
FUNCTIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ENUGU STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIETAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The paper examined the extent of acquisition of functional/self reliant skills by beneficiaries of secondary education in Enugu State. The study was a descriptive survey type using teachers and principals as respondents. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The research question was answered using mean and grand mean, while the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at .05 level of significance. Results of data analysis indicate a little extent of acquisition of functional/self reliance skills by beneficiaries of secondary education in Enugu State. Some recommendations including better funding and provision of equipment for functional/self reliance skills training in secondary schools in Enugu State amongst others were put forward.

At all times and seasons all through history, growth and development are desirable variables. Both individuals and societies continuously strive towards better living standards. This comes in the forms of better food supply for the family, improved medicare, shelter and clothing etc. Education, functional education has been known to remain the surest source of the good life for both individuals, societies and nations.

Education is the process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools and colleges. This process develops both knowledge and skills in the individual and makes him a responsible and contributing member of society. Obunadike (2013) affirms that education is the transmission of what is desirable to individuals to make them

knowledgeable and contributing members of the society. Education is the sum total of all the processes through which an individual develops abilities, attitudes, values, norms and other behavioural patterns which are of positive value to the society. Ajaegbo (2000) asserts that education includes all the right attitudes, values, habits, norms, abilities, skills and competencies all of which help to make the individual a good functional and useful citizen and prepares him to play an effective role in the growth and development of his society.

Education is the bedrock of all development and that is why governments the world over try to pay serious attention to it. In the words of Fadipe (1998), education remains the only key that unlocks the development of personal and national potentials and to all kinds of rights and powers, political, religious and social. It is in realization of the prime place of education that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) maintains that education is an instrument for effecting national development.

The future of every society lies in the quality of education given to its citizenry because education is an investment in human productive capacity. It provides beneficiaries with basic and specific skills that are indispensable in the production and distribution of goods and services required by the economy (Madumere-Obike and Uchechi, in Obunadike, 2013). It is therefore clear that the quality of education an individual receives determines the extent of his usefulness to the society. The essence of functional education therefore becomes not just indispensable, but imperative.

For the purpose of the present study, functional education is education that is not only qualitative, but also achieves the purposes for which it is meant to achieve. Functional education is both practical and useful. It provides the beneficiaries with all round empowerment, ensuring that they are very useful and contributing members of society. Functional education trains and provides the society with job creators who are skilled and not job seekers. This is all the difference between the education systems of the developed world (USA, Britain, Japan, Germany, South Korea, China, Malaysia etc) and developing cum underdeveloped world (Nigeria, and other African countries except probably South Africa).

According to FRN (2004:18-19), Secondary education is that which children receive after primary education, and before tertiary education. it prepares the beneficiaries for useful living within the society and for higher education. Specifically, secondary education shall:-

- a. provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- b. offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles;

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- c. provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- d. develop and promote Nigerian language, art and culture in the context of the world's cultural heritage;
- e. inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;
- f. foster National unity with emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity;
- g. raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens;
- h. provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

It is clear that any educational system that achieves the above stated objectives is not only qualitative but functional. This is more so when the present 9:3:4 system envisages that graduates of junior and senior secondary education must be proficient in certain skills that make them not just self reliant, but job-creators and contributing members of society.

In Enugu State, the extent to which the relevant equipment for skills development in different trades, vocations and entrepreneurship in the students are present in the various secondary schools is uncertain. This forms the problem of the present study.

Statement of the Problem

The large army of unemployed school leavers in Enugu State and elsewhere is a worrying scenario amongst stakeholders both in Education and the larger economy. Unemployment of course, engenders poverty which is a hydra headed monster and anti-development. The extent to which secondary education in Enugu State offers its beneficiaries functional and self reliant skills is uncertain. This forms the problem of the present study.

Research Question 1

The following research question guided the study; To what extent do secondary school students in Enugu State acquire functional cum self reliant skills?

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument; Extent of benefitting from functional skills questionnaire (EBFSQ) which was developed by the researchers was the instrument used in eliciting responses from the respondents.

Population for the Study

The population for the study comprised all the 8909 teachers in secondary schools in Enugu State and all the 286 principals. This makes a total of 9195 respondents (Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) Enugu). The population for the study was therefore 9195, teachers and principals.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw 5% of the teachers spread all over the six education zones of the state. This makes a total of 445 teachers sampled for the study. The population of principals (ie 286) was manageable. Therefore no sampling was carried out. Uzoagulu (1998) maintains that 5% sample for populations of 10,000 and above 5,000 is acceptable in any research effort.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was trial tested in Ebonyi State using 20 teachers and 20 principals. Cronbach Alpha was used to calculate the reliability coefficient. Alpha value was found to be .69 indicating high reliability of the instrument for the study.

Validation of the Instrument

The face validation of the instrument was done by three experts. Two of the experts are in educational management, while the remaining is in measurement and evaluation. All the experts are from the faculty of education, ESUT, Agbani, Enugu.

Method of Data Analysis

The research question was answered using mean and grand mean ratings, while the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistic at .05 level of significance. A four point scale of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Little Extent (LE) and Very Little Extent (VLE) were used to design the instrument. The four point scale were assigned values thus: VGE, 4 points; GE, 3 points, LE, 2 points and VLE, 1 point. Mean ratings of 2.50 and above were regarded as Great Extent, while values of less than 2.50 were regarded as Little Extent.

$$4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = \frac{10}{4}$$

=2.50Average

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Table 1: Mean Ratings, Grandmean And Standard Deviation Of Respondents On The Extent Of Acquisition Of Foundational Aim Of Self Reliant Skills From Secondary Education In Enugu State.

S/ N	ITEMS	N = 406 Teachers							N = 263 Principals						
		VG E4	G E3	LE 2	V LE 1	\bar{X}	SD	Deci	VG E4	G E3	LE 2	V LE 1	\bar{X}	SD	Deci
	The extent to which secondary school students in Enugu State acquire functional cum self reliant skills in the following areas:														
1	Foundry	21	40	108	237	1.61	0.86	L E	12	28	34	189	1.48	0.86	LE
2	Automechanics	46	52	95	213	1.83	1.04	L E	15	31	50	167	1.60	0.91	LE
3	Electrical maintenance/installation	29	64	101	212	1.78	0.96	L E	20	36	48	159	1.68	0.97	LE
4	Refrigeration/air-conditioning	66	78	123	139	2.17	1.08	L E	10	29	41	183	1.49	0.84	LE
5	Computer application	18	60	126	202	1.74	0.87	L E	09	24	42	188	1.44	0.80	LE
6	Computer software development	-	11	89	306	1.27	0.50	L E	18	29	45	171	1.60	0.94	LE
7	Computer hardware maintenance/development	24	41	60	281	1.53	0.90	L E	-	17	31	215	1.25	0.56	LE
8	Woodwork/carpentry	33	47	55	271	1.61	0.98	L E	28	42	71	122	1.91	1.02	LE
9	Business entrepreneurship	184	118	59	45	3.09	1.02	G E	91	78	64	30	2.87	1.02	GE
10	Furniture/upholstery	68	81	101	156	2.15	1.11	L E	16	30	47	170	1.59	0.92	LE
11	Building construction	55	69	117	165	2.03	1.06	L E	26	37	43	157	1.74	1.03	LE
	Grand \bar{X} and SD					1.89	0.94	L E					1.70	0.90	LE

In the table 1 above, the grand-means of 1.89 and 1.70 for both teachers and principals indicate a little extent of acquisition of functional cum self reliant skills by students in secondary schools in Enugu State. Further a probe of the table reveals that both groups of respondents share similar sentiments on the extent of acquisition of functional cum self reliant skills by beneficiaries of secondary education in Enugu State. It was little extent (LE) in all the items except item 9, which indicated great extent.

Table 2: T-Test of Significant Difference between The Mean Ratings Of Reliant Skills From Secondary Schools In Enugu State

RESPONDENTS	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Teachers	409	1.89	0.94				Reject
				667	2.68	1.96	
Principals	263	1.70	0.90				

The result in table 2 indicates that the calculated t value (t-cal) which is 2.68 is greater than the t-critical of 1.96 at .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there was significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent of acquisition of functional cum self reliant skills by beneficiaries of secondary education in Enugu State.

The findings of the present study revealed a little extent of acquisition of functional/self reliant skills by the beneficiaries. This indeed is a bad situation as any educational system without an inbuilt capacity to offer functional/self reliant skills to the beneficiaries cannot be said to be development oriented. In highlighting the essence of functional education, Madumere-Obike and Uchechi quoted in Obunadike (2013), described education as the bedrock of all development and that is why governments all over the world try to pay serious attention to it. Continuing, they maintained that a nation that denies her offsprings access to qualitative, functional education invariably denies herself of progressive development. The future of every nation lies on the education given to her citizens. It is an investment in human productive capacity. It provides beneficiaries with basic and specific skills that are indispensable in the production and distribution of goods and services required by the economy.

Ajaegbo (2000) and Fadipe (1998) agree that education not only unlocks the development of personal and national potentials, but develops the abilities, skills and competencies that help an individual to become a good, functional, useful and contributing member of society.

From the foregoing, it is clear that it is only functional education which exposes the beneficiaries to functional/self reliant skills that can transform both individuals and societies. It is only this education that can help Enugu State and elsewhere produce self reliant individuals and job providers and not job seekers from its secondary schools system, thereby effectively solving her developmental needs/challenges including the scourge of unemployment.

Implications

It is clear that as long as the secondary school system in Enugu State continues to offer its beneficiaries largely non functional education, the developmental drift of the society will continue. It is also clear that such social ills like unemployment which is a

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time bomb will continue to grow, thereby proving a daunting challenge for the growth and development of the society. It is only functional education that can enhance the living standards of both individuals and the society as a whole, thereby ensuring societal growth and development.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the extent of acquisition of functional/self reliant skills by beneficiaries of secondary education in Enugu State. Both teachers and secondary school principals responded to the EBFSQ questionnaire. Results of data analysis revealed a little extent of acquisition of functional/self reliant skills by beneficiaries of secondary education in Enugu State. This is no good news as only functional education which offers its beneficiaries functional/self reliant skills can engender growth and development.

Recommendations

Following the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. The various governments in Enugu State (Local and State) including non governmental organizations, private individuals, the church and indeed all stakeholders in education should join hands in adequately funding education.
2. The Federal Revenue allocation formular should be reviewed in favour of the states to make more money available for the education sector in the various states of the Federation including Enugu. Adequate funding and better management of available funds will ensure not only a better learning environment for beneficiaries of secondary education, but provision of skills based equipment for functional training. Such equipment include:- Computers, materials for electrical/electronic training, furniture and woodwork, building construction, auto mechanics etc.
3. Teacher education curriculum should be reviewed to ensure and enhance the capacity of the teacher to deliver, especially on the aforementioned technical cum vocational subject areas, in the area of skills development.
4. Constant seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for secondary school teachers to continuously keep them updated especially in the area of skill based teaching and learning.

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