

EDUCATION BIGOTRY: TVET SECTOR MAKING HEADWAY IN NIGERIA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in Nigeria has traditionally been regarded as inferior to the conventional academic system, resulting in educational discrimination against TVET students and graduates. Recently, efforts have been made to change this view and promote the development of the TVET sector as a viable and necessary part of Nigeria's educational system. Through hands-on, competency-based training for different students, TVET can reduce unskilled graduates in Nigeria. TVET educational programmes provide a feasible substitute to conventional academic education by equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the labour market. TVET can also reduce Nigeria's unemployment rate by connecting education and employment through apprenticeships and work internships. This study examined educational prejudice and bias (bigotry) in Nigeria's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector and its causes. The study examined how these concerns affect marginalised communities' employment and income. Despite previous discriminations against TVET, recent findings suggest that the field is gradually garnering acknowledgement and backing, as evidenced by increased investments in TVET infrastructure and training initiatives by both government and corporate entities.

Keywords: Education Bigotry, Nigeria Education System, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Employability.

Introduction

People grow up with bias, which is one of the most detrimental experiences that can happen to anyone, and it is frequently the source of influence that people have. In environments such as educational institutions, it has the potential to have a significant negative impact on students and faculties, where it does not even need to be tolerated. A number of obstacles, such as education bigotry, have been encountered by the Nigerian education system, which has hampered its advancement and improvement. Education has been shown to boost both general well-being and the level of satisfaction one derives from life (Wenz, 2020), but it creates challenges for certain persons when bigots who have biased notions work to undermine its effectiveness. The term 'education bigotry' refers to bias or discrimination against individuals or groups based on their career choices. This problem can appear in different ways in academic environments, such as disparities in treatment regarding career options, admission, staffing, scholarships, academic curriculum, educational services, guidance and counselling, assessments, disciplinary measures, classroom assignment, vocational training, socialisation, sports programmes, and job opportunities (Akdogan, 2019).

Education bigotry is still a big problem in Nigeria, which results in differences in educational opportunities, inadequate education, unemployment, and a high percentage of people who are illiterate. Educational attainment is not only crucial for one's own personal development but

also plays a key role in the social and economic prosperity of a nation. Discrimination held by society against particular field of study or degree of ability, are among the challenges that are encountered in the academic environment (Ghaffarzadeh, 2016). As a consequence of these discrimination, a number of educational fields, namely the Vocational and Technical Education (TVET) sector, have not been given the attention they deserve. Individuals frequently opt for more conventional academic degrees rather than the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, which has traditionally been regarded as a less appreciated choice for education. It appears that Nigeria's education system is making progress in the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, particularly in addressing difficulties related to educational bias. Recent developments imply that this progress is being made. Being that education bigotry is not a commonly use words among people, the researchers chose to interchangeably use other of its concept, discrimination.

Discrimination refers to some form of actions, treatments or behaviours. According to Wenz (2020), discrimination is defined as any human evaluation that differentiates between members of the same group or between people themselves. It also means to discriminate against an individual or a group, specifically by treating them in a manner that is unfavourable in comparison to other people. In reverse, discrimination can be the act of providing preferential treatment to those who are typically marginalised and face difficulties in getting jobs and other societal responsibilities, which is an affirmative action (Wang, 1983). The author demonstrates that discrimination can be communicated through a variety of means, including but not limited to verbal statements, laws, traditions, social policy, rules, regulations, and the way people are treated physically.

Four types of discrimination can be classified as:

- Intentional discrimination, which is an act of bias or prejudice that is done on purpose.
- Discrimination in institutions, which can be intentional or overt in one area but can lead to unintentional discrimination in another. This demands unnecessary levels of education.
- Unequal treatment, here different groups of people, like the old, the young, and men and women, are treated differently on a regular basis.
- Systemic discrimination, which includes practises that have a negative or different effect on minorities and women, even though these practises were set up and put into place with no bias and in accordance with community rules or policies. It becomes part of the way groups and institutions work.

We can see here that there is no type of discrimination that encourage equal acceptance of educational career and choice of study. Nevertheless, from the above definitions, we can say that discrimination mean an arbitrary exclusion of an individual or a group of individuals from pursuing things that society thinks are important rights, which indeed is characterised in Nigeria education system. This indeed form the main purpose of this study.

While some areas of study are considered to be of less significance than others, the Nigerian educational system places a larger emphasis on certain courses than it does on others, that even the admission bodies assigned lower marks to candidates who exhibit an interest in these less respected studies. Some go for it as an alternative to their first choice, this pattern is noticed in the universities admissions process. Therefore, in education offering different courses in place of another to different groups of persons is discrimination, education bigotry. A circumstance in which an individual choice of study is thwarted. It is not a common choice for people in Nigeria to pursue a profession in the field of technical, vocational education and

training (TVET). So, in the context of this study, the term ‘education bigotry’ refers to the practice of discriminating against individuals based on their choice of field of study.

A career education programme is offered to students during their upper basic education phase. This programme is designed to assist students in discovering and comprehending their own strengths and personality. But when these students’ interests shift towards vocational education, relatives and friends usually influenced the decision, in other hands hindering the achievement of the goals of career education (Dike, 2009). The author opined that, vocational education is a structured and intended curriculum that include a wide variety of educational activities and experiences. Providing young people with the core knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions, negotiate school transitions, and transfer into the workforce without any difficulty. The overarching goals of vocational education are as follows:

- Self-development: Is to facilitate the comprehension of oneself and the factors that impact an individual, establish a record of personal experiences and accomplishments, and enhance one's abilities. This is particularly relevant for young individuals.
- Career exploration: Is to assist adolescents in recognising, examining, and evaluating potential prospects in education and employment.
- Career management: Is a process that assists young individuals in creating and adapting plans to effectively manage their career choices, transitions, and changes.

The opportunity to acquire the critical knowledge and skills that are necessary for making career decisions that are satisfying is made available to young adults through the provision of vocational education. When a child gains the essential knowledge needed to make a fulfilling career through this education, but subsequently get thwarted to pursue a career in the field of sciences based on family preference, the result is often foreseeable: number of them become frustrated and quit because they are unable to cope with the stress linked to their lack of interest and proficiency in this new domain. These are students who have the potential to excel TVET courses.

Nevertheless, there is a discernible and consistent increase in the number of students enrolling in conventional academic programmes as opposed to choosing Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that TVET programmes in Nigeria are significantly smaller and relatively less developed in nature. Prior to this day. The Western educational system failed to pay enough attention to the skilled and vocational education that has already been created the priority that it deserves. The provision of education in reading, writing and numeracy, which were regarded as being of utmost importance by the colonial rulers, was, nevertheless, the primary focus of all efforts. The education act of 1882, according to Owolabi (2003), failed to adequately address the needs of technical and vocational education, which consequently hampered the nation's ability to acquire the necessary skilled workforce. The obligation of ensuring that technical education is available to all citizens lies with the government then. Every local government in the country was expected to have a functional technical school while every state was required to have at least one institution running advanced crafts courses with an emphasis on the training of technical instructors (Ayeni, 2015). But in reality, technical schools in Nigeria, are typically regarded as educational establishments that cater to students who are economically challenged and candidates who are unable to meet the prerequisites for obtaining a UTME admission to pursue any of the ‘overrated’ education courses. While TVET has flourished in many nations, Dike (2005) observed that Nigeria has neglected this component of education. Consequently, the society is facing a shortage of people who have received sufficient training, who are in possession of requisite skills, and who are able to be employed.

Assessment of Nigeria's Educational System

One of the most common factors that is regarded to be a significant contributor to the high unemployment rate in Nigeria is the educational system. The rate of unemployment in Nigeria has increased by a factor of three throughout the course of the years, and it is currently at 27.1%, as stated by Olurounbi (2021). In this country, there is a growing young population, but there are not enough work opportunities available for them. This is one of the reasons why there is such a high rate of youth unemployment. The underemployment rate in Nigeria is a significant 22.8%, according to the analysis conducted by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics. Other issues that contribute to the challenge of unemployment in Nigeria, particularly among the younger generation, include poor teacher training and insufficient school curricula. Corruption is a serious problem in Nigeria (Akande, 2014), and individuals with the highest level of education are roughly twice as likely to participate in corrupt activities compared to those who have not received any formal education to date. Consequently, the high unemployment rate in Nigeria is made worse by the fact that the educational system in the country is not enough in terms of providing its populace with a high-quality education. With this, there is a sizeable community of unemployed college graduates in the country. These individuals have certificates from a variety of educational levels, but they do not possess the necessary skills to find major employment. On average, Nigerians place a larger value on university education than they do on technical degrees, which is in contrast to the majority of other developed nations. This emphasis on university education, on the other hand, can often cause graduates to ignore the significance of whether or not the chosen degree provides them with the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully navigate the always changing world of jobs. The decision that young people make regarding their career path does not necessarily represent the natural abilities that they possess. In order to increase their chances of finding work after completing their mandatory year of national service, a significant number of Nigerian graduates are regularly encouraged to 'find something to manage', indirectly to seek careers in vocational disciplines. While taking disciplines TVET offers as something to manage after graduation when it can be studied.

For the purpose of achieving the goals that have been set for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria, the citizens of the country need to actively support and contribute to the growth of this programme in order to bring about the desired reduction in unemployment (Adeyinka, 2018). The unfortunate reality is that there are some parents in Nigeria who place a greater emphasis on their children's university degrees than they do on their children's innate skills and capabilities. Greater emphasis should be on the skills and knowledge possessed by an individual as against the number of degrees and certificates acquired. People are given the opportunity to display their full potential through the provision of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Important of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a component of general education and refers to a variety of learning experiences that are vital for employability, possession of competences with qualification skills for good job, and long-term learning related to the world of work. Is that aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life, comprises formal (organised programmes as part of the school system) and non-formal (outside of the school system) approaches (TESDA, 2010). TVET refers to education or training that is of a

technical character and aims to educate a person with skills that are relevant to a profession for that person to be able to find a job and provide for their life. According to Okadi (2023), is the part of the education system that provides courses and training programmes related to employment with the goal of easing the transition from school to work for young trainees/students (a social objective) and supplying the labour market with competent apprentices (an economic objective).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) provides an outline of the goals that will be accomplished through the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes that will be carried out in Nigeria, the goals are as follows:

- To supply skilled workforce in the applied sciences, technology, and business, particularly at the craft, advance craft, and technical levels.
- To provide the specialised knowledge and practical skills that are essential for the growth of the commercial and agricultural sectors of the economy.
- To enable our young men and women to have an intellectual knowledge of the rising complexity of technology, and
- To provide training and impart the required skills to persons for the purpose of economic self-sufficiency.

Point of note on those goals of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria is to equip the country's workforce with the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that would lead to an improvement in productivity and economic growth (Ajayi, 2019). One of the most important aspects of TVET is its orientation towards the world of work and the focus placed on the acquisition of skills that are marketable to employers. Therefore, the delivery systems for technical and vocational education are designed to train students to be employable.

When examining candidates for employment, potential employers do look at applicants' past accomplishments and experiences. Also, employers look for applicants' certain skills and qualities in addition to the academic qualifications (Briones, Apat, Lorica, & Valenzuela, 2021), that is employers give preference to individuals who possess a wide variety of employable skills. Employability skills, as described by Fajaryati et al. (2020), are the personality traits that allow a graduate to obtain a job and advance in their profession. Skills that enable one to do a specific task, covering technical skills, personal skills, higher-order thinking skills, social skills, generic skills, and self-perceived employability skills.

According to Berntson (2008), employability can be defined as the set of skills, knowledge, and personal attributes that enables an individual to acquire and maintain employment. Since employers prefer candidates who have a wide range of employability skills to complement their job-specific talents; hence, it is necessary for students enrolled in TVET programmes to identify their particular skill gaps and plan how their skills can be strengthened so that they can construct a portfolio of skills that are valued by employers. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance for students who are pursuing technical professions to make a deliberate effort to acquire adaptable skills that can be utilised in a variety of situations and to acquire practical experience in their particular areas of skill. Upon graduation, these students then become the workers that the nation needs to create employment opportunities for the youths so that they can be employed, become productive and contribute to the growth of their society and the nation making them more employable

Recommendations

This study recommends that Nigerians at large should give attention to the development of this country through the support of Technical, Vocational and Education Training by learning from experiences of countries like Hungary that was found to have made significant efforts to reorganize its vocational education and training system so as to face the challenges of the market economy, and example of Germany, where students spend one to two days a week attending vocational schools, and the remaining days of the week are spent doing apprenticeships in a variety of fields. Students in other fields of studies should be educate the role TVET play in educational sector in other to accept it as part of learning programs. Parents and guardians in other hands should stop viewing the TVET program as an aberration and permit their wards to attend Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) studies because there is the provision for students that are interested in TVET education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Presently, Nigerian students and graduates are being encouraged on a regular basis to engage in supplementary income-generating activities (side hustles). This is intended to assist them in coping with the challenges of limited employment prospects within their field of academic specialisation. Interestingly, the inventory of supplementary income sources can be traced back to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes. Technical, Vocational Education and Training is a very important tool through which Nigeria can combat unemployment. Their young ones can be encouraged and supported to pick up TVET programs. Employability is made possible when the school leavers are equipped with the necessary training, skill and experiences suitable for employment. In TVET, there is the desired occupational skills needed to overcome the problems of unemployment. Therefore, is vital that Technical, Vocational Education and Training is given the recognition merited increasing employability.

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