

Review of: "Technological Unemployment, Skill Mismatch and the Future of Higher Education in Post-Pandemic Nigeria"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I have found the paper interesting, insightful and informative plus exhaustively well researched.

The chapter/paper takes on an issue that is 'hot' and currently right in minds of many stakeholders, education professionals, policy makers, employers, trade unions, technology enthusiasts and many more.

As a chapter in a compendium, it surely fulfills all that is needed. However, without having any intention and suggestion to either undermine or over criticize a nicely researched and presented work, I do think there is an obvious need to attune the paper format, content presentation (not substance), to the form that one usually associates with a journal article. The caveat of course is that I'm sure the author is very cognizant of this fact, and probably the main motivation for submitting the paper to the platform is to seek constructive comments from people with a multitude of readers including those who happen to share similar research interests, practitioners in education, and policy makers that are grappling with rising unemployment, unemployability of education system products, the role that curriculum and technology advancement and adoption for the blame.

Language

Some of the words used may require the reader to consult the dictionary, which is not what the reader would want the readership to engage in if the purpose is to present a paper that is easily accessible to both experts and nonexperts of education, and those who English is a second language. Using simpler vocabularies in the stead of uncommon words can improve readability statistics of the work.

Author position on the role that technology is actually playing in burgeoning unemployment in Nigeria

I wonder what the author can say about what the state of facts as different from theoretical debates on the issue of the TU in Nigeria, specifically whether data points to the cause of the mismatch between what is taught and transferred to students during their education and the skills that are required in the labor market. Is it the curricular? Is it the teachers? Is it absence of proactive education policy that informs education curricular on what to teach in order to transfer the right skillsets required at the time they are required?

Another point to ask is how technology adoption and deployment in labor intensive sectors in Nigeria influencing

unemployment (both open and underemployment)? Can stats help to show the trajectory of the relationship between level of technology adoption and unemployment so that one can with some level of confidence say that indeed technology is contributing significantly to rising unemployment?

Concerning the way forward

The author in of the recommendations, proposes aligning curricular with skillsets required in the job market. Does the author consider the role of education is just to foster the teaching and transfer of skills that are on demand in the labor market? How would such an approach affect lifelong skills development such as character, humanism, and societal values? The other problem with that of course lies in the quandary that according to many pundits aligning education with labor market skills in a rapidly changing skillset world is akin to chasing a moving target. Under such circumstances, how can the education system then cope with such need for constant change in curricular content, composition and scope to align with equally if not more so, frequent changes in skillsets that the labor needs?

Other issues

The education system and labor market are both complex systems, each comprising sub systems that may not fit into one characterization. There are jobs with tasks that are more susceptible to technology adoption either way, that is technology adoption may increase job opportunities but there are cases where the number of jobs decreases. The labor market can also be looked at along similar lines. In short, it is not possible to prescribe a one size fits all for all components of education process and products (subject matter, disciplines and students), nor is it possible to do the same to the labor market. Perhaps an evaluation of the education system including inputs, process and output is what needs to be done to define what is exactly the contribution of education to society. Are outcomes as planned or are there deviations? If there are deviations how to fix those? Mapping problem areas or pain points may be the first step to diagnose the underlying problem rather than focusing on symptoms. The same process can be done with respect to the labor market. It is indeed a complex and expensive process but such a process is unavoidable if society and policy makers are to get to the core of the problem. In any case, as the author argues considering the limited level of Nigeria's technology adoption, it could be that it is contributing more to employment than otherwise, especially through digitalization of service delivery processes and by extension, strengthening such employment creation areas as financial inclusion and poverty reduction.