Effects of Vocational Skill Development Programme of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) on Youths Employment in Kaduna State

Muhammad Ahmad Garba

Department of Public Administration Federal University Gashua, Yobe State mgarba@fugashua.edu.ng 08038672568

Abstract

Unemployment has been a menace confronting Nigeria as a country and Kaduna state in particular. This led to the government initiating programmes of action to curb its spread, an example being the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). This study aimed to assess the effects of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) on youth employment generation in Kaduna state. Data for the study were generated from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data utilized was questionnaire while the secondary data were the annual reports of NDE and World Bank Development Reports, unpublished thesis, published journals and internet materials. The generated data were presented and analyzed using averages, percentages, tables and spearman ranked correlation. The study discovered that the VSD programme contributed to generating employment for many youths in the state. It also revealed inadequate tools for training beneficiaries in the three training centres of the state. The study recommended that government should declare a state of emergency on youth unemployment in the state by embarking on an effective industrialisation programme. It also recommended increased funding to the organisation to enable it to train more unemployed youths for self-reliance.

Keywords: Unemployment, skills development, youth, employment generation.

Introduction

The issue of unemployment has become a global concern in recent times. This makes nearly all the governments and development partners to be fully engaged in finding lasting solutions to the problem. Most countries of the world, whether advanced or developing have experienced a very high rate of unemployment since the great recession of 2008. For instance, some companies in the United States had to close down while many others were bailed out by the Obama administration, including the famous automobile company - General Motors. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS), one of the most widely recognized indicators of a recession is higher unemployment rates. "Unemployment is one of the fundamental developmental challenges facing Nigeria at the moment. Although unemployment was high in the 1980s, available reports from various local and international bodies and the glaring evidence of joblessness in this decades are clear indications that there was no time in Nigeria's chequered history when unemployment was as serious as it is now" (Kayode, Arome & Anyio, 2016).

The situation is similar in Africa. With a rapidly growing youth population that is expected to explode to over 830 million by 2050, Africa has its fair share of teeming unemployed young population. According to the Africa Development Bank Group (AFDB, 2017), "Youth are Africa's greatest asset. Africa's youth population is rapidly growing and is expected to double to over 830 million by 2050. If properly harnessed, this increase in the working age population could support increased productivity and stronger, more inclusive economic growth across the continent."

The AFDB went further to explain that Africa has a vulnerable population of 31% and an inactive population of 19%, with unemployment statistics standing at 31%. These scary figures might be among the contributing factors to the high level of instability, crime and insecurity that bedevil the continent. In 2011, a World Bank Survey showed that 40% of those who joined rebel movements said they were motivated by a lack of jobs, and 50% of those involved in one form of criminality or the other, were also motivated by a lack of jobs (Philip, Samson and Ogwu, 2013). Apart from the Arab Spring in Northern Africa, the Sub-Saharan region is full of countries with skyrocketing figures of unemployment among the youth population. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States published unemployment statistics of some countries in Africa which showed Cameroun with an unemployment level put at 30%, Kenya at 40%, Botswana at 20%, Burkina Faso as high as 77%, DR Congo 53%, South Africa 25% etc. (Central Intelligent Agency (CIA), 2018). These figures are indeed scary.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, "Nigerian unemployment rate was recorded at 13.3 per cent in the second quarter of 2016, up from 12.1 per cent in the three months to March, reaching the highest since 2009. The number of unemployed persons rose by 12.2 per cent to 10.644 million, employment barely rose by 0.06 per cent to 69.04 million and the labour force increased by 1.78 per cent to 79.9 million. Meanwhile, youth unemployment increased to 24 per cent from 21.5 per cent. The unemployment rate in Nigeria averaged 9.28 per cent from 2006 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 19.70 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2009 and a record low of 5.10 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2010" (Garba, 2018). Nigeria's unemployment rate was projected to be 33% by the end of 2022; this estimate was done in the last quarter of 2021 (NBS, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

An idle mind it is said is the devil's workshop. Unemployment which is a global phenomenon whereby, the able-bodied workforce is disengaged from the services of the nation has been a cankerworm and a time bomb that is waiting to explode. Although unemployment is a worldwide economic problem, causing poverty and lack (Ajufo 2013), it has become a major problem bedevilling the lives of Nigerian youth, causing frustration, dejection and dependency on family members and friends. The high rate of unemployment among the youths in Nigeria has contributed to the high rate of poverty and insecurity in the country.

Kaduna state is facing similar problems (El-Rufai, 2015). The state is considered crucial not just because of its huge population, but also because of its political, economic and demographic topography. Youth unemployment has become so terrible that all the past leaders of the state have included it in their agenda on or before their inauguration into office. Many analysts are of the view that the state should have an advantage over others in terms of employment opportunities. This is because Nigeria's first and only inland petroleum refinery in the North was built in Kaduna, the avalanche of textile mills (which are now moribund), and the Peugeot automobile assembly plants are among other existing industries (Garba, 2018).

The statistics are disappointing as Kaduna state has an unemployment rate of 25.7%, well above the national average of 23.9%. Its poverty rate fluctuates between 52.4% as core poor and 38.2% as moderately poor, the second highest incidence of poverty in the zone just behind Zamfara state. Income inequality is also increasing moderately by 9.2% (El-Rufai 2015 in Garba 2018).

The need to avert the negative effects of unemployment made the tackling of unemployment very prominent in the development objectives of the Nigerian government through the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment. The Federal Government in its efforts to ameliorate the

problem of unemployment constituted a committee known as the Chukwuma Committee on the 26th of March, 1986, to consider appropriate strategies for dealing with the mass unemployment problem in the country under the aegis of the Ministry of Employment Labour and Productivity. The report of the committee led to the institution of the National NDE in November 1986. The committee identified, among its findings, that the informal sector whose employee profile was characterized largely by low-skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled labour, accounted for up to 90% of the workers distributed unevenly in agriculture and other self-employment ventures. The findings of the committee led to their recommendation to the government, of the establishment of an employment creation agency. Consequently, the federal government approved the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) on 26th March 1986 with relevant programmes like Vocational Skills Development, Rural Employment Promotion, Small Scale Enterprises and Special Pubic Works Programmes launched nationwide in January 1987. The NDE's enabling Act, CAP 250 of the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (formerly Decree No. 24 of 1989) gave the NDE the responsibility to design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment (NDE, 2011).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to analyse the contributions of the Vocational Skills Acquisition programme of NDE towards youth employment generation in Kaduna state, while the subsidiary objective is to proffer solutions to the unemployment problem bedevilling the state.

Research Questions

Based on the problems identified, the following research questions are posed:

- i. How does the Vocational Skills Acquisition programme of NDE affect the employment generation of youths in Kaduna state?
- ii. What are the solutions to the unemployment problem in Kaduna State?

Hypotheses of the study

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the Vocational Skills Development programme of NDE and the employment generation of youths in Kaduna state.

H1: There is a significant relationship between the Vocational Skills Development programme of NDE and the employment generation of youths in Kaduna state.

Review of Relevant Literature

Concept of Employment

There are several kinds of literature by scholars in the social sciences on unemployment in Nigeria, particularly youth unemployment. Youth who constitute majorly, the workforce of any nation and its future leaders, must not be left idle, for the strengths and potentials of that country lie on the shoulders of the young and agile members of the society. It is indeed difficult to tell the exact meaning of unemployment. As rightly pointed out by Adesina (2013), unemployment is a very complex phenomenon for which there is no standard definition. Various countries adopt definitions that suit their local priorities.

To him, "unemployment denotes a condition of joblessness or lack of employment. In other words, anyone who is fit and available to work but fails to get one may be considered as being

unemployed for the concerned period". In a similar line of thinking Osakwe (2013) described unemployment as existing "when a fit and eligible individual does not have a job or work to do for some compensation". Even though they tried to be very pragmatic in their definition of the concept, their exertion tend to be narrow in meaning as it only captures the unemployment of labour. A broader definition of the concept is given by The International Labor Organization (ILO) which defines unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 1998:63).

Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment, therefore, could be described as the conglomerate of youths with diverse backgrounds, willing and able to work, but cannot find any. When the supply of labour outstrips the demand for labour, it causes joblessness and unemployment (Okafor, 2011). According to the Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) 2012, "there is in Nigeria evidence of a close correlation between youth unemployment and rising armed violence". The unequal distribution of economic resources leads to frustration and anger that can turn to violence.

The World Bank identifies the increasing magnitude of youth unemployment as one of two key indicators of the declining welfare status of Nigerians in recent times. Unemployment and lack of economic opportunities are widely considered by experts in academics and policy discussants to be significant factors aggravating conflict and increasing the chances of young people being drawn into violence as both perpetrators and victims. Since all minds must be engaged, the idle mind will be engaged in criminal activities while the productive minds will be engaged in a profitable venture. An unemployed youth has all the chances of being used by criminal gangs and vicious politicians as a weapon for executing any dastardly act against their opponents. As rightly pointed out in World Bank Report 2011, "Unemployment also increases individuals' vulnerability to being mobilised by both rebel movements and urban gangs: evidence consistently points to the lack of alternative sources of livelihood as a motive for youth's joining such groups.

Concept of Vocational Skills Development

The acquisition of skills by youth has been categorized as a very important tool in getting rid of unemployment. According to Idoko 2014, skill acquisition defined as the form of training by individuals or groups of individuals can lead to the acquisition of knowledge for self-sustenance. It involves the training of people in different fields of trade under a legal agreement between the trainers and the trainees for a certain duration and under certain conditions.

Ochiagha (1995) defined skill acquisition as the process of demonstrating the habit of active thinking or behaviour in a specific activity. He further stated that skill acquisition is seen as the ability to do or perform an activity that is related to some meaningful exercise, work or job. He maintained that for a skill to be acquired, appropriate knowledge, attitudes, habits of thought and qualities of character are learnt to enable the acquirer to develop an intellectual, emotional and moral character which prepares him or her for a brighter future.

Similarly, Donli (2004) was of the view that skill acquisition is the manifestation of ideas and knowledge through training which is geared towards instilling in individuals, the spirit of entrepreneurship needed for meaningful development. He stressed that if individuals are allowed to acquire relevant skills needed for self-sustenance in the economy, it will promote their charisma

in any work environment. He further maintained that skill acquisition increased competition and cooperation among people.

Magbagbeola (2004) posited that skills acquisition requires the accumulation of different skills that enhance task performance through the integration of both theoretical and practical forms of knowledge. He enumerated the guidelines for the sustenance of skill acquisition programmes to include the provision of training that gives the trainees the opportunities to acquire skills that are appropriate for preparation in a field of trade for gainful employment; the provision of definite skills that relate to each trade that makes one a professional in one field instead of the others; and the training that have to be done by competent, experienced and qualified instructors. Skill acquisition requires much practice, patience, interest, ability, aptitude and personality traits. Skill acquisition requires a conducive environment. Training requires constructive human relationships, business skills, imitation and constructive ideas. The principles guiding training in a particular field in terms of attitude, customer relationship, productivity, efficiency, supply and demand need to be appreciated.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO 2000), skill acquisition is the task of basic education to ensure each individual the full development of the human personality and citizenship; and to lay the foundation for employability. It further stresses that initial training develops further his or her employability by providing general core work skills, the underpinning knowledge, and industry-based and professional competencies which are portable and facilitate the transition into the world of work. Lifelong learning ensures that the individual's skills and competencies are maintained and improved as work, technology and skill requirements change; ensures the personal and career development of workers; results in increases in aggregate productivity and income; and improves social equity."

Musari (2009) pointed out that about 4.5 million people enter the labour market every year, without any hope of getting employment for life sustenance. The precarious situation has left the youths in a vicious cycle of poverty that daily erodes their self-confidence and future. Every year, thousands of graduates are churned out for whom there are no jobs. the streets in Nigeria are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily would have found gainful employment in some enterprises. The self-employed find it difficult to thrive in their businesses as scant infrastructure makes it impossible for them to succeed. This has undoubtedly made it easy for such young and agile citizens to succumb to the pressures of crimes and violent behaviour. This is why Adejumola & Tayo-Olajubulu (2009) identify unemployment as one of the major causes of social vices, including armed robbery, destitution, prostitution, political thuggery, kidnapping and many more.

Unemployment has become a major problem tormenting the lives of Nigerian youths and this poses a serious risk to Nigerian society. The phenomenon of youth unemployment is devastating (both psychologically and economically) to the individual and society as a whole. The magnitude of the danger that youth unemployment poses to society is better understood when, according to Awogbenle & Iwuamadi (2010), over 64 million youths are unemployed and 1.6 million are under-employed. Unemployment causes frustration, dejection, desperation and dependency on family members and friends who also have their problems to contend with. This precarious situation has left the youths in a vicious cycle of poverty that daily erodes their confidence and future.

The frustration and desperation that daily torment the unemployed create a fertile ground for

crime to thrive. In recent times, there have been notable adverse social, economic and political developments in Nigeria, a consequence of youth unemployment and under-employment, particularly exemplified by increasing militancy, violent crimes, kidnapping, restiveness and political instability (Ajufo, 2013). The scariest undertone of Nigeria's socio-economic underachievement, by far, is the steady rise in youth crime, nurtured in a climate of increasing national income and the simultaneous failure of employment-generation and poverty alleviation programmes. Armed insurgencies ravaging the oil-rich and volatile Niger Delta region and the wanton destruction of lives and property by Boko Haram in the Northern part of the country are now competing for space in international headlines. The season of discontent has special ramifications for a nation with unemployed millions, and the net effect has been a tragic precipitation of violent crimes: assault, burglary, extortion and kidnapping etc. Decades of social and political turmoil have helped turn the strategically located African nation into an established junction for international drug smugglers (Osalor, 2010). Other highlights of Nigeria's prolific crime syndicates are economic fraud usually in the form of innovative internet schemes, money laundering and racketeering.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Ajufo (2013) examined effective career guidance as a panacea to the challenges of youth unemployment in Nigeria and concluded that career guidance can only be a panacea for reducing the rate of youth unemployment in conjunction with technical and vocational education (TVE) and entrepreneurship. He also maintained that the energy, skills and aspirations of young people are invaluable assets that no country can afford to waste but should galvanise them to realise their full potential by providing access to employment, as a precondition for poverty eradication, sustainable development and lasting peace. Ajufo focuses on career guidance towards solving the menace of unemployment. He also relied on secondary sources of data collection to arrive at his conclusion, using Nigeria as a whole as the case study.

Ifatimehin, Isyak & Ahmed (2020) assessed the effect of the N-power scheme on youth empowerment in the Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi state. The study used both primary and secondary sources of data and descriptive and inferential statistical tools for its data analysis. The study found that the N-Power scheme had, to a very large extent, empowered the youths in Anyigba in skills acquisition, financial status, self-reliance and productivity.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Methodology

The study used a survey research design. This involves sampling from a target population of study and then generalizing the findings obtained from the analysis of the data. The survey employed by the researcher collected information from a representative sample upon which inference was drawn. The sources of data were both primary and secondary. The primary source involved the use of a questionnaire to obtain data. The secondary sources of data included information from textbooks, journals, newspapers and internet materials retrieved and reviewed. The Spearman ranked correlation and Pearson correlation statistical methods were used to test and compare the relationships between the opinions of the groups involved in the study. The 0.05 level of statistical significance was chosen for acceptance or rejection of the null hypothesis. The target population of this study consisted of NDE Staff, master trainers and beneficiaries of VSD programme. The total population was 588 consisting of VSD 517 beneficiaries, NDE 18 master trainers and 53 NDE staff who were categorized as 14 management staff, 31 senior staff and 8 junior staff.

In Determining of Sample size, the researcher used the Taro Yamani's formula (1967).

$$n = N \\ 1 + N(e)^2$$

Where:

n = Sample size N = Population e = Level of significan

e = Level of significance 95% = 0.05

n = 588 $1+588 (0.05)^{2}$ n = 588588x0.0025

> $\frac{588}{=1.47}$ = 400

Proportional Distribution of Sample Size to the Population

S/No.	Respondents	Total population	Sample size	Percentage (%)
1	Management staff	14	10	2.4
2	Senior staff	31	21	5.3
3	Junior staff	8	6	1.4
4	Master trainers	18	12	3.1
5	Beneficiaries	517	352	88.0
	Total	588	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Data Presentation (NDE Staff)

This unit used correlation in testing the hypothesis formulated with the aid of SPSS software for data analysis.

Crosstabs

Table 1.2: The Contribution of Vocational skill acquisition (IV) * The description level of awareness of NDE skills acquisition programme (DV) Cross tabulation

Count

		The description of level of awareness of NDE skills acquisition programme(DV)					Total
		VH	Н	U	L	VL	
The	VH	2	0	0	0	0	2
contribution of	Н	0	2	2	4	0	8
Vocational	L	0	0	0	3	0	3
skill	VL						
acquisitoon		0	0	0	0	2	2
(IV)				2			1.5
Total		2	2	2	7	2	15

Source: Computer Product of SPSS

VH- Very High H- High U- Undecided L-Low VL- Very Low

Table 1.3: Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.768	.088	4.320	.001(c)
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.833	.093	5.437	.000(c)
N of Valid Cases		15			

Source: Computer Product, SPSS

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
- c. Based on normal approximation.

Decision Rule

From table 1.3, the internal Pearson's Rank Correlation is 0.768, and the value of the Spearman correlation falls at 0.833. The decision rule is that 0.01 to 0.25 represents a weak relationship, 0.26-0.49 represents a moderate relationship, 0.50 - 0.75 represents a fair relationship and 0.75-1.00 represents a strong or perfect relationship. If the value of our correlation falls between 0.75 - 1.00, this shows that the relationship is strong. Thus, our hypothesis which states that "there is no significant relationship between the Vocational Skills Development programme of NDE and employment generation of youths in Kaduna state" has a strong relationship between the two variables. This means that the relationship between the vocational skills development programme of NDE and the employment generation of youth in the state is strong.

Statistical Test for Beneficiaries

Crosstabs

The level of contribution of VSD Programme on self -sustenance in Kaduna state under NDE (IV) * The VSD Programme on improving cooperation among the youths in Kaduna State under NDE Cross tabulation

		The VSD Programme on improving cooperation among the youths in Kaduna State under NDE				Total	
		VH	Н	U	L	VL	VH
The level of	VH	27	0	0	0	0	27
contribution of VSD	Н	10	45	11	6	0	72
Programme on self	U	0	0	0	11	0	11
sustenance in	L	0	0	0	1	14	15
Kaduna state under NDE (IV)	VL	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total		37	45	11	18	16	127

Source: Computer Product of SPSS

Table 2.2: Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error(a)	Approx. T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by	Gamma	1.000	.000	16.584	.000
Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.899	.024	22.353	.000(c)
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.916	.018	24.730	.000(c)
N of Valid Cases		127			

Source: Computer Product, SPSS

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
- c. Based on normal approximation.

Decision Rule

From table 2.2, the internal by internal Pearson's Rank Correlation is 0.916, and the value of the Spearman correlation falls at 0.899. The decision rule is that 0.01 to 0.25 represents a weak relationship, 0.26- 0.49 represents a moderate relationship, 0.50-0.75 represents a fair relationship and 0.75-1.00 represents a strong or perfect relationship. If the value of our correlation falls between 0.75-1.00, then the relationship is strong. Thus, our hypothesis which states that "there is no significant relationship between the vocational skills development programme of NDE and employment generation of youths in Kaduna state" has a strong relationship between the two variables. This means that the relationship between the vocational skills development programme of NDE and the employment generation of youth in the state is strong.

Major Research Findings

Based on the data presented, hypotheses tested and analyzed, the study made the following findings:

The relationship between the Vocational Skills Acquisition programme (VSD) and youth employment generation in Kaduna state is strong with the Spearman Correlation at 0.899 for beneficiaries and 0.833 for NDE staff. A total of 5,089 persons were registered while 3575 were placed in the various schemes of the VSD during the period under review. Also, it was found that most beneficiaries enrolled on the skill acquisition programme because they had no option. This apparent lack of passion for the skill acquired led to many graduate trainees abandoning the venture just a few months after graduation, to seek white colour jobs, or the jobs of their dream. This is because the inputs into the system (beneficiaries) do not consider the programme as a sustainable means to an end, so even if the system tries its best in processing the input (training), the output (empowered youth) will still abandon the skills acquired.

Conclusion

From the findings of this research, we can conclude that the National Directorate of Employment has, since its establishment, achieved several successes in providing employment opportunities through the instrumentality of Vocational Skill Development. Despite these successes, however, a large population of youths in Kaduna state have made the impact almost insignificant. The study

thus suggests that the programme be continued but that it should be properly overhauled to enable it to give room for more persons to be enrolled and empowered for self-employment.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it is recommended that the Kaduna state government, in collaboration with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the 23 local governments in the state should declare a state of emergency on unemployment. This should go beyond the usual paying of lip service but should involve the massive provision of skill acquisition centres across all the local government areas in the state. This will no doubt increase the capacity of the NDE by deepening its scope to the grassroots and increasing the number of beneficiaries. The governments at both state and local governments should include skills acquisition studies in their curriculum at schools from primary to university levels. This will cultivate passion in the children as they grow. This passion will make them a very good input into any skill acquisition programme in the future, thereby ensuring a qualitative output after receiving the required training.

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