

**SKILLS ACQUISITION OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN OGUN STATE FOR SELF-
SUSTENANCE**

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Abstract

This study examines the skills acquisition of technical and vocational education students in tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria for self-sustenance. Two purposes and research questions were formulated to guide the study. Survey research design was used for the study. The total population of the study comprised of 435 final year students of the schools selected, out of which 174 respondents were randomly selected. The institutions selected were Tai-solarin University of Education, Ijagun and Tai-Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The result of the study shows that students of TVE programme to a high extent have acquired skills in their course of study and the outlined factors truly revealed the effect of skills acquisition towards self sustenance. However, the paper recommended that higher institutions should focus on curriculum that is aimed at a growing job market and expanding the production of qualified professionals most required by industries.

Keywords: Skills Acquisition, Vocational and Technical Education, Self-Sustenance

Introduction

Nigeria like most developing nations of the world is faced with series of problems which include poverty, unemployment, conflicts and diseases. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in most developing nations thereby calling for the training of educated men and women who can function effectively in the society in which they live in. Available information by National Universities Commission (2004) reiterates the massive unemployment of Nigerian universities graduates in the country. This problem is said to be traceable to the disequilibrium between labour market requirements and lack professional employable skills by the graduates (Diajomal and Orimolade, 1991; Dabelen and Adekola, 2000). This obvious critical skill gaps inhibits the development of youths and the entire development of the nation.

The world is facing a very hard time and Nigeria as a nation cannot run away from it, rather we are to provide solutions to some of these problems facing us. Some of the major problems facing Nigeria today as a developing country include unemployment, poverty, poor healthcare services, youth restiveness, insecurity, etc. Nigeria cannot easily make headway, when yet to fully develop capacity for TVE which will help in the employability of our youths. According to Oyenuga (2003), technical and vocational education allows individual to master the combination of knowledge and skills that are the basic tools for effective and efficient work performance.

The achievements of a nation are based on advances in science, technology and raising the level of educational achievement in the general population (Hofstain & Lunetta, 2004). The United Nations recognizes this role and states that the development of effective TVE system is at the heart of global education reform efforts (UNESCO, 2004). Chunghwa (2000) in Hong Kong suggested that, from a global perspective, the framework for technological education in any nation must be drawn from a widely recognized, acceptable, national conceptualization of the role of technology in national development.

TVE is the economic force that is currently developing countries of the world. It is an employment strategy that can lead to economic self sufficiency of an individual, a community and a nation. TVE is self satisfying, self rewarding and self reliant focusing on man's ability to diversify his ideas and brainstorming in order to solve his problems. TVE is the resourcefulness to critically address economic growth of a nation like Nigeria. As an economic force, TVE create jobs for individuals that are not relying on white collar work to earn a living. It as well promotes critical thinking skill which one can translate and manipulate into creativity and be an employer of labour. With this, graduates of TVE can explore the opportunities that may arise in the world of work in terms of being an entrepreneur after graduation.

However, since the government of Nigeria is now trying to show interest in TVE, adequate information about TVE as a self-sustenance career is still lacking. Therefore, an intensive promotion of the characteristics TVE as a career that is equipped with necessary skills to put unemployment to the doldrums is imperative. The promotion of such enabling characteristics for TVE while especially revolving around the critical thinking skills of an entrepreneur will largely depend on the government policies, strategies and implementation.

To this end, it is pertinent to say that the type of skills to be acquired by the TVE students should be the skills that will be saleable in the labour market. But a gap may still exist where the level of skills of graduates fail to meet the demand required in the world of work. The presence of such skills gap puts pressures on higher education institutions in Nigeria to contemplate on how the academe can do its pivotal role of preparing the graduates to readily face the needs and challenges of the labour market especially for a graduate of TVE. Various literatures and studies confirm the need for skills suited to the requirements of the current technological advancement and global economy.

The skills are to enable an individual to engage and advance in the constantly changing demands of the work setting (CBC, 2000; Buck and Barrick, 1987; Gregson and Bettis, 1991) and to remain as an asset to employers (Buck and Barrick, 1987; Gregson and Bettis, 1991). These are skills that cut across all jobs from entry level to chief executive officer (Sherer and and Eadie, 1987) and that are necessary for both personal and career success and fundamental to good performance in the job. In today's competitive world, a degree is no longer a guarantee of employment unlike decades ago when enrolling in almost any degree program ensures a choice of employment offers in the graduating year. Mastery of content areas solely by graduates will not totally respond to employer requirements for they need transferable skills to improve their job opportunities (Fallows and Steven, 2000; Warn and Tranter, 2001; Cox and King, 2006).

Employers assert that graduates are deficient in transferable skills required of the workforce (Evers, Rush, and Berdrow, 1998; Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2003) as a result of the unsuccessful development of their employability skills during their stay in the university (Evers et al., 1998; Tymon, 2011). Employers view that graduates are not yet ready to enter and face the complexities and challenges of the world of work (Tymon, 2011; Brown et al, 2003) and such unpreparedness leads to an apparent insufficiency of skills in the work settings (Tetreault, 1997). Employers are convinced that the academe should be most responsible for equipping the graduates with generic skills. However, the skills, behaviors and attitudes needed by job entrants differ from those taught in higher education. Martin et al.

(2000) stress the predicament of universities in educating and training their students that will address the requirements of employers.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria, like most developing nations of the world is faced with myriad of problems which include poverty and unemployment. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in the country thereby calling for the training of TVE students who may function effectively in the society in which they live in by increasing their proficiency level and professional skills while in their respective workplaces.

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The study is to establish how crucial and influential the acquired skills are on the employees' task performance. Thereby bridging the gap between the demands of work and the level of skill preparation of graduates to effect better task performance and greater success in workplaces.

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Nigeria, like most developing nations of the world is faced with myriad of problems which include poverty and unemployment. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in the country thereby calling for the training of TVE students who may function effectively in the society in which they live in so that they can acquire the necessary skills that would be useful to them in work situation after graduation.

It is vital to know how proficient they are in accomplishing key technical tasks during a transition stage since they are new in the job. The study is to also establish how crucial and influential the acquired skills are on the employees' task performance. Through this, it is hoped that the critical points raised on academe and employment collaborations will be resolved, thereby bridging the gap between the demands of work and the level of skill preparation of graduates to effect better task performance and greater success in workplaces.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the skills acquisition of TVE students' for self sustenance. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the level to which TVE students acquire skills for self sustenance.
2. examine the factors that may determine the effect of skills acquisition towards self sustenance.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the course of the study in line with the specific purposes of this study:

1. To what level do TVE students acquire skills for self sustenance?
2. What are the factors that may determine the effect of skills acquisition towards self sustenance?

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey research design. The survey method enhanced the respondents to freely express their opinion on skills acquisition and factors responsible for skills acquisition.

The population for this study comprised of all 435 TVE students in the final year tertiary institutions in Ogun East Senatorial district of Ogun State, Nigeria. The total numbers of the students were as follows: Tai-Solarin University of Education, Ijagun – 289 and Tai-Solarin College of Education, Omu Ijebu - 146. The reason for using the two institutions mentioned was that they offer all the TVE courses.

A sample size of 174 TVE students was used for this study. This was selected through the purposive sampling technique of 40% in each institution. The sample is as follows: Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun – 116 and Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu Ijebu – 58.

A structured questionnaire was used for the study. The questionnaire adopted 4-point scale. The instrument was on the skills acquisition of TVE students' for self sustenance. Table 1 consists of 13 items and while table 2 consists of 6 items. Table 1 was rated as follows: Very High Level (VHL) - 4; High Level (HL) - 3; Low Level (LL) - 2 and Very Low Level (VLL) - 1. Table 2 was rated as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) - 4; Agree (A) - 3; Disagree (D) - 2 and Strongly Disagree (SA) - 1.

Face validation of the instrument was done by three VTE experts. The expert judgment was used for the final draft of the questionnaire.

The instrument was trial tested once on 20 students of Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha and it was found to be 0.79. An indication that the instrument is reliable.

For the purpose of data collection, the researchers employed two research assistants that administered the instrument. The respondents filled the questionnaire and returned immediately. The entire 174 questionnaire were returned. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

The mean ratings were interpreted as follows:

RESPONSE	POINTS	BOUNDARY LIMIT
Very High Level / Strongly Agree	4	3.50 – 4.00
High Level / Agree	3	2.50 – 3.49
Low Level / Disagree	2	1.50 – 2.49
Very Low Level / Strongly Disagree	1	0.50 – 1.49

RESULTS

Research Question 1:

To what level do TVE students acquire skills for self sustenance?

Table 1

Mean and standard deviations on the level to which TVE students acquire skills

S/N	ITEMS ON EXTENT TO WHICH TVE STUDENTS ACQUIRE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
1	Performing basic computation and approach problems with different techniques.	2.53	1.05	High Level
2	Organizing basic ideas that may be manipulated into work situation.	2.73	0.97	High Level
3	Specifying goal and constraints, generating alternatives, considering risks, and evaluating and choosing the best alternative.	2.23	0.87	Low Level
4	Organizing and processing symbols, pictures, drawings, graphs, objects and other information.	2.88	0.89	High Level
5	Acquiring and apply new knowledge and skills from multiple print and digital sources.	2.61	1.05	High Level
6	Discovering a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applying it when solving a problem.	2.94	0.91	High Level

7	Exerting a high level of effort and persevere toward goal attainment.	2.65	1.05	High Level
8	Selecting goal-relevant activities, ranking them, allocating time, and prepare and follow schedules.	2.22	0.81	Low Level
9	Acquiring and using materials for the production of new technology innovations.	2.79	1.02	High Level
10	Assessing skills and distribute work accordingly, evaluate performance and provide feedback	2.20	0.86	Low Level
11	Identifying, or solving problems with equipment, including computers and other technology	2.79	0.91	High Level
12	Organizing, processing and maintaining written or computerized records and other forms of Information	2.13	0.83	Low Level
13	Employing computers to acquire, organise, analyse and communicate information, and demonstrate some proficiency with standard software	2.96	0.88	High Level

Table 1 shows that 9 items (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11 and 13) were rated high level as skills acquired by the students while items 3, 8, 10 and 12 were rated low level.

Research Question 2:

What are the factors that may determine the effect of skills acquisition towards self sustenance?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviations on the factors that may determine the effect of skills acquisition towards self sustenance

S/N	ITEMS ON FACTORS THAT MAY DETERMINE THE EFFECT OF SKILLS ACQUISITION TOWARDS SELF SUSTENANCE	\bar{X}	SD	DECISION
1	Skills acquired in the course of the programme.	2.73	0.96	Agreed
2	Problem-solving skill and self-thinking acquired.	2.74	0.93	Agreed
3	Reflective initiative through the skill acquired.	2.89	0.85	Agreed
4	Application of the acquired skills.	2.56	0.99	Agreed
5	The more the skills one acquires on the job, the more the performances increases.	2.77	0.97	Agreed
6	Undergoing series of technical and vocational training.	2.83	0.96	Agreed

Table 2 indicates that the TVE students agreed on all the 6 items in the table as factors that may determine the effect of skills acquisition towards self sustenance.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 revealed the level of skills acquisition among TVE students in Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria and Tai Solarin College of Education (TASCE), Omu – Ijebu, Ogun State, Nigeria. The result is an indication that the level of specifying goal and constraints, generating alternatives, considering risks, and evaluating and choosing the best alternative; selecting goal-relevant activities, ranking them, allocating time, and prepare and follow schedules; assessing skills and distribute work accordingly, evaluate performance and provide feedback and organizing, processing and maintaining written or computerized records and other forms of information by the TVE students are low. With this, there is need for TVE students to fully acquire all the skills that were rated low so that they would be able to cope with the challenges in the world of work due to constant changes and development in technology in the world at large. With the result in table 1, when students are equipped with necessary skills white collar job would be irrelevant. This supported Ikegwu et al (2014) that skills acquisition help the youths to be self-reliant and independent and so reduce their reliance on white collar jobs.

In addition, students of TVE programme to a high level had acquired the necessary skills that would be useful to explore the technology improvement in the world of work. The result indicated that TVE students in the TASUED and TASCE have in no doubt acquired skills in their respective institution.

Table 2, indicated that the TVE students agreed on all the factors may determine the effect of skills acquisition towards self sustenance. This shows that when students have acquired saleable skill, it is not going to be a hidden thing. The trait will show as they would be exhibiting the works of their hands day in day out. When this happens, they would be preventing form roaming about the streets for immoral dealings. This is in agreement with Nwanaka and Amaehule (2011) that possession of skills is important in preventing youths from becoming social misfits; because the skilled person become gainfully employed through vocational training and acquisition of skills.

Conclusion

The study had shown that students of TVE programme to a high extent have acquired skills in their course of study and the outlined factors truly revealed the effect of skills acquisition towards self sustenance. TVE students in the tertiary institution can benefit from school education when they are exposed to different skills that are saleable skills in the labour market. Those students who were equipped with skills that can make them confident, self-

reliant and useful citizens would be adequately accommodated by the world of technical and vocational career and the society at large. Therefore, it is pertinent to conclude that TVE is an engine that drives vocational knowledge and skills needed for the world of work.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. The higher institutions should focus on curriculum that is aimed at a growing job market and expanding the production of qualified professionals most required by industries.
2. There should be provision for periodic retraining of the teachers to update their knowledge in the various areas of entrepreneurship and in the use of information and communication technology. This will expose them to modern trends in entrepreneurship across the globe and enhance effective teaching.
3. Lecturers should re-dedicate themselves by attending more workshops, seminars to acquaint themselves with these skills so that they can in turn, impart same in the students.
4. Nigeria educational curriculum should be re-appraised to move away from the theory based learning to more practical (hands-on) training.
5. The enabling vision and laws setting- up the Universities and Colleges of Education for TVE programmes in Nigeria should be fine-tuned and the dichotomy and discrimination of TVE graduates should be quickly resolved to encourage such graduates focus on their training to acquire the learning and skills required to drive our technological advancement dreams and take the nation to its “Eldorado”.
6. Apprenticeship schemes should be formalised in the country to enable those pursuing skills acquisition through that medium have a sense of belonging.
7. The government should make available funds for trainees to be able to set themselves up after acquiring such skills that would make them explore the world of work.

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