

## Electronics Troubleshooting Skills Acquisition: A Panacea to Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Youth restiveness is a major problem in Nigeria. Stakeholders are concerned on how to overcome this problem. The use of electronics troubleshooting skills in job creation is one of the ways of curbing the problem of youth restiveness considering the unemployment situation in Nigeria. This paper therefore, unveils the use of electronics skills acquisition as a panacea to youth restiveness in Nigeria. Causes of youth restiveness and how electronics troubleshooting skills can be used to curb this menace was also presented. It was therefore recommended among others that youth should be adequately equipped with the right skills and competencies in electronics troubleshooting in order to tackle the problem of youth restiveness and its attendant consequences.*

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### Introduction

Troubleshooting is the process of diagnosing for equipment failure. It is a form of problem solving, often applied to repair failed products or process. It is a logical and systemic search for the source of a problem so that it can be solved and so that the electronics appliance can be made operational again. Furthermore, Robert (2001) stated that troubleshooting is a logical and systemic analysis of a faulty circuit system to determine what exactly is wrong with it. Troubleshooting of electronics appliance therefore, requires the identification of the mal-function(s) or symptoms within the device, then, knowledge and experience (skills) are used to generate possible causes of the problem which are eliminated, then, the device is repaired and tested to make sure its serviceability is restored. Furthermore,

electronics troubleshooting is the act of detecting, locating and rectifying faults in electronics system.

The level into which electronic troubleshooter can go while restoring the serviceability of a faulty electronic device depends on his experience, skills, level of confidence and severity of the fault – the required servicing tools being available. To this end, troubleshooters can be categorized into three. This is as a result of their learning outcomes about the paradigm of electronics devices (Garut, 1997). The first category is the “KNOW WHAT” group, which are those that learned-by-using. The domestic and industrial electronic appliances users who use manufacturer’s troubleshooting manual and some of the roadside electronic repairers who use ‘trial by error’ method to repair some certain faults fall into this category. Obviously, these people did not

attend any formal/non-formal course to acquire the relevant skills. Troubleshooting at this level is cheap but dangerous. Proper skills are expected to be used in electronics repairs to avoid accidents that could lead to serious damages on humans and properties.

The second category, the "KNOW WHY" group, learned-by-studying. The people in this category went to schools to acquire the relevant skills and certificates. They can repair severely damaged electronic devices according to their competencies and can be held responsible for their actions. The last category is for those that learned-by-doing, the "KNOW HOW" group. They carry out repairs at manufacture levels. They are highly skilled and possess exceptional qualities in electronics troubleshooting to carry out first line maintenance/repairs of electronics devices, they can also cope with the current challenges of the dynamic world of electronics technology.

It is important to emphasize however, that electronics troubleshooters at all levels (from engineers down to craftsmen) can be found within any of the last two categories depending on his/her competency, experience and job opportunities. Sadly, due to some certain factors that hinder electronics skills acquisition in Nigeria, which created a wide gap between the world of knowledge and the world of work, there is dearth of indigenous workforce within these categories. It is observed therefore that if government can create suitable policies to produce manpower (that possess the right qualities) to fill these job opportunities, employment will be provided to young people, thereby reducing the rate of youth restiveness to minimal level.

### Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

The term youth has been defined in many ways. The National Youth Development Policy (2007) defined youth as people aged 18-35 years. Youth is also the period of life when one is young, but often means the time between childhood and adulthood – appearance, freshness, vigor, spirit etc, are the characteristics of one who is young. This is the category of people that determine the future of every society – they are the leaders of tomorrow. If properly equipped with the right values, attitudes, orientation, and skills, the socio-economic and political stability is indirectly achieved; otherwise the consequence of their negative effect is felt.

Youth restiveness has become a very serious issue in Nigeria. It is defined as a sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youth. It is seen by Elegbeye (2005) as "an event of violence and disruption of lawful activities". Youth restiveness leads to killings, religious crises, civic unrest, uprising of social crimes, insecurity, unwanted teenage pregnancies, militancy and so on, mostly the perpetrators of which are youth. According to Danbazau (2007), Nigeria has been on the global crime map since 1980s. The nature of these crimes include, armed robbery, murder, rape, car theft, burglary, fraud, bribery and corruption, food trafficking, kidnapping, drug abuse, money laundering, internet scam and other illegal activities. Despite continuous efforts put by the government to curb the situation, it appears as if nothing is being done. The unending vandalization of pipelines in the oil rich regions by jobless youth and the rampant kidnapping of people in the south eastern region have become daily occurrences on news reports. The armed robbery cases across the country (especially the southwest region) where a

used adequately to bring about socio-economic development. In 2013 alone, government has spent about N1.055 trillion on security. This represents an increase of N135 billion over what was spent in 2012 (Nigeria News Day, 2013). The security agencies, who can only sleep with one eye open these days, are working day and night, in fact over stretched to curtail the situation. The citizens can neither move freely for their daily activities nor stay safely in their homes. Precarious lives and properties worth trillions of naira are being lost on daily basis. In fact, youth restiveness is affecting every effort towards achieving peace, unity and political stability of our great Nigeria. The scariest undertone of Nigeria's socio-economic underachievement, by far, is the steady rise in youth crimes, nurtured in a climate of increasing national income and simultaneous failure of employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes. Armed insurgencies ravaging the oil-rich and volatile Niger Delta region and wanton destruction of lives and properties by "Boko Haram" in the northern part of the country are now competing for space in the international headlines.

From all indications, the reduction of youth's unemployment will translate into reduction in their restiveness, and hence, poster national development. The youths are an important part of the society, who should be encouraged to channel their energies to national development by being positively employed, having the right skills to explore the area of electronics troubleshooting and discouraged from activities that could be detrimental to the growth of the country. Therefore, every action taken towards youth's employment is an action towards reducing youth restiveness to minimal level.

### **The Role of Electronic Troubleshooting Skills in Curbing Youth Restiveness**

In recent time, the use of electronic products has increased, but there seem to be relatively inadequate qualified and competent hands to troubleshoot these products when they develop snags. The availability of electronic devices such as mobile phones, computer system, TV sets (LCDs, plasmas), radio sets, public systems, pressing irons, fans, cookers, refrigerators etc in our society is so much so that they can be found almost in every type of home (rich or poor), at every location (village or town) and used at different capacities (domestic or industrial). This is because, the world of technology is rapidly developing from analog to digital and now, to smart and nano-technology, thereby making them cheaper, lighter, more efficient, having less power consumption (in some cases, integrated with rechargeable batteries) to make them usable even at remote areas. This continuous increase in the demand of electronics devices over the time however has made manufacturers to adapt a 'make it and it will sell' market strategy, in which case products are manufactured massively with little or no attention given to their quality (Cheryl, Graham and Devid, 2004). According to a resent 'Repair or Replace' electronics consumer survey in USA in which 27,404 respondents narrated about the troubles they had with 53,218 broken electronic appliances, it was discovered that electronic goods do not last as long as they did a decade ago (Consumer Report Magazine,2011). This implies that in the absence of competent and qualified electronics troubleshooters, products are said to be replaced rather than repaired. It is suggested therefore that, if our youth can be equipped with the latest skills to enable

them fit properly into the second and third categories of troubleshooters, a lot of job will be created and attention of many youth will be diverted into positive tendencies of repairing the 'many' faulty electronic devices in our homes, offices and industries. In line with this, Raymond (2008) asserted that acquisition of vocational skills such as those in electronics troubleshooting is crucial in creating employment, improving the quality of life and limiting the incidences of social vices due to joblessness. Furthermore, Samson and Chris (2014) asserted that entrepreneurial empowerment skills need to be imparted to technicians and engineers in the newly innovated electronic device repair and maintenance so as to balance the situation in Nigeria. This will create more jobs for the ever increasing number of unemployed/underemployed youth which will help curb the problem of youth restiveness to minimal level.

### Factors Affecting Electronics Troubleshooting Skills Acquisition in Nigeria

The factors affecting electronics troubleshooting skills acquisition in Nigeria include the following:

- **Poor Funding:** Electronics troubleshooting skills acquisition programmes are expensive to be established and sustained. Poor funding has been identified as one of the factors affecting the sector. It was narrated by Ogo (2013) that despite the importance of vocational training given by the federal government, the system is largely underfunded.
- **Wrong Public Perception:** Some parents and students see electronics troubleshooting skills acquisition as fit for only the academically less endowed. This has led to poor participation of the appropriate number of intelligent students into this type of important field of study in the country.
- **Gender Stereotyping:** There is another belief that electronics skills acquisition programmes are only meant for men excluding women. A survey conducted by Onjewu (2005) revealed that there is a poor participation of women in technical courses which is not unconnected with the belief of most people that technical courses are only preserved for males because they are labour intensive or simply viewed as too masculine in orientation for women to engage in. This is dangerous as even the female gender is hit by the current problem of unemployment/underemployment.
- **Lack of Steady Power Supply:** Electronics troubleshooting requires the use of steady power supply to enable teaching/learning process take place efficiently. Unfortunately, in the nation today, there is a general problem of steady supply of electricity. This has seriously hindered the teaching/learning as well as general practice of electronics troubleshooting.
- **Lack of Good Working Tools:** Electronic troubleshooting skills acquisition is suppose to be more of a practical than a theory. The right tools have to be used for efficient teaching/learning to take place effectively. Unfortunately, there is lack of training facilities such as electronics testing equipment and machines in technical training institutions.
- **Other factors include:** Lack of qualified and competent teachers, poor

private sector participation, use of outdated curriculum, inadequate number of technical and vocational collages.

### **Ways of Improving Skills Acquisition Towards Reducing Youth Restiveness**

From the ongoing, the importance of electronics troubleshooting skills acquisition to provide relevant employable skills to the restive youth in the country is no longer an option but a necessity. Practical skills acquisition programmes should be positioned as tools for providing youth with employable skills for peace, unity, socio-economic and political development of the country. In order to achieve this, appropriate training equipment and tools, adequate supply of training materials, text books and qualified instructors with experience in enterprise should be provided. Employability of youth begins with effective guidance to choose training programme in relation to their attitude and academic background. Government should give legislative backing to national vocational training policies, improve coherence of governance and management of vocational training and introduce policies and incentives that will support increased private sector participation. It should also partner informal vocational trainers to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills in their training programme, institute measures to reduce gender, economic and geographical inequalities in vocational training provisions. It should set up venture capital to support vocational training graduates, provide policies to introduce vocational education across the country right from the grassroots, building leadership and management capacity to drive training systems and mainstreaming vocational training into general education system so

that the vocational track is less dead-end. Furthermore, ICT should be introduced into vocational training with constant monitoring, periodic evaluation of performance of the system, applying corrective measures accordingly.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

It has been shown that acquisition of skills in electronics troubleshooting can provide jobs and eradicate youth restiveness in Nigeria. However, there is the need to create economic environment that promotes the growth of enterprises and generally stimulates the economy. When business develops and expands, additional labour-market demands for technically trained graduates, new job opportunities are created, more people get employed and the incidence of poverty and youth restiveness reduces. For this to happen on a sustainable basis, the practical skills acquisition system must be labour-market relevant, equitable, efficient and of high quality, so as to produce competent manpower that can exploit the advantage of the rapidly expanding and appreciative world of electronic technology.

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