



Technical and Vocational Education as a Tool for Poverty Alleviation in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria

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Accepted: September 26th, 2022

Published: October 14th, 2022

Citations - APA

Irogbo, P. U. (2022). Technical and Vocational Education as a Tool for Poverty Alleviation in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. *Contemporary Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 3(3), 16-23. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7212895>

The study is survey research with focus on technical and vocational education as a tool for poverty alleviation in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. In pursuance of this objective four research questions were raised. Using random sampling technique 240 students in senior secondary school (SS 2) were selected for the study from six randomly selected secondary school in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire titled Technical and Vocational Education as a Tool for Poverty Alleviation in Questionnaire (TVETPAQ) were used for data collection. Research questions were analyzed using frequency tables and mean scores with criterion mean of 2.50 and above were set for acceptance of technical and vocational education as a tool for poverty alleviation. The result of the analysis revealed that vocational and technical education is skill-oriented and employment motivated, and it is very obvious that vocational education is an indisputable means of reducing poverty in our society. This can be achieved through the acquisition of the relevant vocational and technical skills, knowledge and abilities required for work (either paid employment or self-employment) However, the means of acquiring this skills, knowledge and abilities are either lacking or in short supply due to some inhibiting factors. Some of these inhibiting factors to poverty reduction through vocational education and information technology are lack of proper vocational guidance, negative public attitude towards vocational and technical education, inadequate provision of basic infrastructure/facilities/workshops, inadequate funding of vocational education, inadequate and ill-equipped vocational and technical education teachers, and irregular review of the curriculum of vocational and technical education to reflect the realities of modern work environment. However, these problems can be transformed to better opportunities if stakeholders develop a frame work to further widen the prospects of technical and vocational education.

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Technical and Vocational Education; Poverty Alleviation; Ethiopia East Local Government Area

Introduction

Education in a broad sense is a process by which an individual acquires the many physical and social capabilities demanded by the society in which he/she is born into to function. According to Ojo and Vincent (2000), education is many things to man, a visa to success, a passport to the unknown, a catalyst to great heights. Education empowers, refines, civilizes, enlightens, enriches and gives confidence to man". Education inculcates proper values for the survival of the individuals and society. It helps to develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their internal and external environment. Okojie (2007), stated that education involves the socialization of individuals to become integral part of the society in which they live. Education has a direct way of reducing poverty in any country. It is viewed as the single most important factor in improving the quality of the lives of people, both economically and socially.

The Federal Government in the National Policy on Education (FRN 2004) states that technical and vocational education is that aspect of education that gives its recipients an opportunity to acquire practical skills as well as some basic scientific knowledge which can enable them live above poverty level. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) recommendations of 2000 on technical and vocational education and training for the twenty-first century, defined technical and vocational education as those aspects of education process involving, in addition, to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. The African Union (AU) recognizes the importance of technical and vocational education as a means of empowering individuals to take control of their lives and recommends therefore the integration of vocational training into the general education system. The AU also recognizes the fact that vast numbers of young people are outside the formal school system, and consequently recommends the integration of non-formal learning methodologies and literacy programs into national technical and vocational education programs (COMEDAF, 2007). According to Akerele (2007), technical and vocational education is that aspect of education that exposes the learner to acquisition of demonstrable skills that could be transformed into economic benefits. According to Idris, Ehikioya and Ali-Momoh (2011), technical and vocational education can be a tool for poverty alleviation through, providing trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly art and craft, advanced craft and technical levels; providing the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; giving training and imparting necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

The development of technical and vocational skills is vital to economic development for two important reasons. First, technical and vocational skills are needed for enterprise productivity and profitability, as well as for national productivity and wealth creation. Oyebolu (2011), highlighted that without the necessary technical skills, enterprise and national growth can be seriously at risk. Technological innovation and economic growth fuel the demand for skilled workers. The need for technical and vocational skills is increasing because of a convergence of factors—technological change, changes in work organization, growing economic openness and competitiveness, and capital deepening (increasing capital per worker). The second reason development of technical and vocational skills is of vital importance is because it is essential for individual prosperity. Skills enable the individual to increase productivity and income. This is especially important for those who are seeking out a living in the informal sector of the economy.

Poverty is a global phenomenon that is complex and multi-dimensional and not easy to define. Each region of the world has different yardsticks for measuring the level of poverty based on people's ability to have access to basic things of life such as, food, clothing and shelter. However, it is pertinent to note that despite different yardsticks and indices of measuring poverty from region to region all over the world, the fact still remains that the meaning of poverty still tends towards lack and below average and poor standard of living going by the following definitions as posited by scholars. The World Bank Report (2002) sees poverty as hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to go to school, not knowing how to read, not being able to speak properly, not having a job, having fear for the future, losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water, powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom. According to World Bank (2002) and United Nations (1995) the various manifestations of poverty include: lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition and other basic services, homelessness and unsafe degraded environment among others. Nasir (2002) defined poverty as a

concept that entails socio-economic and political deprivation which may affect individuals' households, or communities and which may result in lack of access to the basic necessities of life. Going by the foregoing definitions and facts about poverty, Ogunleye (2006) concludes that indicators of poverty include: literacy, health status, nutrition status, access to housing, water and satisfaction among others. Poverty therefore is the inability to attend to or meet up with the basic necessities of life as a result of lack of wherewithal to do so. For the purpose of this study poverty is viewed as deprivation of common necessities that determine the quality of life which include food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water, and may also include the deprivation of opportunities to learn, to obtain better employment to escape poverty and/or to enjoy the respect of fellow citizens.

Nigeria ranked among the 25th poorest countries in the world. The country gained its independence with poverty level of barely 15% of her population in 1960 (Alfa, Eikojonwa & Enojo 2014). This is concentrated in the rural areas where illiteracy prevalence is high, potable water and health facilities are rarely available, road and electricity infrastructures are either unavailable or ill-managed. No Nigerian Government, be it military or civilian has come without introducing and leaving behind one form of poverty alleviation or reduction program meant to reduce the level of poverty, give hope and despair to the poor and, or more towards some sort of wealth creation. Strategies, policies and plans have been articulated; programs and projects have been formulated and executed over the years. For instance, at independence in 1960, poverty eradication efforts in Nigeria centered on education, while Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution, War Against Indiscipline (WAI), People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Community Banks, Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DIFFRI), Nigerian Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support Program (FSP) and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) were put in place during the period under review. Though, successive governments have tried to address the issue of poverty as captured above, the effect of the strategies and programs has been that of mixed feelings (Aliyu, 2002).

Furthermore, urban areas such as those in Gwagwalada Area Council are faced with the problem of increasing population and consequently inadequate supply of food items, poor housing, low income, and nutrition status. According to Ibrahim, Uba-Eze, Oyewole and Onuk, (2009), due to the increasing prices in the cost of living, a large proportion of urban households earning is being spent on food, shelter and other necessities of life making life miserable for individual households.

However, the need to have vocational and technical education taken in our secondary schools is incontrovertible. This is because it is a sure way to endow children with specific sellable skills that can get them self-employment. It is also a way of functionalizing our secondary school curriculum as well as being a strategy for poverty alleviation. Moreover, it offers children and adults the opportunity to learn the local craft and to turn some wastes to wealth. Vocational and Technical Education give room for more interactive teaching and participation learning in schools. (FGN, 2004; NERDC, 2011). Dokubo (2010) observed that vocational and technical education programs could be planned to take care of the needs of the teeming unemployed youths and adults aspiring to own small-scale businesses and those wishing to take up employment in the private and public sectors of the economy. Ezeji (2005) posited that there had been a lot of youth restiveness, militancy and other social vices that would have been averted in Nigeria if appropriate technical skills were inculcated into these youths. Therefore, the incidence of youth restiveness, kidnapping, unemployment and other anti-social behaviors that could be associated with idleness and in conjunction with lack of acquisition of technical and vocational skills should have been a thing of the past. In the past, it was observed that several attempts made by governmental and non-governmental agencies towards poverty alleviation programs and empowerments have thus proved abortive because they could not achieve their set objectives.

For any program to meet its set objective, its design must address the needs of the learners, the needs of institution of learning, that of the society into which the learner belongs and Nigeria at large. Therefore, the areas of specialization will include but not limited to masonry works, Carpentry works, Automobile mechanics, Ceramics productions, Hair dressing/barbing saloon, Leather works/shoe making, Fashion designs/tailoring services, Catering services, Fishery/aqua-culture, plumbing works, Detergents/soap making, Concrete designs, Automobile driving, out boat engine mechanics, Tilling works, Painting and decorating work, Computer services, Arts/graphics, etc. (Kolawole & Adepoju, 2007), Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

- I. to ascertain the extent to which technical and vocational education can impart necessary skills to individual in Ethiopie East Local Government Area, Delta State.
- II. to ascertain the challenges of technical and vocational education in Ethiopie East Local Government Area, Delta State

Review of Empirical Literature

Igwe and Oragwu (2014) in a study on techno-vocational skills acquisition and poverty reduction strategies in vocational institutions: the case of Rivers State Three research questions and two hypotheses were posed for the purpose of this study. A descriptive survey of students in the six (6) techno/vocational institutions in Rivers State was adopted. A sample size of 300 students was sampling technique. Questionnaire tagged “Techno Acquisition and Poverty Reduction Questionnaire (TVSAPRQ)” developed by the researcher was the instrument used for data collection; it was validated and its reliability established at 0.86. The mean and rank order was used to answer the research questions and z- test to test the hypotheses. The study found, among others, that the automobile engineering, catering, electrical installation, computer craft practice, fine arts, clothing and textile and agricultural science are the types of vocational and technical programs studied in Nigeria especially in Rivers State for poverty reduction

Uddin (2013) in his study on the role of technical and vocational education in poverty reduction among youths in Nigeria made use of the eighteen local government areas of Edo State as the study area. Descriptive survey design was employed for the study with a population of 150 students. Three research questions were formulated and analyzed using arithmetic mean method. The finding of this study revealed that technical and vocational education can play a vital role in reducing poverty as well as equipping, building and making our youths self-employed, reliable and employable in an industry or company after university education. However, the paper recommends that one of the ways by which government should reduce poverty and generate employment is to focus on a functional, technical and vocational education and that graduates of the programs should be encouraged with soft loans/micro credit for a start.

Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2012) also in a study on vocational and technical education programs as strategic tools for poverty alleviation in Nigeria used a stratified random sampling technique, 250 respondents from five recognized local government areas in Lagos state, South Western Nigeria. Data were gathered through a self-monitored questionnaire survey. Simple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the entrepreneurship training and education and poverty alleviation. Two hypotheses were postulated to determine the relationship between technical skill and youth empowerment and between personal entrepreneurial skill and social welfare services. This study confirmed that vocational and technical education is significantly related to the youth empowerment and social welfare services. Findings revealed that youth empowerment are influenced by their acquired technical skill. The study recommended effective vocational and technical education as a catalyst for poverty alleviation. The study addresses the factors affecting implementation of vocational and technical education programs and it also explores how vocational and technical education can be used as a tool in reducing poverty and enhances development in Nigeria. The study found that various factors that hinder the implementation of vocational and technical education programs, include inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure, societal neglect of skills training, inappropriate training of vocational and technical education teachers, limited institutional and personnel capacity. In addition, the study found that the development of small-scale industries through vocational and technical education based on the utilization of available resources in the immediate neighborhood and the level of technology that is appropriate to the level of education and skills of the disadvantage groups can enhance job creation, economic growth and poverty reduction.

Furthermore, Nwojiewho and Chidinma (2014) study on the impacts of vocational and technical education programs on the empowerment of rural dwellers in south-south, Nigeria found that technical and vocational education acquisition is closely related to economic empowerment of the rural populace. The authors noted that this program as well as the curriculum could be designed to take care of the needs of the learners in order to acquire skills necessary for employment, self-reliance and economic development. The acquisition of these vocational skills will greatly help to empower and transform man into a self-reliant person and make him economically viable. They also

noted that among other things, that government, private organizations and NGOs should adequately support the funding of vocational and technical education programs, more qualified facilitators and instructors should be trained, more training schools should be built, youths should be motivated to enroll in the program by giving them adequate stipends.

Methods

The researcher used the survey research method for the collection of relevant data for the study. The research work covered the whole of Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State, the population for the study is made up of secondary schools’ students in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State. A sample of 240 senior secondary two (SS 2) students comprising 140 males and 100 females were used for the study. The sample was selected using simple random sampling technique. The major instrument that was used for data collection is the questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics

Results

Research Question One

To what extent has technical and vocational education imparted necessary skills to individual in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State?

Table 1: Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation of the Student’s Response to Extent Technical and Vocational Education has Imparted Necessary Skills to Individual in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State

<i>s/n</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>	<i>Remark</i>
	Extent technical and vocational education has imparted necessary skills							
9	Technical and vocational education has imparted masonry skills	31	57	28	22	3.25	0.99	Agree
10	Technical and vocational education has imparted automobile/mechanics skills	51	74	44	71	2.44	1.13	Disagree
11	Technical and vocational education has imparted carpentry skills	60	92	34	54	2.66	1.09	Agree
12	Technical and vocational education has imparted leather works/shoe skills	61	58	43	78	2.43	1.19	Disagree
13	Technical and vocational education has imparted plumbing skills	62	87	45	46	2.69	1.06	Disagree
14	Technical and vocational education has imparted welding skills	89	81	24	46	2.89	1.11	Agree
15	Technical and vocational education has imparted driving skills	107	83	22	28	3.12	1.00	Agree
16	Technical and vocational education has painting skills	68	80	55	37	2.75	1.03	Agree

N= 240; criterion mean = 2.50

The table 1 above shows frequency means and standard deviation of student’s response to extent technical and vocational education has imparted necessary skills to individual in Ethiopia East Local Government Area. The result revealed that the respondents agreed to items 9, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16 as being the extent technical and vocational education has imparted necessary skills to individual in Ethiopia East Local Government Area with the mean scores of 3.25, 2.66, 2.69, 2.89, 3.12, and 2.75 respectively; but disagreed with items 10 and 12 with the mean score of 2.44 and 2.43 respectively. The overall result value of 2.78 shows that the respondents agreed that the whole items are

extent technical and vocational education has imparted necessary skills to individual in Ethiopia East Local Government Area.

Research Question Two

What are the challenges of technical and vocational education in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State?

Table 2: Frequency, mean and standard deviation of the student’s response to the challenges of technical and vocational education

<i>s/n</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>No resp</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Challenges of technical and vocational education								
1	Negative public attitude towards vocational and technical education	68	80	55	37	240	2.75	Agree
2	Poor funding	107	83	22	28	240	3.12	Agree
3	Irregular review of the curriculum of vocational and technical education to reflect the realities of modern work environment	95	65	29	51	240	2.85	Agree
4	Inadequate provision of basic infrastructure	81	96	41	22	240	2.98	Agree
5	Inadequate and ill-equipped vocational and technical education teachers	131	57	28	22	240	3.25	Agree

Table 2 above indicates that negative public attitude towards vocational and technical education and Inadequate provision of basic infrastructure/facilities/ workshops has a mean of 2.75, 2.98, while poor funding, irregular review of the curriculum of vocational and technical education to reflect the realities of modern work environment, and Inadequate and ill-equipped vocational and technical education teachers has a mean of 3.12, 2.85, 3.25. This shows that the technical and vocational education in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State has suffered some challenges.

Discussions of Results

The first research question sought to ascertain extent to which technical and vocational education has imparted necessary skills to individual in Gwagwalada Area Council. The findings reveal technical and vocational education has imparted masonry skills, automobile mechanic skills, carpentry skills, welding skills among others. According to Nwojiewho and Dokubo (2014) areas of specialization of technical and vocational education include carpentry works, automobile mechanics, ceramics productions, hair dressing/barbing saloon, leather works/shoe making, fashion designs/tailoring services, catering services, fishery/aqua-culture, plumbing works, detergents/soap making, concrete designs, and automobile driving.

The second research question sought to ascertain the challenges of technical and vocational education in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, Delta State. The result reveals that negative public attitude towards vocational and technical education, Irregular review of the curriculum of vocational and technical education to reflect the realities of modern work environment, poor funding, inadequate provision of basic infrastructure and inadequate and ill-equipped vocational and technical education teachers are the major challenges of technical and vocational education. Aliyu, (2002), asserted that there is a societal belief that vocational and technical education is meant for dropouts. Durosaro (2008) observed that teaching materials and learning environment rank second after the inadequate capabilities of the learner in ensuring success in the educational ability of the students. Idih (2002) opined that many teachers of vocational education were trained with the traditional technology hence they lack the necessary ICT skills to impart to students.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the analysis of the data carried out in the study, vocational and technical education is skill-oriented and employment motivated, and it is very obvious that vocational education is an indisputable means of reducing poverty in our society. This can be achieved through the acquisition of the relevant vocational and technical skills, knowledge and abilities required for work (either paid employment or self-employment) However, the means of acquiring this skills, knowledge and abilities are either lacking or in short supply due to some inhibiting factors. Some of these inhibiting factors to poverty reduction through vocational education and information technology are lack of proper vocational guidance, negative public attitude towards vocational and technical education, inadequate provision of basic infrastructure/facilities/workshops, inadequate funding of vocational education, inadequate and ill-equipped vocational and technical education teachers, and irregular review of the curriculum of vocational and technical education to reflect the realities of modern work environment. However, these problems can be transformed to better opportunities if stakeholders develop a frame work to further widen the prospects of vocational education. The study recommended the following:

- I. Vocational and Technical education teachers should improve communication and awareness about vocational education programmes with schools and between schools. Parents and the business community should be acquainted with what vocational and technical education is all about.
- II. The problem of inadequate infrastructure and facilities/workshops/ laboratories in vocational education is usually attributed to low funding. Government and other stakeholders should invest heavily in the provision of modern facilities for vocational training. This will go a long way in improving the quality of graduates produced thereby reducing unemployment and by extension poverty.

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