

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING NEEDS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES IN TARABA STATE

\*M. A. Auta & Obi BibianIrukaku Mary Noleen, Ph.D

Department of Technology and Vocational Education,

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka-Nigeria

+2348036466757

ma.auta@unizik.edu.ng

\*Corresponding Author

**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to identify the vocational training needs of unemployed graduates in Taraba state. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The area of the study was Taraba state in North-eastern Nigeria, and the population of the study comprises of all unemployed graduates with a minimum qualification of Higher National Diploma (HND) in the state. Stratified random sampling was used to arrive at a sample size to 150. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts in vocational education who are lecturers in institutions of higher learning. 150 copies of the instrument were administered of which 148 copies were properly filled and returned. Frequency count, Simple percentage and Ranking were used to analyze the research questions. Findings from the study among others indicated that most of the unemployed graduates (72%) are male while the rest (28%) are female. None of them had a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D). Also, 3%, 53% and 44% had Master of Science (M.Sc.) Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and Higher National Diploma (HND) respectively. Electrical Installation and Maintenance, tailoring and hair dressing are the first three most preferred vocational training needed by unemployed graduates in Taraba State. It is therefore recommended among others that, Government should take girl-child education with all the seriousness it deserves through the promotion of inclusive education. Universities should ensure that the entrepreneurship components of their programmes are overhauled to respond to the needs of the society and the students.

**Key words:** Vocational; Training; Needs; Unemployment; Graduates;

### Introduction

Graduate unemployment has become a matter of concern to the society. This is more pronounced in developing countries such as Nigeria where graduate unemployment has become so scary in the labour market (Longe, 2017). According to Adawo (2013), among all the problems facing Nigeria in recent time, none is as persistent and distressing as the problems of high rate of unemployment among Nigerian graduates.

As part of measures aimed at finding solution to this scourge, the authors observed that, successive governments have been putting in place various vocational education programmes aimed at equipping unemployed graduates with relevant skills that will make them self-employed. For instance, when the federal government of Nigeria decided to partially removed subsidy on petrol in 2009, it introduced subsidy reinvestment programme (SURE-P) with one of the components meant for the training of graduates in the areas of skills acquisition.

In the present regime, as part of it desires to fulfill some of its campaign promises, the government introduced some social investment programmes (SIP) with NPower build as its vocational training arm. The success or otherwise of these programmes is still debatable (Surajo & Zehadul-Karim, 2016). However, what is not in dispute is that, some of these

graduates abandoned the training along the way; the few that managed to complete the training mostly ported to other irrelevant endeavours after selling off the startup tools supplied to them by the federal government for the commencement of their journey to self-employment.

The authors also observed that, this unwanted behaviour may not be unconnected with the fact that most of these vocational training programmes were put in place without considering the needs of the beneficiaries (graduates) or based on any observable data even though, learners' interest is a key to success or otherwise of any training and indeed, any vocational skill acquisition programme. These situations necessitate this study to identify the vocational training needs of unemployed graduates of in Taraba state.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to identify the vocational training needs of unemployed graduates of in Taraba state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Describe the salient demographic characteristics of unemployed graduates in Taraba state.
2. Identify the areas of vocational training needs of unemployed graduates in Taraba state.

### **Research Questions**

The findings of the study answered the following questions:

1. What are the salient demographic characteristics of unemployed graduates in Taraba state?
2. What are the areas of vocational training needs of unemployed graduates in Taraba state?

### **Method**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The area of the study was Taraba state, and the population of the study comprises of all unemployed graduates with a minimum qualification of Higher National Diploma (HND) in the state. For the purpose of sampling, the state was stratified along the three senatorial districts, in each of the three senatorial district headquarters, 50 unemployed graduates were randomly selected, thereby, bringing the sample size to 150. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers in accordance with the vocational trades training framework developed by Savion (2018). The instrument was validated by three experts in vocational education who are lecturers in institutions of higher learning. 150 copies of the instrument were administered of which 148 copies were properly filled and returned. Frequency count, Simple percentage and Ranking were used to analyze the research questions.

### **Results**

#### **Research Question 1**

**Table 1**

#### **Sex Distribution of unemployed graduates in Taraba state**

S/N	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	107	72%
2	Female	41	28%

Table 1 show that 72% and 28% of unemployed graduates in Taraba state are male and female respectively.

**Table 2**

#### **Educational Qualification Distribution of unemployed graduates in Taraba state**

S/N	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ph.D	0	0%
2	M.Sc, M.Ed, M.A, M.Tech	4	3%
3	B.Sc, B.Ed, B.A, B.Tech	79	53%
4	HND	65	44%

Table 2 shows that 3%, 53%, and 44% of unemployed graduates in Taraba state hold Masters, bachelor Degree, and Higher National Diploma respectively. However, none of the unemployed graduates hold a Ph.D.

**Table 3**

**Age distribution of unemployed graduates in Taraba state**

S/N	Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	15-24	21	14%
2	25-34	88	59%
3.	35-Above	39	27%

The data presented in Table 3 indicated that 14%, 59, and 27% of unemployed graduates in Taraba state have their age range between 15-24, 25-34, and 35 and above respectively.

**Research Question 2**

**Table 4**

**Frequency, Percentage, and Ranking on areas of vocational training needs of unemployed graduates in Taraba state**

S/N	Vocational Trade	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Electrical Installations and maintenance	21	14.19%	1
2	Tailoring	19	12.84%	2
3	Hair Dressing	15	10.14%	3
4	GSM Repairs	13	8.78%	4
5	Computer Operations & Maintenance	13	8.78%	4
6	Furniture & Upholstery	12	8.10%	5
7	Mechatronics	9	6.03%	6
8	Carpentry & Joinery	8	5.40%	7
9	Catering Craft	8	5.40%	7
10	Fabrication & Welding	7	4.73%	8
11	Plaster of Paris (POP) Craft	7	4.73%	8
12	Painting & Decoration	6	4.05%	9
13	Blocklaying & Concreting	5	3.40%	10
14	Radio and Television Repairs	3	2.03%	11
15	Plumbing & Pipe Fittings	2	1.35%	12

The data presented in Table 4 reveals that the 15 vocational areas presented received a frequency count ranging between 2 and 21 with corresponding percentages between 1.35 and 14.19. Electrical Installation and Maintenance was ranked No.1 while Plumbing and Pipe fittings was ranked No.12. This shows that Electrical Installation and Maintenance was the most preferred vocational area while Plumbing and Pipe fittings was the least preferred vocation.

**Discussion of Findings**

Findings from the study on the salient demographic characteristics of the respondents indicated that most of them (72%) are male while the rest (28%) are female. This may not be unconnected with the low female enrolment of female students into high institution. (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, 2015). With regards to the educational qualification of the unemployed graduates, none of them had a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D). However, 3%, 53% and 44% had Master of Science (M.Sc.) Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and Higher National Diploma (HND) respectively. This may be due to the fact that there is a high demand for Ph.D holders in our tertiary institutions which makes them “sought after” after graduation. Okafor (2017) opined that most of the Ph.D graduates are either lecturers in tertiary institutions or are “well to do” in their respective callings thereby making them slightly immune to the prevalent scourge of unemployment. The findings also indicated that most of the unemployed graduates fell with the age range of 25 – 34. This can be associated

with the fact that the age range fell within the period where an average Nigerian student graduate from the University or its equivalent and might have completed the mandatory one year National Youth Service Corp (NYSC). This finding is also consistent with the Federal Government of Nigeria, FGN (2013) which indicated that a child must pass through basic education and senior secondary education before proceeding to institutions of higher learning which requires a period of 12 years of studies after pre-basic education.

Findings from the study also indicated that Electrical Installation and Maintenance, tailoring and hair dressing are the first three most preferred vocational training needed by unemployed graduates in Taraba State. This can be linked to the central role electricity plays in the life of our nation and the need to have competent personnel to handle its installations and maintenance in our homes, offices and factories. The choice of tailoring and hair dressing on the other hand may likely be due to the societal need of fashionable appearance and to confirm the long held notion that one is “addresses the way he or she dresses”. This was corroborated by Nnamdi (2018) who opined that today’s society have evolved to the extent that one dressing speaks volume about his or her personality and the respect one earn commensurate with his or her appearance.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings presented in the proceeding heading, it can be concluded that the success of any vocational training programme depends largely on the needs of the trainees and the society. Where programmes are developed without recourse to any observable data, its tendency to remain and mirage is very high.

### **Recommendations**

It is therefore recommended that:

1. Government should take girl-child education with all the seriousness it deserves through the promotion of inclusive education.
2. Universities should ensure that the entrepreneurship components of their programmes are overhauled to respond to the needs of the society and the students.
3. Government should continue to make adequate budgetary provisions for the training of unemployed youth in various skills so that they can become more productive and useful to the society.
4. Government should ensure that only those vocational training area that are needed by the unemployed youth are mounted so that the maximum benefits of such laudable project can be derived.

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