TACKLING PRESENT AND FUTURE NIGERIAN CHALLENGES THROUGH INNOVATIVENESS IN A NEW NORMAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The objective of this study is to examine the challenges relating to developmental issues in Nigeria.

Methods: To achieve the objective of the study, literature was reviewed to identify and substantiate the challenges confronting the nation and the citizens.

Result and Discussion: The study revealed the various challenges confronting Nigeria which ranges from infrastructural deficit, climate change, rigid educational system, terrorism and kidnapping. In curbing developmental challenges through the use of technology and Nigeria, one of the most populous black nations in the world, is beset with challenges of infrastructural gap, institutional void, entrepreneurial incompetence, and poor competency-based curricula in her educational system. These challenges gave rise to the problems of poor innovation ideas and unsaleable skills that could engender self-reliance or generate gainful employment among Nigerian graduates. It also led Nigeria to fall far behind its international competitors.

Conclusion/Recommendation: From review of literature evidences, the study concluded that the problems of Nigeria could be significantly reduced through innovative vocation and technology programs inculcated in young undergraduates and uneducated Nigerians so as to reduce unemployment and crime rate in the country. The study therefore recommended that in order for the nation to develop sustainable innovation systems to solve her problems, innovative vocation and technology must be encouraged throughout all institutions, government agencies and organizations in Nigeria, students must be imbued with market-relevant skills, and both relevant digital skills and intra and extra firms’ innovation and technology must be developed and encouraged.

Keywords: Innovation, New Normal, Technology, Vocation, Nigeria.

ENFRENTAR OS DESAFIOS NIGERIANOS PRESENTES E FUTUROS ATRAVÉS DA INOVAÇÃO NUMA NOVA ERA NORMAL

Objetivos: O objetivo deste estudo é examinar os desafios relacionados às questões de desenvolvimento na Nigéria.

Métodos: Para atingir o objetivo do estudo, a literatura foi revista para identificar e substanciar os desafios enfrentados pela nação e pelos cidadãos.

Resultado e Discussão: O estudo revelou os vários desafios enfrentados pela Nigéria, que vão desde déficit de infraestrutura, mudanças climáticas, sistema educacional rígido, terrorismo e sequestro. Ao conter os desafios do desenvolvimento através do uso da tecnologia e da Nigéria, uma das nações negras mais populosas do mundo, está sofrendo com desafios de lacunas infraestruturais, vazio institucional, incompetência empresarial e currículos pobres baseados em competências em seu sistema educacional. Esses desafios deram origem aos problemas de ideias de inovação pobres e habilidades invendáveis que poderiam gerar autoassuﬁência ou gerar emprego.

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remunerado entre os graduados nigerianos. Também levou a Nigéria a ficar muito atrás de seus concorrentes internacionais.

Conclusão/Recomendação: A partir da revisão de evidências de literatura, o estudo concluiu que os problemas da Nigéria poderiam ser significativamente reduzidos através de programas inovadores de vocação e tecnologia inculcados em jovens estudantes de graduação e nigerianos sem escolaridade, a fim de reduzir o desemprego e a taxa de criminalidade no país. O estudo, portanto, recomendou que, para que a nação desenvolva sistemas de inovação sustentáveis para resolver seus problemas, vocação e tecnologia inovadoras devem ser incentivadas em todas as instituições, agências governamentais e organizações na Nigéria, os alunos devem ser imbuídos de habilidades relevantes para o mercado, e tanto as habilidades digitais relevantes quanto a inovação e tecnologia intra e extra empresas devem ser desenvolvidas e incentivadas.

Palavras-chave: Inovação, Novo Normal, Tecnologia, Vocação, Nigéria.

HACER FRENTE A LOS RETOS ACTUALES Y FUTUROS DE NIGERIA MEDIANTE LA INNOVACIÓN EN UNA NUEVA ERA NORMAL

RESUMEN

Objetivos: El objetivo de este estudio es examinar los desafíos relacionados con los problemas de desarrollo en Nigeria.

Métodos: Para lograr el objetivo del estudio se revisó la literatura para identificar y fundamentar los desafíos que enfrenta la nación y los ciudadanos.

Resultado y discusión: El estudio reveló los diversos desafíos que enfrenta Nigeria, que van desde el déficit de infraestructura, el cambio climático, el sistema educativo rígido, el terrorismo y el secuestro. Al frenar los desafíos de desarrollo a través del uso de la tecnología, Nigeria, una de las naciones negras más pobladas del mundo, se ve acosada por desafíos de brecha de infraestructura, vacío institucional, incompetencia empresarial y programas de estudios deficientes basados en competencias en su sistema educativo. Estos desafíos dieron lugar a problemas de ideas de innovación deficientes y habilidades imposibles de vender que podrían generar autosuficiencia o generar empleo remunerado entre los graduados nigerianos. También llevó a Nigeria a quedar muy por detrás de sus competidores internacionales.

Conclusión/Recomendación: A partir de la revisión de las evidencias bibliográficas, el estudio concluyó que los problemas de Nigeria podrían reducirse significativamente a través de programas innovadores de vocación y tecnología inculcados en jóvenes universitarios y nigerianos sin educación, a fin de reducir el desempleo y la tasa de delincuencia en el país. Por lo tanto, el estudio recomendó que para que la nación desarrolle sistemas de innovación sostenibles para resolver sus problemas, se debe alentar la vocación y la tecnología innovadoras en todas las instituciones, agencias gubernamentales y organizaciones en Nigeria, los estudiantes deben estar imbuidos de habilidades relevantes para el mercado, y se deben desarrollar y alentar las habilidades digitales relevantes y la innovación y la tecnología tanto dentro como fuera de las empresas.

Palabras clave: Innovación, Nueva Normalidad, Tecnología, Vocación, Nigeria.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria stands out as the most populous country on the African continent, supported by the recent data from the African Development Bank (AfDB, 2021) which estimates that the country is home to over 201 million people, a stunning 64% growth from the 122 million
recorded at the turn of the 21st century. With an estimated 2.4 billion people calling Africa home in 29 years, Nigeria will account for 17% of the continent's total population, whereas the world's population is projected to reach 8.6 billion by 2050. The nation of Nigeria is already the sixth biggest in the globe. After Pakistan, India, China, and the US, it will have 68 million more residents by 2030 and a further 63 million by 2050, putting it in fifth place in terms of population. Consequently, Nigeria's impact on a worldwide scale would be substantial and only increasing. However, the issue at hand goes beyond mere statistics. Rapid global ageing is occurring. Many Western nations are already struggling to cope with the challenges that come with a population that is becoming older. A smaller proportion of the population is of working age, and this is happening everywhere. Even in China, for example. Even though the world's youth crisis will worsen in the next decades, Nigeria will still have a relatively youthful population throughout the better part of this century. With a median age of 18 and a population that is both young and ambitious, Nigeria has the makings of a global powerhouse which suggests that the country has a large labour force to support production and other value creation activities. These factors influence investment decision by entrepreneurs and investors and favours Nigeria as an investment destination of choice. However, the African powerhouse is battling to establish its proper position due to its massive infrastructure deficits and its lackluster strategy for long-term economic expansion and growth.

According to the economic effect trend, Nigeria's economy has a hard time keeping up with the country's soaring population from 1980 to 2006, and salaries are little more than they were 36 years ago. As a result of its worldwide rivals' much more advantageous demographic circumstances over the last generation, Nigeria has lagged significantly behind. The dismal economic performance of Nigeria during the last sixty-one years is due to more than just demographics (Wuam, 2021). Rapid population increase made it difficult to provide the nation with the better education, healthcare, and governance that would have accelerated its development. On light of this, it is reasonable to assume that Nigeria's rapidly expanding population and developing modern economy would need substantial expenditures on both physical and digital infrastructure. Governments and commercial investors alike may take advantage of a massive investment opportunity in the infrastructure gap that exists across many sectors. To fix Nigeria's infrastructure, the country would need to spend almost $3 trillion over the next 30 years. Roads & transit, water, garbage, electricity, communications, aviation, and a host of other essential infrastructures and services are all negatively impacted by the country's infrastructure deficit.
The National Bureau of Statistics (2020) reports states that the oil industry contributed 8.16 percent of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) of $448 billion; nonetheless, the government has traditionally relied on oil money for support. Regrettably, Nigeria's economic fortunes have declined over the last seven years due to unpredictable global oil demand, which has resulted in price fluctuations. This oil price crisis is different from those in the past because of a number of factors, including a dramatic change towards renewable energy on a worldwide scale, increased efficiency in the United States’ oil production, and the emergence of shale oil as a substitute for crude oil. These new trends, together with the shift towards cleaner and more sustainable energy sources, are permanently altering the global demand picture for oil, which is causing oil-producing nations like Nigeria to struggle to increase their economic fortunes from the black gold. One of the biggest obstacles to the country's economic growth has been its inability to upgrade its refineries in terms of technology, refining process, and name plate capacity. That meant the country lost out on potential profits from its crude oil and gas reserves.

There has long been a connection between Nigeria's educational system and the country's high unemployment rate and economic stagnation. Critics of the system point to a lack of effective teaching methods, an absence of entrepreneurial competencies, and inadequate competency-based curriculum as causes of this problem (Bankole & Oyebisi, 2020). This contributed to the fact that Nigeria was unable to create enough employment to accommodate its expanding labour force. Unemployment affects almost 30% of the Nigerian population at present, with youth unemployment and underemployment being especially acute issues. The continued and alarming difficulty of many college-educated Nigerians to get gainful employment is another telling indicator of a dysfunctional labour market. The employment prospects of a Nigerian with a bachelor's degree are comparable to those of a Nigerian with no degree at all. A lot of people end up taking occupations that don't really suit their skills because they have no choice. Graduates' employment rates in professional and technical fields are declining. Sales, farming, and physical work provide little opportunities for many college educated men and women. As a consequence of brain drain, a large number of Nigerians have left the nation in search of work opportunities elsewhere.

A current hot subject has been the likely answer to these complicated challenges (Ibrahim et al., 2018). The world over, people are turning to innovative professions and technologies as solutions to their national and organisational difficulties. In order to fix a problem in the company, one must first collect relevant data, analyse it, and then provide a solution.
This paper attempts to provide answers to some of the Nigerian challenges through innovative vocation and technology.

2 NIGERIAN PRESENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

No gains in democratic development have been made possible due to a collapsing economy, increasing insecurity, and violent conflicts. A number of armed conflicts have sprung out in the nation recently, including those between pastoralists and herders, different regions, armed bandits, and the Boko Haram insurgency has led to the creation of inclusive policies that reduce violent crime and bolster safety measures focused on the neighbourhood. It might be wise to study Herbert and Husaini (2018) and James and Muhammad (2019) to learn about the causes and processes of communal disputes in Nigeria. To address security issues, create confidence, and encourage accountability, the police and internally displaced communities in Northeast Nigeria must work together to find realistic and tangible solutions. The Aten, Fulani, and Takad peoples of Kaduna and Plateau states have been at odds for a long time, and their respective peacebuilding organisations have worked to mediate a ceasefire that would end the bloodshed.

The death toll suggests that violence is pervasive in Nigeria, as pointed out by Bukar et al. (2021). Some say that the COVID-19 epidemic has made violent events even more widespread; for example, kidnappings in Nigeria increased by 169% in 2020 compared to 2019. One possible way to improve efforts to achieve peace is to learn more about the nuances of the concept, how they differ throughout societies, and which signs of harmony are most highly prized. Iwara (2021) points out that a "lost generation" of youngsters has emerged over most of Nigeria as a result of the systematic abduction of schoolchildren, which is a symptom of the deterioration of human security in the most populous African nation. An alarmingly high percentage of the world's unschooled youngsters are from Nigeria. In the midst of the current crises—the kidnappings, the extreme brutality of Boko Haram, and the strife between agricultural and herding communities—policymakers on both the national and international levels must immediately rescue and support the country's broken educational system.

In the last few years, an increase in the number of kidnappings and violent clashes between nomadic herdsmen and rural farmers has seen a rise in tension between the Fulani considered to be Northerners and rural communities in the Southern part of the country (Egbuta, 2018). Looking at the patterns and forces influencing global security, however, allows for extrapolations. A number of variables have been highlighted as propelling globalisation and the
interplay between security and economic conditions, terrorism, state instability, and geopolitical instability into the future of global security. Additionally, according the World Economic Forums 2016 Global Risk Report (World Economic Forum, 2016), the top five Global risks in terms of likelihood include: large-scale involuntary migration, extreme weather events, failure of climate—change mitigation and adaptation, interstate conflict with regional consequences, and major natural catastrophes. Taiwo (2010) also notes that the major problems confronting development in Nigeria are rooted in socio-cultural composition. The society consists of distinct and numerous communal groups, extended families and lineages, clans and ethnic groups, which have served to sustain livelihoods during years of bad governance, unemployment, deprivation and financial insecurity.

The real estate sector which accounts for 5.70 percent of GDP is an important sector that receives less-than-ideal funding from the government but has big potential returns on investment (Elodimuor, 2021). National housing is severely underfunded, despite the fact that it is a fundamental human need, and there is an immediate need to improve residential property alternatives for customers. Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa data from 2016 (CAHFA, 2016) shows that compared to other African nations, Nigeria's homeownership rate of 25% is much lower than South Africa's 56% and Kenya's 73%. The Federal Ministry of Housing has received billions of naira a year from the government to construct new housing units, but this progress has been very sluggish and has had very little effect. Despite the government's 2016 announcement of a goal to build 1 million new housing units yearly, CAHFA data shows that building has remained stagnant at roughly 100,000 units per year, which is a major setback, particularly considering the expanding urban population. Private investors and business owners may take advantage of this housing shortage by investing in the market.

Similarly, Nigeria suffers from unstable power supply which continues to impact economic activities in the country (Okafor, 2019). While there is a total installed power capacity of up to 12,000 megawatts, on average, currently, only around 4,000 megawatts of electricity is supplied to consumers, an abysmal figure considering that South Africa, a country with roughly 58 million people produces more than 50,000 megawatts of electricity to citizens and businesses (KPMG, 2021). The national grid breakdown in Nigeria is a clear indication of the country's chronic power woes. There were six instances of national grid breakdown in the first four months of 2019, impacting both the transmission and final distribution of power. The collecting of power money is also a difficult task. For a long time, distribution companies—the
final link in the power supply chain—have complained about the massive amounts of debt that homes and businesses have racked up.

Furthermore, the Nigerian economy suffers in the areas of healthcare, education, and transportation. Total transport makes for less than 2% of the country's GDP, whereas education and healthcare each contribute 1.78 and 0.62 percent, respectively, according to GDP figures (Elodimuor, 2021). Investor interest has been low in all three sectors due to decades of government indifference and uneven regulation. Still, the progress and prosperity of Nigerians in the years to come depend on these fields. Similarly, millions of Nigerians lack access to affordable healthcare and appropriate transit options, highlighting the country's underdeveloped transport and healthcare sectors. All of these things provide chances for business owners and financiers, and the need for them will only grow in the future years due to the dramatic expansion in the population of big cities. The World Bank's 2020 Human Capital Index rated Nigeria at 150 out of 157 nations, despite the country's recent socioeconomic growth. Extreme poverty, geographical disparity, and social and political instability all stem from a dearth of employment options. In addition to reducing family income, excessive inflation has driven an extra 7 million Nigerians into poverty in 2020 due to skyrocketing prices (World Bank, 2021).

3 INNOVATIVE VOCATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Vocation is the use one’s strengths, intellect and gifts to make the world a better place through service, creativity, and leadership. Innovative vocation is anticipating the needs of the market and offering additional quality or services at reduced cost (Okpara, 2007). This denotes satisfying the customers at reduced cost and remain competitive. This is a mind-set that is driving the small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria. However, Mohammed and Abimiku (2015) defined it as generation, development and adaptation of novel ideas. Every innovative product comes from a novel idea; that is, an idea that is not common which could satisfy the aspiration of the customers. Hence, innovative vocation could help to improve an existing product or produce a new product all together as well as produce services and products that could reposition a nation by solving her problems.

Innovative Technology helps to facilitate gainful employment, self-help, and competence to utilize their skills and other resources; inculcation of scientific temper, with the association of cultural change, they may turn for help to science rather than to quackery, acceleration of development with multiplier effects, and better utilisation of resources (including wastes); more and better distributed employment opportunities with less movement
of people, an integrated approach with flexibility of adjustment as per available resources, and maintenance of ecological balances (National Academies Press, 2017). Practically, innovative vocation and technology help integrate values with knowledge, replace linear thinking of old science by the multi-dimensional systems approach (Ngwenya & Hagmann, 2011).

The majority of technology advancements have been directed towards the banking, payment, wealth management, and consumer lending sectors of the financial services business. Further support for this comes from data compiled by EFInA, which reveals that out of 99 million people in Nigeria, 39.7 percent have bank accounts and 1.3 percent have access to credit via formal lenders (EFInA, 2018). In addition to this, according to the Centre for Financial Regulation and Inclusion (CENFRI), only 1.9% of Nigerian adults have insurance coverage, and the industry contributes barely 0.3% to the country’s GDP (Elodimuor, 2021). Another estimate by Catalyst Fund, an investment company, claims “a measly 400,000” Nigerians had a mutual fund investment by March 2020, representing a 0.8% penetration rate (Elodimuor, 2021). This shows that there is room for improvement in the availability of current products and services as well as the provision of fundamental financial services to the people of Nigeria.

4 NEW NORMAL

With a GDP growth rate of 3.6% in 2019, Africa failed to meet its goals of accelerating social and economic development and reducing poverty. The development of jobs has lagged behind the need to accommodate the 29 million young people reaching working age annually, and growth per capita was only approximately 0.7% (AUC/OECD, 2018). Rather than improvements in productivity, domestic demand (69% of the total) has been the main driver of GDP growth in Africa since 2000. The ratio of Africa's labour productivity to Asia's has dropped from 67% in 2000 to 50% currently, while the proportion of Africa's productivity relative to the US level remained unchanged from 2000 to 2018. (AUC/OECD, 2019). Oil, natural resources, and agricultural goods make up the bulk of Africa's exports, which reach global markets in 88% of cases.

Worldwide, 3,855,788 people have been sick and 256,862 have died as a result of the 2019 coronavirus illness (COVID-19) pandemic (Akinyemi et al., 2020). The Nigerian Centre for Disease Control announced the country's first pandemic case on February 27, 2020. To mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Nigeria has implemented a slew of social, economic, and health-related policies. Nevertheless, it is important to note that
some policy measures have limitations and, when combined, do not adequately address the significant challenge at hand (Dixit et al., 2020).

Social isolation and "test and trace" strategies are two examples of evidence-based policies that have been put into place at the national and state levels (Dixit et al., 2020). But this rollout has occurred on a foundation of inadequate health care, slow emergency response, ineffective accountability measures, and disjointed information and data monitoring infrastructure. There have been gaps in implementation due to these issues. To lessen the impact of economic shocks, the Nigerian federal government and the country's central bank launched various programmes to ameliorate the shocks. However, only employees in the formal economy were helped by the announced financial aid packages because many businesses in the informal sector are unregistered and it will be difficult for them to get these benefits. These businesses were supported by interest-free loans, grants, microfinance facilities and other community based channels (Dixit et al., 2020). Also, government programmes meant to help people out, like food stamps and cash transfers did not work very well.

In 2019, GDP growth slowed to around 2.3%, continuing the government's struggle to recover from the 2014 oil price shock (Onyekwena & Ekeruche, 2020). Due to relatively low oil prices and limited budgetary headroom, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reduced the 2020 GDP growth forecast downward from 2.5% to 2% in February (IMF, 2020).

Lower household consumption in Nigeria was caused by a combination of factors. First, consumers were forced to prioritise essential goods and services due to movement restrictions. Second, workers in the informal economy and the gig economy, who are engaged on a short-term or contract basis, had low expectations of future income. Third, assets like stocks and home equity declined, eroding both wealth and expected wealth (UNDP-NBS, 2021). The informal sector accounts for 65% of Nigeria's GDP, and the gig economy is growing rapidly alongside it. The consumption of non-essential items has decreased due to movement limitations, which have also impacted the income-generating capabilities of these groups, leading to a decrease in their consumption expenditure (UNDP-NBS, 2021).

Government expenditure, on the other hand, went up as governments, which normally have more financial leeway to run deficits and use fiscal stimulus programmes to offset the decline in consumer spending (Horton & El-Ganainy 2020; Onyekwena & Ekeruche, 2020). On April 2 2020, Brent oil was trading at little over $26 per barrel while the country's budget was 2.18 trillion naira ($6.05 billion) short due to assumption of a price of $57 per barrel. In a similar vein, since oil constitutes 90% of Nigeria’s exports, the fall in demand and oil prices had a negative impact on the quantity and worth of net exports. Expenditure cuts have been
announced by the Nigerian government due to the precipitous drop in oil prices caused by the epidemic.

A considerable slowdown in expansion was seen in a number of important economic areas. Elumoye et al. (2021) reports that in Q2 of 2020, the country's services sector grew at a negative rate of -6.78%, while the industries sector grew at a negative rate of -12.05%. The services sector shrank by 2.2% in 2020, whereas the industrial sector shrunk by 5.9% (UNDP-NBS, 2021). The agriculture sector, on the other hand, was only slightly hit, falling short of 2019 performance by 0.14 percentage points (UNDP-NBS, 2021). By the first quarter of 2021, the economy had grown somewhat, but the services sector had shrunk. The sharp drop in business activity and revenue that has impacted Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is consistent with the slowdown in GDP growth across several sectors. The fall in profitability and turnover of products also hit larger enterprises. The unemployment rate rose to 33% in Q4 2020 from 27% in Q2 2020 as a result of staff layoffs implemented by firms in response to the changing climate.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) implemented a number of reactions to mitigate the impact of the epidemic on businesses. As a stimulus package, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was given N50 billion to boost families and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). All loans from TraderMoni, MarketMoni, and FarmerMoni are now on hold for three months. All loans made by the Nigeria Export Import Bank, Bank of Agriculture, and Bank of Industry that were financed by the Federal Government of Nigeria were subject to a similar moratorium. As a result, the CBN put together a fiscal stimulus package that included a 1-trillion-naira ($2.78 billion) loan to the manufacturing sector, a 100-billion-naira ($277.78 million) loan to the health sector, and a 50-billion-naira ($138.89 million) credit facility to households and SMEs hit hardest by the pandemic. A one-year moratorium on CBN intervention facilities has been instituted, beginning March 1, and the interest rates for all CBN interventions have been lowered downwards from 9% to 5%. (KPMG, 2020; UNDP, 2021).

At least two-thirds of the country's firms that are still in operation had to shut down during the epidemic, indicating that disruption in operations was visible throughout organisations. Additionally, the findings provide insight into the opposition to government regulations and lockdown orders, especially in the informal sector, where one-third of businesses remained open throughout the epidemic (UNDP-NBS, 2021). Still, many companies probably could not handle the pandemic's first shock. Nearly one-third of the businesses surveyed said they knew of another business that was comparable to theirs but had to shut down permanently because of pandemic-related operational difficulties (UNDP-NBS, 2021).
Businesses all around the nation saw a decline in output, sales, and income, but to varied degrees. Sales were down by 44% on average compared to losses in 2019. In contrast to industries like transportation, mining and quarrying, utilities and agriculture were found to be less affected, and in some cases even saw increases, when compared to these sectors. Sales and revenues for 74% of the businesses continued to fall even after the pandemic's limitations on travel and containment measures were eventually relaxed.

In addition to having trouble paying fixed expenses like rent, many firms, especially informal ones, complained about having limited access to financing and capital. To keep their enterprises afloat, many entrepreneurs have had to dip into their own resources or tap into the generosity of friends and family. The findings further emphasised the need of making sure businesses in failing industries have access to affordable loans and credit, as well as targeted funding. However, only a tiny percentage of businesses showed improvement or resilience across all of the dimensions and components of company operations measured by the poll. For example, those who could easily adapt and transition to online sales performed better than those who could not take use of digital infrastructure. This shows how important it is to spend more in connecting different parts of the nation.

Increased government expenditure and tax cuts for companies were already part of the plan to boost aggregate demand in Nigeria (Ololo et al., 2020). In 2020, the national budget jumped from 8.83 trillion naira ($24.53 billion) to 10.59 trillion naira ($29.42 billion), or 11% of GDP. In the meantime, small businesses are no longer subject to company income tax, and the tax rate for medium-sized businesses has been reduced from 30% to 20% (Thompson, 2020). A fragile financial scenario has befallen Nigeria as a result of the interplay between COVID-19 and low oil prices. With oil prices low, economic activity stifled by the lockdown, and global macroeconomic conditions poor, Nigeria's economic predicament became worse, necessitating more responsible, fair, and efficient use of local resources. Additionally, greater foreign assistance may be possible than is already anticipated (Dixit et al., 2020; World Bank, 2021). As a result, most businesses found themselves in an even more precarious position after the outbreak in Nigeria.
5 MODELLING SOLUTION TO PRESENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES THROUGH INNOVATIVE VOCATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE NEW NORMAL ERA

It is well-established that cutting-edge professions and technologies play a significant part in resolving many issues. It may be anything from constructing a company to addressing societal issues; either way, it has the potential to impact businesses globally.

Using renewable energy sources is the solution to the country's electricity problems. Wind and solar power, among others, are becoming more affordable as governments throughout the world ramp up their deployment of these renewable energy sources. However, they are unable to produce energy when neither the sun nor the wind is present. However, there are nations that are making efforts to diversify their energy sources away from fossil fuels and coal (Ahuja & Tatsutani, 2009). When renewable generating criteria are high, the expense of deploying enough batteries to back up whole networks becomes prohibitive. One viable option is to construct more affordable and long-lasting grid-scale storage, such as flow batteries or salt tanks filled with molten salt.

With the help of smart classroom technology, the boundaries of the conventional classroom are crumbling, and new possibilities are appearing for both educators and their students. Many students, particularly those living in rural areas, have found that advances in cloud computing, video conferencing, and wireless technology have opened doors to classes, subjects, and instructors that would have been inaccessible to them before. In addition, those who are unable to attend traditional educational institutions now have the opportunity to take advantage of free online classes or even educate themselves using resources like YouTube and Wikipedia, all thanks to the proliferation of high-speed internet and improved network coverage. Training programmes that mimic real-life scenarios may provide crucial "hands-on" experience in fields like engineering and medical, where personnel may be replaced by robots, and virtual reality technology will play an important role in this regard (Optus Business, 2017).

M-Pesa a mobile money allowed millions of people to execute secure transactions in real time by providing greater access to resources, more free time, and security in earnings (de Soyres et al., 2018). This technology could be used in microfinance as a tool for social change. Further social change could be facilitated in the community by deliberate involvement of individuals in providing amenities and convincing other meaning individuals and in fact the whole community to invest in it. One of the newer organizations leveraging technology and enterprise to drive social change is Clean Water for Everyone (CFWE). CFWE was started by
entrepreneur Wemimo Abbey, who builds community based water sanitation and hygiene units. Now operating in 6 countries, they have found that by getting the community to invest in the project and pay for its costs, the station is able to improve the standard of living at a lower cost and achieve community buy-in for the improvement. CFWE is just one of example of the social business taking ahold of Africa as it accelerates its growth (Goel, 2021). It might seem as though these institutions only make a difference in the developing world but CDFI’s and innovative ways to give back have start creating a social shift in developed nations as well. For instance, organizations like Opportunity Finance Network and the onset of resources including free online education have sparked new opportunities for all demographics across a number of issues.

The first step towards a new path is for social organisations to reevaluate their beliefs, practices, and attitudes in light of the fact that we live in a world where the number of connections between people and ideas is growing at an exponential rate. Nonprofits and associated organisations should ditch the organization-centric paradigm in favour of the SCaaP model, which is focused on relationship scaling via the innovative use of modern technology.

Innovating one's profession is another potential solution to poverty. Take Transfertation as an example; they are a legally recognised nonprofit organisation. You may think of transfertation as "Uber for Food Rescue." The firm has shifted its focus from food production to logistics after realising that humanity now wastes more food than is needed to eradicate hunger. Through Transfertation, businesses that have extra food may be linked with volunteers who can distribute it, all while receiving real-time logistical support. The approach relies less on technology and more on the people involved, similar to MPesa or CFWE. But the actions of backers and the openness of the firms using these funds to solve an issue ultimately matter. With the aim of ensuring that everyone has enough food this Christmas season, Transfertation is launching a campaign to reach even more people, especially those who are most in need. Get behind the Transfertation project by clicking here! The answer to this issue is personal, but the possibilities are endless when the will to effect social change is coupled with technological capability (Goel, 2021). Technology can also help to reduce poverty by creating more jobs and allowing people to reach a wider market. Having access to the internet, combined with digital literacy, can open up more opportunities for more people to economically support themselves.

From smart lighting to pollution-free air conditioning and heating systems, smart cities and the Internet of Things (IoT) can make streets and buildings more efficient, which help with climate change. Water and power consumption may be measured and improved with the help of applications that are linked to sensors. A smart irrigation system was implemented to tackle
drought conditions and increase water conservation in Barcelona, while sensors were set up to monitor the city's noise, rain, and air quality. Current energy-related CO₂ emissions worldwide are 23% attributable to transportation. As technology improves for both charging and the efficiency of batteries, electric vehicles provide a potential answer to this problem. Burdekin (2017) notes that roadways equipped with sensors can track parking and traffic flows, which may help alleviate congestion and pollution.

With the digitization of healthcare facilities, the industry is moving away from paper records and towards more efficient electronic medical records (EMRs). This will enable clinicians to access records from any location, communicate with patients and colleagues online, and improve collaborative care (Keshta & Odeh, 2021). Globally, electronic medical records will improve treatment quality, save money for hospitals, and enhance the patient experience. The healthcare industry may benefit from blockchain technology's secure ledger in addressing security, scalability, and privacy concerns. Improvements in clinical trial accountability and openness, claim validation and payment, and avoidance of counterfeit drugs are all potential solutions. Internet of Things (IoT) wearables will collect health data from users, which may help diagnose health problems sooner and notify emergency services more promptly in the event of a problem.

From enhancing survivors' ability to communicate to assisting emergency services in gaining time and information, technological innovation is delivering new and more efficient methods to manage with catastrophe aftermath (Yoo, 2018). Emergency services can react more swiftly and efficiently with the use of mobile apps that provide vital information rapidly, and drones may deliver much-needed assistance packages to remote places. In order to sustain the world's expanding population, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation predicts that food production would have to increase by 70% from 2006 levels by 2050 (World Bank, 2013). Smart farming solutions, which include practical farming technologies like livestock monitoring, equipment testing, soil and weather measures, are becoming more popular among farmers and agricultural organisations. These solutions help with efficiency, productivity, and decision making in the daily job. Chronic hunger affects almost 800 million people, or 11% of the global population (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2020).

One way that IoT solutions can help end world hunger is by providing data-driven insights. For example, by connecting agricultural devices to the internet of things (IoT), we can learn more about crop health and potentially improve yield quality. Another way is by reducing food waste in the distribution ecosystem through the use of IoT monitoring devices. With an expected increase from 27 billion in 2017 to 125 billion in 2030, the number of IoT devices
will hit an all-time high, resulting in an IoT network with unparalleled coverage, according to business information source IHS Markit. Toesland (2018) argues that in order to make the most efficient use of limited food supply, it is important to provide real-time data on urgent food needs and waste.

Smart factories have the potential to improve organisational processes that contribute to society's progress. According to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2020) and Shrouf et al. (2014), smart factories are a kind of Industry 4.0 that employs intelligent production systems and processes in conjunction with appropriate engineering methods and tools to effectively establish distributed and interconnected production premises. Many procedures are fully automated in smart factories, and there is direct communication and cooperation between employees, machines, robots, logistic systems, and products. A high degree of automation and connection is seen by automotive smart factories. When new production needs arise, the integrated network of smart devices, robotics, machines, processes, and logistical systems can adapt quickly. Production processes are aided by data analytics and real-time information management, which lead to increased productivity, reduced manufacturing times, reduced failure rates, and reduced physical prototyping and testing expenses. Complex engineering procedures at all levels are necessary for the operation of these facilities. Several activities in a plant rely on the digital abilities of operators. These include tele-operated motion processes (such as using collaborative robots, autonomous guided vehicles, or drones), virtual reality (VR) testing of supplier components and packaging, and augmented reality (AR) troubleshooting. To fully use IoT applications, conduct real-time analytics for edge computing, or run inventory-based self-triggered order placing systems, smart factory employees also need excellent analytical and AI skills.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a country, Nigeria has a wide range of challenges, including but not limited to: infrastructure, the economy, climate change, terrorism, and abduction. But new professions and technologies could fix most of these issues. Therefore, it is advised that:

To address these problems, the country has to foster creativity and technological advancement across all levels of government and non-profits. This may be accomplished by incorporating innovation into all aspects of an organization's operations, from top-down planning and priorities to bottom-up execution; by providing funding to relevant government bodies; and by formulating policies for businesses at the time of registration. Every department,
class, and extracurricular activity should strive to foster innovation. Planning, funding, human resource management, knowledge management, internal assessment and monitoring processes, internal communication, and facilities management are all essential to this endeavour since they provide ongoing support for innovation. An important illustration of this aspect is the designation of dedicated personnel to oversee innovation and the incorporation of novel organisational structures, all in accordance with a clear innovation mandate. This method permeates an organisation from top to bottom, fostering an environment where new ideas and projects may grow and eventually become standard practice. Consequently, there are a number of additional tasks that need to be completed, such as providing facilities and training for business incubators and start-up services, developing consultancy services, registering patents, and bridging the gap between basic research in academia and the commercialization of products.

Teaching methods, both pedagogical and didactic, require improvement if institutions are to retain students' interest in learning in the digital era and equip them with skills that are relevant to the job market. To accomplish this, educational institutions can maintain relevance in the innovation ecosystem by keeping up with methodological developments in pedagogy and assessment, such as the widespread use of competency-based approaches to the assessment of vocational skills and the incorporation of digital technology into the classroom. Once these obstacles are overcome, institutions worldwide will be able to take advantage of existing programmes like: VR/AR and the use of tablets, laptops, and smart boards; apprenticeship programmes and on-the-job training; learning based on problems, challenges, and projects; flipped classrooms and flexible pathways; audio and video tools; and simulators, gamification, and online platforms.

Jobs should be restructured and digital and more sustainable business models should be adopted. This can be achieved through innovative research and development, which will help bridge the innovation gap. Businesses can then innovate and adapt their products and services to anticipate the demands of society, the economy, and individuals. This can be done by monitoring the labour market and society for emerging needs and opportunities. In order to boost the ecosystem's innovation potential, businesses need to quickly transform these demands into useful organisational practices, training, goods, and services.

Developing digital skills should be an essential aspect of working in government. Along with developing skills relevant to individual occupations, there should be an effort to promote the use of electronic devices, complicated equipment, and robotics in order to address both workplace and social issues.
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Tackling Present and Future Nigerian Challenges Through Innovativeness in A New Normal Era


