nation building. *Association of Education Researchers and Evaluators of Nigeria Journal of Education*, vol. 1, no. 1, 179-184, 2016.