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Managing Technical and Vocational Education in Technical Colleges in Rivers State for Youth Empowerment and Sustainable Development

Kalagbor-Gbeke, Ibiene (Ph.D)

Department of Educational Management, Rivers State University, Nigeria.

Corresponding Authors' Email: ibienekalagbor@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated management of technical and vocational education (TVE) in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development. Descriptive survey design was adopted and two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised of 138 instructors in the three technical colleges in Rivers State. A sample of 46 instructors representing 33% of the population was drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire entitled: "Management of Technical and Vocational Education in Technical Colleges for youth empowerment and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (MTVETCYESDQ)" developed by the researcher, was used for data collection. The instrument was well validated and the test for reliability using Cronbach alpha method yielded 0.78. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study showed that, management of TVE has enhanced youth empowerment and sustainable development in Rivers State by producing trained technicians in electrical/electronics, building construction, auto mechanics, wood work construction among others. The study also revealed that, the challenges of managing TVE for youth empowerment and sustainable development in Rivers State include among others: inadequate instructors; inadequate learning facilities, poor funding and defective curriculum. Based on the findings conclusion was drawn and the following recommendations among others were made: Government should employ more qualified instructors in the technical colleges; government should provide more equipment and modern facilities in technical colleges in Rivers State; and government should encourage more people to attend technical colleges.

Keywords: Management, Technical and Vocational Education, Youth Empowerment, Technical Colleges and Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Technical and vocational education (TVE) is the type of education provided in technical colleges. TVE equip students with a wide range of practical knowledge or psychomotive skills and attitude that is relevant for meaningful living and contribution to economic growth and development. According to FRN (2014:19), TVE is an integral part of general education; it is a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work; it is an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship; it is equally and instrument for promoting environmentally sound

sustainable development; and it is a method of alleviating poverty. TVE is that part of our educational system that focuses on skills acquisition by students to enable them become self-employed after their graduation or gain employment in industries or other relevant places.

According to Aziz (2014), there are five types of institutions established for the provision of technical and vocational education training programmes in Nigeria. The schools include: the pre-vocational and vocational schools at post- secondary level, the technical colleges, the polytechnics, colleges of education (Technical) and universities. The major reason for this type of education is to prepare people for jobs requiring specialized training. It must be noted that in TVE, the need to use the head, the hands and the brains to achieve concrete and tangible results cannot be overlooked. Supporting this, Obanya (2007) was of the view that TVE is part of integral development of the head, the heart and the hands which must not be neglected, as doing so will amount to a denial of students' integrated personality development.

TVE is a very important system of education that could be relevant in poverty alleviation and reduction of youth unemployment which are necessary for sustainable development. Ezeji and Okorie (2010) stressed the importance of skills acquisition programmes in national growth. They were of the view that, Nigeria's social and economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment would be drastically reduced if people are given adequate vocational training in skills, raw materials, machineries and equipment. Herrington and Kew (2014) clearly remarked that innovative technical and vocational education, as well as skills acquisition programmes are globally recognized as very strategic mechanisms or driving forces of sustainable economic growth. They impact on creativity and job creation, and also have welfare effects on poverty incidence across international boundaries.

In view of the rapid changing world of work influenced by globalization and technology, TVET is expected to impact adaptive skills that will enable their recipients to adapt to different job roles (International Labour Organisation, 2010). According to United Nations (2015), acquisition of skills for work is a key area of focus in sustainable development. This is because having acquired the perquisite skill, knowledge and attitude, individuals can be gainfully employed. When this happens, their economic and social lives will improve as they will earn more and have good health services. As this continues, the socio-economic status of the nation improves and poverty level reduces, which are critical for sustainable development.

Youth empowerment is enabling the youths to gain useful skills with which they could be gainfully self-employed. TVET can help young people acquire the skills they need in life.

Youth Empowerment according to Olabiyi (2013) is the process of encouraging youths to be active citizens in their community.

Sustainable development could be seen as that type of development that cuts across all sectors of our economic life and promotes the welfare of the present generation without compromising the welfare of the future generation. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Edet and Beyin (2018) defined sustainable development as the development which tends towards maximization of human well-being in this present generation that will not however, lead to the reduction in the well-being of future generations. It focuses on the immediate needs of the present time and those of the future generations concurrently and it is geared towards the welfare and the well-being of every individual. Sustainable development is concerned with the creation and sustenance of better living conditions for every individual. Management according to Grawford (2018) is the act of organizing resources to ensure that the goals of an organization are achieved efficiently and effectively. Management is a set of activities which has been classified into planning, organizing, leading and controlling in order to use available resources to achieve desired outcomes in the most efficient manner (Peretomode, 2012). The resources could be materials, people or funds management helps in creating and maintaining a common purpose in an organization.

Management of technical and vocational education training (TVET) ensures that resources provided for them are effectively utilized to achieve the objectives of the programme. Effective utilization of resources would enhance effective teaching and learning of vocational education trades. One main issue of concern in technical colleges today is the issue of provision of human and material resources required for effective management of technical colleges. According to studies conducted by Oduwa (2015) and Nwajuba (2014), the training received by students in technical colleges in Nigeria is not adequately supported with educational resources. Supporting this observation Puyate in Akpan (2016) revealed that the present state of technical and vocational education training facilities in most technical colleges is very poor, and there is no plan for the maintenance of broken-down equipment.

The management of technical and vocational education is affected by inadequate facilities, equipment and tools. The available facilities in most technical colleges in Nigeria are very obsolete. According to Olaitan (1996) vocational education cannot achieve much in producing quality skilled human resources when facilities necessary for the training are inadequate. There is also the issue of inadequate number of vocational trades teachers, as well as poor conditions of service and poor teaching and learning environment. These issues

adversely affect the management of TVE for sustainable development of the society. Technical and vocational education has been an integral part of national development strategies in Nigeria and many other countries due to its impact on human resource development, productivity and economic growth. According to Ojimba (2012) part of the reasons for the nation's underdevelopment is the inability of Nigerian leaders to give TVET the adequate attention that it deserves.

TVET according to ILO (2007) gives individuals the skills to "live, learn and work as productive citizens in a global society. TVET has continued to thrive in many societies and has helped to produce skilled technicians but Nigerian government neglected this important aspect of our educational system. This has resulted to lack of skilled technicians such as bricklayers, carpenters, painters, auto mechanics, laboratory and pharmacy technicians, electrical/electronic technicians etc. TVET provides vocational training of skilled technicians in almost all fields and the poor attention paid to it has resulted to shortage of skilled technicians in various fields. Today, we have numerous people with certificates and degrees but lack necessary skills for gainful employment. They are busy roaming the streets looking for white collar jobs that are no longer there. The neglect and inadequate management of TVET is socially and economically dangerous because it is denying the nation the opportunities for sustainable development through the contributions of the graduates of the programme.

The World Bank Policy Paper on VTE (1991) states that to get the best benefit to sustainable development from VTE, certain factors must be considered:

- Well timed modern courses linked to local and global demands;
- Relevant and up to date VTE courses need to be developed;
- Proper justification with respect to individual countries offering such VTE courses and level of schooling;
- Wider range of VTE courses need to be developed in terms of demand and cost effectiveness. Adequate management of TVET according to Akyeampong (2002) does not only have economic impact but also cultural, social and political contributions. In line with this Momoh (2012) asserted that VTE is a bold and courageous step in this changing scenario for economic life by developing human capital (appropriate workforce) and strong economy, as well as cohesive, literate and healthy society.

Statement of the Problem

Technical and vocational education (TVE) is a very important aspect of our educational system designed to produce skilled and well-trained technicians in various technical areas. If TVE is adequately managed, it will produce graduates that will fit into the productive sectors of our economy to enhance sustainable development. It will equally help to address the escalating rate of unemployment by producing skilled men and women who can become self-employed and entrepreneurs. In recent times, it appears TVE institutions have not being adequately delivering on their mandates. There has been an increasing low turnout of skilled and well-trained technicians in various fields by these institutions. This suggests that this aspect of our educational system is not well managed.

The situation in TVE institutions in Rivers State has resulted to inadequate supply of technicians and middle level man power in various technical fields. A situation that has adverse effect on youth empowerment and sustainable development of the state, it appears there is also low enrolment rate in these institutions and many students graduate annually from technical colleges without adequately acquiring relevant practical skills in their trades or areas of study. The researcher sees this as a serious problem. Hence, the problem of this study is to investigate management of TVE in technical college in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate management of technical and vocational education in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1. Identify ways management of TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State enhance youth empowerment and sustainable development of the state.
- 2. Determine the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for empowerment and sustainable development of the state.

Research Ouestions

The following research questions were answered by the study:

- 1. What are the ways management of TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State enhance youth empowerment and sustainable development of Rivers State?
- 2. What are the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development of the Rivers State?

Hypotheses

These null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- 1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on ways management of TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State enhance youth empowerment and sustainable development of the State.
- 2. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development of the state.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 138 teachers (99 male and 39 female) in the five technical colleges in Rivers State. Technical College Tombia, Technical College Ahoada, Technical College Iheaogu, Government Technical College Port Harcourt, Government Craft Centre, Aba Road Port Harcourt. Source: Rivers State Ministry of Education, Port Harcourt. A sample of 46 (33 male and 13 female) teachers representing 33% of the population was drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire entitled: "Management of Technical and Vocational Education in Technical Colleges for youth empowerment and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (MTVETCYESDQ)" developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument was properly validated by three senior colleagues, two from educational management and one from Measurement and Evaluation. Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and this yielded an 'r' index of 0.78. mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the ways management of TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State enhance youth empowerment and sustainable development of the State?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation analysis of the responses of male and female instructors on the ways management of TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State enhance youth empowerment and sustainable development of the State.

S/N	Items	Insti	Tale ructors = 33	Insti	male ructors = 13	Mean Set $\overline{x}_1 + \overline{x}_2$	Decision
		\bar{x}_1	SD_1	\bar{x}_2	SD_2	2	
1.	Adequate Management of TVE leads the training of people who serve as electrical/electronic technicians.	3.02	1.15	3.04	0.99	3.03	Agree
2.	Effective Management of TVE improves the training of various technicians involved in building construction	3.00	1.16	3.02	1.01	3.01	Agree
3.	Management on TVE helps in the production of auto mechanics.	3.06	1.14	3.08	0.98	3.07	Agree
4.	Efficient Management of TVE helps in producing auto electricians	3.06	1.14	2.96	1.03	3.01	Agree
5.	Adequate Management of TVE helps in producing computer technicians	2.84	1.23	2.80	1.13	2.82	Agree
6.	Adequate training in the field helps in producing various people that engaged in wood work construction.	2.90	1.21	2.86	1.09	2.88	Agree
7.	Effective management of TVE helps in producing people who can engage in printing and textile works	2.82	1.25	2.76	1.15	2.79	Agree
8.	Adequate training in TVE helps producing shoe makers and shoe repairers.	3.00	1.16	2.84	1.11	2.92	Agree
9.	By producing people who serve as support staff in business offices such as typists, store keepers, stenographers etc.	2.98	1.17	2.88	1.08	2.93	Agree
10.	By producing people who work in the hospitality industries e.g. food caterers	2.94	1.19	2.92	1.05	2.93	Agree
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation	2.96	1.18	2.92	1.06		

Table 1 shows that all the items had weighted mean scores that are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. They were accepted as the ways management of TVE enhances productivity and sustainable development of Rivers State. the aggregate weighted mean score of 2.96 for male instructors and 2.92 for female instructors indicate that both respondents shared a common understanding about how management of TVE contribute to youth empowerment and sustainable development.

Therefore, the ways management of TVE enhances productivity and sustainable development is by producing trained technicians in various fields who upon their graduation engage in productive activities in their fields of study either as a self-employed person or as an employed staff in an organization.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for productivity and sustainable development of the State?

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation analysis of the responses of male and female instructors on the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development of the State.

S/N	Items	Male Instructors N = 33		Female Instructors N= 13		\mathbf{Mean} \mathbf{Set} $\overline{x}_1 + \overline{x}_2$	Decision
		\bar{x}_1	SD_1	\bar{x}_2	SD_2	2	
1.	Inadequately trained vocational teachers.	3.26	0.66	3.24	0.66	3.25	Agree
2.	Inadequate number of vocational teachers.	3.20	0.68	3.22	0.69	3.21	Agree
3.	Inadequate learning facilities.	3.42	0.63	3.38	0.65	3.40	Agree
4.	Inadequate learning environment.	3.38	0.65	3.40	0.64	3.39	Agree
5.	Poor funding of TVE	3.46	0.62	3.42	0.63	3.44	Agree
6.	Defective curriculum	3.18	0.71	3.14	0.71	3.16	Agree
7.	Brain Drain	3.10	0.72	3.12	0.73	3.11	Agree
8.	Wrong perception about TVE by elites	2.94	0.73	2.92	0.74	2.93	Agree
9.	Poor maintenance culture/value system	3.22	0.67	3.18	0.70	3.20	Agree
10.	Unwillingness of the students to obey their instructors and learn.	2.38	0.75	2.30	0.76	2.34	Disagree
	Aggregate mean and standard deviation	3.15	0.68	3.13	0.69		

Data in table 2 show that all the items had weighted mean scores that are greater than the criterion mean except item number 10. Items 1 to 9 were agreed on by the respondents as the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development. Item number 10 was disagreed on by the respondents.

The aggregate mean of 3.15 and 3.13 for the male and female instructors respectively indicate that both respondents shared a common opinion on the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State. Therefore, the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development include: inadequately trained instructors; inadequate number of instructors; inadequate learning facilities; inadequate learning environment; poor funding; defective curriculum; brain drain; wrong perception about TVE by elites; and poor maintenance culture/value system.

Test of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

HO1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female instructors on ways of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State that enhances youth empowerment and sustainable development.

Table 3: z-test analysis of difference between the mean responses of male and female instructors on the ways of management of TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State enhance youth empowerment and sustainable development.

Gender	N	\overline{X}	SD	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of sign.	Decision
Male Instructors	33	2.96	1.18	44	0.112	+1.960	0.05	Ho1
Female Instructors	13	2.92	1.06		0.112	<u>-</u> 1.700	0.03	Retained

Table 3 showed that male instructors had mean score and standard deviation of 2.96 and 1.18, female instructors had mean score and standard deviation of 2.92 and 1.06. with a degree of freedom of 44, the z-calculated value of 0.112 was by far less than the z-critical value of \pm 1. 960. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. This implies that, there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female instructors on ways of management of TVE enhances productivity and sustainable development in Rivers State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female instructors on the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development of the State.

Table 4: z-test analysis of difference between the mean responses of male and female instructors on the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development of the state.

Gender	N	\overline{X}	SD	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of sign.	Decision
Male Instructors	33	3.15	0.68	44	0.066	<u>+</u> 1.960	0.05	Ho2
Female Instructors	13	3.13	0.69					Retained

Table 4 showed that, male instructors had mean score and standard deviation of 3.15 and 0.68, female instructors had mean score and standard deviation of 3.13 and 0.69. With a degree of freedom of 44 at 0.05 level of significance, the z-calculated value of 0.066 was by far less than

the z-critical value of \pm 1.960. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. This implies that, there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female instructors on the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State for youth empowerment and sustainable development.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed the ways management of TVE enhance youth empowerment and sustainable development include producing middle level manpower (technicians) in various fields such as electrical/electronics, carpentary/ wood work, welding and fabrication, auto mechanic, plumbing etc. These technicians work in various organizations. Some of them are equally self-employed. They directly and indirectly contribute to productivity and sustainable development in the state, they have skills needed for rendering of various services relevant in economic development. This finding is supported by Ezeji and Okorie (2010) as they emphasized on the relevance of skills acquisition programmes in national development. Adequate production of skilled technicians in our technical colleges will contribute so much in solving the problems of unemployment, poverty, hunger, youth restiveness etc.

The world today is driven by knowledge and technology. Organizations today are after what you can do, that is the skills you have. This makes the provision of innovation technical and vocational education necessary in Rivers State. Technical skills acquisition are strategic means of enhancing youth empowerment and sustainable development. Supporting this, Herrington and Kew (2014) clearly stated that TVE impact on creativity, job creation, reduce poverty and it has welfare effects across national boundaries. Adequate management of TVE will also help to raise entrepreneurs. Some of the graduates from our technical colleges may choose to exercise their skills and initiatives by organizing business ventures that will enable them take advantage of business opportunities in our society. Through such means they will create jobs for themselves and other people, thereby contributing in promoting economic activities and sustainable development.

The study equally identified the challenges of managing TVE in technical colleges in Rivers State. The challenges include inadequate quality and quantity of instructors. The adequacy of teachers or instructors in terms of quality and quantity in any educational or training organization cannot be overemphasized. To a large extent, this determines the quality of training the students will receive. Technical colleges will not be able to achieve much in terms of producing skilled and well-trained technicians where relevant teachers are inadequate in quality and in number.

There is gross inadequacy of learning/training resources in the technical colleges in Rivers State. Most of their machines are bad and the ones functioning are outdated. This situation is complicated by our poor maintenance culture. The facilities are not adequately maintained resulting to frequent breakdowns. The learning environment is poor. We have leeking roof, dilapidated school buildings, bushy school environment, rough classroom floors, broken doors and windows, shortage of chairs and lockers, lack of internet and ICT facilities etc. Supporting this finding Olaitan (1996) noted that vocational education institutions cannot achieve much in producing quality skilled human resources when facilities necessary for the training and learning environment are inadequate.

The issue of the curriculum for TVE should also be addressed. There is the need to overhaul the TVE curriculum to adequately by equip the students with the relevant skills needed for their daily living. Ojimba (2012) supporting this finding identified six problems associated with current curriculum some of which include: current curriculum is based on foreign model which has evolved under ideal conditions; lack of textbooks in many areas and the available ones are very expensive, and the curricula are adjudged to be too academic and overloaded intellectual content in pure science and mathematics at the expense of basic engineering and technology.

Funding of education especially TVE is very poor. Government has failed to pay adequate attention to proper funding of TVE in Rivers State. This situation is worsened by high level of corruption in our educational system. This has resulted to inadequate provision of human and material resources needed for effective management of TVE in Rivers State. According to Momoh (2012) government's lack of commitment to TVE and inadequate funding has weakened technical education in Nigeria. This has resulted to the number of technical education institutions dwindling, while that of general education institutions is increasing. Poor funding of TVE has encouraged brain drain in this area as most of their experienced and qualified instructors are leaving the system for greener pastures locally and internationally.

Finally, there is the need for re-orientation and change of mindset about TVE by some parents. Many parents prefer general education institutions to technical and vocational education institutions. Most parents prefer to send their children to secondary schools instead of technical colleges. This has adversely affected enrolment into TVE. It has equally resulted to high rate of youth unemployment in our society due to high rate of secondary school graduates who lack life coping and employability skills.

Conclusion

The study has identified the various ways management of TVE contribute to youth empowerment and sustainable development in Rivers State; as well as the challenges facing the management of TVE. From every indication, TVE is a very important aspect of our educational system, which has the potentials of addressing many of our socio-economic challenges and enhancing youth empowerment and sustainable development. To take full advantage of the potentials of TVE, government should urgently address the challenges facing the management of TVE in the technical colleges in Rivers State in other to encourage efficient and effective TVE delivery in these colleges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Government should recruit and post more instructors to the technical colleges in Rivers State.
- 2. More modern equipment and training facilities should be purchased and supplied to the technical colleges in Rivers State for effective teaching and learning.
- 3. The curriculum of technical colleges in Rivers State should be continuously updated in line with modern trends and emerging needs of the society.
- 4. Government should provide orientation and sanitization to parents on the need to encourage their children to attend technical colleges.
- 5. Funds should be urgently released to the administrators of technical colleges in Rivers State for the renovation and maintenance of dilapidated school buildings, and repairs/maintenance of machines and training facilities.

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