

The Role of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Tackling Unemployment and Insecurity in Nigeria: A Review

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Abstract

The need to tackle unemployment and its accompanying threat to national security has made TVET a priority in the education system of nations. TVET is a promising education programme through which the unemployed and economically inactive individuals are engaged meaningfully and made to contribute to national development. However, abandonment of TVET has dampened the realization of its many potentials. To date, no one has made effort to review the role of TVET in tackling unemployment and insecurity. This paper presents a review of literature on unemployment, insecurity, and TVET in academic journals. It has been found that poor industrial-based economy, pressure from rapidly growing population of school leavers, inappropriate school curricula, corruption, and insecurity are the major causes of unemployment, which is a security threat itself. Recommendations are offered to ensure that TVET approach is utilized in tackling unemployment and insecurity. This review provides a reference for practitioners, policy makers and stakeholders on indispensable need for TVET programme in Nigeria. Again, the list of the causes of unemployment in this paper can be useful to scholars for further empirical studies.

Keywords: TVET, Unemployment, Threat, National Security, Insecurity

Introduction

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has become a tested and trusted path through which many national challenges are curbed. UNESCO (2013) affirms that quality TVET has outstanding capacity to tackle unemployment. According to Uddin (2013), TVET inculcates skills for agricultural, industrial, and economic development. Researchers affirm that TVET has the capacity to equip recipients with skills for gainful employment, and self-reliance venturing, making TVET most relevant in tackling unemployment challenges (Ogbuanya & Udoudo, 2015; Iwu, 2015). Through TVET, both the economically inactive, and unemployed persons in the society are made contributors to the national economy, thereby enhancing wealth creation, and development (Obidile, et al., 2020). According to Okafor (2011), unemployment describes the situation where work-ready group of people are without jobs. Unemployment is said to be responsible for the high rate of poverty and rising wave of crimes causing insecurity in Nigeria (Gofwan,

et al., 2019; Adedayo, 2013). Meanwhile, youth employment is considered a priority for both national security and sustainable development (Ogbuanya & Udoudo, 2015), and TVET has been accepted in both developed and developing nations as a solution.

However, as much as unemployment is a challenge in Nigeria, national security threat has worsened the situation. Security threat refers to existence of potential entity, action, circumstance, or event that is capable of causing external or internal harm, injuries or loss of any kind (Risk Management for DoD Security Program, n.d.). It is “an event or condition that has the potential for causing asset loss and the undesirable consequences or impact from such loss (Committee of National Security System, n.d.)” Researchers (e.g. Ogbuanya & Udoudo, 2015; Mofoluwawo, 2015; Adegoke, 2015) have investigated the link between unemployment, insecurity or national security threat, and TVET, in Nigeria. There is no doubt that there is upsurge in

security threats making Nigeria one of the most insecure countries of the world. It equally makes researchers and government to constantly seek appropriate strategies to be developed so as to reduce or overcome the nation's insecurity challenges.

TVET has been idolized as a total solution to youth unemployment in all spheres because of its capacity to inculcate knowledge, skills and attitude that enable everyone to be meaningfully engaged in paid jobs, trades or self-reliance ventures, in spite of individual's cognitive level. TVET refers to "aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupants in various sectors of economic and social life" (FRN, 2013). It is equally "understood as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production services and livelihoods" (UNESCO, 2015).

Despite the increasing attention given to unemployment and insecurity researches, no paper has attempted to review and analyze the already reported findings in the literature. According to Li *et al.* (2000), there is need to investigate what we already know instead of continuously arguing. Systematically investigating what we do know gives the clearest picture of how to proceed so as to learn more. It is therefore imperative to review literature on unemployment and national security threat in order to clarify understanding of researchers and practitioners on the way forward. Thus, this paper aims to conduct a systematic review of literature on unemployment and security/insecurity issues of Nigeria, in order to offer recommendations based on the purpose for the which TVET was adopted.

It is hoped that the result of this paper will provide useful information for stakeholders (youths, government, schools, industries, parents among others) on the relationship between unemployment and the security decadence of the nation. Also, the resultant outcome of how unemployment influences insecurity may be useful to future

researchers who would want to validate the role of unemployment in national security through further empirical studies.

The remaining part of the paper is structured as follows: research methodology; result and discussion; TVET, unemployment, and insecurity - linking nodes; and lastly, conclusions. The purpose of the study reported in this paper is to broaden stakeholders' understanding of role of TVET in tackling unemployment and security threats in Nigeria through a literature review. The paper generally answers the following questions:

- i. What are the causes of unemployment?
- ii. What is the link between TVET, unemployment, and security threats in Nigeria?

Methodology

This study is primarily based on a literature review of the link between unemployment, security threats or insecurity, and TVET in Nigeria. It is important to review a particular topic that has been progressively recurring in the literature instead proliferating more arguments. This review is however, restricted to studies that present arguments on the unemployment, and or insecurity in relation to TVET, published online in academic journals. To retrieve studies of interest, a systematic literature search was conducted using Google and Google Scholar as well as Scopus search engines. The researchers considered articles within the past 11 years (2013 – 2023).

The keywords used in the search engines include "TVET", "TVET Unemployment", "role of TVET", "youth unemployment", TVET and Insecurity, and "TVET and unemployment." Google and Google Scholar search engines gave numerous articles that were majorly opinion papers. Scopus search on the other hand has no article with two or three of the buzzwords of interest to the researchers. The result of each search shows a mix of articles on works done across the globe but with focus on Nigeria as an area of the study, from which articles with the intended keywords were identified, contents were reviewed, and the ones relevant for the

study selected. It was surprising that most of the articles that discussed TVET and unemployment, as well as TVET and security challenges were opinion papers. Only a handful of empirical articles were found. At the end, the researchers included all due to the limited number. A total of 45 articles were downloaded, and only 11 articles were suitable for the study. Suitability of the 11 articles was justified using buzzword such as TVET Challenges, TVET and Unemployment among others. Thus, articles on TVET that do not focus on unemployment, employment, and insecurity were discarded.

Results

Table 1 shows the list of the articles reviewed in this study, indicating only a handful of research has been to effectively think through solving the unemployment issues using TVET. Table 2 shows the summarized findings or causes from each article. The causes of unemployment

identified were assigned codes, which were used to represent them in the line chart presented in Figure 1. The line chart in Figure 1 indicates number of times each challenge was mentioned across the reviewed publications.

A total 13 causes of unemployment were identified from 11 articles whose focus covered unemployment and either insecurity or TVET. The causes identified are represented in a line chart showing their percentages (Figure 1). It is observed from Table 2 and Figure 1 that several causes of unemployment exist, the five most reported causes are poor industrial-based economy, pressure from rapidly growing population of school leavers, inappropriate school curricula, corruption, and insecurity. Although, each of the challenges are important in addressing TVET, the focus of this work limited the discussion to the top four challenges found in the literature concerning Nigeria.

Table 1: Publications and authors reviewed

S/n	Title of paper	Authors	Year Published
1	Unemployment and Security Challenges in Nigeria.	Adesina, O. S.	2013
2	Unemployment and poverty: Implications for national security and good governance in Nigeria.	Akwara, A. F., Akwara, N. F. Enwuchola, J., Adekunle, M. & Udaw, J. E.	2013
3	Youths Unemployment and Crime in Nigeria: A Nexus and Implications for National Development.	Adebayo, A. A.	2013
4	Youth unemployment and security challenges in Nigeria	Adegoke, N.	2015
5	Youth Unemployment Saga in Nigeria: Implications for Security challenges and Economic Development.	Mofoluwawo, E. O.	2015
6	Re-Contextualizing Unemployment and National Security in Nigeria.	Iwu, H. N.	2015
7	Towards Quality Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programmes in Nigeria: Challenges and Improvement Strategies.	Ayonmike, C. S., Okwelle, P. C. & Okeke, B. C.	2015
8	Security challenges and Nigeria university system in Nigeria.	Alemika, E. E.	2015
9	Youth Unemployment and Peace in Nigerian Society.	Onah, N. & Okwuosa, L. N.	2016
10	An examination of the causes of unemployment among youths in Nigeria.	Galadima, G., Ways, S. S. & Abd Hair, A.	2019
11	Curbing youth unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria: Vocational and Technical Education Imperative.	Gofwan, J. D., Goshi, M. S. & Ishaya, J.	2019

Table 2: Causes of Unemployment

Code	Causes of Unemployment	Source (s)
01	Pressure from rapidly growing population of school leavers	Adegoke, 2015; Mofoluwawo, 2015; Onah & Okwuosa, 2016; Akwara <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Adesina, 2013; Adebayo, 2013
02	Defective manpower planning	Akwara <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Adegoke, 2015; Adebayo, 2013
03	Job seekers selectivity of the available	Akwara <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Adegoke, 2015
04	Inappropriate and outdated school curricula	Mofoluwawo, 2015; Iwu, 2015; Galadima <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Adesina, 2013; Adebayo, 2013
05	Insecurity and poor business enabling environment	Adegoke, 2015; Iwu, 2015; Galadima <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Adesina, 2013
06	Poor electricity	Adegoke, 2015; Galadima <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Adesina, 2013
07	Corruption	Mofoluwawo, 2015; Onah & Okwuosa, 2016; Iwu, 2015; Galadima <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Adebayo, 2013
08	Rapid growing urban labour force from rural-urban migration	Onah & Okwuosa, 2016; Adesina, 2013; Adebayo, 2013
09	Poor industrial-based economy	Mofoluwawo, 2015; Onah & Okwuosa, 2016; Iwu, 2015; Galadima <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Adesina, 2013; Adesina, 2013; Adebayo, 2013
10	Abandonment of agricultural sector	Onah & Okwuosa, 2016; Galadima <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Adesina, 2013
11	Dearth or abandonment of TVET	Onah & Okwuosa, 2016; Adesina, 2013;
12	Proliferation of institutions of learning	Onah & Okwuosa, 2016; Adesina, 2013; Adebayo, 2013
13	Untimely economic policy adoption	Adesina, 2013

Source: Authors' literature review

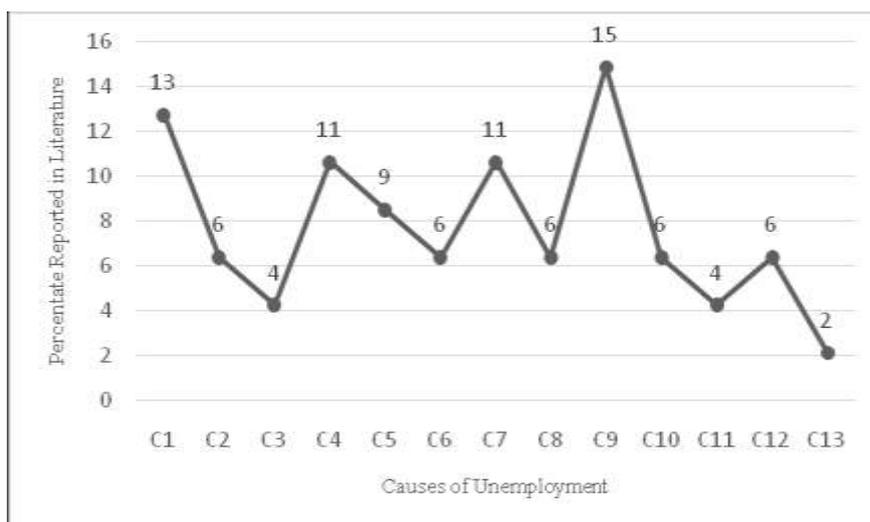


Figure 1: Percentage representation of the causes of unemployment

Poor Industrial-Based Economy – How TVET can help?

Industry-based economy refers to the nation being able to utilize its factors of production in making goods or rendering services intended for the market. Industry is

vital for tackling unemployment. Before the discovery of oil, Nigeria prides in agriculture which gave rise to the agro-based industries. At that time, no one was seen without work (Iwu, 2015). However, advent of oil boom sidelined this prospect and refocused everyone to seek employment in oil industry, whose collapse resulted to first upshot of

unemployment (Onah & Okwuosa, 2016). Poor industrial nature has turned Nigeria to a “consumer nation” or “retail economy” (McCrocklin, 2018), where even goods that were once manufactured at home are now being imported (Onah & Okwuosa, 2016). Okafor (2011) lamented that 800 industries have collapsed while 837 factories closed their shops in 2009. But the table can still turn again.

TVET approach can be engaged to harness and channel the energy of the burgeoning youths to meaningful activities.

Rapidly growing population (of school leavers) - TVET is the utilizing channel

Nigeria is the seventh most populous nation in the world with over 206 million inhabitants, and the second poorest nation after India (Worldometer, 2020; World Bank, 2015). The world most populous nation is China and report has it that same population growth was once a challenge. But industrialization occasioned by a well-articulated TVET system and stringent birth control mechanisms transformed the economy of China. Nigeria can learn a lot if the government thinks beyond borrowing and importation.

The growth in Nigeria population shows that there is mass availability of labour force for any kind of industry. The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (2018) stated that economic growth must involve large members

Inappropriate School Curricula - one major challenge to TVET

The Nigeria Economic Summit Group (2018) laments that “education curricula at both secondary and tertiary institutions do not focus on prospective skills for youth employment, resulting in the misalignment of skills taught in the schools with the demand of the labour market.” Nigeria school curricula are best to say obsolete, thereby exacerbating the issue of skill mismatch. According to UNESCO (2013), there are three types of skills mismatches which include lack of relevant skills, lack of information about the labour market and lack of work experience. The effect of these errors is far reaching,

Agriculture that was once the employment plug for everyone willing to work is just one area of TVET, and a look into it shows that for the economy to thrive, agricultural sector must be the first to rise. Previous researchers have decried the abandonment of TVET, causing the programme to face many challenges, as one reason the nation is where it is today (Ayomike, et al., 2013; Tiamiyu and Babalola; 2013). It is time for government to take steps beyond the lip services paid to TVET if the economy is to recover.

of the population if it is to be transformational. Also, the hunger for education in Nigeria, makes the utilization of the growing population easier if well planned. However, a notion must be corrected from the grass root. Iwu (2015) observed that there is an embodied thought in every Nigerian, graduate or non-graduate, that government owes the whole population job opportunities. Therefore, failure to secure such is labeled as government failure (this notion is utilized by politicians to take advantage of the teeming population). As much as this notion is being corrected, TVET must be enshrined into every aspect of Nigerian education. TVET system can be utilized to show the light towards industrialization from the grassroots. But if TVET remains optional, then the error that allows every Nigerian to opt for public sector employment is not leaving any time soon (see Iwu, 2015).

hence young graduates leave school without skills and those who have are far from employers’ demand. More so, lack of labour market information deprives graduates of ideas leaving them to loom streets with “academic knowledge” while being unemployable (Nigeria Economic Summit Group, 2018; UNESCO, 2013). To correct the menace, UNESCO posits that private sector must be involved in designing of school curricula; schools are to offer on-the-job trainings to test-run knowledge and skills, as well as increase experiences required in world of work. Skill mismatches can also be corrected if schools especially TVET

institutions establish school-production units (Chukwu & Omeje, 2017; FRN, 2013).

Corruption – all-round sectorial menace, requiring complete purging

Corruption has robbed the nation its economic base development (Mofoluwawo 2015). Nigeria infrastructure development has continued to suffer in the hands of Nigerians due to corruption. Supposed electricity, road, hospitals and other structures have ended in some oversea banks because persons decided to take their share of the national cake to the detriment of the whole nation (Nwokwu, 2013). According to Page (2018) corruption is endemic across Nigeria's economic sectors, posing as the single greatest obstacle

preventing the nation from realizing its great potential. The challenge of electricity for instance, is supposed to be a thing of the past, but has become a major investment sapping channel for one ruling class after another. Poor electricity supply is one reason private sectors, and small and medium scale enterprises cannot thrive in Nigeria. According to Page (2018), there is no sector without corruption stories in Nigeria, therefore, the government getting it right in being honest and accountable for the trust invested in them is surely going to move the nation forward, beginning with the power sector.

TVET, Unemployment, and Insecurity: Linking Nodes

TVET has been reported to have strong implications in enhancing and generating employment for the innate and docile populace. Figure 2 summarizes the effect of TVET on unemployment, insecurity, industrialization and national development. Pieces of evidence of the strides of TVET are visible in developed and developing countries. Some of the expected transformational links of TVET to unemployment and insecurity are highlighted thus:

- Low education means an absence of tangible skills for work, and a subscription to any other work in pursuit of personal security (Alemika, 2015). Lack of education, therefore lack of TVET, keeps individuals unemployed. This results in the inability to provide "the needed personal and dependents' security" such as food, housing, medical care etc. Individuals in this category are the first port of call for crimes, thuggery, insurgency, and terrorism among others (Alemika, 2015). But TVET in all forms and levels is designed to accommodate individuals of different backgrounds and educational levels. Formal or informal TVET ensures that meaningful skills, knowledge and attitude are transferred to the recipients for positive venturing and sustenance. Accepting TVET is choosing to be skilled in a path, being skilled delists from being a tool of insecurity; skill in

TVET opens employment opportunities and creative venturing.

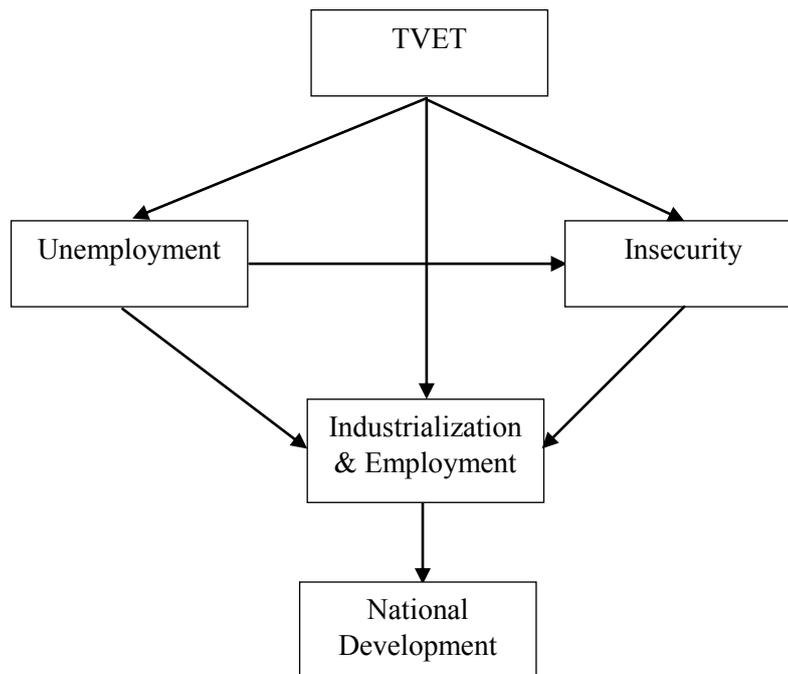


Figure2: Using TVET programmes to tackle unemployment and insecurity
(Source, Authors)

Security means development, without development there can be no security (McNamara, 1968). TVET helps in developing nations, TVET is chosen for its development-engendering capabilities, rewriting the trends of unemployment. However, the persistence of unemployment is fueled by an innate erroneous belief amongst Nigerians that it is the public sector infrastructure that must accommodate the employable populace (Iwu, 2015). This notion has eroded the nation of developmental strides in TVET and has readied more persons to turn against the government once reminded of its failure. However, a well-harnessed TVET engenders development; development in turn reduces dependency on government for jobs and reduces the populace awaiting negative recruitment/mobilization.

- In Nigeria, an educated citizen, cannot meet his/her basic needs, not to talk of uneducated (Mukhtar et al., n.d). Granted that the population of the uneducated in Nigeria is quite high. This unfortunate incidence is worsened by the population of out-of-school students and dropouts. All categories of the unemployed are a threat to the security of the nation. TVET has been described as a safety net for all parties, the government, the citizens, development, and the entire nation. According to Iwu (2015), employment is any work an individual engages in whether personally created or hired for wages, from which a means of livelihood is sourced. TVET in its outright purpose, is to reposition individuals to create jobs/works seeing that the government cannot provide work for a highly fertile, unstoppable and uncontrollable population, especially in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Through a systematic literature review, this paper identified the causes of

unemployment, which is a threat to security in Nigeria. It was found that the most reported causes of unemployment are a poor industrial-based economy, pressure from a rapidly growing population of school leavers, inappropriate school curricula, corruption, and insecurity. There is an unbroken link in literature between unemployment and insecurity, judging that the unemployed and uneducated, are ready manpower that can be deployed negatively.

TVET no doubt has soothing effects in nations by enhancing employment that utilizes

the teeming populace. TVET is a skill-based education programme in all spheres. Skills are necessary to transform an unemployed, a pending threat to security, to the employed, efficiently contributing to the development of the nation. There is no gainsaying that a true turn to TVET is a take-off in developmental strides, but words and policies must be matched with action. Direct action to tackle unemployment and its insecurity progeny begins with TVET.

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