

APPRAISAL OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL STUDIES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

The study appraised the Extent of Youth Empowerment through technical and vocational studies in Tertiary institutions in Enugu State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Literature was extensively reviewed. The area of study was carried out in Enugu Educational Zone of Enugu State. Enugu State has six Education zones. The population for the study was 2473 respondents comprised of 704 academic staff and 1733 non – academic staff. The researcher used proportionate stratified random sampling technique to sample a total of 243 respondents representing 10% of the total population. The instrument for data collection was a self constructed questionnaire with 20 items on the whole. Research questions were answered using mean statistics while the hypotheses were equally tested using t- test statistics. The result of data analysis revealed that to a low extent youths are empowered with technical and vocational skills among others. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Technical and Vocational Courses should be introduced as general studies in every Tertiary Institutions to enable students get basic skills for self reliant after graduation.

Key words: Youth, Empowerment, Technical and Vocational Skill.

Technical and Vocational education is used as a comprehensive term in the educational process involving, in addition to general education. The study of technologies and related sciences and acquisitions of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life [FGN 2004]. Okoro (2013) defines Vocational education as a form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations. In the same vein, he defines technical education as a post secondary vocational training programme which the major purpose is the production of technicians.

The term technical education and vocational education are often used interchangeably but they are separated and distinct terms. For the purpose of this paper, there is need to do some clarifications. Vocational education refers to skill based programmes which are designed for skill acquisition at lower level of education (Obi 2014). Technical education on the other hand is not designed for any particular vocation but provides general technical knowledge. This type of education prepares people for entry into recognized occupation at a higher level but usually lower than the first degree. Obi (2014) noted that technical and vocational education

Academic Scholarship

is usually a merger of technical and scientific knowledge with the skill based vocational programmes.

According to Uwaifo (2009), technical education is the training of technically oriented personnel, who are to be the initiator, facilitators and implementers of technologically development of a nation. In his own opinion, this training of its citizens on the need to be technologically literate would eventually lead to self reliance and sustainability. He observed that technical education more than any other profession has direct impact on the development of the Country. Again, technical education contributes so much ranging from electrical and electronic technology, metal work technology, mechanical / automobile technology, building technology, wood work technology, etc. technical education is practical oriented education which makes it unique in its content and approach, thereby demanding special attention.

Unfortunately, despite all the glaring contributions of technical and vocational education in our nation, Nigeria is yet to accord this type of education the attention it deserves. This is one of the major reasons for the rising unemployment, poverty, and unabated crimes in the society today (Oranu 2010). Vocational and technical education is designed to offer people the opportunity of improving themselves in their general proficiency, especially in relation to their present or future occupation. Nuru (2007) opined, that changes in any nation's economy is required to prepare young people for the jobs of the future of which technical and vocational education, have crucial roles to play. May (2017) observed that, technical and vocational education are very much still neglected in the aspect of adequate funding, personnel, modern facilities, staff motivation, which consequently are robbing the country of the economic development to be contributed by graduates of technical and vocational education.

Asogwa and Diogu (2007) maintained that there is an urgent need for Nigeria's attention to be redirected towards self reliant and sustainable means of livelihood which technical education provides.

Most analysts agree that employer of labour today demand more skills than they did in the past. Yang (2008) observed that there are many factors that have contributed to the ever rising demand for skills in the labour market, which include the following; technological and organizational change, trade, deregulations of the key industries and the decline of unions. A critical challenge that faces Nigeria is the development of a competent workforce and sustained economic growth in the global economy. Human resource development, through planned education and training initiatives can contribute significantly to promoting the interest of individuals, enterprises, economy and society within the nation (Egwu 2009). By helping individual gain access to decent work and sustainable jobs, as well as to escape from poverty and marginalization, technical and vocational education can impact positively on the economy by ensuring full employment opportunity and promoting social inclusion, enhance competitiveness, and promote entrepreneurial activity, (Obi 2014). Primary objective of all, technical and vocational education programme is to ensure acquisition of relevant knowledge, practical skills and attitudes for employment in a particular trade or occupation (UNESCO 2017). Skill acquisition is vital for an economy to compete and grow particularly in an era of economic integration, transformation and technological change.

Ekpenyong (2017) observed that when vocational technical education has been adequately invested upon, intelligently articulated and properly executed, it should be able to meet the following economic needs and expectations of the nation and its citizens.

1. Development of individuals who are equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills for productive work life.
 2. Development of individuals who are capable of meeting modern technological challenges.
 3. Development of pool of competent and reliable technical manpower capable of being mobilized in times of national and economic emergency and crises.
 4. Development of the Youth with right attitudes, skills and aptitudes toward work.
 5. Equipping of the Youth with requisite knowledge and skills for paid employment or self employment.
 6. Preparing the youth for meeting community, state and national human resource needs.
 7. Enabling the individuals to choose and perfect knowledge and skills in those vocational areas of interest.
 8. Enabling individuals to develop sound economic reasoning and make good economic decisions
 9. Enabling youths to relate their knowledge, skills and expertise to the needs of their local communities.
 10. Establishing and maintaining a functional link between school and industry
- Generally, this will inject vibrancy into the economy by increasing productivity while checking unemployment and inflation. Therefore, it is against this background that the researchers want to evaluate the extent of youth empowerment through Vocational and Technical Education in tertiary institutions in Enugu State.

Statement of Problem

In a plural society like Nigeria, unemployment is a causative agent for the polarization of the unemployed youths into ethno – religious groups. These groups have wrecked the stability of the country both in the past and in the present. Also, unemployment is a major obstacle to workers solidarity against exploitation and oppressive nature of capitalism. Unemployment among the youth is a major facilitator of violence, crime, ethno – religious acrimony and social deprivation. However, while we blame the government for misplaced priority, the youth equally have a share of the blame. They enroll into courses in the university which offers restrictive employment.

All things considered, the future of Nigeria / Enugu State lies in the hands of the youths. The mobilization of youths in the direction of employment and production will thus ensure peace, justice, stability, equity and social progress. Therefore, the problem of the study is to evaluate the extent of youth empowerment through vocational and technical education in tertiary institutions in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent are youths empowered on the technical and vocational skills available in the tertiary institutions in Enugu State.

2. To what extent do tertiary institutions have enough technical and vocational facilities used for youth empowerment in Enugu State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses, guided the study and was tested at 0.05

Level of Significant Difference.

1. There is no significant difference in the Mean ratings of academic and non academic staff of tertiary institutions in Enugu State with respect to the extent to which youths are empowered on the technical and vocational skills available in the school.
2. There is no significant difference in the Mean ratings of academic and non academic staff of tertiary institutions in Enugu State with respect to the extent tertiary institutions has enough technical and vocational facilities.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey research design is the one which arrived at collecting data and analyzing the data from only a few people or items considered to be representatives of the entire group (Nworgu 2015). Thus the researchers deemed it wise to adopt descriptive survey design because it uses a representative sample of the entire population. It is best suited for this study because it permits the collection of original data and describes the conditions as they exist in their natural settings. This study was carried out in Enugu State. Enugu State has Six Education Zones for easy administration which include Udi, Enugu, Awgu, Nkanu, Nsukka and Obollo – Afor Education zone. Tertiary institutions in Enugu State are spread in those zones. The study was carried out in Enugu State Education zone.

Population for the study comprises of Academic and non – academic of Enugu State College of Education Technical which happen to be the only public tertiary institution within Enugu Education Zone. The total population is (2,473) respondents comprised of 704 academic staff and 1733 non academic staff.

The researcher used proportionate stratified random sampling technique to sample 10% of the entire population for the study. The total sample is 243 respondents comprised of 70 respondents from academic staff and 173 non academic staff. The researcher equally used simple random sampling technique to sample one education zone.

The instrument for data collection was a Self Constructed Questionnaire titled (QAEYET & YE) which has twenty (20) items on the whole. This questionnaire was made of two sections, A & B. section A focused on the bio – data of the respondents while section B contained twenty items grouped in two clusters. The instrument was face validated by three experts from Enugu State College of Education Technical Enugu.

The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using ten (10) academic staff and ten (10) non academic staff from Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). The reliability co-efficient was computed using Croubach Alpha which yielded 0.72.

The research questions were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation while hypotheses were also tested at 0.05 level of significant difference.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One:

To what extent are youths empowered with technical and vocational skills available in tertiary institution.

Table 1: showing the Mean response of the respondents regarding research question one.

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	D	N	\bar{X}	SD	D
	Extension students learnt the following skills	70				173			
1	Fashion Design	70	2.41	1.01	LE	173	2.22	2.34	
2	Photography	70	1.99	1.64	LE	173	1.45	0.104	
3	Hair Dressing / Barbing Saloon	70	1.87	1.03	LE	173	1.61	0.309	
4	Catering	70	1.46	0.492	LE	173	2.39	0.411	
5	Make up	70	2.33	0.301	LE	173	1.49	0.198	
6	Automobile servicing	70	2.42	1.44	LE	173	1.55	0.204	
7	Interior Design	70	2.01	1.52	LE	173	1.31	0.189	
8	Welding and Fabrication	70	2.39	0.369	LE	173	1.41	1.40	
9	Carpentry	70	2.40	0.432	LE	173	1.22	0.120	
10	Plumbing	70	2.61	0.301	HE	173	1.41	0.204	
	Mean		2.19	1.03			1.61	0.437	

Result of data analysis in table one revealed the stands of the responds on the subject matter. The analysis shows the grand mean score of 2.19 and 1.61 respectively of academic and non – academic staff of the institution used. The implication of the finding is that to a low extent youths are empowered with technical and vocational skills in the tertiary institution.

Research Question Two:

To what extent does tertiary institution have enough technical and vocational facilities used for youth empowerment in Enugu State.

Table 2: showing the mean response of the respondents on available facilities.

Academic Scholarship

S/N	Items	N	\bar{X}	SD	D	N	\bar{X}	SD	D
1.1	Demonstrators	70	2.44	1.04	LE	173	2.19	1.52	
1.2	Kits / Modular Units	70	2.36	1.22		173	2.26	1.66	
1.3	Simulators	70	2.49	1.49		173	3.00	1.07	
1.4	Training benches	70	2.63	1.13		173	2.16	1.89	
1.5	Training Laboratories	70	2.04	1.09		173	2.22	1.49	
1.6	Training manuals	70	2.38	1.64		173	2.41	1.52	
1.7	Fitting fluids	70	2.66	1.73		173	2.52	1.47	
1.8	Energy power generator	70	2.29	1.52		173	2.36	1.82	
1.9	Semi conductor fabricator	70	2.30	1.44		173	2.40	1.66	
2.0	Hydrology	70	2.40	1.64		173	2.16	1.74	
Grand mean			2.40	1.44	LE		2.37	1.09	

Result of data analysis in table II revealed that the grand mean score of the respondents as 2.40 and 2.37 respectively of academic and non – academic staff of the institution sampled. The implication of the above finding is that to low extent does tertiary institutions have enough technical and vocational facilities used for youth empowerment in Enugu State.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of academic ad non academic staff of tertiary institutions in Enugu State with respect to the extent to which youths are empowered using technical and vocational skills.

Table 3: Addressing hypotheses one.

Category	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t.cal	t-crit	Decision not significant
Academic	70	2.19	1.44	241	1.66	1.96	
Non academic	– 173	1.61	1.09				

Result of hypotheses one shows the value of t-calculated as 1.66 at 0.05 level of significant difference and 241 degree of freedom while the critical value was 1.96. Since the calculated value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis tested is not rejected. The implication is that, there is no significant difference.

Hypothesis two.

There is no significant difference in the mean response of academic and non academic staff in the tertiary institutions in Enugu State with respect to the extent tertiary institutions have enough technical and vocational equipment for youth empowerment.

Table 4: Addressing hypotheses two.

Category	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t.cal	t-crit	Decision not significant
Academic	70	2.40	1.44	241	1.46	1.96	
Non – academic	173	2.37	1.09				

Table 4 showing the value of t- calculated as 1.46 at 0.05 level of significant difference and 241 degree of freedom while the critical value was 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis tested is rejected. The implication is that, there is no significant difference on the opinion of the respondents.

Discussion on Findings.

To a low extent, youths are empowered with technical and vocational skills in tertiary institutions in Enugu State as opined by the respondents. The findings is in agreement with the view of Uwaifo (2009) as he observed that both technical and vocational education is the training of the technically oriented personnel who are to be the initiators, facilitators and implementers of technologically development of a nation. He observed that this training of citizens on the need to be technologically literate would eventually lead to self reliance and sustainability. Hypothesis one, equally shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents.

To a low extent, tertiary institutions do not have enough technical and vocational facilities used for youth empowerment in tertiary institution in Enugu State. The findings is in agreement with the views of (Oranu 2010) who observed that despite all the glaring contributions of the technical and vocational education in our nation, Nigeria, is yet to accord this type of education the attention it deserve. He noted that this is one of the major reasons for the rising of unemployment, poverty and unabated crimes in our society today.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Technical and vocational courses should be introduced as part of general studies in every tertiary institution in Nigeria to enable students who are not in the Department, of technical and vocational education to get basic skills that will enable them to be self reliance after graduation to reduce unemployment rate in the country.
2. Government and other good spirited individuals should as a matter of urgency help to provide different technical and vocational equipment to various tertiary institutions so that students can learn different skills using those equipments.

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