

MANAGEMENT OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR YOUTH'S EMPLOYABILITY IN PORT HARCOURT CITY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The impact of technical and vocational education in making the youths skillful and employable cannot be over emphasized. This is the reason why the researcher used descriptive research design to assess the extent to which technical and vocational education curriculum is being managed to put the youths in the employment market. The population is comprised of all Senior Technical and vocational students in Senior Secondary 3 who are at the verge of leaving the school. They are two hundred and thirty five (235). With a simple random sampling technique, a sample of 117 was used as the target respondents. A questionnaire titled "Management of Technical and Vocational Education Curriculum for Youth Employability" (MTVECYE) in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The instrument was validated by two experts from measurement and Evaluation, Educational Foundations Department and one from the Educational Management Department, Federal University Dutsin-Ma, with a reliability index of 0.07. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings show that though, so much has been done on technical and vocational education curriculum, no much impact has been felt on skills and employability of the youths. The research concluded that more efforts should be made on the skill acquisition as its importance on the employment of the youths is very paramount. The researcher therefore recommended amongst others, that the government should equip the technical and vocational schools more with both material and human resources.

Keywords: Management, technical and vocational education, curriculum, employability.

Introduction

Education is a *sine qua non* to the development of any nation, Nigeria inclusive. This is why it is imperative for attention to be paid properly on education. It is also said that "if you educate one child, especially a girl child, you have educated the nation". It is also said that "if you want to destroy a nation, you need no arm or missals, but destroy the educational system of such a nation, the nation is gone". This is why the researcher decided to assess how the

technical and vocational education in the nation is been managed to encourage skill acquisition for youths employability and nation building.

Education is a series of process through which individuals acquire knowledge, attitude and other skills to create positive values in the society where he or she lives, Fafunwa (2004). One of the broad goals of secondary education is to preparation the child for useful living in the society, National on Education Policy (FRN 2014).

Technical and Vocational Education have been regarded as the bedrock for sustainable technological development programmes in entrepreneurship, occupational professionalism, self-reliance, poverty alleviation, wealth creation and others, Nwachukwu (2014). Consequently, Technical and Vocational Education focuses on specific trade that prepares an individual to be self-reliant and suitable for employment, Clarke, (2007). Oyeboode, Oladipo,&Adetoro (2012) posit that Technical and Vocational Education focuses on specific trades such as automobile repairs, welding and fabrication, plumbing and pipefitting, electrical craftsmanship, hair dressing, tailoring, barbing amongst others.

Anaele, Adelakun, Dem-Isaiah and Barfa, (2014) posited that Technical and Vocational Education is a type of education that provides trainees with relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes that is necessary for employment. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO (2012) in Nwachukwu (2014) defined Technical and Vocational Education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational processes including, general education, the study of technology and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. In this context, Technical and Vocational Education could be defined as that type of education that is systematically organized to train individuals to be practically oriented for paid or self-employment.

In recognition of these facts, it is worth noting that the technological progress of any nation is dependent largely on the technical and vocational facilities and human experiences acquired and follow up. Umunadi (2013) in his part defined technical and vocational education as education for work. He stated further that it prepares individuals to be gainfully employed. TVE system cannot be separated from the world of work, as its main goal is to develop occupational competence and enable its graduates to meet the requirement of their future work places. According to Dokubo and Dokubo (2013) TVE system prepares individuals for acquisition of skills and job position in the different skilled areas.

Yusuf and Soyemi (2012) Posited that technical and vocational education is meant to equip people with the technical and professional skills needed for industrial development as well as social progress of any country. They continued by stating that TVE is a driving force of human capital development and a catalyst to sustainable livelihood and economy for developing nations such as Nigeria. This is the more reason why the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN 2014) in its National Policy on Education accepted and included technical and vocational education as part of her educational curriculum in Nigerian schools. It went further to state the philosophical objectives of technical and vocational education as:

- a. Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly in the areas of craft, advanced craft and technical levels;

- b. Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and
- c. Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals for self - reliance economically.

The management and implementation of technical and vocational education (TVE) is vested on the school managers and teachers. They are individuals who are trained in the relevant institutions on how to teach technical and vocational subjects and relevant skills to students or learners. These teachers are trained in some of the institutions like the Federal Colleges of Education (Technical), Polytechnics, State and Federal. The establishment of technical and vocational teacher training institution in Nigeria hinges on the need for adequate and effective TVE teachers and manpower in the educational sector.

Skills that make one employable have become a global concept even though they come with different names as generic skills, employability skills, key skills, core skills etc. However, they basically share the same core notion which is the ability that tends to lead more to non-technical skills (Bridgstock, 2009). The application of employability skills is to ensure that someone gets the opportunity to get employable skills, job maintenance and work efficiency needed (Sermsuk, Triwichitkhun, & Wongwanich, 2014). The impact could be an economic downturn for a country (Orumolu, Agbede 2012). These problems can be an emergency and occur if someone is unable to get a job. Later, it will be a contributor to economic decline for a country because the effect is caused by lack of employable skills.

Many organizations desire graduates who are technically competent and equipped with relevant employable skills Pitan, (2016). Employable skills are work skills that refer to general or non-technical competencies including achievement, understanding and personal attributes that make an individual able to get a job and become successful in his chosen job (Ju, Zhang, & Pacha, 2012; Mello 2017). In a simple term, Employability skills mean those skills that can be transferred as well as the ability to increase efficiency in work (Oforma, 2015). Employability skills are also a guide on how to get jobs done according to their professional field qualifications, thereby increasing the attractiveness of being recruited by companies (Cavanagh 2015). Therefore, workers can survive in their jobs and reach a top career in their field choice career.

Technical and Vocational Education had existed in Nigeria before even the advent of the white man. Fafunwa (2004) posits that many communities and cultures had developed their own system of informal, formal and vocational system of education. He continued by stating that vocational education was done through the system of apprenticeship, whereby young boys and men were attached to master craftsmen where they learned various trades and skills such as carpentry, masonry, blacksmith, foundry, carving, textile design and dyeing. Such apprentices could spend from three to seven years depending on the trades they were specializing in, the master's skill, competence and exposure, and the individual apprentice ability and performance as exhibited and transferred to the apprentice. At the end of such training, the graduate apprentice was assisted by the family to acquire necessary tools, and local equipment to start his or her own trade. He would recruit other apprentices to work within his new set-up (Onibausi, 2021).

Looking at the vocational and technical education in Nigeria, it will be reflected on how education curriculum was subjected to social and political influences aimed at achieving any political or social aim of the government of the time (UNESCO, 2008). The advent of British government in Nigeria during the colonial missionaries, trades, and administrators etc, curricula were used and fine-tuned towards achieving the vested interest of colonial masters. After Independence in 1960, it became clear that colonial system of Education was no longer suitable for the people of Nigeria as it has failed to produce the type of manpower necessary for development of the society. The expected sustainable youth empowerment was not achieved through the colonial curricula of education. This prompted the introduction of several education policies, which the 6334 system was one.

The New National Policy on Education was on 6334 system of education. This system was designed to prepare individuals for useful living within the society (FRN 2014). The choice of any vocational and technical education curriculum model is based on the roles that technical colleges or institutions are expected to play in the society. This means that curriculum must be relevant to societal needs as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN 2014) in its national objectives. The Federal Government in realization for better society and good living for the citizenry decided to implement this kind of new education policy in order to achieve sustainable youth development and empowerment for the nation as a whole to foster a change.

Nwachukwu (2014) stated that there are certain factors crucial for functional technical and vocational education curriculum implementation. The factors he enumerated and explained as follows:

1. The vocational and technical education curriculum must be humanized. The curriculum for vocational and technical education in Nigeria should not be something foreign to technical college students, and should not be chosen just because it is traditional. The technical and vocational education curriculum must speak of today, of real-life problems facing the communities and society at large and the process of living in its entire ramification. Nwachukwu (2014) explained that humanizing today's vocational and technical Education means making the curriculum responsive to the present situation of Nigeria.

Materials chosen in this technical and vocational education curriculum to be taught and utilized for learning should be derived from the need and environmental requirements of Nigeria for sustainable youth empowerment in the nation.

2. Trainees must be ready to receive what is taught. The ability of the trainees to learn depends on the students' readiness. In any teaching-learning situation, there is a period when effective learning takes place. This learning period varies among individuals even when they are exposed to the same learning environment and many factors are known to influence the readiness to learn among students. The factors include age, family background, nutritional status, fatigue or lack of it. Others are belief and attitudes of learners.

3. The learning experiences must provide the development of the ability to think. In technical and vocational education, thinking is the process of realizing and finding solutions to problems. It has been defined as all those cognitive actions taken by an individual in advance

of an action as a preliminary to deciding among alternative thinking. According to Okolo (2014), it characterized the whole process of solving a problem, which is very essential for handling problem-solving situation or for carrying out tasks in vocational and technical education situations.

4. The technical and vocational education curriculum must be based on contain experiences intrinsic to the life of the learner. There are stages in technical and vocational education when students pass through the pre-vocational to the vocational concepts and characteristics, they develop new ideas, shape their values and can by so doing, solve their individual problems. These students can constantly undergo the process of exploring and testing out ways of getting to where they want to. In this manner, these students will learn, and this learning process requires direct thinking. These students can in this process discover new materials relevant to the solution of their problems. Such materials must be intrinsic to them because they discovered the materials themselves and found it useful for solving their immediate problems. These intrinsic materials will remain internalized in the students because they have fixed the knowledge into the repertoire of their abilities and understanding.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of vocational and technical education in Nation building cannot be over-emphasized. This is a programme enshrined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), that lay emphases on the psychomotor as well as skill acquisition of the child. In this regard, making the child useful to him/herself and to the society at large. This lofty idea has been met with some problems which has almost hindered its implementation. Some of these challenges include the inadequate implementation of the curriculum, inadequate or obsolete facilities. Most times, if the facilities are there the teachers or facilitators may not be there or may be inadequate or may not have the technical know how.

Most of the technical and vocational schools are ill equipped in both the laboratories and workshops. So teaching and learning becomes difficult as such schools do well with visible materials and facilities. Some other envisaged problems include lack of collaborations with the tertiary institutions, unstable school calendar, creating lack of continuity or destabilization of programmes lead to students not having proper and adequate training.

Other factors include staff shortage or available incompetent staff in the schools to take charge of the necessary equipment and facilities if available. Hence the researcher looks at the management of technical and vocational education curriculum for youths' employability in Port Harcourt City Council.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess if the management of technical and vocational education curriculum is portraying its impact on youths' employability in Port Harcourt City Council in Rivers State, Nigeria. Other purposes included:

1. To examine if the purpose for which Technical and Vocational Education establishment has been achieved as it concerns the youths);
2. To identify if there are indications to show the impact of technical and vocational education on youths' employments;

3. To Evaluate if the influence of the training acquired from technical and vocational education has any effect on the employability of the youths; and
4. To assess the factors militating against the adequate implementation of Technical and Vocational Education curriculum on youth employment.

Methodology

The descriptive research design is adopted in the study to assess the extent to which technical and vocational education curriculum is being managed to put the youths in the employment market. The population comprised all Senior Secondary Technical and vocational students in Senior Secondary 3 who are at the verge of leaving the school. They are two hundred and thirty five (235). With a simple random sampling technique, a sample of 117 was used as the target respondents. A questionnaire titled “Management of Technical and Vocational Education Curriculum for Youth Employability” (MTVECYE) in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The instrument was validated by two experts from Measurement and Evaluation in Educational Foundations and one from the Department of Educational Management, Federal University Dutsin-Ma, with a reliability index of 0.07. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Research Question

The following research questions were formulated to elicit information from the respondents:

1. To what extent does the purpose for which technical and vocational education curriculum served in the employability of the youths?
2. What are the indications that technical and vocational education curriculum has impacted on the youths’ employment?
3. To what extent does the training acquired from technical and vocational education influenced the employability of the youths?
4. To what extent was the implementation of Technical and Vocational Education curriculum affected by some factors?

Data analysis

RQ1: To what extent does the purpose for which technical and vocational education curriculum served on the employability of the youths?

Table1: Showing the responses of the respondents on the purpose for which technical and vocational education served on the employability of the youths **(117)**

Accepted Mean Value = 2.50

S/N	STATEMENT ITEMS	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	MEAN
1.	The technical and vocational education is a programme for the training of the youth.	85	20	10	2	3.30
2.	The technical and vocational education is programmes for creation of employment and for the youths.	95	10	8	6	3.50
3.	The technical and vocational education is aimed at equipping the child for future healthy living in the society	78	25	12	2	3.15
4.	Technical and vocational education is aimed making the child a master of his/her profession.	89	23	5	0	3.05
5.		66	41	6	1	2.85

Technical and vocational education is aimed at making the child communicative as well as creating in him/her job the relationship.

Grand Average Mean Value = 3.17

From table 1 above the respondents posit that the purpose for which technical and vocational education is introduced into the school curriculum was to position the child for self or public service or employment after school. This is seen as the grand average mean is 3.17, higher than the accepted mean of 2.50. This is also in line with one of the broad goals of secondary education which is to preparation the child for useful living in the society, National on Education Policy (FRN 2014). It is also in line with Nwachukwu (2014) who posits that technical and vocational education have been regarded as the bedrock for sustainable technological development programmes in entrepreneurship, occupational professionalism, self-reliance, poverty alleviation, wealth creation and others.

RQ2: What are the indications that technical and vocational education curriculum has impacted on the youths' employment?

Table 2: Shows the level of responses by the respondents indicating the impact technical and vocational

Average Mean = 2.50

S/N	Statement Item	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	Mean
6.	As a child who just left the school, I have all the skills to be employed.	78	35	3	1	3.45
7.	Some of the technical and vocational education graduates show off the skill	56	48	10	3	2.95
8	quality in their self or public employment.	6	8	48	55	1.83
9.	Most of the technical and vocational graduates show adequate	55	35	20	7	2.88
10	communications and manipulative skills.	53	38	18	8	3.07
	Analytical skills were also shown by Some graduates of technical and vocational education.					
	Most of the graduates show adequate competent skill on research work and practical's					

Grand Average Mean = 2.84

Table 2 above shows that most of the respondents agree with some of the statement items based on the grand average mean of 2.84 which is higher than the average mean of 2.50, indicating that technical and vocational has made some impact on the graduates. Though, one of the statement items (8) was disagreed upon as seen on the table. In line with the above, (Sermasuk, Triwichitkhun, &Wongwanich, 2014) posit that the application of employability skills is to ensure that someone gets the opportunity to get employable skills, job maintenance and work efficiency needed. The impact could be an economic downturn for a country

(Olorumolu and Agbede 2012). Many organizations desire graduates who are technically competent and equipped with relevant employable skills Pitan, (2016).

RQ3: To what extent does the training acquired from technical and vocational education influenced the employability of the youths?

Table 3: Showing if the training acquired from technical and vocational education influences the employability of the youths.

Average Mean = 2.50

S/N	Statement Item	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	Mean
1.	Technical and vocational education has equipped the school graduates with knowledge	60	38	14	5	3.15
2.	and skills for work.	55	40	8	4	2.72
3.	It has developed individuals who are capable of meeting the modern technological challenges.	51	36	21	9	2.55
4.	It has developed many competent and reliable technical manpower capable who may be able to handle some of the technological problems of the nation.	65	31	18	3	3.05
5.	It has developed some youths with the right attitudes, skills and aptitudes towards job employment.	5	10	48	54	1.87
	It has prepared youths to meet up the societal needs in technological skills.					

Grand Average Mean = 2.67

As seen from table 1 above, it is observed that technical and vocational education has impacted so much on the youths, employment, and for human development. This is attested because the grand average mean of 2.67 is greater than the average mean of 2.50. Though, the last statement item was disagreed entirely with an average mean of 1.87 lesser than the agreed mean of 2.50. This in line with Dokubo and Dokubo (2013) who posit that technical and vocational education prepares individuals for acquisition of skills and job position in the different skilled areas. Yusuf and Soyemi (2012) Posited that technical and vocational education is meant to equip people with the technical and professional skills needed for industrial development as well as social progress of any country.

RQ4: To what extent was the implementation of Technical and Vocational Education curriculum affected by some factors?

Table 4: Shows the extent to which some factors militated against the adequate implementation of Technical and Vocational Education curriculum.

Average Mean =2.50

S/N	Statement Items	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	Mean
1.	A lot of guidance and counseling is carried out on the importance of technical and vocational education in schools.	11	25	36	45	2.15
2.	The technical and vocational education is financed adequately.	8	10	31	68	1.03
3.	There is adequate provision of both human and material resources in technical and vocational schools.	17	21	33	46	2.05
4.	Change in government policies on technical and vocational affects its smooth running.	63	31	16	7	3.35
5.	There is poor teachers and students motivation in technical and vocational schools	71	29	11	6	3.48

Grand Average Mean = 2.41.

From table 4 above, it is posited that there are many factors militating against the adequate implementation of technical and vocational education curriculum. This could also be deduced as the grand average mean of 2.41 is lesser than the accepted mean of 2.50. In line with the National Policy on Education (FRN 2014), functional vocational and technical education curriculum for sustainable youth empowerment in Nigeria is clearly stipulated that equipment and other facilities in technical institutions will be utilized also for evening classes and for adult and non-formal education, more importantly in establishing training programmes for groups of traders and roadside mechanics. In this way, maximum use would be made of this equipment in normal day classes to realize the goal for which it is set.

Okolo (2013) stated that the facilities, which include the buildings, equipment, tools and technical college materials available, are inadequate for effective use and implementation of vocational and technical education curriculum in technical colleges. He continued by stating that the state of inadequate equipment and facilities for teaching and effective implementation of vocational and technical curriculum in technical colleges has been a source of concern to various people and government at various times.

Discussion of findings

Technical and vocational education is very important to any nation that needs rapid growth and development, especially in the area of the youth empowerment and development. This study carried out therefore to examine the management of technical and vocational education curriculum for youth's employability in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. It has been discovered that the adequate implementation of the technical and vocational education curriculum of a nation is the panacea for its youths' growth and development in particular and the nation in general.

The study shows that so many factors militate against the management of the curriculum implementation. UNESCO and Oil (2006) in the same view, expressed that there is so much shortage of manpower and useful resources to enable the youths' employability. They

continued by saying that the aspect of employability skills in Nigeria are missing in the curriculum (Ali 2012). Cavanagh and Burstone (2015) also stated that the curriculum of technical and vocational is poorly managed and implemented in schools.

From the study, many of the respondents agreed that technical and vocational education has proved ineffective in the development of the nation. They also posit that inadequate finance by the government, inadequate provision of both human and material resources, and motivation to teachers and students are some of the factors hindering proper implementation of the technical and vocational in Nigeria. In view of this, it is observed that this has led to the shortage of competent manpower in most industries and other places where they are needed. The study also reveals that the neglect of this sector has hampered the pace of economic development in the nation. The respondents laid emphasis on empowering the youths' right from secondary school level with employability and entrepreneurial skills, preparing them for the world of work by enabling them to secure paid employment or become self-reliant.

Conclusion

The conclusion is drawn based on the findings of the study. The findings reveals that though, there are subjects taught in technical and vocational schools, the curriculum is not adequately covered as to give the graduates enough skills to make employable. This impediment as posited by the respondents was attributed to some factors which militated against the curriculum coverage. These factors ranges from the inability of government to provide the necessary equipment and facilities, inadequate human and material resources, lack of skill acquisition awareness, lack of motivation in students to promote that they can be self-employed and contribute meaningfully to national development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations are made:

1. The government should employ adequate staff (academic and none academic) to mind the curriculum and laboratories;
2. There should be adequate provision of equipment and other facilities;
3. Teaching and other practical lessons should be monitored for guidance and direction;
4. Equipment and other facilities should maintained for sustainability and effectiveness;
5. This unit of education should be properly funded; and
6. The mind-set of the political leaders over education generally should be made to change generally.

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