Adequate Manpower Planning and Funding of Technical Vocational Education and Training: A Panacea for Sustainable Production of Workforce for Nigerian Industries

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ABSTRACT

Most industries in Nigeria stand the risk of low productivity due to lack of high-tech workforce. To function effectively in the modern industrial world of today and in the future, the Nigeria industrial workers need to constantly up-date their skills, while the tertiary institutions on their part will need to modify their programs to suit modern trends in the workplace. In the light of this modernization, this study looks at the need for manpower development and the role of technical vocational education and training in manpower planning and development. Challenges inherent in manpower production through technical education were also highlighted and suggestions made for improvement which include among others, the planning of educational programmes to meet the technical needs of the nation; training of more technical teachers and providing adequate funding to facilitate equipping the technical institutions for more practical than theoretical subject delivery.

Keywords: Manpower, planning, funding, Vocational Education and Training, Sustainable workforce production.

Aims Research Journal Reference Format:

1. INTRODUCTION

In the global world we find ourselves today, technology has become the driving force behind economic development. Industrialization has progressed from primary production to labour and capital intensive manufacturing and now to knowledge based businesses. If tertiary institutions’ programme offerings will meet the labour demands of industries, they must reasonably, follow this modern trends by running academic programmes that best fit the graduates into the modern world of work. This presupposes that Nigerian tertiary institutions must work with current manpower figures and projections into the future labour demands of the nation. Admissions into programmes will then be guided by such projects: to prepare graduates for existing and anticipated jobs.

According to Obadara and Oyebolu (2013) the growth of tangible capital stock of a nation depends, to a considerable degree, on human capital development. These authors further argued that without adequate investments in developing its human capital, the possibility of the growth of a nation might be minimal. Human capital, according to them, can be developed through the process of increasing knowledge, skills and the capacities of the people in the country. Ibeneme (2009) maintains that no nation can develop beyond the level of the human resources it has. There is therefore, a need for manpower planning to facilitate the production of adequate manpower by our tertiary institutions.

Manpower planning, also known as human resource planning, involves putting right number of people, right kind of people at the right place, right time and doing the right things for which they are suited for the achievement of goals of the organization (Obasan & Yomi, 2011). The authors stress that manpower planning is a conscious attempt by the country to link the development of the educational systems to the demand for educated manpower by their economies. Planning is to ensure regular and adequate supply and maintenance of relevant human resources in all sectors of the economy at all times.
It is a two-faced process because it not only analyzes the current human resources but makes manpower forecast thereby drawing employment programmes. Such planning to be effective must follow the systems approach using the following procedure:

1. Analyzing the current manpower inventory – Before a forecast of future manpower needs of an organization is made, the current manpower status has to be analyzed.
2. Making future manpower forecast – As the factors affecting the future manpower forecast are known, planning can be done for the future manpower requirements in several work units using experts forecast, trend analysis, workload analysis, workforce analysis or other mathematical models.
3. Developing employment programmes – Once the current inventory is compared with future forecast, the employment programmes can be framed and developed, which will include recruitment, selection procedures and placement plans.
4. Design training programmes – These will be based upon the extent of diversification, expansion plans and development programmes. Such training programmes depend on the extent of improvement in technology and advancement to take place. It is also done to improve on the skills, capabilities, and knowledge of the workers. (http://www.managementstudyguide.com/manpower-planning.htm).

For the production industries in Nigeria to function effectively, there is need to feed them with adequate manpower and the means of developing this manpower is through manpower planning and technical education. Obadara and Oyebolu (2013) observed that employment and occupational skills can be provided by technical and vocational education, since this type of education involves the acquisition of techniques and application of the knowledge of science for the improvement of man’s surroundings. It is a well known fact that the industrial sector needs better trained workers and technical schools could contribute to solving the problem by providing programmes that will equip graduates with functional skills. Orama and Ndidi (2012) observed that to develop technologically, requires among others, a workforce that has the right skills, knowledge and attitude, which are acquired through technical and vocational education.

Technical education is broadly defined as educational programmes planned for those who desire to earn a living in an occupation in which success is largely dependent upon technical information and understanding of the laws of science and technology as applied to design, manufacturing, production, distribution and serves (Olaitan, 1996). According to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), technical and vocational education refers to those aspects of 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 related to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (UNESCO & ILO, 2002). Olaitan (1993) refers to vocational education as a process of getting people ready and keeping them ready for the type of services we need. Technical and vocational education is designed to prepare skilled workers for industries, agriculture and commerce.

Thus, this form of education plays an important role in cutting down on unemployment and in supplying industries with the needed skill labour. The Nigerian Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) sees technical and vocational education as a form of education which is obtainable at the technical colleges. According to Urama and Ndidi (2012) technical and vocational education gives individuals the skills to live, learn and work as productive citizens in a global society, hence, it is a prerequisite for the manpower development of a nation. It can safely be concluded that manpower development and vocational education are inseparable. But to determine the quantity and quality of manpower need, TVET must depend on manpower planning. Osisioma (1993) observes that the central objective of vocational education revolves on the advance of socio-economic, industrial and technological objectives that will eventually manifest themselves in improved standard of living for the citizens as well as in economic stability, industrial harmony and technological advancement.

2. NEED FOR MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Unemployment is a major challenge on which all the levels of vices, especially insecurity, hang in Nigeria. The unemployment rate in Nigeria is currently put at 24 percent with over 60 percent of these, being youths in their active ages (Dahunsi, 2013). The author attributed the unemployment situation to the Nigerian system of education that is neither regulated by any known manpower planning principle nor guided by the labour market requirements. Manpower planning according to Monday (2009) leads to economic development, political stability and poverty alleviation.
In an attempt to explain each of these variables, the author observed that: to economic development manpower planning involves the building of capacity and harnessing the nation’s human resource which constitutes a requirement for development; regarding political stability, manpower development can enhance the youths’ ability for self-development and improving the quality of their political participation; and an effective poverty alleviation scheme involves the development and utilization of local resources including human, for solving the problem of poverty. The author concluded that manpower development is central to solving the present problem of poverty in Nigeria. Also, Yesufu (2000) observed that no activities can be done without planning, just as nothing can be done in any organization without first determining the organizations’ human resource needs.

3. ROLE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN MANPOWER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Manpower is equivalent to labour when labour is understood to be a factor of production. It also means personnel or employees or the human resource. A plan of any type may be defined as a predetermined course of action, involving the future actions and some element of organization. According to Okorie (2000) manpower can be seen as the total supply of persons available and fitted for service. It is thus, a process by which a society or firm ensures that it has the right number of people and right kind of people in the right places at the right time doing things for which they are economically most useful. Cole (2008) states that the focus of manpower development tends to be primarily on an organization’s future requirement. Urama and Ndidi (2012) assert that the development of manpower means exposing individuals or group of individuals to those experiences that will enable them to be intellectually matured to acquire skills that will enhance their abilities in solving their personal and financial problems. Thus, the author opines that manpower development relates to the training and development of a nation’s human resources to achieve the highest productivity and most efficient interactions with other factors of production.

From economic need stems the social and political needs of any nation. The economic and social well being of any society is dependent on the abundance of goods and services made available for its people. These goods and services are made available by skilled hands. According to Olaitan (1993) the world is created by the work of skill hands on raw materials. Vocational technical education is capable of producing these skilled hands. Such education has been seen as education dealing with skills, knowledge and attitudes. It should therefore, produce the right type of manpower in the right number, that is, the right quality and quantity (Umara & Ndidi, 2012).

Manpower planning involves a way of using human beings and their skills to meet the needs of a nation. It thus follows that there is a strong link between technical education and manpower planning. These are two great natural resources. Any attempt at manpower planning should consider the most efficient means of tapping while at the same time conserving these assets. Technical education, through the skills it makes available to individuals, can contribute to the conservation of these resources. In planning manpower, there is need to consider the labour demand of the society.

The contribution of technical/vocational schools to manpower development can be viewed in line with contrition’s of setting training programmes to manpower development through courses like building, drafting, metal work, woodwork, and others, technical schools can develop manpower for the industries. At this period of the nation’s development, there are machines in homes, in the farms, in the factories, in schools and other places of business. These machines are to be manned by skilled workers. It follows then that the role of technical education in manpower development is broad in scope and deeply rooted in the philosophy of technical and vocational education.
4. CHALLENGES INHERENT IN MANPOWER PRODUCTION THROUGH TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The manpower production process in Nigeria is handicapped by two major problems. These are:
1. Inadequate manpower planning
2. Inadequate funding.

1. Inadequate manpower planning:
Inadequate manpower planning results in overemphasis on general education and inadequate surveys due to poor policies.

General form of education in Nigeria: The true economic test of the value of any educational programme is its ability to meet manpower need and solve employment problem in the society. The colonial oriented general education operating in the country does not satisfy the above test. The result of this type of education has been the production of graduates with no saleable skills. The labour market in Nigeria is thus filled with surplus underemployed youth. Many more others are unemployed, and some others are even unemployable since they have nothing to offer in terms of employability skills.

Inadequate surveys due to poor policies: There are no proper surveys and assessment of manpower needs and long range forecasting of manpower requirements. This leads to poor development of educational and training programmes to the extent that some professions are over-bloated with training personnel, while some are in short supply.

Lack of vocational guidance and counseling: Students need to be guided and awareness for vocational programmes created in them. But we find the guidance and counseling are lacking in many schools in Nigeria.

2. Poor Funding of TVET
May, Arogundadade and Ekundayo. (2007) observed that technical and vocational education are very much still neglected in the aspect of adequate funding, personnel, modern facilities, staff motivation which consequently are robbing the country of the economic development to be contributed by graduates of technical/vocational education. This poor funding has resulted in the following challenges:

Inadequate professionally qualified technical teachers: In a country such as Nigeria, there is a proliferation of institutions of technical education. Unfortunately, many of these institutions are not well staffed with professionally qualified teachers. Most of the graduates of vocational institutions prefer working in industries. Thus, there is shortage of vocational technical teachers in schools. The effect is that some vocational studies are not taught in schools. In some schools, vocational technical subjects are taught by non-professionals. Staffing of Vocational technical education is generally inadequate because of poor funding. Experienced and skilful teachers may not be employed. Those that are employed, because of poor remuneration do not stay long in the teaching profession, but drift to some other more lucrative jobs especially in the industries and abroad. Consequently, inexperienced and unqualified technical teachers are employed thereby lowering academic standard, resulting to wastage in the achievement of technical education goals (Agbionu, 2003). The result is that students graduate with little or no skills for effective participation in the world of work.

Poor Public Perception of TVET: The attitude of the Nigerian society towards the real meaning of vocational technical education needs more to be desired. The society tends to regard vocational education as a type of education meant for the handicapped, people of very low intelligence, drop outs, delinquents and the poor in the society. The way policy makers view vocational education as being the major reason why it has not been given a clearly defined place in the educational system.

Inadequate Facilities: Most of the technical education schools in Nigeria do not have adequate and well furnished laboratories or workshop. The available facilities and programme are inadequate quantitatively and qualitatively and besides, they are obsolete. Oryem-Origa (2005) opined that only 40% of institutions of Higher Education in Nigeria have laboratory or workshop space for technical education programmes and that the few schools that have laboratories, experience acute shortage of laboratory equipment and supplies. This has made technology education difficult, which has led to insufficient production of technical graduates who are also ill prepared for driving the technological development of the country (Nworlu – Elechi, 2013).
5. CONCLUSION

The contribution of technical schools to manpower development can be viewed in the light of the contribution of certain technical training programmes to manpower development. In the light of the identified problems, the present picture of manpower development may look bleak. But it is hoped that with adequate manpower planning and effective implementation of government policies on vocational technical education, such schools can be depended upon to develop adequate manpower for Nigerian industries.

6. WAY FORWARD

We agree with Asogwa and Diogu (2007) that there is an urgent need for the Nigeria’s attention to be redirected towards self reliant and sustainable means of livelihood which technical education provides. The answer to improvement of our manpower production lies in a planned educational programme that will provide for all literarily. A planned programme based on a system of initial intellectual training and a formal option for manipulative skill training subsequently, is recommended. Policies on education should be articulated as to embrace vocational education as an equally important aspect of the overall education for the achievement of the goals of the individual and society. The policy planners should take into consideration the theories and needs of technical education. This means that government would rely more on expert advice from technical educators if policies on education should improve technical education. In planning manpower, there is need to consider the labour demand of the society. Hence, technical education should be planned to supply this needed labour in the right proportion and at the right time. There is also need in manpower planning to have a long range forecast of future national needs and plan ahead so as to give vocational technical education enough time to train the needed manpower. Short term planning may drain or weigh done on the economy and lead to inadequate production of manpower.

One of the basic approaches to technical education in Nigeria should be the establishment of more advanced technical teachers colleges to enhance the production of quality teachers. There should be sponsorships and scholarships for teachers who may wish to improve themselves. Also, a measure should be taken to improve middle level manpower by establishing more trade schools to train vocational teachers who are competent in their special fields.

The Industrial Training Fund (I.T.F) should be funded adequately to facilitate students’ industrial training in Nigeria. Education at all levels should be geared towards meeting the ever growing economic, social and political needs of Nigeria. To meet our manpower requirements, there should be more practice with adequate hands-on activities and less of theory in teaching technical courses in Nigerian schools. Objectives and careful manpower survey and planning should be carried out at national level. Special bodies responsible for manpower and the development of human resources should be created in the country. These will be responsible for surveys, statistics and planning necessary for immediate and long-range manpower predictions.

Instead of the proliferation of ill-equipped institutions, existing ones should be adequately equipped and staffed for effective training of manpower. Furthermore, on-the-job and in-service training courses should be highly encouraged. The employers should bear the primary responsibility of developing certain types of skills on the job, utilizing where necessary, the assistance of educational institutions. The position of technical-vocational education as the primary producers of the economy’s manpower should be recognized and rewarded accordingly. Since technical teachers possess saleable skills, they should be discouraged from fleeing the teaching profession into more lucrative industrial jobs. To retain them, and thus ensure the continuous production of manpower, they should be adequately remunerated. Where importation of foreign technicians is very necessary, security measures should be put in place to ensure that their activities are restricted to technical assistance.

Existing technical institutions should be expanded and equipped to take adequate number of students to meet the manpower needs of the nation. If necessary, foreign experts should be invited to train the trainers in their home environment. What is most needed today is a complete change of societal attitude to see vocational technical education as an equally important aspect of education.
REFERENCES


