

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Integrating ICT in Vocational Business Education for Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria

**Elemure Clement Boluwaji**

Lecturer, Department of Office Technology & Management,  
The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

**Eke Siene Elizabeth**

Principal Instructor, Department of Office Technology & Management,  
The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

**Shittu Oluwakemi Funmilayo**

Principal Instructor, Department of Office Technology & Management,  
The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*The current level of unemployment in the country is no doubt worrisome and alarming, it has remained a menace that is yet to be adequately tackled by various tiers of government. This paper therefore seeks to establish that unemployment which is one of the major problems bewildering the nation could be reduced through vocational business education provided that it receives the needed attention and support. The paper emphasized that vocational business education with its added skills, knowledge, abilities and opportunities has come to be the very much needed asset to individuals and the nation. Enhancing the programme would make the recipients to be economically viable and self-reliant. In view of this, the paper recommends that government at various level should support the programme through adequate funding and provision of facilities that will enhance delivery of the programme.*

**Keyword:** ICT, business education, unemployment

### **1. Introduction**

Education has been a fundamental way of living a successful life in the world today. It is a fundamental human right entitled to by every child (Kenya, 2010). It is critical to our development as individuals and as societies. It helps to pave the way for a successful and productive future. (Children's Act, 2004). Education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured, from a civilized and socialized society. It is the only means of cultural values of a society and, its goal is to make an individual perfect. Education in the broadest sense of the term is meant to aid human being in his pursuit of wholeness. Education program is a system of projects or service intended to meet a public need. It is the process of acquiring knowledge, in order to be a functional person in the society.

In Nigeria today, the problem of unemployment has become an all reaching concern. The developed nations have not shown exception to this frightful social problem, although the up-surge is more pronounced in the developing countries. In Africa and Nigeria in particular, graduate unemployment is a very daunting challenge in the labour market. Balogun (2016) hinted that almost half of the 10 million graduates, churned out of the over 668 universities in Africa yearly, do not get jobs. This by implication goes to establish that, graduate unemployment is one of the most critical developmental problems facing the African continent. It has not only obstructed some of the countries to achieve their economic greatness and developmental aspirations, but has also kept them as nations with jobless growth economy. By statistical information in Nigeria, the phenomenon of graduate unemployment has reached an alarming state. For instance, Akintoye (2008) indicated that graduate unemployment as a percentage of total unemployment rose in Nigeria from 1% in 1974 to 4% in 1984. In less than a decade, between 1992 and 1997, it accounted for 32% of the unemployed labour force in the country (Dabalén, Oni & Adekola 2000). Conservatively, Eneji, Mai-Laifa & Weiping (2013) put the rate of unemployed graduates at about 60% of the Nigeria labour supply market. Recent publication supplied by National Bureau of Statistics (2016) indicated that a total of 52 million citizens within the economically active population of Nigeria is jobless and this figure consisted mostly of newly qualified university graduates.

Akarahu (2010) asserted that the objective of (vocational) business education is to develop knowledge and competencies needed by:

- Developing basic awareness of the contribution which business and office employees make to the nation's economic system;
- Improving personal qualities and building attitudes necessary for adjustment to personal and employment situations;

- Developing the abilities of students to their maximum and
- Guiding individual for suitable placement in business and office employment

Acquisition of maximum business education skills is an important aspect of Vocational Education programme at the various levels of the Nigerian education. In support of this, one of the National Educational Objectives states that the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical are important for all Nigerians to live and contribute to the development of their society (FGN 2004). Consequently, the National Educational Policy document (FGN 2004) states that the nation's educational activity should be centred on the students in order for them to acquire sufficient skills acquisition for self-development and fulfilment in the labour market. From the above it is observed that this skill will help to reduce unemployment, that is, when there is no room for government work, student with vocational business education have the ability to stand on their own and become employer of labour. According to Cramp, (2004), key skills in vocational business education include skills of communication, application of number; problem solving, team working, information technology and improving own learning and performance while generic skills include the key skills but also covers more complex reasoning and management skills and personal values such as motivation, discipline, judgement, leadership and initiative. Cramp (2004) added that vocational skills are technical skills which are specific to a particular occupation or group of occupations.

## 2. Vocational Business Education

Vocational Business Education according to Ikpo (2010) is the enterprise of education directed towards a study and research in the field of teaching, developmental skills, business and related field of office practice. Citing Osuala, he referred to (vocational) business education as a programme of instruction aimed at developing skills, knowledge and understanding that are necessary to facilitate business information, control and processing. He opined that vocational business education makes significant impact on the nation's economy through the preparation of workers for entry into the labour market.

Government is yet to invest significant amounts in development of Vocational (Business) Education in Nigeria. This has resulted in having many poverty stricken Nigerians lacking skills, knowledge, tools, beliefs, and values to seek employment opportunities in Vocational Business Education. People who lack skills, knowledge, tools, beliefs, and values to perform financially rewarded activities are not usually employable. The vicious cycle of unemployment therefore continues unabated. In Nigeria, tackling unemployment requires development and implementation of educational programs that will directly benefit the teeming graduates. For this to be achieved, Vocation Business Education has a significant role to play.

## 3. The Concept of Unemployment in Nigeria

Unemployment has been a major challenge facing the world economy at present. Thousands of graduates are turn out yearly for non-existing jobs. Nigerian streets are littered with youth hawkers and bike riders who ordinarily would have found gained employment in some enterprises; or would have demonstrated their skills and resourcefulness if there are enabling environments and reliable management structures. However, the youths have now shifted their attention to cybercrime (Uddin & Uddin, 2013). Oyebade (2003) submitted that unemployment in Nigeria can be grouped into two categories: first, the older unemployed who lost their jobs through redundancy or bankruptcy and second, the younger unemployed, most of whom have never been employed; this has buttress the definition of Fajana (2000) who viewed unemployment as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. In the same vein, Adebayo (1999) stated that unemployment exists when members of the labour force desire to work but cannot get jobs. Government at all level should strive to create viable structure which will encourage the youths to think rationally towards job creation rather than job pilferage and almost unending unemployment proliferation in vogue in Nigeria (Uddin & Uddin 2013).

Unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 18.80 percent in the third quarter of 2017 from 16.20 percent in the second quarter of 2017. Unemployment rate in Nigeria averaged 10.63 percent from 2006 until 2017, reaching an all-time high of 19.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2009 and a record low of 5.10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010.



Figure 1

Unemployment in Nigeria has resulted in more and more people who do not have purchasing power. Less consumption has led to lower production and economic growth has been hampered. Unemployment also has social consequences as it increase the rate of crime. For instance, in Nigeria today, there is the Boko Haram menace, insurgency

in the Niger Delta, armed robbery and a lot of devastating crime all traceable to the problem of unemployment in the country. Unemployment leads to financial crisis and reduces the overall

Education therefore, can play a major role in reducing unemployment. According to UNESCO (2001), the role of education in unemployment reduction is crucial. Not only is education important in reducing unemployment, it is also a key to wealth creation. It promotes economic growth, national productivity and innovation, and values of democracy and social cohesion. The education system in Nigeria according to Elemure and Olowe (2014) need to be channelled towards areas of education that will not only provide the needed skills and ability needed in the labour market for the teeming unemployed graduates but will also make them employer of labour.

#### 4. Causes of Unemployment in Nigeria

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPMN, 2016) identified some factors that predisposed tertiary institution graduates to unemployment in the country. These include lack of national employment policy, sub-optimal quality of graduates, educational system not tailored and aligned to industry need and inappropriate educational curricula. Others are poor political governance, poor setting of policy direction, inconsistent government policy and harsh business environment. However, Olawale (2018) identified the following among others as the causes of unemployment in Nigeria:

- **Poor Supply of Electricity:** For average Nigerian youth that wants to venture into entrepreneurship, constant source of power supply is essential for most businesses. The current situation of little or no power supply is detrimental to the development of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs), hence such businesses fold up and unemployment sets in.
  - **Poor Standard of Education:** The standard of education is really low in Nigeria. Unemployment results due to half-baked graduates being released into the labour market every year due to the poor standard of education in the country.
  - **Tribalism and Nepotism:** Tribalism is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society. People are being employed based on where they come from or who they are. In the long run, the more qualified people are not employed.
  - **Lack of Employable Skills:** One of the major causes of unemployment in Nigeria is the low standard of education. Many graduates do not think it essential to empower themselves with skills that would further enhance their chances of getting a job. Skills such as ICT, PMP, HSE and the likes are usually overlooked. The ones who eventually acquire such skills stand a higher chance of getting employed.
  - **Preoccupation with Political Ambition:** Due to the huge salaries of people in political offices, along with kickbacks, many youths resort to occupying themselves with the ambition of being politicians and waste time, energy and resources in the pursuit of a public office, which sometimes, is a futile attempt. Such youths are not concerned about getting a job or venturing into a business.
  - **Corruption:** The high level of embezzlement, fraud and the likes by people in public office is also responsible for the rising level of unemployment. Government cannot provide amenities to facilitate job creation due to inadequate funds.
  - **Policies:** There are little or no policies in place to facilitate graduate's employment and where in place, they are mere paper work which are not implemented.
  - **Ignorance:** Many Nigerian youths live in ignorance. They do not develop ways of getting themselves employed. They instead prefer to sit at home and wait for someone to employ them.

#### 5. Information Communication and Technology

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills refer to the ability to comprehend and utilize digital processes and tools. As the amount of ICT equipment in schools increases, expectations of teachers continue to rise. According to UNESCO (2002) information and communication technology (ICT) may be regarded as the combination of 'Informatics technology' with other related technology, specifically communication technology. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is primarily being used for supporting teaching and learning at educational institutions and as blended learning (combining virtual distance learning with on-site learning at the institution).

Daniels (2002) posited that ICTs have become within a very short time, one of the basic building blocks of modern society. Many countries now regard understanding ICT and mastering the basic skills and concepts of ICT as part of the core of education.

#### 6. The Need for Vocational Business Education in Nigeria

The increasing rate of high level of unemployment in Nigeria is partly due to the fact that people do not have the knowledge and skills that will enable them take up the jobs for the highly skilled (Ojo & Gbinigie, 2006). Unemployment is particularly acute among graduates. Graduates in Nigeria according to Ojo & Gbinigie (2006) are becoming increasingly unemployed because they lack saleable skills. The need to be self-reliant simply connotes that one need to be skilled in any area of vocational courses of which Business Education is an integral part. Vocational Business Education is an avenue for discovering knowledge, acquiring human and social skills that are relevant for development and change. It is designed to guide potential graduates into the field and knowledge of business for self-reliant. Vocational Business Education aims at supporting people's knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in the world of work. It also helps prospective graduates experience various aspects of business ownership where understanding the basis of the economy, career opportunities that result, and the need to master skills to be successful in a free market economy should be the focus.

According to Osuntuyi (2013), the alarming rate of unemployment among graduates in Nigerian calls for the re-organization of our educational sector. Some attribute as the ugly situation to poor funding of education, indiscipline among our youths and other defects glued to it. Graduates would have been gainfully employed immediately after leaving the school if they are exposed to vocational (business) education leading to the acquisition of skills. Graduates are unemployed because of the type of education they received while in school which could not equip them with necessary saleable skills.

In most developing countries of the world such as Nigeria, the economy is moving towards a direction where only those individuals with self-sustaining and saleable skills can really survive (Okoro, 2010). As a result of this, he asserted that there is need for individuals to think of ways to be self-employed and to be self-reliant rather than waiting for government jobs which in any way may never come. Unemployment and poverty scourge are a common phenomenon which every nation strives to eradicate, hence educational policies are formulated to provide relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for individuals to secure self-paid employment rather than being employed by other person. For a country to reduce the scourge of poverty and unemployment, it has to depend on its available resources for survival. These resources can easily be harnessed with the relevant skills already acquired by its citizens through educational programmes that were offered in higher institutions of learning.

### **7. Challenges of Integrating of ICT in VBE in Nigeria**

According to Basir & Abdullahi some of the challenges facing integration of ICT and its implementation in Vocational Business Education include among others; lack of IT skills and training among teachers; Lack of e-content and technology; and inadequate infrastructure, technical support and equipment among the institutions.

- Lack of IT skills and training among teachers: This make many teachers to be sceptical and not open to new learning methods and are afraid of new technologies. As a consequence some teachers are not adopting ICT, as they consider it to be too technology-driven and that it does not add value for the user. The fact that some teachers and trainers are not ready for the adoption of ICT is inhibiting the realization of the future scenarios. The inadequate training of teachers is a related barrier, since many teachers lack the competences required to use ICT in teaching and learning.
- Lack of e-content and technology: E-content represent a major barrier in relation to the future scenarios in the use of ICT in Technical/Vocational Education. In many institutions the students have poor access to the technological equipment required, in addition which there is lack of suitable and relevant e-content.
- Access to online learning resources is too poor. The cost of the equipment – not least for individuals – is too high, which also limits access.
- Inadequate infrastructure, technical support and equipment among the institutions. Access to the digital equipment by both staff and students is limited. Lack of sustainable power supply and not having enough Internet bandwidth are all contributing factors coupled with low maintenance culture of the equipment.

### **8. The Way Forward**

In the same vein, Ikpo (2010) suggested the following as the way forward

- Change of attitude and perception of vocational business education by parents, public and other education stakeholders is needed. There is need to stress the importance of office education using different media outlet.
- A strong relationship between business education and general education is desirable. Equal preference should be given both.
- There is need for a strong linkage in business education and the labour market.
- Vocational business education programme needs to be well equipped with modern facilities and multimedia gadgets, with well-trained technical staff to manipulate, operate and carry out repairs.
- Vocational business education should be well funded by the various agencies involved. One of the greatest challenges to the successful implementation of office business curriculum is lack of fund.
- New implementation structures will need to be employed to effect and improve policies, strategies, delivery method, instructional materials, frame work, action plan and administrative style.
- Business Education should have a training package aimed at employment and demand-driven, must be linked to the world of work.
- Government should give vocational office business programme legislative backup, introduce achievable policy and incentives, build solid leadership and management capacity and also introduce sustainable financing scheme to improve (vocational) business education programme.
- The introduction of new equipment and facilities should be prioritised for effective delivery system.
- In improving the field of vocational business education, information technology is very vital. Akarahu (2010) citing Wilfred stated that Information and Communication Technology is an important tool in creating access to a learning environment that encourages interaction and collaboration and supports student's abilities to explore individual parts of learning. According to him, this will enable the leanings to cover the basic and core subjects which will give them strong foundation and proper placement in the world of work.

### **9. The Role of Vocational Business Education in Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria**

A career in business education includes knowledge in vocational education, occupational and skill development. According to Ojo & Gbinigie (2006), this is to make the individual involved to be competent and to contribute greatly to

national development through the acquisition of foundational business skills, understanding and idea to enable him identify problems and to proffer lasting solutions to such problem in order to have a beneficial effect on both himself and the society at large.

Vocational business education enables the recipient to stand on their own as a result of the knowledge, skill and creative ability they have gained which are also needed for self-employment without relying on government for jobs. The knowledge of business education makes people to be able to work for themselves and also stand as employers of labour. Vocational business education enables the recipient to develop employable and entrepreneurial skills and according to Abudu cited in Ojo & Gbinigie (2006), business education graduates could fit into many sectors of the economy having been exposed to the development of the right and needed employability and entrepreneurial skills to enable them function effectively in the work environment. The knowledge in vocational business education equips the recipients with the willingness and ability to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. It also enables the beneficiary to have management and organization skills to manage human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprise, risk bearing and innovation.

Vocational business education skill enhances entrepreneurial success for beneficiary graduates. Okoro (2010) citing Obarah gave the following as part of the roles of vocational business education.

- Providing meaningful education for the youths which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profits, and be self-independent.
- Providing small and medium sized companies with the opportunities to recruit.
- Providing graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium sized business.
- Providing graduates with training in skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
- Providing graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty.
- Stimulating industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
- Providing graduates with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.

In the view of Olowale (2013), the gains of vocational Business Education citing Osuala are the opportunities derived from the programme which include

- Gaining control over one's destiny and job satisfaction,
- Reaching one's full potentials,
- Creating employment for others,
- Reaping unlimited profits which help to expand the business
- Contributing to the economic development of the society and the nation at large and also being recognized.

Business education which is an integral part of vocational education emphasizes acquisition of skills and application of business laws to solve business problems and provide services for self-employment and self-reliant instead of searching for government jobs which are rather inadequate for the teeming graduates.

## 10. Job Opportunities in Vocational Business Education

There are enormous job opportunities that are opened to beneficiaries of vocational business education. It is therefore no doubt a veritable tool for reducing unemployment if given the much needed attention. Some of the opportunities as stated by Obarah cited in Elemure and Olowe (2014) include

- Computer business centre
- Book binding centre
- Photocopying centre
- Commercial programming/software
- Laminating centre
- Manual typewriting centre
- Computer sales
- Printing press
- Computer training
- Business/secretarial training schools
- Internet service (cyber cafe)
- Reprographic centre
- Business registration
- Employment Agency
- Training Consultancy
- Documentary/Information services
- Research Fellow
- Business curriculum development
- Organizing seminars/short courses
- Rental services
- Leasing services
- Contract jobs

Other areas that can be harnessed include graphics designing, designing of cards or posters and website designing.

### 11. Conclusion

The fact that no nation can grow beyond the level of education of her citizenry perhaps accounts for the scarcity of employment opportunities in the country. Vocational business education provides the needed general knowledge coupled with entrepreneurial skills which are the essential tools needed for managing a business. It is an untapped field that could be used as a mean of empowering the teeming unemployed graduate. A well implemented vocational business education will no doubt ease the challenges of unemployment and make the citizenry to be self-reliant. The right support and attention is therefore needed from all stakeholders for vocational business education that gives the much needed opportunities to be self-reliant and active in jobs creation.

### 12. Recommendations

Considering the enormous opportunities in vocational business education as highlighted in this paper, the following recommendation are made:

- Government at various levels should support vocational business education graduates through provision of required facilities and soft loans so as to encourage entrepreneurs and self-reliance.
- To achieve the objectives of vocational business education programme, government should ensure proper funding since it required a huge financial outlay to procure facilities and equipment used in the training of students.
- The curriculum need to be constantly reviewed to reflect modern trends; this will give room for innovation and other relevant areas to be integrated into the curriculum.
- Regular training and retraining of teachers/instructor is highly needed by the various institution offering the course.
- Information communication technology facilities should be made available by government and all other stakeholders in institutions to enhance and facilitate teaching and learning.

### 13. References

- i. Adebayo, A. (1999). Youth Unemployment and National Directorate of Employment Self Employment Programmes. *Nigerian Journal of Economics and Social Studies*, 41(1), 81-102.
- ii. Akintoye, I. (2008). Reducing Unemployment through the Informal Sector A Case Study of Nigeria. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Science*. 1(1), Pp 97-106.
- iii. Balogun, K. (2016); Unemployment in Africa Paper Presented at African Transformation Forum Organized by African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET), April, 2016, Kigali, Rwanda.
- iv. Children Act 2004. [www.workingwithkids.co.uk/childrens-act.html](http://www.workingwithkids.co.uk/childrens-act.html)
- v. Cramp, P. (2004). *Labour Markets: The Economics of Work and Leisure (Second Edition)*. Stocksfield: Aforme Limited.
- vi. Dabalén, A., Oni, B. & Adekola, O. (2000). Labour Market Prospects for University Graduates in Nigeria., *Higher Education Management*. 14 (1) pp1-36.
- vii. Eneji, M, Mai-Laifa, D. & Weiping, S. (2013). Socio-Economic Impact of Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria and the Vision 20: 2020, *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 2 (1) pp148-176.
- viii. Fajana S (2000). *Functioning of the Nigerian Labour Market*, Labonfin and Company, Lagos.
- ix. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on education (4th ed)*. Lagos: National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC). Kenya (2010). *Right to Education Country Factsheet*. KENYA
- x. National Board for Technical Education (2004). *Office Technology and Management Curriculum and Course Specification for ND and HND Programmes*. Kaduna: NBTE Publications.
- xi. National Bureau Statistics (2016). *Unemployment and Underemployed Watch in Nigeria - (Quarter 4) National Bureau of Statistic, Publication, Abuja, Nigeria*.
- xii. Olawale S. (2018). <https://infoguidenigeria.com/auseu-unemployment-nigeria/>
- xiii. Onifade A. (2004). *Management: Office Business Education*. Abeokuta: KAPPCO
- xiv. Oyebade, S.A. (2003). *Education and Unemployment of Youths in Nigeria: Causes, Impacts and Suggestions*. National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) Document, pp.94.
- xv. Uddin P. S. O. & Uddin, O. O. (2013). Causes, Effects and Solutions to Youth Unemployment Problems in Nigeria, *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences (JETEMS)* 4(4):397-402