VOCATIONAL SKILL TRAINING AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT ORIENTATION OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORP MEMBERS IN IFO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OGUN STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of vocational training as a gateway to self-employment among youth in Ifo Local Government Area, Ogun State. In Nigeria, the hope of any graduate is to get a well-paying job after completing his or her education, but the reality in the Nigerian labor market has shown that this is not the case, since there are no significant jobs available anywhere after completing the National Youth Services Corps (NYSC) program. The sample size for the study was 100 and a survey research design was use to gather data and information from the respondents and a purposive sampling was also used. Three (3) research questions were raised, 100 questionnaires were distributed to respondents and 92 were returned. The findings of the paper revealed that, vocational training and skills is the "sustaining strategy" for graduates to remain employed and provide basic needs for themselves. The study recommends that, relevant authorities and stakeholders must work tirelessly to guarantee that vocational and technical schools have enough qualified, competent teachers on staff to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Also, government should also prioritize and establish a quiet lovely environment for comfortably studying technical and vocational education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Vocational Skills, Training, Entrepreneur, NYSC Member, Self - Employment

Introduction

Unemployment is the biggest challenge faced in many countries around the world. Youth unemployment is increasing alarmingly year after year. Lack of possessing a technical knowledge plays a major role. Vocational skill training can offer greater opportunities to overcome unemployment problems. It is considered as an alternative school program which maps an individual's career to self-employment by acquiring entrepreneur skills in an explicit discipline. Vocational training is more specific on a career or trade. It helps the young people or adult to pursue employment through skills training and practical work experience. A common misconception among us is that, vocational training is only for the school drop outs or for the people from a meager background. However, it is not. A skill learnt through vocational training can be recognized of prior learning towards tertiary education (ex., Universities) as a credit. This additional acquired skill helps in meeting the current economic challenges faced in the country.

Aghenta and Ewgwuelu (1995) conceived vocational skills training as the development of the abilities, information, and attitudes required for success in any profession. The authors further revealed that vocational skill training is mainly concerned with the knowledge and skills necessary self-development. According to Gordon (1999), vocational skills training is a set of practically depicted and practiced task or career-skill training. Gordon also underlined that, vocational skills training has a variety of sub-components which are business education, agricultural education, as well as technical education and trade and industrial education were some of the elements that were included. Vocational skills training is an efficient method of reducing unemployment through empowering youths economically by training them to use their hands to create job opportunities for themselves.

Kennedy (2011), also defined vocational skills training from the lens of a course meant for the purpose of employment. He further explained that the concept of vocational education is a type of education that specifically prepares a student for their chosen field of employment. It is a planned training or courses and learning experience that begins with exploration of career options, support academic and life skills. While view the concept from the technically-inclined professionals, Uwaifo (2009) defined the concept as the process of developing professionals who will initiate, facilitate, and implement a country's technological progress. This definition further corroborate the

opinion of Lawal (2013) who emphasized that, vocational education is a form of training of people or personnel to become experts in their different occupations.

Vocational skills training is one way of solving the unemployment problem at least that is what we believe. When unemployed entrepreneurship has a refugee effect by which more people are pushed towards business ownership. We are basing our contribution on the Schumpeter effect by which the increase in the rate of entrepreneurship (business ownership) leads to greater levels of employment and economic growth (Baptista & Thurik, 2007: 76

Every organization has a unique vision and objective and being an entrepreneur is a necessary component of running a successful business. According to Barot (2015), every person who establishes a new business organization does so by adopting a new ideology of entrepreneurship. Hence, entrepreneurship is a key to success. However, entrepreneurship is an autonomous activity that helps people change their old behaviors into new ones. Entrepreneurship is also described as an activity that entails the discovery, appraisal, and exploitation of chances to bring new products and services, organizational structures, markets, operational procedures, and raw resources via organizing initiatives that previously had not existed (Venkataraman, 1997).

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From the forgoing analysis, it is clear that vocational skills training is absolutely crucial in contemporary societies. This is because vocational skills training provide the necessary practical knowledge and skills to sufficiently help the countries or communities in the development of industry. There are many potential for cultures that choose to adopt the culture of vocational education to succeed greatly. They can discover that achieving economic development and independence is considerably simpler.

Parker (2004) considers the self-employed as individuals who earn no wage or salary but derive their income by exercising their profession or business on their own account and at risk. Self-employment, understood as the basic notion of people working for themselves rather than for someone else, has been practiced for a long time; for example, according to Aronson (1991) "self-employment is unquestionably the oldest way by which individuals offer and sell their labor in a market economy." However, the concept of self-employment may be used in a narrow or broader perspective, according to the unit of analysis, the country being studied, or the specificities, methodological issues and goals of each research.

On the one hand, if we consider that self-employed individuals search for and explore new market opportunities and who start their own businesses, self-employment may be viewed as being associated with entrepreneurship. Kunt (2007), say self-employment may reflect an alternative professional occupation for unemployed or unsatisfied people who have quitted their job and who just want to enter the labor market as self-employees, without necessarily developing anything new. This study will investigate these strands, in order to shed new light on self-employment and vocational skills.

The European System of Accounts (ESA) defines employment as "covering both employees and self- employed persons, who are engaged in some productive activity that falls within the production boundary of the system". More specifically, self-employed persons are defined as persons who own sole or joint businesses of the unincorporated enterprises in which they work, with the exception of those unincorporated enterprises classified as quasi-corporations.

One of Nigeria's guiding principles to the attainment of its projected national development is the achievement of successful industrial development. Among the comity of nations, several nations are currently making enormous efforts to join the group of 'developed and industrialized nations' and to have a great deal of influence on international events (Tolu & Abe, 2011).Countries like China, United States of America, Japan as well as Germany, and a host of others, are recognized as being leaders in nearly every area of innovation and development. Vocational skills or what some called vocational education/ technical education is highly valued in each of the above nations (Okoye and Arimonu, 2016). They also passionately thought that, it is a good strategy to achieve a prosperous industrial growth and also a gateway for self-employment.

Nigeria as a country is obviously battling with unemployment and this is having a serious effect on the future of the country (Obumneke, 2012). In Nigeria, the hope for any graduate is to get a well-paying job after completing his or her education, but the reality in the Nigerian labor market has shown that this is not the case, since there are no significant jobs available anywhere after completing the National Youth Services Corps (NYSC) program. In its first quarter report, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that unemployment in the country surged from 27.1% in 2020 to 33% in 2021. The NBS report indicate that 60% of Nigeria's working age population is younger than 34 (Jerome-Mario, 2022). The willingness of the political class to suppress unemployment in the country is considered to be the key to the solution of the unemployment. Thus, Nigeria urgently needs leaders who can guide the ship of the country toward the acquisition of suitable and sound socio-economic and political advancements.

In Theory of economic development and further work, Schumpeter described development as historical process of structural changes, substantially driven by innovation which was divided by him into five types:

- Launch of a new product or a new species of already known product;
- Application of new methods of production or sales of a product (not yet proven in the industry
- Opening of a new market (the market for which a branch of the industry was not yet represented)
- Acquiring of new sources of supply of raw material or semi-finished goods;
- New industry structure such as the creation or destruction of a monopoly position.

Schumpeter argued that anyone seeking profits must innovate. That will cause the different employment of economic system's existing supplies of productive means. Schumpeter believed that innovation is considered as an essential driver of competitiveness and economic dynamics (Ziemnowicz, 1942). He also believed that innovation is the center of economic change causing gales of "creative destruction. In Schumpeter's theory, the possibility and activity of the entrepreneurs, drawing upon the discoveries of scientists and inventors, create completely new opportunities for investment, growth and employment (Hospers, 2005). In Schumpeter's analysis, the invention phase or the basic innovation have less of an impact, while the diffusion and imitation process have a much greater influence on the state of an economy (Tzeng, 2009).

Furthermore, as a means of survival for themselves and their family, a large number of graduates in the country have turn to learning a skill which may include hairstyling, make-up artistry, art/craft and so on. These skills have turned them to young entrepreneur who constantly seek financial aids for their business. The crux of this paper is to discuss vocational skills training as a gateway to self-employment and entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent global economic meltdown has caused many economics to experience a landslide recession which affect the labour market, mostly affecting the under-developed and developing nations of the world. Graduate unemployment has become one of the most challenging issues in Nigeria because most graduate lack entrepreneurship development training aside their course of study. This is because thousands of graduates are turned out from tertiary institutions on yearly basic with no hope of being absorbed by government establishments or private organization due to the unemployment trend in our society.

Objectives of the Study

The core objective of the study is to investigate how vocational skills could serve as a gateway to self-employment and entrepreneurship among Youth Corper in Ifo Ogun State. Specifically, the objectives of this paper are:

1. To identify the vocational skills training available for acquisition by the National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area.
2. To determine the extent at which vocational skill training as contributed to self-employment orientation among National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area.
3. To identify the challenges of vocational skill training among National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area.

Research Questions

1 What are the vocational skills training available among the National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area?

2 What are the extent as which vocational skill training contributed to self-employment orientation among National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area?

3. What are the challenges of vocational skills training among the National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area?

Methodology

This paper adopted the survey research design to gather data through the use of a structured questionnaire that is in tandem with the research questions. The sample size of the study comprises of 100 Youth corps who engaged in Vocational training and domiciled in Ifo Local Government. The primary data was collected from the respondents using a self-administered questionnaire specifically designed for Youth Corps Members. 100 questionnaires were distributed to targeted respondents and 92 of these questionnaires were returned. These data were analyzed using percentage, frequencies and pie-chart.

Results and Data Analysis

Table 1: What are the vocational skills training available among the National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area?

S/No	ITEMS	AVAILABLE		NON-AVAILABLE		REMARKS
		No.	%	No.	%	
1	Hair Styling	92	0.92	8	0.08	Accepted
2	Fashion Designing	97	0.97	3	0.03	Accepted
3	Art/Craft	80	0.80	20	0.20	Accepted
4	Home Cleaning	87	0.87	13	0.13	Accepted
5	Cosmetology	81	0.81	19	0.19	Accepted
6	Barbing	95	0.95	5	0.05	Accepted
7	Photography	89	0.89	11	0.11	Accepted
8	Aluminum	77	0.77	23	0.23	Accepted

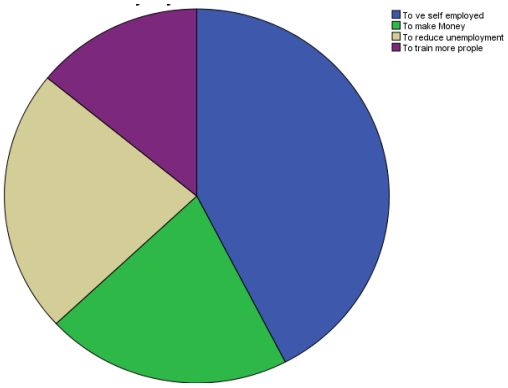
Table 1 which sought to the Vocational skills available for the National Youth Services corps Members in Ifo Local Government Area and the Programs promotes individual creativity and innovation, reduces the level of poverty, bring about economic development and increase self- esteem. Majority of the respond s agreed that the vocational skills are available for them.

Table 2 gives the respondents' opinions on whether vocational education and training in Nigeria serve as a springboard for entrepreneurship and self-employment. The table 2 below indicates that 42.4% of the respondents choose vocational education/skills to be self-employed. 22.8% of the respondents also choose to vocational education to reduce unemployment in the state. 20.7% of the respondents choose vocational education to make money for sustainability while 14.1% of the respondents choose vocational education to train more people and create more employment for people.

Table 2: What are the extent as which vocational skill training contributed to self-employment orientation among National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area?

Items	Frequency	Percentage
To be Self independent	39	42.4
To make money	19	20.7
To reduce unemployment	21	22.8
To train more people	13	14.1
Total	**92**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

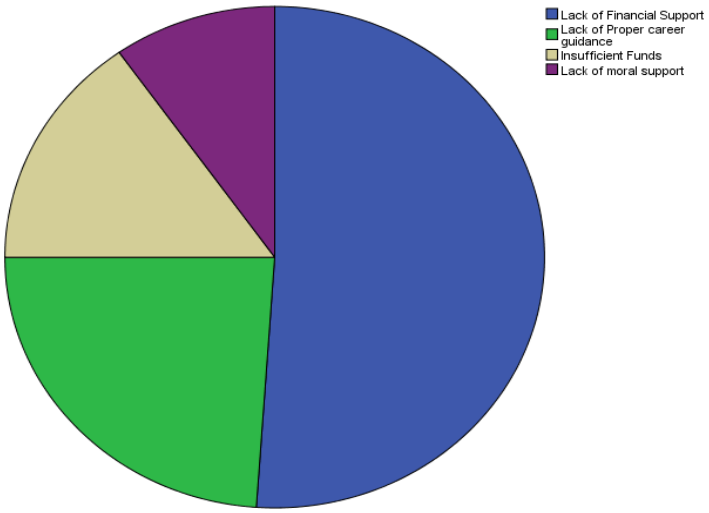


The table 3 below shows the response of the respondents on the challenges encountered during these trainings. The table below indicates that 51.1% of the respondents battle with lack of financial support during these trainings. 23.9% of the respondents said lack of proper guidance is also an obstacle for them. 15.2% of the respondents also battle with insufficient facilities after the training and lastly, 9.8% of the respondents said they battle with moral support. The implication of this is that, majority of the respondents are battling with one challenges or the other.

Table 3: What are the challenges of vocational skills training among the National Youth Services Corps Members in Ifo local Government Area.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Financial Support	47	51.1
Lack of proper career guidance	22	23.9
Insufficient Facilities	14	15.2
Lack of moral support	9	9.8
Total	**92**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2022



Discussion of Findings

From the analysis above, we must know that vocational skill training is considered as a pathway for self-employment among youth members in Ifo Local Government. These indicate that vocational skill training like Art/Craft, hair-styling, make-up artistry, photography and so on are skills learnt by graduates during their compulsory NYSC service. Learning these skills have created a pathway for self-employment and have made them entrepreneur in their

respective field. The findings of this paper is in tandem with the findings of Galadima (2003) who posits that, vocational skills training is the main source of knowledge creation and dissemination in all fields. Also, the findings of Abubakar (2019) corroborate with the findings of this research. He reiterated that, poor parental attitude and inadequate funding are the challenges of vocational training in the country. The findings of Nanjwan and Plang (2019) also revealed that, the development of vocational skills training is practically concerned about the individual most especially those with special needs. The authors further revealed that the personnel are seen as human resource and it is therefore meant to liberate the mind of the trainee to be self-employed. They also indicate that ignorance and the idea of not being informed about different types of vocational skills remain a problem.

Conclusion

Vocational training has become the order of the day more so that paid employment is far-fetched. There is need for every Nigeria Youth to be self-reliant in order to make a living and entrepreneurship remains the only option. Vocational skills training is seen as a pathway or gateway for self-employment and entrepreneurship. The study conclude that, vocational skills and training such as hair-styling, make-up artist, art and craft, fashion designing and so on are skills in the hands of graduates who have now become self-employed with these skills. Although there exist some challenges, but these challenges do not deter them from learning to be self-employed. The study also conclude that the enrolment of graduates in these vocational skills contribute to their sustainability and increase their experience in management.

Recommendations

The paper therefore recommends that,

- The federal government should as a matter of urgency take adequate measure on how to reduce unemployment in Nigeria.
- For Nigeria to survive in the global market and handle the socio-economic and security difficulties the country adequate measure must be put in place to ensure that both her youth have the necessary vocational skills to rely less on white collar jobs.
- It is crucial that the authorities work tirelessly to guarantee that our vocational and technical schools have enough qualified, competent teachers on staff to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- The government is expected to prioritize and establish a quiet lovely environment for comfortably studying technical and vocational education in Nigeria.
- Funds meant for vocational skills training should not be channeled through politicians. The funds should be invested directly on the Corper and anyone found wanting of misappropriation should be sanctioned.
- Vocational training should be encouraged in youths from kindergarten and as such parents should allow kids to choose their own profession.
- There should be continual workshop and seminars organized by individuals, government, vocational and technical educators, schools, accrediting bodies and industries regularly to enlighten the people about the importance of vocational skills.

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