

**THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF EMPLOYMENT IN CURBING
UNEMPLOYMENT IN ENUGU STATE 2012 - 2022**

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Abstract

The study examined the role of the national directorate of employment in curbing unemployment in Nigeria with particular reference to Enugu State within the time frame of 2012 to 2022. The objectives of the study were to examine if the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) has well-articulated programmes able to curb unemployment rate in Enugu State; ascertain if the NDE is able to maintain data bank on employment in view of reducing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State; investigate if there exist any collaboration between NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in a bid to curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State; examine the challenges facing the NDE in its bid to curb the unemployment rate in Enugu State; and proffer viable recommendations to the challenges facing NDE in cubing unemployment in Enugu State. This study adopted the survey research design. The population of the study include the total number of persons living of Enugu state which according to the National Population Commission (2006) is 3,233,366, which comprises both officials of NDE and beneficiaries of NDE programmes and schemes. From the 17 local government areas in Enugu state 20 beneficiaries of NDE programmes was selected as sampled respondents making a total of 340 while 20 staff (senior and junior staff) was also selected from the NDE, Enugu State, making the study sample size to be 360. The method of data analysis used for the purpose of this study was the simple percentage (%) and the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. The study discovered amongst others that there is a significant relationship between the NDE programmes and unemployment rate in Enugu State. It was also revealed by the study findings that there exist a positive significant relationship between NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State. Thus, based on the aforementioned findings the following recommendations amongst others were given; NDE should imbibe the culture of maintaining an up to data repository on unemployment and NDE should engage in rigorous public sensitization of its plans and programs.

Introduction

Nigeria is bedeviled with a myriad of problems, which despite her oil wealth, inhibits her development. Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that face every developing economy in this twenty-first century, and Nigeria is not exempted. The situation has been on the increase, and this has resulted in increase in social vices in the country. Available records clearly show that in the last two decades of the independence of Nigeria as a sovereign nation (1960s and 1970s), unemployment and its attendant consequence: poverty, were not of national concern as they are today (Popoola and Ajayi, 2016).

The origin of unemployment in Nigeria can be traced back to the oil boom era of 1970s. During this period, Nigerian government and individuals abandoned skills acquisition and utilization through diversified entrepreneurship practices that have the capability to boost both individual and the country's economic ego (Akpansung, 2003). Emphasis shifted from entrepreneurial practices to paper qualification which has resulted in increased unemployment in the country. The growing unemployment in Nigeria and its concomitant consequences constitute a serious challenge to the economic development with negative effect for future generation, especially as the youths are mostly affected. The National Bureau of Statistics (2006) reported that the demand for employment opportunities in the country is ever-increasing with demand clearly outstripping supply. The average rates of unemployment in Nigeria for the 1960s and 1970s were about 2.0 and 4.5%, respectively (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Since, the early 1980s,

unemployment in Nigeria has been one of the most menacing social and economic problems the country has had to contend with. For instance, in 1985, the national unemployment rate was 8.5% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Hardly can one find a family (whether rural or urban) in which nobody is either unemployed or threatened by unemployment.

Statement of Problem

From the time immemorial, as asserted by Bello (2003), the subject of unemployment has always been an issue of great concern to policy makers, administrators and economic managers alike, giving the devastating effect of this phenomenon on individuals, the society, and the economy at large. In the 1960's and 1970's, the Nigerian economy provided jobs for the teeming population. The economy also absorbed considerable imported labour in the scientific sectors. The wage rate compared favorably with international standards. There was also relative industrial peace in most industries and some groups. Specifically, following the oil boom of the 1970's, there was rapid migration, especially by the youths to the urban areas in search of wage employment. But following the downturn in the economy in the 1980's, the problem of unemployment started to manifest (Mbah and Agu, 2007).

Successive governments in Nigeria had adopted various policies to create jobs and reduce unemployment in the country. In spite of various employment programmes of successive governments in Nigeria, unemployment rate has continued to rise unabated. This has necessitated the need to undertake this study with a view to assessing and determining the extent to which the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) has proved effective in curbing unemployment in Enugu State of Nigeria. Hence, the following questions became necessary; Has the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) well-articulated programmes able to curd unemployment rate in Enugu State? Has the NDE able to maintain data bank on employment in view of reducing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State? Is there any collaboration between NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in a bid to curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State? What are the challenges facing the NDE in its bid to curbing unemployment in Enugu State? What are the recommendations to the challenges facing NDE in cubing unemployment in Enugu State?

Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study were to:

1. examine if the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) has well-articulated programmes able to curd unemployment rate in Enugu State;
2. ascertain if the NDE is able to maintain data bank on employment in view of reducing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State;
3. investigate if there exist any collaboration between NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in a bid to curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State;
4. examine the challenges facing the NDE in its bid to curb the unemployment rate in Enugu State; and
5. proffer viable recommendations to the challenges facing NDE in cubing unemployment in Enugu State.

Research Hypotheses

1. **There is no significant relationship between the NDE programmes and unemployment rate in Enugu State.**
2. **There is no significant relationship between NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State.**
3. **There is no significant relationship between the collaboration of NDE and the Bank of**

Industry (BIO) in curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State.

4. There is no significant relationship between the challenges facing the NDE and the unemployment rate in Enugu State.

Literature Review

Unemployment is partly responsible for social ills such as armed robbery, destitution, prostitution and other social vices (Obike *et al.*, 2007). The latest unemployment figure in Nigeria according to the National Bureau for Statistics (2020) is 18.8% which when translated into labour, means that more than 18 million able-bodied Nigerians are unemployed. The more than 70% of the unemployed persons were relatively unskilled primary and secondary school leavers between the ages of 13 and 25 years; also, graduate unemployment which hitherto was unnoticed, emerged and began to grow rapidly. This situation was quite disturbing to the government, considering the socio-political implications as well as the economic wastage that could result.

There is a large population of out-of-school youths who are unemployed, and as was stated in 2008 by the then Vice Chancellor of the University of Maiduguri, there were a total of 90 universities in Nigeria turning out thousands of graduates each year, who eventually go into the job market to seek for the non-existent jobs thereby compounding the unemployment situation with its attendant social challenges (Adebisi and Oni, 2012). Resultantly, the lack of employment has created platform for criminal behaviors for some Nigerian university graduates and school leavers. Long-term unemployment has become a feature of the Nigerian labour market, i.e., five years after graduating, many youths are in the labour market in search of jobs that are not available, thereby lending force to crimes such as armed robbery, car snatching, pipeline vandalization, oil bunkering, and prostitution among the youths (Adebisi and Oni, 2012). Available information by National Universities Commission (NUC, 2004) reiterated that the massive unemployment of Nigerian universities graduates in the country is traceable to the disequilibrium between labour market requirements and lack of essential employable skills by the graduates (Emeh 2012).

Therefore, policies and programmes that help to increase employment opportunities will assist in alleviating poverty, since the issue of unemployment has been linked directly to poverty. For the simple reason that the rising rate of unemployment in the country cannot be ignored, the federal government of Nigeria decided to stem the tide by establishing a directorate that will address this serious social-economic challenge; hence the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986. The fundamental reason for the establishment of the NDE by the federal government was a committee report which highlighted that the informal sector of the national economy had operators and employees who were low skilled, semi-skilled and/or unskilled (Ukoha *et al.* 2014). This group was said to constitute about 90 percent of the workforce within the sector (Ukoha *et al.* 2014). That situation, therefore, placed skills acquisition/training on the front burner with respect to employment creation. This was predicated on the effects of the economic recession of the '80s, which led to drastic reductions in capacity utilization and outright closure of industries in Nigeria.

Similarly, macro-economic policies of government resulted in massive job losses in both the public and private sectors of the economy. As result of the socio-economic significance of employment creation and the reduction of unemployment to the national economy, many research work relating to the various activities of the National Directorate of Employment had been conducted and reported (Akpansung, 2003; Obike *et al.*, 2007; Adebisi and Oni, 2012; Ukoha *et al.* 2014; Ugoani and Ibeenwo, 2015; Anyebe, 2016; Popoola and Ajayi, 2016). The law establishing the NDE presents its mandate from which it derives its routine functions. The main goal therefore is to combat mass unemployment through skills acquisition, job creation, self-employment and labour-intensive work schemes (Ugoani and Ibeenwo, 2015). These challenging circumstances required the Federal government of Nigeria to develop and empower the Nigerian youths to enable them

contribute effectively to national economic growth. The government adopted strategic plans, programs and initiated policies through their main institutions for employment and wealth creation; National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and other relevant agencies in engaging the youth positively with skill development, acquisition, and empowerment packages that will explore their potentials and make them self-reliant. Analysis indicates that unemployment in Nigeria is on the increase and only youth development and empowerment can mitigate this problem.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted the survey research design. The adoption of the survey research design in this study will make the study explorative as well as descriptive in nature.

Population of Study

According to Schutt (1999) research population is the sum total of all the elements of units of analysis which a study is interested in. The population of the study include the total number of persons living of Enugu state which according to the National Population Commission (2006) is 3,233,366, which comprises both officials of NDE and beneficiaries of NDE programmes and schemes.

Sampling Technique

This research work adopted the probability sampling as its sampling technique for which the selection of the sample to be under-studied was based on chance. This chance selection ensures that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected or represented in the sample.

Sampling Size

In arriving at the sample size, the simple random sampling method was adopted in this study. The reason for using the simple random sampling method is to ensure that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. From the 17 local government areas in Enugu state 20 beneficiaries of NDE programmes were selected as sampled respondents making a total of 340 while 20 staff (senior and junior staff) was also selected from the NDE, Enugu State, making the study sample size to be 360. Taro Yamani's Formula was used to calculate the sample

Sources of Data

Basically, there are two major sources of data collection that was utilized in this study. They are: **Primary Sources:** This entails gathering information through the administration of questionnaires which was structured in line with the relevant objectives of the study, while the **Secondary Sources** involves the use of data from sources such as published books, journals, Newspapers, magazines, as well as internet sources.

Instrument of Data Collection

The research instrument for the collection of data for this study was the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in two sections that is, sections A and B. Section A dwelled on the socio-demographic profile of the surveyed as Age, Educational qualification, Occupational distribution and Religion. Section B covers issues that relate to the objectives of the study. The questions were structured along the close-ended response pattern, where respondents were given options to choose from.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis used for the purpose of this study was the simple percentage (%) and the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. The simple percentage was used to analyze the data collected through the questionnaire, while the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to analyzed the research hypotheses via the SPSS 21.

Data Presentation And Analysis

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

1. Ho: **There is no significant relationship between NDE programmes and unemployment rate in Enugu State.**

Table 1: Correlation between **NDE** programmes and unemployment rate in Enugu State.

Correlations		NDE Programmes	Unemployment Rate
NDE Programmes	Pearson Correlation	1	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	342	342
Unemployment Rate	Pearson Correlation	.836**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	342	342

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 reveals that, there exist a significant relationship between **NDE** programmes and unemployment rate in Enugu State with a correlation coefficient *R* value of 0.836, indicating that, **NDE** programmes has a very strong influence on unemployment rate in Enugu State. Furthermore, with the *p*-value (Sig = 0.000) less than (<) 0.01, the study thus rejects the null hypothesis (there is no significant relationship between **NDE** programmes and unemployment rate in Enugu State) and accept the research hypothesis (there is a significant relationship between **NDE** programmes and unemployment rate in Enugu State).

Hypothesis Two

1. Ho: **There is no significant relationship between NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State.**

Table 2: Correlation between **NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State.**

Correlations		NDE Data Bank on Employment	Unemployment Reduction
NDE Data Bank on Employment	Pearson Correlation	1	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	342	342
Unemployment Reduction	Pearson Correlation	.751**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	342	342

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Data from table 2 shows a significant relationship between **NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State**. With a correlation coefficient value of 0.751, the table above reveals a very strong correlation between **NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State**. The study rejects the null hypothesis (there is no significant relationship between **NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State**) due the *p*-value (sig = 0.000) less than 0.01, and accept the research hypothesis (there is a significant relationship between **NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State**).

Hypothesis Three

1. Ho: There is no significant relationship between **the** collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State.

Table 3: Correlation between **the** collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State.

		Correlations	
		Collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO)	Unemployment Reduction
Collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO)	Pearson Correlation	1	.893**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	342	342
Unemployment Reduction	Pearson Correlation	.893**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	342	342

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 analysis reveals a positive relationship between **the** collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State, due to the high rate of *R* coefficient which is 0.893, hence signifying a strong relationship between **the** collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State. The data from table 24 also reveals a *p*-value (sig = 0.000) which is < 0.01, indicating that the researcher rejects the null hypothesis which state that, there is no significant relationship between **the** collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State, and accepts the research hypothesis which states that, there is a significant relationship between **the** collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State.

Hypothesis Four

1. Ho: There is no significant relationship between **the challenges facing the NDE and the unemployment rate in Enugu State.**

Table 25: Correlation between **the challenges facing the NDE and the unemployment rate in Enugu State.**

		Correlations	
		Challenges facing NDE	Unemployment Rate
Challenges facing NDE	Pearson Correlation	1	.909**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	342	342
Unemployment Rate	Pearson Correlation	.909**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	342	342

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 reveals that, there exist a significant relationship between **the challenges facing the NDE and the unemployment rate in Enugu State** with a correlation coefficient *R* value of 0.904, indicating that, **the challenges facing the NDE** has a strong influence on **unemployment rate in Enugu State**. Furthermore, with the *p*-value (Sig = 0.000) less than (<) 0.01, the study thus rejects the null hypothesis (there is no significant relationship between **the challenges facing the NDE and the unemployment rate in Enugu State**) and accept the research hypothesis (there is a significant

relationship between the challenges facing the NDE and the unemployment rate in Enugu State).

Discussion of Findings

This study undertaken examined the role of NDE in curbing unemployment in Nigeria: A case study Enugu state, Nigeria. The main goal of this study was to assess the challenges facing NDE in its role of curbing unemployment in Nigeria. Having subjected the data collected from the respondents to statistical package for social science (SPSS), the outcome of the research revealed the following findings which include.

Firstly, this study examined aimed to understand the **relationship** between the NDE and unemployment rate. The study revealed that the activities of NDE had an impact on the unemployment rate in Enugu, Nigeria

The activities of the NDE in Enugu state has been seen to impact on the unemployment rate in the state. The NDE's activities in the skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled job sectors have impacted on the unemployment rate as indicated from the respondents. Other scholars also express this point of views. Toluwalase & Omoniji (2013) in their theoretical analysis pointed out that youth population is increasing explosively particularly in developing countries as a result of rapid urbanization. The continuous decrease in the manufacturing employment has made many of the young people facing three options: getting jobs in the informal economy with insecurity and poor wages and working conditions, getting jobs in the low-tier service industries, or developing their vocational skills to benefit from new opportunities in the professional and advanced technical/knowledge sectors. Moreover, in developing countries, like Nigeria a large portion of young people are not even lucky enough to choose among any of these options facing as a consequence, long-term unemployment, which makes them highly vulnerable.

This demands that the government must respond through policy interventions in setting institutional framework that will be responsible in enhancing skill, and training to complement the products from different academia. This presupposes that technical and vocational education institutions can respond to the different socio-economic and academic backgrounds and prepare the clientele for gainful employment and sustainable livelihoods. Thus, the youth, the poor and the vulnerable of society can benefit from vocational/technical education. In other to achieve this target, National Directorate of Employment and few other institutions were created. Adebisi and Oni (2012) advocated that meeting the training needs of the prospective trainees of the National Directorate of Employment is what makes the training programmes of the Directorate relevant to the plights of the unemployed. To identify and evaluate people's needs, adult educator must understand the nature and role of needs in the training programmes. In their findings, they observed that the NDE has enough schemes and job categories from which the prospective beneficiaries can acquire necessary skills that will guarantee their employment.

The study investigated the **relationship** between NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State. The study revealed that respondents agreed NDE data bank aids in the reduction of the unemployment rate in Enugu state. Also, correspondents agreed that NDE engages in periodic data gathering activities. Data gathering is an important aspect of the aim for unemployment reduction as this informs the decision making process of the NDE. The economic and social development of any nation depends to a large extent on the emergency of a strong and vibrant private sector driven by entrepreneurship and respondents of this study agree that the entrepreneurship activities of the NDE has an impact on the unemployment rate, in fact they say it has led to a reduction. This opinion is supported by realities on ground as the NDE has several initiatives by government to foster the creation of more micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), strengthen the management capacity of the existing institutions and working out some modalities to provide easy access to capital for entrepreneurship development. The agency believes that the ebb and flow of any meaningful business enterprise is usually highly

dependent on the resilience of entrepreneurial activity often measured by an extraordinary predisposition to business venturing, the manifestation of high spirit for exceptional financial risk appetite, and a natural interest to the pursuit of productive investment and Akpama, Esang, Asor, and Osang (2011) also believes is the basis of entrepreneurship.

The study also sought to explain the relationship between NDE and the Bank of Industry (BOI) in a bid to curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State. The Bank of Industry. The respondents generally agreed that the NDE and BOI had an impact on the rate of unemployment in Enugu state. They agreed that programs of the NDE and BOI like small and medium scale enterprises, N-power and rural employment programs had an impact on unemployment rate reduction while undecided if special works program had an impact on the unemployment rate. The primary mandate of Bank of Industry (BOI) is to financially assist the establishment of small, medium and large project as well as expansion, diversification and modernization of existing enterprises and reliability of oiling industries, and to ensure a level playing for domestic businesses to attain international state which have the propensity to ensure better economic growth of the nation (Sanusi, 2013). The role of Bank of Industry is to promote the SMEs across all industries with little or no collateral and low interest charged on finances advanced to such sector (Akingunola, 2011). Central Bank of Nigeria (2011) opined that Bank of Industry (BOI) volume of loan to MSMES have a working capacity facility of one year with provision for roll over or maximum of 15 years and the fund allows for moratorium in the loan repayment schedule. To collaborate this, Bank of Industry (2013) noted that interest charged on credit to SMEs is cost faced by small, medium and large enterprises when borrowing from Bank of Industry though not as the deposit money banks charged. BOI (2013) further opined that low interest rate will help the MSMES to payback and as when due and contribute to economic growth. Opafunso and Adepoju (2014) employed analysis of descriptive statistics and Chi-square tools to investigate the role of small and medium enterprises on economic development of Ekiti state in Nigeria over the data base and discovered there is a positive and significant relationship that exists between small and medium enterprises have significant role and effectiveness on poverty reduction, employment generation and advancement of wellbeing of the citizens in Ekiti State. The study inferred that low interest charged on bank loans has the capacity to improve the performance of small and medium enterprises in Ekiti state and Nigeria at large. A similar study, carried out in Bauchi metropolis by Sama'ila and Tahir (2015) on contribution of the Bank of Industry towards SMEs industrial development, evidently found that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Bauchi Metropolis significantly benefited from BOI's loans and that the loans were directed to the right channels. Iloh and Chioke (2015) collated data from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin for the period of 1980 to 2010 to analyze the nexus between commercial bank credit indicators and availability of credit facility to small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria and it revealed that commercial banks' credit to SMEs in Nigeria have significant effect on Nigeria economic growth by positively affecting gross domestic product.

Lastly, the relationship between the challenges facing the NDE and the unemployment rate were investigated. The respondents agreed that Mismanagement and corruption are challenges facing the NDE in its role of unemployment rate reduction in Enugu state. Mismanagement and corruption is a bane of many public institutions and the NDE is no exception to this. Also lack of funding and regime change also were challenges highlighted by respondents as facing the NDE in its bid to reduce the unemployment rate in Enugu state.

Conclusion

From the data collected and analyzed from the field, the study concludes amongst others that, there is a significant relationship between the NDE programmes and unemployment rate in Enugu State. Also, the study discovered a positive significant relationship between NDE data bank on employment and reduction in the rate of unemployment in Enugu State. The study also concludes

that there is a significant relationship between the collaboration of NDE and the Bank of Industry (BIO) in curbing the rate of unemployment in Enugu State. and lastly there also exist a positive relationship between the challenges facing the NDE and the unemployment rate in Enugu State.

Recommendations

The findings of the study have provided vital information about the role of NDE in curbing unemployment in Nigeria: A case study Enugu state, Nigeria. It is based on the findings of this study that the following recommendations were made:

1. NDE should imbibe the culture of maintaining an up to data repository on unemployment.
2. NDE should engage in rigorous public sensitization of its plans and programs.
3. NDE programs should be designed to reflect the current world realities ie tech, soft skills acquisition.
4. Successive regimes should maintain the template and programs of previous administrations.
5. Adequate fundings for NDE activities should be a top priority for government.

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