

DYNAMICS OF QUALIFICATION ESCALATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN MEDIUM SCALE ESTABLISHMENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The relationship between education and employment has varied dimensions each of which has definite implications for aspects of educational acquisition, occupational formation and development, and the efficient utilization of educated manpower. This paper examined the syndrome of escalation of educational qualification, geared to securing specific cadres of employment. In doing this, it gives particular focus to the concept of 'qualificationism' that is driven by the raising of the quantum of education that is demanded as prerequisite for filling available employment opportunities. This phenomenon is generally associated with large scale unemployment of output from the educational system. The paper utilizes a combination of data obtained from interviews of employers, graduate employees and students in a tertiary educational institution, and also from focus group discussions by the latter group. This data is applied to an examination of some features of the escalation of educational qualifications for employment of tertiary level educated youth. The paper concluded by positing views concerning necessary future trends of sociological research aimed at adequate appraisal of the situation of sharp rise in educational demand and supply for employment. Such studies could also be geared at creating a better overall alignment between education and employment.

Introduction

Interactions between schooling and employment have over the years constituted major interest in sociological research and discuss (Roberts 1984; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Collins 1971 and 1979). A major objective of education is the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his society. A very important aspect of this particular function of education is its concern with enabling the individual to undertake meaningful work and earn an adequate livelihood (Nwosu: 1981).

It should therefore be noted that contributions which the educational system makes to socio-economic development are dependent not only on the quantum of its provision and its knowledge content and quality, but quite particularly on its utilization for and in employment, as observed by Okpara (1985: 305); Irriazarri: (1985); and Callaway; (1975). Developing nations in particular have need to recognize this importance of a balance of educational provision with measures which ensure maximal private as well as social returns, especially due to serious national and personal economic constraints to educational provision and utilization, as observed by Nigam (1982). In Nigeria, since early post independence era, development planning efforts have centered quite understandably on education for the cure of so many societal inadequacies and ills. (Yesufu: 1974), (Federal Republic of Nigeria: 1962 and 1970) Starting therefore from the earliest national development plans, much effort became geared towards provision of levels and types of education which were considered essential for vital areas of development. The major assumption was that education would automatically produce the human capital that would promote development. This general assumption has as yet not become fully scientifically grounded, even in developed countries. Hence while human capital theorists initially focused on education's role as a catalyst for industrial productivity (Becker: 1964), on the other hand labour economists of various theoretical persuasions have argued that education may serve mainly as a mechanism through which

employers screen job applicants (Blaug 1973). However in spite of this debate, there remains little doubt that the extent of some forms of education in any society is closely tied to its level of economic development.

Education escalation in relation to employer's requirement for entry into employment in Nigeria, which is the focus of this paper, is a phenomenon that is generally viewed in terms of the upward deviation of a worker's schooling from the estimated "required" amount of schooling for his/her occupation. This situation and others such as what is termed "qualificationism" are employed synonymously in sociological research. For example, Watts (1985); Clogg and Shockey (1984); Little (1978); Smith (1986), inquired into the consequences of the marked increase in the schooling requirements for particular occupations that occurred by the 1980s.

Both the developed and the developing nations witnessed this shift. In the developed world this was as a consequence of two major factors. These are the general advancement in knowledge and the expansion of education intensive industries. On the other hand, however, the resulting economic growth slowed down significantly after the 1970s, in contrast to high rate of continued growth of tertiary educated level manpower as noted by Smith (1986). As a result the late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed the gradual upgrading of educational requirements for occupations (Clogg and Shockey 1984; Smith 1986). Consequent upon this situation, especially with regard to workers in developed nations such as the USA, acquired years of schooling significantly exceeded levels that counterparts in the past had acquired for similar occupations. (Robert: 1984) In these more developed nations however, "qualificationism" largely represented a situation of potential job seekers striving to have state assisted and financed higher levels of educational qualifications than was previously required for their occupations.

The Problem

In a developing nation such as Nigeria, political independence had by the 1970s begun to give rise to a preoccupation with modernity that successfully spear-headed vast educational expansions ostensibly geared at socio-economic development (Nigeria: 1970). Such expansion however failed to be matched by commensurate focus on employment creation. A major consequence was a fast rise in the unemployment of educated youth, as observed in Nigeria (1975). At first, focus of redress of this situation was primarily directed, as was the case in developed countries, (Roberts: 1984) on the inadequacy of school preparation of its output. Consequently Nigeria became preoccupied during the 1980s with vocationalizing of her educational system. The idea therefore was to provide a content of education which would be more appropriate for the needs of the economy for increased productivity. This strategy has generally not been seen to achieve the desired purpose. More recent focus of government has therefore been on the provision of short term training and small loans to school leavers as typified by the programs of the National Directorate of Employment. However, the scale and the dimensions of this intervention have been very minimal compared to the vast numbers who require it.

Furthermore, a major feature of education and employment relationship in Nigeria is that the educational institution is socially distanced from the employment scene. Thus, large numbers of students may conclude their educational endeavours without any contact with the employment scenario. Nor do most students have issues of employment dealt with in any form within their curricula and so have only a vague awareness of the situation. The outcome of such ignorance is an exacerbation of the trauma associated with transition from schooling to work.

While quite visible high level of social mobility for the educated fuelled large scale educational demand and expansion, especially at the tertiary level, (Nigeria: 1999: 269-270) over the years: (Ojo: 1978, Nigeria: 1999), current situation of high unemployment rate also seems to coincide with growth of high wage paying banks, other financial institution and industrial establishments as well as general wage increases in the modern public and private sectors. Desperate quest for higher levels of education as competition mechanism for scarce but lucrative wage employment would therefore appear to remain prevalent despite fast rising unemployment, which was at 8.3 percent in 1996 for Anambra state: (Nigeria: 1999:3 13). Such a situation would imply several attendant

economic and related problems in a general situation of impoverishment for a large sector of the population. For Dore (1976: ix) this situation which is problematic even for developed countries, spells "disaster" for developing countries with their already existing stresses of a "dualistic development pattern". As observed by Nigam (1982:1) the problem of unemployment of educated persons in developing countries had by the 1980s become chronic, and was posing a threat to economic and social stability.

Research Questions

Based on the forgoing, this study seeks to obtain answers to the following questions:

- What level of awareness exists with regards to any substantial increases that have occurred in educational requirements for employment in Anambra State?
- What employment related reasons are given to support increased qualification levels for specified jobs in the state?
- What are the relationships of increased educational requirements on students' behaviours in the state?
- What important effects of rising education requirements are identifiable in the work place environment in the state?
- In what ways is escalation of educational qualification for work related to rising unemployment in the state?

Objectives of Study

Consequent upon these research questions, major objectives of the study are:

- To ascertain the extent of awareness of increase in educational requirements for employment in Anambra State.
- To ascertain the extent to which views are held to the effect that more education generally means more effective performance of work in the state.
- To identify any causal relationships between escalation of educational requirement for work, and certain anti-social student educational behaviours in the state.
- To identify any observable work place factors that support increase of educational qualifications for jobs in the state.
- To identify the ways by which escalation of qualification requirements may be related to unemployment in the state.

Significance of Study

There are several theoretical and practical implications for this study.

Theoretically, it is meant to contribute to already existing stock of knowledge on education and employment relationships. While the works of such social scientists as (Berg: 1971; Dresch: 1976: 535-69; Anosike: 1977:27-51; Watts: 1985; Okpara: 1985; Smith: 1986: 85-99; Levin: 1987: 333-54) have over the years substantially contributed to this area of knowledge, there is no doubt that there is need for more studies, which address the current situation, especially from the perspective of Nigerian social scientists. This study is therefore expected to stimulate both collaboration and sponsorship in this important area.

On the other hand, this paper is intended to acquaint in-school and employment seeking youth, and even those already employed, with some important aspects of the education and employment dynamics. The purpose of this exposure is to enable youth adjust their educational endeavours towards maximizing their chances for having the best employment returns from it that is within their financial as well as their intellectual and aptitude capabilities. Armed with such relevant knowledge, job seekers would be better prepared to appraise some factors related to their educational qualifications, and relate these to their eligibility for varieties of employment types and levels.

It is also important that employers be faced with the reality of the possibility that escalation of educational requirements for jobs may be artificially created by high unemployment rate, rather than any real discovered employment performance needs. Parents or guardians of educated youth would also be better prepared to deal with the hopes, fears and frustrations of their wards, if they had better understanding of the real nature of aspects of the relationship between quantum of education sought, student ability, student desperation and coping mechanisms and youth unemployment in Nigeria. Sociologists, policy makers, employers and educationists at various levels would also be usefully informed by an insight into the processes and interactions which determine employment or unemployment of educated youth.

Theoretical Framework

Modern sociological thoughts have generally provided much scope for the examination of viewpoints on the value of education as a springboard for positive transformation of lives. Hence from various dimensions education is seen to play vital roles in the uplifting of individuals and society; economically, politically and culturally.

A cursory examination of early sociological thought with regard to the nature of relationship between education and society begins here with Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). To Durkheim a prominent functionalist the main function of education was the development of social solidarity through the transmission of a collective culture in line with his views. The main problem however was the need to resolve the divisions of modern industrial society and to maintain social solidarity. Bernstein (1977) borrowing Durkheim's emphasis on the social bond and the structuring of experience examined extensively the organization and transmission of school knowledge. A major contribution of Bernstein is his examination of the way in which the change from collective code to integrated code represents the change from mechanical to organic solidarity. This message system of the school privileged middle class pupils, because they began their schooling with access to these codes, already provided by their family background. Thus the message system reproduces within schools the social inequalities of the society. Bernstein's sounding of a note of warning about social inequality in education has continued under various sociological schools of thought.

Between 1930s and 1960s Talcott Parsons and Davis and Moore of the American functionalist perspective, extensively examined the ways in which the education system functions in society. In their views, taking for granted that talent is unequally distributed, then the education system plays a central role in the allocation of the most talented to the functionally most important roles in society. This importance is determined by the length and specialist training required for particular occupational roles.

Among the early Marxists, Althusser examined the way education replaced religion as a state apparatus of control in capitalist society (1971). Under the influence of Althusser, Bowles and Gintis's work saw education as being the roots of inequality in capitalist America (1976). In their view the associations between the length of schooling, ability and how much one earns is dependent on factors other than ability; such as parental income and class. Thus, to them school reflects the hierarchical divisions of labour in the economy through a correspondence between the social relations of production, school and family. From this point, other Marxists such as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) Willis (1977) Mac an Ghail (1988) questioned the success of the assumed allocation functions of education in modern society.

Several sociologists have examined the issues involved in the amount of education for particular work components. In particular the link of education with the requirements of the modern industrial wage paying sector, and an attendant situation of qualification escalation have been explored by several authors, including Collins (1979), Little (1982) and Smith 1986.

This paper takes off from the views on the "qualificationism" theory expounded by Oxenham, (1984) a development researcher who devoted much work on what he termed 'paper qualification syndrome'. In his view unemployment of educated persons was a matter of serious concern to many developing nations. The rate of economic growth in most African countries had become inadequate for the absorption of educated persons. This was particularly true of the much sought after modern sector; whose growth had been slower than was envisaged in the immediate post-colonial period. Employers, on the other hand, tended to escalate the educational

requirements for jobs as a way to cope with the pressures of very large numbers of applicants for employment. This has generally created the feeling among those seeking employment, that the more educational qualifications one has the higher are the chances of winning scarce job opportunities. In response, the educational system focused much effort on encouraging students to gear all their efforts towards examination success; one step or level after another; with the sole purpose of gaining entry into wage employment.

A major characteristic of the qualification escalation syndrome is its effects on student's valuation of jobs. According to Oxenham (1984: i-ii), the attitude of educated people generally is that since they are formally or highly qualified for a particular type of salaried employment they should not accept any other kind of employment". Frustration and a hankering for more commensurate employment placement, through containing to obtain even higher qualifications, are some of the outcomes of this situation..

This paper's point of divergence from the views of Oxenham, is with regard to his assertion that educated youth persist in their refusal to accept lower employment options. The Nigerian situation clearly demonstrates that educated youth are not totally insensitive to the changing situations and the non-availability of jobs which their counterparts took for granted in the past. Hence, university-educated youths in most parts of the country are currently employed as petty traders, shop sales persons, clerks, and primary school teachers, in contrast to the situation in the 1980s. However, such acceptance of 'lower' jobs by educated youth seem to remain an interim measure for most of them with dire possibilities for the quality of their work input

Methodology

Methodology employed in this study comprise mainly of unstructured interviews of two groups, those in the work place and graduating university students; and two sets of male and female focus group discussants of the latter group. One of the interviewed groups belongs to a small sample of work establishments, while the other set of interviews is carried out in a tertiary educational institution in the state capital. A small sample of 12 work establishments was drawn purposively, so as to obtain a broad representation of medium scale private sector employers and workers. Hence the sample was drawn from companies in Awka (Anambra slate capital) and Onitsha (major commercial cen.tre). Each of the firms in the sample had a minimum of 10 employees, at least two of whom were young graduates of tertiary educational institutions who were between the ages of 23 and 30years. While there were many more of these categories of work establishments in the state, the rationale for this mini survey was its adequacy for an exploratory study.

Focus of this study is not on the economic and other technicalities involved in grading of small, medium and high level organizations. Rather utilization of modern equipments for production and services and employment of various cadres of manpower are given more import in choice of this sample. Employment of at least two graduates was used as a criterion to ensure an adequate mix in the educational levels of the manpower in each establishment. This particularly serves the purpose of ensuring availability of graduate respondents in the sample of organizations. It also ensured that the organization had experience of graduate employment practices and performances. The establishments in the sample included two transport companies, two pharmaceutical companies, two gas piping and distribution companies two fast food restaurants, two cloth marketing companies, one courier service company, one plastic utensils manufacturing company.

The areas covered by the interviews were in accordance with the research objectives of this study. Three persons were interviewed in each work establishment, namely employers/proprietors and two graduate employees. A total of thirty-six persons were therefore interviewed.

For the interview of graduating classes of a tertiary educational institution in the state capital, fish bowl method was used to obtain a sample of five students each from a random sample of six faculties, consisting of Arts, Management, Social Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Engineering and Natural Science. This sample population comprised thirty students.

These interviews were complemented by two focus group discussions, further aimed at elucidated student views in relation to the research objectives. The two focus groups comprised 12 males and 12 females. In all there were a total of twenty-four students.

Qualitative analyses are mostly adduced from data obtained from these interviews and focus group discussions.

Findings

Interview of proprietors/owners, graduate workers, undergraduates, and focus group discussions by the latter yielded several important findings relevant to qualification escalation. Findings with regard to number one objective are as follows:

Extent of Awareness of Increase in Educational Requirements for Employment **Table 1: Medium Scale Private Sector Employment Grading**

Positions	Entry point in 2008	Entry point in 1990	Entry point in 1970
Management	First Degree with long years (15yrs) of experience.	First Degree	Secondary Education with on-the-job-training.
Admin. Officer	First Degree	First Degree	Secondary School
Executive/Cadre	OND and an average of 5 years of relevant experience.	OND	Secondary School certificate with training
Supervisors (Industries)	First Degree	OND	Primary School certificate with
Security officer/Executives	First Degree	Secondary School, rise through the ranks.	Primary Education, and rising through the ranks.
Cashiers	First Degree/OND	OND	Secondary Education
Marketers	First Degree	OND	Secondary Education
Clerical officers	Secondary School	Secondary School	Primary School certificate with
Sales personnel	Secondary School with experience	Secondary Education	Primary Education certificate with on-the-job-training
Junior security staff	Secondary School and paramilitary experience.	Secondary School GCE/WAEC	Primary Schooling
Office attendant	Secondary School GCE/WAEC	Primary School certificate/WAEC attempted.	Primary School, dropout or no education.

Table 1 illustrates qualification increase as obtained from the respondents. Both respondents and discussants displayed a general awareness of increase in qualifications required for jobs; and also demonstrated some awareness of a relationship between this and increasing scarcity of employment opportunities.

With regard to rise in qualifications demanded for jobs, 3 undergraduate discussants out of a total of 24 (12.5 percent) pointed out that applicants themselves contributed to the raising of qualifications. This was due by their demanding lower cadre jobs rather than remaining unemployed for long periods. Consequent upon this, qualification required for jobs become raised

over time. For instance clerical jobs were now demanded by tertiary education graduates, thus making it unavailable for secondary school leavers that performed such work in the 1980s. Another example is that of security personnel. While in previous years only secondary education and experience were required by security supervisor in modern establishments such as universities-such positions were now filled by graduates and holders of post graduate certificates.

Extent to Which More Education Generally Means More Effective Work Performance

With regard to research question number two, while employers did not supply clear cut relationships between increased education and work performance they tended to see increase of qualification requirement as normal, and as one of the outcomes of modernization of the employment system. They also viewed employment of graduates as a source of image enhancement for their organizations. In response to whether such increase in qualification was necessary for work performance, only two of the employers clearly stated that there may be no direct relationship to improved work performance. Others generally tied certain qualifications to given cadres of work in line with existing pattern in employment practice, despite the fact that income was generally lower in the medium scale industrial sector than in larger industrial establishments. Indeed, one of the earlier mentioned two employers, who owned a cloth trading concern, observed that higher education often posed a constraint to progress in necessary local apprenticeship training for prospective traders. This is because university graduates were generally not amenable to some of the tasks performed by the normally younger and less educated apprentice traders. Furthermore, they regarded themselves as possessing more capability to understand the rudiments of trading at a faster rate than the average apprentice and sometimes even the trainer. This often constituted a source of disruption to normal apprenticeship social environment and relationships. This employer also observed that while graduates were quite willing to work as factory junior operatives, the snag was that they often tended to resent supervisors instructions and corrections. These drawbacks often had the consequence of their being less effective in such lower level employment.

Workers on the other hand, generally expressed concern about increase in qualification requirement for jobs. Their concerns were based on the costs of education and on the time required. Asked if: increased levels of education improved actual work performance in the industry three of the graduate employees (namely a medicine sales supervisor, a transport booking clerk, a fast food counter sales-man) observed that their extended education was not necessary for their work. Their income which ranged between NI5,000 and 1430,000 was a particular source of resentment among these workers. All but twenty-two of the twenty-four graduate employees in this employment sector (92 percent) regarded their employment as a stopgap pending when they obtained another employment in large banks or other establishments with better income prospects. Undergraduate respondents generally expressed the view that higher education exposure was useful for executive/administrative work. However, they did not see the point of higher education in a situation where employment opportunities for graduates were increasingly becoming unavailable. None of the participants attributed increase in qualification requirements to actual efficiency in job performance.

Causal Relationships between Escalation of Education for Work, and Anti-Social Educational Behaviours

With regard to objective number three, in response to questions about the impact of quest for qualifications on educational behaviour of undergraduates, most respondents stated that desperation to obtain qualification was causally related to escalation of examination misconduct, examination result manipulation and certificate forgery by staff and students in tertiary and even secondary educational institutions. 21 undergraduate respondents that are 70% of a total of thirty saw all forms of stealing and robbery by students as their own ways of financing education, since part time jobs were not available and parents were often impoverished.

Four out of the thirty interviewed undergraduate respondents (13percent) expressed the view that availability of more bursaries/scholarships would assuage the situation of desperation among students. Additionally, this would serve to put government in mind of their responsibilities to youth and thus nudge them towards more focus on creation of employment opportunities.

Undergraduate focus group discussants generally showed keen awareness of increase in anti-social behavioural tendencies such as examination misconduct certificate forgeries, corrupt acquisition of grades involving lecture and even prostitution and armed robbery. Such practices were closely tied to student striving to meet the financial and other demands of their education. Desperation to obtain qualification so as to obtain jobs was also seen by most discussants as the cause of increase of student cultism. A total of five discussants from the twenty-four members of the two focus groups (21 percent) also related above anti-social behaviours in tertiary educational institution to general decadence in society. All others laid the blame for such behaviours solely on the stress caused by inflation of educational demands and attendant acute competition for very scarce employment.

Work Place Factors that Support Increased Qualification for Jobs.

In the research objective number four, with regard to employment related education grading, all employers readily maintained that there is an institutionalized link between educational levels and jobs in the state. The grading of jobs in the public sector scheme of service is based largely on a schedule whereby salaries correspond to qualification levels as obtains in the public service commission. Each job fits into a compartment of qualification level, salary grade and level of responsibility. The higher the level of intellect which a job is thought to require, the more the responsibility attached to it, the higher the level of qualification it is assumed to require, and consequently the higher the salary and other benefits assigned to it. At the other extreme, the more menial a job is, regardless of the nature and the extent of any demands it might place on the worker, the lower the qualification level and hence a corresponding low salary slot in which it is placed. A modern private sector employment scheme, tend to loosely follow this pattern, though the exact income component is often not strictly adhered to in medium scale establishment.

Employers also generally acknowledge that compliance to this pattern of wage correspondence to qualification levels is more total in situations where applicants far exceed available employment vacancies. Thus, states which have comparatively low rates of tertiary graduate demand for their large numbers of available employment places in the administrative cadre tend to employ those with lower qualification requirements or to give more credence to in-service training and other categories of qualification besides those obtained from formal schooling. In states that have a surplus of demand for few employment opportunities staff are employed into lower grades than those stipulated for their qualifications.

Escalation of Qualification Requirements and Unemployment

With regard to research objective number five, student interviews revealed large scale student discontent and exasperation about high rate of unemployment. All students were aware of situation of large scale unemployment. Students gave examples of those who were still unemployed more than two years after graduation. There was also a general awareness that educational requirements for employment had increased over the years. Student estimation of average period of unemployment for graduate was six months. They were generally of the view that jobs obtained before or after this period by over half of graduates employees represented underemployment in terms of income and the types of work performed.

All undergraduate respondents placed their expected work level at the executive/administrative level and regarded lower levels as underemployment. Students generally view graduate unemployment as an aspect of bad governance with its attendance low responsiveness to basic needs of the population.

Most of these undergraduates also saw themselves as acutely marginalized by increasing qualification requirements for jobs. Opinions were expressed by all student respondents about high cost of living and of education and the unfairness of being unemployed for long periods after graduation. However, inspite of acute unemployment most of the student respondents were still of the view that there was need to vastly increase tertiary education opportunities in order to meet the quest for education, and reduce the frustration of protracted repeat of tertiary education entrance examinations by large numbers of youth.

In the two focus groups, undergraduate discussants showed keen interest in the subject of unemployment. There was general agreement that unemployment of graduates of tertiary

educational institutions was high. Average period of waiting after graduation was estimated at about one year after youth service for up to forty percent of each cohort of graduates. Up to thirty percent were estimated to remain unemployed beyond one and half years. There was also a general agreement that up to twenty percent of each graduating cohort remained unemployed beyond two years. With regard to employment preferences, they indicated preference for white collar wage employment irrespective of their academic disciplines. Only 6 students (25 percent) from four faculties indicated interest in engaging in self employment.

One undergraduate gave an example of how traditional trader apprenticeship had in recent years become an employment route for many graduates who wished to be assisted in starting their own businesses. This form of apprenticeship was previously the preserve of secondary school dropouts and primary school leavers and dropouts (Egbue: 2006). He observed, however, that most graduate apprentices were either unemployed for a long duration or were older people who had lost their jobs. This option therefore generally represented a last resort.

High unemployment levels, rather than requirement for job performance were generally held responsible for escalation of qualification levels for jobs. Responsibility for high unemployment levels was placed on government inefficiencies, ineptitude and corrupt use of government funds which should be directed at employment creation and provision of essential services and infrastructure for industrial growth. Discussants generally resented the escalating employment situation, which they variously regarded as marginalization and provocation of youth, invalidation of their education and irresponsibility by those in authority.

Both the quantity and the character of youth unemployment have witnessed marked changes since the 1970s. By the late 1970s graduate unemployment was still rare (Damachi and Diejomaoh: 1978:45). At the time a substantial portion of secondary school leaver unemployment was due to school leavers not wanting to work outside their traditional preserves of white collar employment.

It is generally acknowledged that obtaining accurate basic statistics is highly problematic in Nigeria. In this regard Nigerian official unemployment statistics which indicated 3.2 percent in 1998 (Federal Republic of Nigeria: 1999: 309) clearly does not serve as accurate measure of the obviously large scale unemployment in the country at the time. However, it is interesting to note that in 1998 those with no schooling constituted 28.0 percent of total unemployment. People who had primary school, secondary and post secondary education constituted 15.8, 49.5 and 6.5 percent of total unemployment respectively (Nigeria: 1999:310). Graduate unemployment had therefore constituted a sizeable proportion of total unemployment.

With regard to secondary school leavers at the time, 49.5 percent of unemployment may represent a propensity for this category of school output to search for wage income in already saturated wage employment sectors. Currently, however secondary school leavers have very reduced expectation of wage employment, while lack of necessary infrastructure, facilities and other logistics for self-employment have continued to exacerbate their unemployment situation

Presently, up to an estimated, 30% of educated employed youth are underemployed in terms of their own estimation of what level of employment should accrue to their educational qualification. See Table 1.

Educational Consequences of Inflation of Qualification

In Nigeria the problem of unemployment of educated youth has become so chronic that it has come to constitute a serious threat to economic and social stability. In spite of this situation children and youth are continually expected to spend long years obtaining education which both they and their parents expect would somehow enable them earn reasonable living. As the hope of large proportions of educated youth continue to be dashed, and their frustrations mount their developmental prospects, as well as that of the country at large remain jeopardized. (Egbue 2006:

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Consequences of educational demands and use by employers over and above actual requirements of jobs are multi-faceted and problematic. For instance this situation means that people expend more than is necessary on education. This is not tenable in the present situation where

a large proportion of the Nigerian population is acutely impoverished and where there is ever increasing need to invest on basic needs such as food, water, heat and electricity. Furthermore, in the bid to obtain more education for employment, possible resources for investment in self employment may also be lost. Government effort in the direction of necessary employment related loans to school leavers is presently very inadequate,

Over-concentration on formal schooling as the only means of skill acquisition tends to discountenance other means of obtaining skills; such as natural ability, apprenticeship, on the job training and experience/exposure.

This is problematic for the following reasons,

- i. Unnecessary expenditure is incurred on more years of schooling for the sake of jobs for which such schooling is not unnecessary.
- ii. There is a dwindling of job opportunities for those who do not have extensive education-exposure, thus escalating unemployment,
- iii. So called 'unskilled' work areas are filled up with large numbers of people whose potentials for work performance in such sectors are stilled by frustration.

Youth in the state as in many parts of Nigeria, have for a long time considerably moved away from their erstwhile practice of long waiting periods before employment, as they try to obtain particular levels of white collar jobs, as postulated by Oxenham. Rather, realizing the actual situation of high unemployment rate, most youth are willing to grudgingly make do with any available jobs, while still searching for the ones which they consider more appropriate for their educational qualifications.

There are myriads of social and psychological consequences of youth frustration resulting directly and remotely from high rate of unemployment. These, as is quite evident in Anambra State, result generally in debilitating the state's socio-economic, political and cultural development. However expatiations on these problems do not constitute part of this paper.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This paper concludes on a recommendation; namely that society has need for sociologists to posit definite solutions to the inadequacies that are concomitant on the current interactions between modern systems of education and employment. Much of existing inadequacies in the economy are directly related to the inability of the teeming population of school users to find employment at the end of long years of education. Furthermore a large proportion of desperate seekers for higher education cannot afford such education or are not intellectually qualified. Quite clearly therefore no amount of adjustment at the educational institution level is likely to take care of this problem.

There is therefore very pressing need for other strategies as follows:

- ❖ Collaboration between all stakeholders is imperative. Namely sociologists, psychologists, economists, educationists, and policy makers.
- ❖ Major focus of such collaboration would be to find solutions for any inadequacies in the content and environment of education, as well as factors in the economy and the society at large, which constrain the employment of output of the educational system.
- ❖ Inculcation of entrepreneurship in educational institutions holds out immense promise for educational outputs that are familiar with and inclined towards knowledge and skill application towards employment generation.
- ❖ Focus on problem solution should also be directed beyond the formal education curriculum. This is because adequate inculcation of entrepreneurial skills requires a balance of focus on both intra and extra curricula dimensions.
- ❖ There is also a need for a future large scale study that is focused on the balance between the demands of increased educational qualification and the actual needs for

efficient work performance in sectors of the Nigerian economy.

While all formal education, no doubt to some extent contribute to the satisfaction of essential societal needs for upgrading individual and societal stock of knowledge and enlightenment, nevertheless most products of the educational system particularly in developing countries, place premium on expected employment outcome. For this reason, while current response to employer demand for increase in amount and levels of education has been' in the affirmative, a combination of sustained and indeed increasing economic recession and acute reduction of availability of wage employment may eventually result in significant fall in school enrolment, especially at the higher levels of education. Such a situation was witnessed at the secondary level in Anambra State (Egbue: 1999) and in several other states in Southeastern Nigeria from the mid 1980s to the late 1990s. Massive public enlightenment by government and international agencies was required at the time in order to stem the tide of male exodus from schools. As has been witnessed generally in Nigeria, many negative behavioural outcomes that are attendant upon youth unemployment do not augur well for security of life and property in the country (Egbue 2006).

Escalation of youth quest for higher levels of education irrespective of individual intelligence and abilities has largely fuelled examination misconduct and several forms of youth criminality, especially among students of tertiary educational institutions. Related to this problem is the fact that many parents of tertiary education students see their children's education as a means for uplifting the income status of their entire families. There is therefore urgent need for government and other stakeholders to intervene by sponsoring studies focused on the dynamics of escalation of educational requirements for employment (Irriazarri (1985). For one thing this would pave the way for a well-grounded apportioning of responsibilities and seeking out solutions for youth desperate quest for education at all costs and by all means in Nigerian. This would also pave the way for experts to collaborate in the determination of what education is essential for what jobs. The latter is particularly necessary in a country where parents of school going youth are perpetually engaged in a struggle to balance the cost of their children's education with those of other desperate basic needs for family survival.

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