

LEARNING

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TUTORS AND TRAINEES' PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VOCATIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILL ACQUISITION PROGRAMME IN OGUN STATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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&
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Preamble

The quality of Nigerian graduates has continued to be a major concern to stakeholders in education. The prevalence of half baked graduates from tertiary institutions in Nigeria has led to astronomical increase in the unemployed graduates in the society. In order to curb the menace of unemployment among graduates in Nigeria, some tertiary institutions have integrated the teaching and learning of vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme into their regular academic programme. This study investigated tutors and trainees' perception of the effectiveness of the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme in Ogun State tertiary institutions. The subjects of the study included trainees and vocational tutors. 534 randomly selected trainees and 58 tutors from two tertiary institutions in Ogun State who offer vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme were used for the study. The study utilizes questionnaires and a rating scale as instruments to gather data from the trainees and tutors. The obtained data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (mean, standard deviation and t-test). The study revealed that financial resources disbursed for the effectiveness of the programme were found to be moderately adequate and utilized. It was also revealed that there is a statistical significant difference in trainees' skill acquisition in computer-science/maintenance, livestock poultry management and fashion designing since the inception of the programme. However, the study revealed that the human resources available for the programme are not adequate. Some of the recommendations made were that more tutors and non-teaching staff should be employed, faulty or worn-out facilities/equipment should be repaired or replaced and financial resources allocated to the vocational department should be reviewed upward and monitored to ensure purposeful and judicious use of such.

Introduction

Vocational and entrepreneurial skills are desirable for the development of a nation. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), the term technical and vocational

education is used to convey a comprehensive term which refers to those aspects of the educational process involving general education. It also includes the study of technologies, related sciences, and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of the economic and social life.

The policy further asserted that technical and vocational education is an integral part of the general education that serves as a means of preparing individuals for effective participation in the world of work. This is to say that technical and vocational education offers a kind of learning that provides individuals with skills needed to be effective in immediate and larger society. The policy further perceived technical and vocational education as an instrument for promoting sustainable development and a particular means of alleviating poverty. It could therefore be inferred, that the federal government recognizes the importance of vocational and entrepreneurial skills acquisition as an important tool for producing skilled individuals that are self-reliant, that can drive the nation's economy and boost the socio-political machinery of the country.

In the words of Adebukola (2005), vocational training is an act of teaching, impacting knowledge, skill, behavioural patterns and practice to an individual. She added that training is more concerned with knowledge of practices, acquisition of technical know-how, skills for operation of tools and equipment in the performance of tasks related to specific management of entrepreneurial and technical style inherent in specific process of production. It is therefore, evident that vocational skill leads to entrepreneurial skill acquisition. Also, Oni (2007) claimed that vocational education could be regarded as that aspect of education which provides the recipients with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self-employed. Vocational education nurtures skills that are necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development and thus builds a self-reliant nation (Ofoha, 2011). According to Fafunwa (1967):

It is clear that Africa's reconstruction, rebirth, and development can become a reality only when Africa is prepared to place more emphasis on technical education... We do not know of any country or nation in the world that was developed by an army of clerks and administrators... The African builder of tomorrow will be drawn from an army of skilled artisans, technicians, technologists, engineers, scientists and the like who have technical skills and good general educational background as well as millions of Africans who are also able to turn screws, wield axes and tend gardens (Fafunwa, 1967).

However, in Nigeria, the negligence of vocational and entrepreneurial skills acquisition has been identified as one of the major causes of youth unemployment and economic setback in the country (Omoruyi and Osunde, 2004; Apagu and Andural, 2007; Aworanti, 2011). Most tertiary institutions in Nigeria tend to teach and produce graduates who may be sound in knowledge based field of study but are found wanting in the area of skill acquisition. Of course, the societal demands of the nation dictate the

need for skilled manpower (Omoruyi and Osunde, 2004). For instance, the Nigerian society needs educationally and professionally qualified hands in craft of electrical and electronic repairs and installations, car repairs and servicing, tailoring, vulcanizers, carpentry and furniture, goldsmith, blacksmith among others. Most graduates produced presently in the country who are taught only in knowledge based courses without the acquisition of necessary skills, may be less needed in the economy since there are few or no vacancies for white collar-jobs (Adebukola, 2005). In this regard, Offorma (2005) lamented the growing dependence of our youths on white-collar jobs which are even difficult to come by these days. Job employers, according to her, do not emphasize certificates but what one can do. She therefore urged youths to seek self-reliance through self employment.

In Ogun state, south-western Nigeria, some higher institutions have introduced the teaching of vocational and entrepreneurial skill into their curriculum. This course was introduced not as a discipline, but to serve as supplement for students in all discipline. The tertiary institutions in Ogun state who have introduced this programme include Tai-Solarin University of Education (TASUED), and Federal College of Education Abeokuta (FCE, Abeokuta). These institutions are owned by the state and the federal governments respectively.

The Tai Solarin University of Education which was established on 29th January 2005 with the pronouncement of the transformation of the then Tai Solarin College of Education into a university of education by the former governor of Ogun State. The Tai Solarin University of Education thus became the premier university of education in Nigeria and second in Africa, after the University of Education Winneba, Ghana. The bill formally establishing the university was passed into law on 31st August 2005. The university had its first set of graduates in the year 2009. Apart from producing highly professional, academically sound, dedicated and disciplined teachers for the various levels of education in Nigeria, the university intends to make prospective graduates from the institution to be well grounded in at least one vocational skill and entrepreneurship education, further equipping the graduates to meet the challenges of self-reliance in contemporary Nigeria and the world at large. Consequently, the university established the Centre for Vocational Skills, Entrepreneurship and General Studies (CVSEGNS), in June 2005. The objective of the centre among other things is to make the students master at least one vocation that can guarantee self-reliance and equip them with the needed knowledge to make them successful entrepreneurs.

In pursuance of the above objectives, the university inculcated into its curriculum, vocational skill courses such as fashion designing and accessories, catering and confectioneries, textile designing, computer servicing and maintenance, wood work, production of fruit juice and non-alcoholic drinks, fish farming, and livestock poultry management.

On the other hand, the Federal College of Education Abeokuta was established in 1976 as the Federal Teachers College. It is the first and the oldest Tertiary Institution in Ogun

State. The College started at the then Abeokuta Grammar School, Isale-Igbein right in the centre of Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State. The Federal College of Education, Abeokuta provides three-year full time and five-year sandwich courses respectively leading to the award of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE).

In 1982, the then president-in-council approved the autonomy of the college along with other colleges under the name 'Federal College of Education'. The legal instrument for this autonomy was effected through Decree 4 (now Act) of March 14, 1986 and the Federal Colleges of Education (Amendment) Decree 6 of January 1, 1993. In line with the provision of the Act establishing the college, it is primarily established to provide full-time courses of teaching, instruction, and training in technology, applied science, commerce, arts, social sciences, humanities and management and to carry out research in the developmental and adaptation of techniques. In view of the current surge of graduate unemployment in the nation, the college has made provisions for the acquisition of vocational and entrepreneurship skill for its students, a task that is saddled to the School of Vocational Education for accomplishment.

The objective of the School of Vocational Education includes equipping NCE graduates with manipulative skills which will make them self-reliant job creators among other things.

In order to achieve the objective of the programme, there is need for necessary input to be put in place. Human, financial and material resources have to be judiciously utilized. The human resources include the vocational tutors, trainees and the non-teaching staff in the vocational and entrepreneurial department/centre of the institutions. The financial resources include the fund allocated and disbursed for vocational and entrepreneurial programme effectiveness. Also, the material resources include the physical facilities and equipment/machinery that is used for programme effectiveness. It is therefore the intent of this study, to investigate the adequacy of these inputs and their interaction which may lead to programme effectiveness.

Therefore, the study investigated trainees and tutors' perception of the effectiveness of the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme in tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Research Questions

1. How adequate are the human resources put in place for the effectiveness of the programme?
2. What is the working condition of the facilities/equipment put in place for the effectiveness of the programme?
3. Are the financial resources put in place adequate and judiciously utilized for the effectiveness of the programme?
4. Is there any significant mean difference in trainees' skill acquisition in: (a) Computer science/maintenance, (b) Livestock poultry farming and (c) Fashion designing; before and since they have started the vocational skill course?

Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature; hence, the descriptive research design was adopted using the survey research approach. This was used because the researcher reported the variables measured as it existed, without manipulating such.

Population

The target population for this study comprises of all Federal and State government tertiary institutions in Ogun State Nigeria, who have introduced vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme as a supplement to regular academic programme.

Sampling Techniques and Sample

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the purpose of this study. First, a purposive sampling technique was used to select tertiary institutions in Ogun State that have introduced the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme as a supplement to regular academic programme. These institutions must have operated the programme for at least three consecutive years. Two institutions were found to meet these criteria namely, Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun Ijebu-ode and Federal College of Education Abeokuta. Second, a purposive sampling technique was also used to select vocational courses that are common to the two institutions. Thereafter, random sampling technique was used to select three out of the nine vocational and entrepreneurial skill courses that are common to the two tertiary institutions selected. The three vocational skill courses randomly selected are computer science/maintenance, fashion designing and poultry livestock management. Third, trainees were also randomly selected to participate in the study, and all vocational skill tutors found on ground also participated in the study. The sample of the study thus included 58 tutors and 534 trainees which included 300 and 400 level students. The rationale behind using 300 and 400 level students is that they are the ones who have been consistent in the programme, having spent 3 and 4 years respectively offering the course.

Instrumentation

Two questionnaires and a rating scale designed by the researcher were used for data collection. The instruments were Vocational Trainees' Perception Questionnaire (VTPQ), Tutors' Perception Questionnaire (TPQ) and Trainees' Vocational Skill Acquisition Rating Scale (TVSARS). The VTPQ and TPQ are likert type response instruments, divided into two sections. Section A was used to obtain respondents' personal information while Section B consists of 25 and 20 items for trainees and tutors respectively. The TPQ sought the perception of the tutors while the VTPQ sought information from trainees concerning the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme in their institutions. The third instrument (TVSARS) was a rating scale that measured trainees' skill and their ability to use some tools and equipment effectively. The instruments were subjected to face validity by two research fellows of the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan. The instruments were also pilot tested on respondents outside the sample of the study. The reliability coefficient was determined, using Cronbach Alpha which was found to be 0.81 and 0.88 for

trainees and tutors questionnaire respectively while the trainees rating scale had 0.89 reliability coefficient.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed, using mean, standard deviation and paired sample t-test.

Results

The presentation of the results is in line with the order in which the research questions were stated. The results are described in tables.

Research Question 1: How adequate are the human resources put in place for the effectiveness of the programme?

Table 1: Adequacy of Human Resources as Perceived by the Tutors and the Trainees

S/N	Statements	Respondent	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1	There is adequate number of tutors in my area of specialization.	Tutors	6 (10.3)	23 (39.7)	18 (31.0)	11 (19.0)	2.41	.918
2	There is adequate number of non-teaching staff.	Tutors	4 (6.9)	20 (34.5)	24 (41.4)	10 (17.2)	2.31	.842
3	I think there is need for more tutors to be employed in my specialisation area.	Tutors	30 (51.7)	25 (43.1)	3 (5.2)	—	3.47	.599
4	The number of tutors are adequate	Trainees	136 (25.5)	249 (46.6)	111 (20.8)	25 (4.7)	2.88	.925
5	Practical sessions are held in shifts due to inadequate tutors.	Trainees	68 (12.7)	244 (45.7)	147 (27.5)	58 (10.9)	2.54	.956
6	Tutors are adequately spread among trainees for observation and guidance during practical session.	Trainees	103 (19.3)	211 (39.5)	153 (28.7)	52 (9.7)	2.63	.992
7	My vocational skill tutors are less knowledgeable.	Trainees	49 (9.2)	136 (25.5)	197 (36.9)	137 (25.7)	2.13	.988
8	There are adequate non-teaching staff in the vocational skill department	Trainees	96 (18.0)	178 (33.3)	171 (32.0)	65 (12.2)	2.48	1.06 0

Mean cut-off = 2.50

Table 1 showed the mean values obtained in respect to tutors and trainees' perception to the adequacy of human resources for the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme. The mean cut-off is 2.50. This means that any mean above 2.50 represents favourable perception for a positive worded item; also, mean below 2.50 implies favourable perception for negative worded item and vice-versa. Table 1 above revealed a divergent perception of the adequacy of human resources between tutors and trainees. However, they both agree in some aspects.

The tutors have the perception that there are no adequate tutors in the vocational department while the trainees perceived that there are adequate tutors and decline that the tutors are less knowledgeable. This is indicated by the mean value of 2.41, 2.88 and 2.13 for tutors and trainees respectively. The trainees also inclined that tutors are well spread among trainees during practical session. This has a corresponding mean of 2.63. However, both tutors and trainees inclined that there are no adequate non-teaching staff in the vocational department. This is

corresponded by a mean of 2.31 and 2.48 for tutors and trainees respectively. Furthermore, trainees perceive that practical sessions are held in shift due to inadequate tutors while tutors think there is a need to employ more vocational tutors. This is corroborated with a mean value of 2.54 and 3.47 respectively. Hence, one could correctly infer from the above result that the human resources put in place for the effectiveness of the programme is not adequate as perceived by the tutors and trainees.

Research Question 2: What is the working condition of the facilities/equipment put in place for the effectiveness of the programme?

Table 2: Working Conditions of Facilities as Perceived by Tutors and Trainees

S/N	Statements	Respondent	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1	Facilities/equipment in my vocational skill area is in good working condition.	Tutors	19 (32.8)	24 (41.4)	9 (15.5)	6 (10.3)	2.97	.955
2	Equipment is in faulty condition.	Tutors	11 (19.0)	24 (41.4)	19 (32.8)	3 (5.2)	2.71	.899
3	Equipment is due for servicing.	Tutors	5 (8.6)	7 (12.1)	36 (62.1)	10 (17.2)	2.12	.796
4	The facilities/equipment is in good working condition.	Trainees	142 (26.6)	248 (46.4)	94 (17.6)	34 (6.4)	2.87	.976
5	Most equipment are faulty	Trainees	80 (15.0)	171 (32.0)	175 (32.8)	90 (16.9)	2.43	1.393
6	All equipment is in a worn-out condition.	Trainees	64 (12.0)	147 (27.5)	212 (39.7)	97 (18.2)	2.28	.982
7	The equipment is due for servicing.	Trainees	91 (17.0)	205 (38.4)	152 (28.5)	71 (13.3)	2.54	1.013
8	Most of the equipment has not been working since we started this course.	Trainees	86 (16.1)	103 (19.3)	171 (32.0)	136 (25.5)	2.12	1.168

Mean cut-off = 2.50

Table 2 showed the mean values obtained in respect to tutors and trainees' perception of the working conditions of facilities for the effectiveness of the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme. Table 2 shows that there is a convergence between tutors and trainees' perception of the working conditions of facilities put in place for the purpose of the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme.

Both tutors and the trainees inclined that facilities and equipment are in good working conditions. This has a corresponding mean value of 2.97 and 2.87 respectively. Trainees also declined to the statements that equipment have not been working since the inception of the programme, most equipment are faulty and that equipment are in a worn-out condition. This has a mean value of 2.12, 2.43 and 2.28 respectively, which are also favourable perceptions. Tutors also decline that equipment are due for servicing with a mean value of 2.12. However, tutors incline that equipment are in faulty condition with a corresponding mean of 2.71 while trainees incline that the instruments are due for servicing with a corresponding mean of 2.54. Therefore, one may infer from

the above response that the working condition of the facilities as perceived by the tutors and the trainees is fair and at a moderate level.

Research Question 3: Are the financial resources put in place adequate and judiciously utilized for the effectiveness of the programme?

Table 3: Adequacy and Usage of Financial Resources as Perceived by Tutors

S/N	Statements	Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1	Financial resources disbursed to my area of specialisation are adequate.	Tutors	2 (3.4)	22 (37.9)	24 (41.4)	10 (17.2)	2.28	.790
2	Money disbursed for VOS are sometimes used for some other purposes.	Tutors	13 (22.4)	27 (46.6)	15 (25.9)	1 (1.7)	2.83	.920
3	Funds released for the purpose of VOS programme are judiciously used for the provision of resources.	Tutors	13 (22.4)	27 (46.6)	13 (22.4)	4 (6.9)	2.81	.926
4	Money disbursed for the VOS programme is grossly inadequate.	Tutors	4 (6.9)	16 (27.6)	23 (39.7)	15 (25.9)	2.16	.894

Mean cut-off = 2.50

Table 3 showed the mean values obtained with respect to tutors' perception of the adequacy utilization of financial resources for the effectiveness of the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme. Table 3 revealed that the financial resources disbursed for the purpose of the programme are inadequate and at times the money disbursed for vocational and entrepreneurial skill programme are diverted for some other purposes.

Though tutors agreed that funds released for the programme are judiciously used for provision of resources with a corresponding mean of 2.81, they have declined that financial resources disbursed for the programme is adequate and incline that money disbursed are sometimes used for some other purposes. This has a corresponding mean of 2.28 and 2.83 respectively. They (tutors) have also declined that the financial resources disbursed for the purpose of the vocational and entrepreneurial skill programme is grossly inadequate. This has a corresponding mean of 2.16. It could therefore be inferred from the tutors' perspective that the financial resources put in place for programme effectiveness are not adequate and the utilization of such are sometimes diverted for other purpose. The adequacy and utilization level of financial resources put in place for programme effectiveness could be said to be at the moderate level as perceived by the tutors.

Research Question 4: Is there any significant mean difference in trainees' skill acquisition in: (a) Computer science/maintenance, (b) Livestock poultry farming and (c) Fashion designing; before and since they have started the vocational skill course?

Table 4.1: (a) Mean Difference of Computer Science/Maintenance Skill Acquisition before and since Trainees started the Vocational Skill Course

Pair	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Df	P value
Before VOS	275	56.95	12.22	-13.71	274	.000*
Since VOS	275	67.23	11.42			

Table 4.1a shows that the mean value for VOS since trainees started the course (67.23) is higher than before they started the course (56.95) in computer science/maintenance.

The observed mean difference (10.28) between before and since they started the VOS is statistically significant, $t(274) = -13.71, p < .05$. This implies that trainees acquire VOS in computer science/maintenance since they have started the course than before they came in for the course.

Table 4.2: (b) Mean Difference of Livestock Poultry Farming Skill Acquisition before and since Trainees started the Vocational Skill Course

Pair	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Df	P value
Before VOS	120	43.79	8.96	-13.11	119	.000*
Since VOS	120	55.18	7.42			

Table 4.2b reveals that the mean value for VOS since trainees started VOS (55.18) is higher than that of before they came in for the course (43.79) in livestock poultry farming. The observed mean difference (11.39) is statistically significant, $t(119) = -13.11, p < .05$. This result shows that trainees have been able to acquire skill better in fashion designing since they started VOS than before they started the VOS course.

Table 4.3: (c) Mean Difference of Fashion Designing Skill Acquisition before and since Trainees started the Vocational Skill Course

Pair	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Df	P value
Before VOS	139	38.58	8.45	-7.68	138	.000*
Since VOS	139	45.83	9.82			

Table 4.3c shows that the mean of before VOS (38.58) is lesser to the mean of since VOS (45.83) in the fashion designing skill acquisition. The observed mean difference (7.25) is statistically significant, $t(138) = -7.68, p < .05$. This implies that trainees have acquired skill more in fashion designing since they started taking the vocational skill course than before they started.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study revealed from the tutors and trainees' perspective that there are inadequate human resources. It was also revealed that the working condition of the equipment/facilities are at the moderate level and that the financial resources are inadequate and may sometimes be put to use for other purposes other than the reason why they are disbursed.

However, the findings further revealed that the trainees have been able to acquire vocational and entrepreneurial skills in computer science/maintenance, livestock poultry farming and fashion designing since they have started the programme. Bearing the objectives of the programme in mind which include equipping trainees with necessary skills that could lead to their self-reliance and independence among other things, one may rightly infer that the programme has been effective as a result of the statistical significant difference observed in trainees' level of skill acquisition since they have started the programme.

Irrespective of the inadequacy in human, financial and working condition of equipment/facilities, it was discovered that the programme has been effective. This is revealed from the significant difference observed between trainees' skill acquisition before and since they started the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme.

The effectiveness of the programme in the midst of inadequate inputs may be as a result of efficient use of available resources. This finding corroborates the findings of Adebukola (2005), who found out that despite the inadequacies in the input variables of the vocational skill programme she was assessing, there was effective training outcomes as revealed by available equipment that was put to use. Congruently, in the findings of Oakley (1991), he discovered a positive relationship between training, available resources, efficiency of the process and training effectiveness.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme as introduced to supplement courses offered by students in tertiary institutions is a laudable one and a welcome development in view of its prospect of producing self-reliant and independent graduates who can drive the nation's economy forward. This will help re-focus our tertiary educational system and its curriculum which so many scholars have argued that is too knowledge oriented, laying so much emphasis on certification¹ at the detriment of skill acquisition.

The programme is capable of promoting vocational skill acquisition among undergraduates, if all input variables such as human, financial and material resources are well managed and judiciously utilized.

Recommendations

In view of the result of the study, the following recommendations were hereby proffered:

- ❖ The two institutions concerned should employ more vocational skill tutors and non-teaching staff so as to complement the efforts of the present staff and thereby bring about achievement of the programme objectives.
- ❖ Faulty equipment/facilities should be repaired and the worn-out ones should be replaced.
- ❖ There is a need for upward review of the financial resources allocated for the vocational department in the two institutions. More importantly, regular monitoring of the programme should be embarked upon. A high level of accountability should be encouraged to ensure judicious use of available financial resources and to also guarantee prudent management of such.
- ❖ Other tertiary institutions in the nation should also incorporate the vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition programme into their regular academic programme to ensure that graduates are independent and self-reliant.

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