

APPROACHES TO MANPOWER PLANNING AND ANALYSIS IN VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Chukwunwike Emmanuel Attamah

Abstract

The paper highlighted manpower development processes in vocational education and discussed personnel planning and its development while paying due attention to trainer and trainee analysis and training for development. The benefits of educational statistics and manpower planning and development in vocational education were discussed exhaustively. Planning was presented as a remedy to mass unemployment and skill shortages in vocational education. Finally, the roles of vocational education in the provision of job opportunities in Nigeria were discussed.

Introduction

The main element of manpower planning and development according to Olaiya (1998) are training, human resource development and skill acquisition. Training, formal or informal is a planned activity to produce necessary skill acquisition. Training, formal or informal is a planned activity to produce necessary skill or improve an existing one for a more effective performance. It refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skill or attitude required to perform not just well but better. The skill acquisition equips the individual worker to face the challenges of an occupation.

Vocational education according to Olaitan (1982) involves the use of appropriate instructional devices, methods, techniques and knowledge for developing skills. But he went further to state that vocational training involves the carrying out of the trainer's instruction to develop skills.

The history of vocational education according to Ekpenyong (1990) is often traced to the medieval trade and craft guilds. Individuals who wanted to learn skills or arts connected with particular trades such as weaving, printing or merchandizing had to attach themselves to master craftsmen; a process of education and training which is generally called today vocational or technical education.

According to Okoro (1993), vocational education is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations. Vocational education provides skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupations.

Olaitan (1986) broadly defined vocational education as that part of the total experience of an individual whereby he learns successfully to carry on gainful occupations. He further stressed that vocational education intentionally designed for people who have chosen occupation and wish to improve on them.

Manpower Development and Vocational Education

The economic well being of a nation, its standard of living and its potential growth and security, all depend to a large extent on the efficiency of its system of vocational education and training and on the amount of effort and finance the nation is willing to devote to it.

Olaiya (1992) pointed out that training, as a concept is the organised process concerned with the maintenance of existing capacity. According to him, it has also been seen as a carefully planned and handled effort of management, through competent instructors, to impart "know how" and develop or improve certain phases of an individual's skill, attitude, discipline, behaviour or knowledge to make him either more effective on his present job or better

qualified for another.

According to Olaitan (1978), manpower planning is a process by which a society or firm ensures that it has the right number of people and kind of people in the right places at the right time, doing things for which they are economically most useful. He further stressed that the contribution of vocational/technical education to manpower development can be viewed in the light of the contributions of certain vocational training programmes such as building, draft metal work, electrical, etc to manpower development.

Vocational Education: Planning And Development

According to Towe (1990) shortages in vocationally skilled personnel are due to: Inadequate training capacity; the nation's inadequate capacity for manufacturing capital goods used in technical education; curriculum inadequacies; the poor salaries payable to and the low social states for craftsmen, artisans and shortages of students with the appropriate entry behaviour. Towe, is of the opinion that in whatever way the nation wishes to diversify her economy, she should invest substantially on vocational, technical and professional skill training. He went further to state that industries should be encouraged to be more involved on skill training programmes.

On the issue of curriculum, Towe stated that the curricula for the various programmes should be restructured to make them flexible and diversified to meet the needs of the individual. In formulation of the curriculum Towe stated that, it should be borne in mind that:

- (a) The beneficiaries of the programmes are to be self-employed so that they may become job creators instead of job seekers.
- (b) The curriculum will be used to teach the technical skills and theory across the board, for full-time and adult students alike who been or are enrolled in a vocational training programme.
- (c) The curriculum should be adequate and self contained in the content of each module to fulfil specific job requirements, so that completers of any trade or professional module can perform as skilled operators or artisans, if necessary, even if they were not completing a full trade programme.

One of the strategies proposed to improve the social status of technical manpower is through improved working conditions and equal opportunities for advancement on the job so that they are assured of equal prospects in the services as their graduate counterparts.

Vocational Educational; Trainee's/Trainee's Analysis

Vocational Education training involves all activities which aims at providing the skills, knowledge and attitudes or group of related occupations. It is a learning experience appropriate guidance and counselling to trainees, who show interest in self development in areas that were thought not necessarily related to their present jobs, but may be useful in some other operations or the programme.

Trainer Characteristics

According to Olaiya (1998), the trainer is the professional who has the responsibility of effecting positive change in the performance of employees (trainees) in an organisation with the view to ensuring increased output. The function of the trainer includes developing staff at all levels to enhance meaningful contributions to their personal growth and development as well as to the growth of a given programme. The trainer should know how and why people learn well or why they are unable to do so, since functionally, he is in a position to adopt

appropriate training methods and techniques.

In the same line of thought, the trainer should know "a variety of methods both on and off-the-job; the skills required to build an effective working team; the skill of working as a consultant; more effective feedback and counselling skills; the skills required to enable individuals to take greater responsibility for their own development in a focused business oriented way".

A trainer may not necessarily have all the skills but his role makes it necessary for him to be skillful in many aspects of manpower development. In particular, he needs to be skillful in training need analysis, training techniques, effective presentation, validation and evaluation of training. Olaiya in his submission stated that the role of the trainer includes:

- A researcher because he carried out training needs analysis of trainees.
- An educator because he implements training programmes and provides knowledge and skills to his trainees.

Training For Manpower Development

Olaiya asserts that for a training to have impact on the trainee and the training programme, the trainer must adopt a systematic training system. For a training programme to be considered systematic, it must be planned and purposeful. Systematic training as defined by Olaiya, (1998) is a planned and programmed training addressing specific needs. The traditional approach to systematic training involves the following stages:

- Identifying what training is required;
- Planned appropriate programme to meet the requirement;
- Implementing the training and evaluating the effectiveness.

There has been an indication especially from the industrial sector concerning the limited number of workers with adequate technological expertise, Ekpenyong (1990) emphasized the situation, when he observed that growth of economy has far outstripped the availability of trained personnel. Higher productivity would result when there are skilled people to operate sophisticated machines, as well as those to maintain them efficiently.

According to a consultative paper on vocational preparation for employment of young people in Great Britain there is much that people need to learn in order to do their jobs well. Vocationally planned and integrated programme of education and training can give them a better start in working life and improve their job and must be planned as whole". It therefore becomes clearer that more attention should be given to training young people catering jobs with no additional education or planned training, with a view to guiding them.

Benefit Of Manpower Planning And Development In Vocational Technical Education

The success of any enterprise can depend on its ability to retain all available efficient personnel. (Lawler,1971). This should be so since as a developing nation, most of our industrial activities or educational programmes are still labour oriented.

Manpower planning and management which are primarily concerned with the strategies for the procurement, allocation, utilization, improvement and retention of the organization or institution manpower, is necessitated by the growing difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff of the requisite calibre in adequate number, at the right time and in the right place, expending the least amount of resources in doing so.

According to Olaitan (1986) manpower development involves efforts to stimulate more employment opportunities, to upgrade the skills and adaptability of workforce, and to link jobs and men more effectively. One important issue to manpower development for industrialization through vocational education in Nigeria is to ensure that human resources are developed to such an extent that the achievement of desired rates of technological change will not be impeded through lack of personnel with suitable skills especially when foreign supply is not forthcoming.

Manpower planning is carried out at the micro and macro levels. At the macro level (national or state level) manpower planning can be seen as the "process of determining the policies and programmes that will develop, utilize, and distribute manpower with a view of achieving a country's broader aim of socio-economic and political development" (Ojo, 1983). It will therefore deal with estimation of the demand and supply of people with appropriate skills to match the requirements of different sectors-education, manufacturing etc. of the

state economy. It starts with knowing how many qualified persons there are and what the needs are so that efforts could be made to fill the gap. At the micro (or organizational) level manpower planning is a process of determining and ensuring that an organization will have adequate number of qualified persons available at proper times, performing jobs which meet the needs of the enterprises and which provide satisfaction for the individuals involved.

Educational Statistics

One important aspect of manpower planning is the planning of formal education as well as non-formal education and training. Therefore educational statistics are important data requirement for manpower planning. These educational statistics are useful in the analysis of relating education to change in labour forces, as well as the study of educational development.

Educational attainment statistics, in providing information about the levels of completed education of adults up through the university level give some idea of the state's resources of professional and intellectual training. It is the significant component of many programmes of national economic development, and may serve, as the basis for a government's decision to provide educational facilities to ensure that the future needs for educated skilled workers will be met.

According to Adeyemi (1998), the ample provisions for the promotion of skill acquisition in the various schemes, the level of development in the vocational sector still leaves much to be desired. In the first place, there is the general lack of the required large crops of skilled personnel to transform the vocational technical sub-sector from its present largely under utilized sector to a virile and well organised industrial development opportunities in the economy.

Data on educational progression includes those on school retention and dropout, scholastic retardation and acceleration. They provide a base for seeing to what extent population groups persist in school and to what extent continuation in school is related to normal grade progress. Statistics on, on-the-job training or in service programme and adult education are also relevant to manpower planning in vocational technical education and must be generated and used accordingly.

Planning As A Remedy to Mass Unemployment and Skill Shortages

Manpower is defined as the productive employment capacity of human beings. It also refers to the effects of human beings in learning and employed activities. It is an essential aspect of human resources, which seems to encompass human beings in all their productive activities whether in paid or unpaid

employment; manpower relates to the labour force and incorporates the skill aspects as well. (Olaiya, 1998).

Hence education and training are among the major sources of manpower in Nigeria. However, it is necessary to mention that the inadequacies in Nigerian manpower development is not essentially an educational problem; rather, it lies in the ineffective utilization of policy decisions about education and training

contents that could match development aspiration to the magnitude sources and methods of financing the required infrastructure. The supremacy and determinacy of the human element in the industry have now been aptly re-cognised. Olaiya went further to state that of the three tripods-capital, lands and labour-on which the industrial enterprise is predicated, the human element has supreme importance as the determinant of the synergies and the catalyst to turn the resources into the most productive results.

Shy Plan Manpower

No nation is likely to be able to compete effectively against other nations if it allows either a shortage or surplus of labour to develop for any significant period of time. If, on the other hand, there is under utilization of personnel through over manning, there will be unnecessarily high labour costs and lower, profit margins. The main purpose or advantage of manpower planning is to enable a nation to discover, at an early stage, the critical points in the labour force where shortages are likely to develop or where there is efficient use of labour. It is sometimes argued that because forecast is apt to be unreliable, there is little virtue in spending valuable executive time in preparing them. But this overlooks the fact that the study which forecasting requires helps to bring to light potential "trouble Spots". Forecasts do not have to be accurate to be revealing. For these alone, manpower planning is an invaluable management. Tool in controlling labours cost and vital to the future profitability of the nation,

Scholars in manpower development and planning assert that there are a number of more specific reasons for attaching importance to manpower planning and forecasting. The reasons which make the exercise essential are to determine recruitment levels, anticipate redundancies and avoid unnecessary dismissals; determine optimum training levels; provide a basis for management development programmes; cost the labour element in new areas of economic development; assist productivity bargaining and to assess further accommodation requirements. A comprehensive manpower programme for economic development must contain two broad activities. First, a manpower development component which deals with the training and retaining of the nation's human resources. Second, a distribution/ allocation and utilization of economic competent which deals with the matching of worker and job by occupation by industry and the geographical location as well as the effective utilization of the worker in his place of work.

Roles Of Vocational Educational In The Provision Of Job Opportunities In Nigeria

Having discussed the problem of manpower shortage in Nigeria, it will now be advisable to discuss on the possible solutions to solving these manpower-associated problems in our society.

According to Ipayefumi's (1972) findings, one of the serious socio-economic problems facing Nigeria as a nation is the high rate of unemployment and this problem is compounded by the fact that most school leavers normally rely on government for employment because they have no skill to be self-employed.

There exist two broad purposes of vocational education vis-avis

education about vocation and education for vocational and technical education offer every individual opportunity to develop those skills, abilities and understanding that will enable them to handle competently their personal affairs, and to develop an understanding of the vocational opportunities available in the field of human endeavour. Also this type education offer students who wish to pursue a career in Business/Technical education an opportunity to develop skills, abilities and understanding that will enable them to enter, perform and progress in the chosen career after graduation from school and also provide them occupational intelligence to enable them to fit into, and find job satisfaction in the labour force of a complex and dynamic economy.

The efficiency of technological take-off depends on the extent of attention given by government to vocational institution, since this is where lower level technical manpower is educated. Also it has been observed that artisans are contributing in no small way to the provision of job opportunities to several people, and also contribute immensely to the nation's gross domestic product (Osuala, 1981).

Summary and Conclusion

Vocational and technical education in Nigeria needs, not just programme managers, but leaders who have strong beliefs in the importance and relevance of vocational education and who can communicate such beliefs to others (Okoro,1993). The common conception of vocational education by many people in Nigeria has not changed much, misinterpretations of the functions of vocational education constantly arise. Although vocational education stresses the need for skill acquisition, this is not to the exclusion of mental ability (Okorie and Ezeji, 1988). Vocational education is concerned with people, who are going to become members of the labour force and who produce the goods and services required by the society.

If vocational technical education programme must have the desired effect, it must be organised and administered in such a way that the funding must be adequate and judiciously used for the purpose intended; career officers should be in all schools to advice trainees on suitable areas of choice; taking into account their aptitudes. This will go a long way in improving the manpower development under the vocational technical education in Nigeria.

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