



Strategies and Challenges for Empowering Youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training Programme in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study investigated the strategies and challenges for empowering youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in Rivers State. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. The descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The sample size of 305 was drawn from the population of registered 3,050 youths from the three Senatorial Zones in Rivers State using snowball sampling technique. The instrument for the study was the researchers' developed questionnaire, titled, 'Strategies and Challenges for Empowering Youth and Technical Vocational Education Programme Questionnaire (SCEYTVPEQ). The questionnaire was face validated by three validates, while a reliability index of .93 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha Statistical Tool. Data collected from the respondents were analysed using mean to answer research questions, while the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings revealed that adequate awareness of vocational skills programme, development of captivating apprenticeship skill packages, the use of appropriate instructional methods and the services of qualified facilitators for training delivery were some of the strategies for empowering youth through TVET. Findings further identified some of the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies as inadequate facilities, poor funding of technical vocational education and training programme, unsuitable skills for learners, political instability and poor perception of TVET by the public. Significant difference was found in the mean ratings of youth from Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East Senatorial zones on the various strategies for empowering youth through TVET, while significant difference was not found on challenges. The researchers recommended among others that adequate publicity on the relevance of TVET be intensified by appropriate authorities to sensitize the populace especially the youth.

Keywords: Strategies, empowering, youth, technical vocational education

Introduction



In every society, education has been acknowledged by scholars as a catalyst for development. Development in this instance denotes the political, economic, socio-cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the society. Interestingly, Anaeto and Anaeto (2010) citing Totaro and Smith identified three objectives of development as thus; increased availability and widened distribution of life sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection; raised level of living in addition to higher incomes, provision of more jobs, better education and greater attention to cultural and human values to generate greater individual and national self-esteem; and expanded the range of economic and social vices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation state, but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery. These objectives corroborate with the Federal Republic of Nigeria's (2014) assertion of education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development.

National development encapsulates a multi-dimensional concept that cuts across every facet of human endeavour in the society. It involves the integration or application of skills, knowledge, competencies of individuals in improving the quality of lives within the socio-milieu. The achievement of these skills, knowledge or competencies to a large extent is dependent on functional education. To this end, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a functional education that emphasises, technological growth, self employment, self-independence, nation building, job performance, competency, life skills and life-long education. Okon, Eminue and Leema (2016) in a study on technical vocational education and training (TVET) as a panacea for alleviation of unemployment in Akwa Ibom, State, Nigeria, revealed that vocational and technical skills training has positive impact on alleviation of unemployment. This finding is not unconnected with the statement of the Federal Ministry of Education that TVET is the most effective means of empowering the citizenry to stimulate sustainable national development, enhance employment, improve the quality of lives, reduce poverty, limit the incidence of social vices due to joblessness and promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy. A cursory look at this view identifies the goals of TVET as imparting the necessary practical skills, knowledge, work habit, attitude and other values to the recipients. By imparting these skills and knowledge on the recipients, they are said to be empowered. According to the World Bank (2011), empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Significantly, the attainment of desired actions and outcomes is anchored on youth empowerment. Hence, Ibeneme (2011) posited that youth empowerment is the process of enhancing youth capacities to make choices, transform those choices into competencies that are needed for their living and contribute to the society they find themselves.

Consequently, youth occupy a prominent place in the society. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2001) affirmed that



Youth are the foundation of the societies, their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the space of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talent and labour power, a nation makes giant stride in economic development and socio-political attainment. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation on their energy. She builds her vitality and purpose, and because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured (FGN, 2001:1).

Thus, empowering youth is one of the most effective ways of helping them to reach their fullest potential as productive member of the society. Botswana Core Welfare Indicator Survey (2010) stipulated the objectives of empowering as: developing good work ethics; gaining entrepreneurship experience, attaining employment readiness; developing skills and competencies that would make them to contribute positively to their communities; fostering the development of behavioural change; and instilling some level of responsibility and accountability in them; drawing on their creativity and energy to improve the delivery of public services, reduce youth unemployment and eradicate poverty among young people. These objectives suggest that empowering youth through TVET would provide them with skills, knowledge and understanding to become productive and meaningful citizen of their nation and live productive and meaningful lives. This is also true as the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2001) rightly observed that the extent of youth vitality, responsible conduct and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country.

In pursuance of these objectives of empowering youth and the relevance of TVET, Chinedu and Olabiyi (2015) in a study on empowering Nigerian youth through technical vocational education and training (TVET) for enhancing national security revealed that horticulture, business, engineering and construction work were some of the vocational skills required by the youth. This means that empowering youth through the acquisition of these skills will enable to create avenue for wealth. Hence, Uloko and Ejinkonye (2010) revealed that empowering the youth to set up businesses involves proper acquisition of skills through education and training. Unfortunately, these skills are not often acquired by the youth owing to some challenges that inhibit the implementation of TVET programme. Some of the challenges as indicated by Nwachukwu (2014) were inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure, societal neglect of skills training, inappropriate of TVET teachers, and limited institutional and personnel capacity. To further buttress these factors identified by Okwelle and Deebom (2017) in a study revealed that inadequate training, poor facilities and acute shortage of trained teachers were some of the problems in the implementation of TVET for sustainable empowerment of youth in the Niger Delta. Okwelle and Deebom also noted that significant difference was not found in the opinion of two categories of respondents on the roles, challenges and strategies in the implementation of TVET.

Regardless of these findings, other researchers have demonstrated that youth do not participate in this programme due to the shallow means of its publication (Ohize & Adamu, 2009; Osuala, 2004). The poor participation of youth in this programme may have informed Morton and Montgomery (2013) to state that the programmes are supposed to be highly participatory, youth driven process that help young people to strengthen positive attitude, skills and behaviour that improve proper functioning across a range of live activities.



Furthermore, the inaccessibility of the programme may not have been unconnected with the poor application of different strategies for awareness creation to the youth since these studies by the various scholars could only address the relevance of VTE without necessarily looking at the strategies for acquiring the necessary skills. The absence of integration of the strategies for empowering youth in these studies has provided a gap which this present study intends to address. The thrust of this study therefore, was to critically identify the strategies for empowering youth through vocational technical Education (VTE) programme in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme has been identified as a functional education that empowers youth through the acquisition of various skills. These skills are but not limited to horticulture, business, engineering and construction work. Scholars through various studies have demonstrated the relevance of TVET in the acquisition of these skills as ways of curbing unemployment among youth. However, in spite of these studies, youth especially in Rivers State are found roaming the streets in search of means of livelihood, while others are indulged in social vices such as kidnapping, militancy, and drug abuse among others. The proliferation of crime especially among the youth in the state has given rise to question as to why TVET has not been able to equip the youth with skills for self reliance. Despite the various contributions of TVET as shown in previous studies, the scholars failed to address the strategies for empowering these youth. The none provision of these strategies has inhibited participation in TVET programme and thus disempowered the youth as evident in the high rate of unemployment among them. The absence of these studies on strategies for empowering youth through TVET has further provided a gap which this study intends to fill. The problem of this study therefore, was to investigate the strategies for empowering youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the strategies and challenges for empowering youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the various strategies for empowering youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training(TVET) programme in Rivers State.
2. determine the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies for empowering youth in Technical Vocational Education and Training(TVET) programme in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following questions were posed for the study;

1. What are the various strategies for empowering youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in Rivers State?
2. What are the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies for empowering youth in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in Rivers State?



Null Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

Ho₁ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of youth from Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East senatorial zones on the various strategies for empowering youth through TVET programme in Rivers State.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of youth from Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East senatorial zones with regard to the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies for empowering youth in TVET programme in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 3,050 registered youth in the ministry of social and youth development in 2017, from three local government areas in the three Senatorial Zones in Rivers State (Source: Rivers State Ministry of Social and Youth Development, 2017). The break down of this population shows that there were 1,170 youth from Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area (Rivers West), 850 in Opopo/Nkoro (Rivers East) and 1,030 in Eleme Local Government Area (Rivers South East Senatorial Zone). The sample size of 305 made of up 117 from Rivers West Senatorial Zone, 85 from Rivers East and 103 from Rivers South East using snowball sampling technique. Data collecting instrument was the researcher’s developed questionnaire titled, ‘Strategies and Challenges for Empowering Youth and Technical Vocational Education Programme Questionnaire (SCEYTVPEPQ). The questionnaire contained 10 items designed on a four point scale of strongly agree (4-points), Agree (3-points), Disagree (2- points) and strongly disagree (1- point). The instrument was face validated by three validates, two of which were from Department of Vocational Education, while one was from Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counselling, all from the University of Uyo. The overall reliability index of .93 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Statistical Tool to determine the reliability of the instrument. Data were analysed using the mean for research questions. The mean of 2.50 as a cut off for accepting a given item, while below 2.50 was rejected. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. A significant difference was not found in the null hypothesis when p value was greater than .05, but significant difference was found when p value was less than .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the various strategies for empowering youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on Various Strategies for Empowering Youth through TVET Programme

| S/ N | Items | RE (n = 72) | Rmk | RSE (n = 97) | Rmk | RW (n = 112) | Rmk |
|---------|-------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|
|---------|-------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|



| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 | Adequate awareness of vocational skills programme | 3.13 | Agree | 3.14 | Agree | 3.08 | Agree |
| 2 | Development of apprenticeship skills packages to captivate youth | 2.76 | Agree | 2.73 | Agree | 2.73 | Agree |
| 3 | Training content aligning with market need | 3.06 | Agree | 3.04 | Agree | 3.00 | Agree |
| 4 | Use of appropriate instructional methods by facilitators | 3.03 | Agree | 3.04 | Agree | 2.96 | Agree |
| 5 | Engagement of qualified facilitators in training delivery | 2.82 | Agree | 2.85 | Agree | 2.83 | Agree |
| | Cluster mean | 2.82 | Agree | 2.82 | Agree | 2.81 | Agree |

Legend: RE: Rivers East Senatorial Zone, RSE = Rivers South East Senatorial Zone, RW = Rivers West Senatorial Zone

Table 1 shows the mean scores of agree on items 1 to 5 from the various respondents in the three senatorial zones. The cluster mean of 2.82 for Rivers East, 2.82 for Rivers South East and 2.81 for Rivers West Senatorial Zones is an indication that adequate awareness of vocational skills programme, development of apprenticeship skill packages to captivate youth, aligning training content with market need and the use of appropriate instructional methods were some of the strategies of empowering youth through TVET programme in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies for empowering youth in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in Rivers State?

Table 2: Means Ratings of Respondents Regarding the Challenges in the Implementation of the Various Strategies for Empowering Youth in TVET Programme

| S/N | Items | RE = 72 | Rmk | RSE (n =97) | Rmk | RW (n = 112) | Rmk |
|-----|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | Inadequate facilities | 3.19 | Agree | 3.10 | Agree | 3.05 | Agree |
| 2 | Poor funding of vocational technical education programme | 3.15 | Agree | 3.21 | Agree | 3.14 | Agree |
| 3 | Type of skills available for learners | 3.06 | Agree | 2.96 | Agree | 2.94 | Agree |
| 4 | Political instability | 3.01 | Agree | 3.07 | Agree | 3.01 | Agree |
| 5 | Poor perception of public about vocational technical education | 3.01 | Agree | 2.94 | Agree | 2.93 | Agree |
| | Cluster mean | 3.08 | Agree | 3.05 | Agree | 3.01 | Agree |

Data on Table 2 indicate that items 1(3.19, 3.10, 3.05), 2 (3.15, 3.12, 3.14), 3(3.06, 2.96, 2.94), 4(3, 01, 3.07, 3.01) and 5(3.01, 2.94, 2.92) have mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, hence, agree for all the respondents in the three sensorial zones in Rivers State. With the cluster mean of 3.08 for River East, 3.05 for Rivers South East and 3.01 for Rivers West, the Table 2 shows that inadequate facilities, poor funding of VTE programme,



unsuitable skills as well as poor perception of the public about VTE programme were some of the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies for empowering youth in Rivers State.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of youth from Rivers East, Rivers West and River South East Senatorial Zones on the various strategies for empowering youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in Rivers State.

Table 3: A One way ANOVA showing the Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Various Strategies for Empowering Youth in TVET Programme in Rivers State

| Variable | Sum of squares | Mean square | F | Sig. Value | Level of Sig. | Decision |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|------|------------|---------------|----------|
| Between Groups | 1.28 | .64 | 6.59 | .00 | .05 | S |
| Within Groups | 27.04 | .01 | | | | |

Table 3 shows that the p value (.00) is less than the significant value of .05, hence, the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that significant difference was found in the mean ratings of youth responses from Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East Senatorial Zones on the various strategies for empowering youth through TVET programme in Rivers State. Thus, the alternate hypothesis is upheld.

Multiple Comparisons

Table 4: Post Hoc Tests on Strategies for Empowering Youth Through TVET

Tukey HSD

| Senatorial Zones | (J) Senatorial Zones | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Rivers East | Rivers South East | -.17050* | .04851 | .001 | -.2848 | -.0562* |
| | Rivers West | -.13234* | .04711 | .015 | -.2433 | -.0213* |
| Rivers South East | Rivers East | .17050* | .04851 | .001 | .0562 | .2848* |
| | Rivers West | .03816 | .04326 | .652 | -.0638 | .1401 |
| Rivers West | Rivers East | .13234* | .04711 | .015 | .0213 | .2433* |
| | Rivers South East | -.03816 | .04326 | .652 | -.1401 | .0638 |



Table 4 shows the mean difference of youth responses in the three Senatorial Zones. The Table further indicates that the mean scores of youth in Rivers East were significantly different from those of Rivers South East and Rivers West.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of youth from Rivers East, River West and Rivers South East Senatorial zones with regard to the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies in the implementation of the various strategies for empowering youth in TVET programme in Rivers State.

Table 5: A One way ANOVA showing Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Challenges in the Implementation of the Various Strategies for Empowering Youth in TVET Programme

| Variable | Sum of squares | Mean square | F | Sig. Value | Level of Decision Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|------|------------|------------------------|
| Between Groups | .27 | .14 | 1.29 | .28 | .05 |
| Within Groups | .28 | .11 | | | NS |

Analysis in Table 5 shows that the significant value of .28 was greater than the level of significance of .05. This means that significant difference was not found in the mean ratings of respondents from Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East Senatorial Zones with regard to the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies for empowering youth in TVET programme in Rivers State. This implies that youth from the three Senatorial Zones have similar views on the challenges in the implementation of the various strategies, hence the retention of the null hypothesis.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from Research Question 1 show that there were various strategies for empowering youth through TVET programmes in Rivers State. Respondents indicated that adequate awareness of vocational skills programme and the use of appropriate instructional methods by facilitators were some of the strategies identified. It is not unlikely that the use of right channel of sensitisation will trigger participation of youth in TVET programme. This is supported by Morton and Montgomery (2013) that youth programmes should be highly participatory and youth driven. This is true since the youth are found to occupy prominent place in the development of any society. Adequately engaging them in the acquisition of various skills will promote self-independence and economic growth of the society. The



findings further revealed that the engagement of qualified facilitators in training delivery was also identified as one of the strategies for empowering youth. In line with this, Okwelle and Deebom (2017) identified shortage of trained teachers as one of the problems in implementation of TVET for sustainable empowerment of youth in Niger Delta. This is also not unconnected with the fact that the provision of adequate number of staff especially trained TVET teachers will facilitate the marketability of TVET programme and its delivery. Thus, enhancing the sensitisation of the programme to the populace.

In Research Question 2, several challenges were shown to have inhibited the implementation of the various strategies for empowering youth in TVET programme in Rivers State. Respondents indicated inadequate facilities and poor funding as some of the challenges. Obviously the absence of adequate facilities makes learning boring thus, limiting participation of youth in TVET programme. The finding is further supported by Okwelle and Deedom (2017) that inadequate facilities inhibit implementation of TVET programme. Poor perception of public about TVET programme also constituted a challenge in the implementation TVET programme. It is not unlikely that the poor perception accorded to the programme by the public may have reduced participation. In agreement with this finding, Ohize and Adamu (2009) reported that youth do not participate in this programme due to the shallow means of its publication. This means that adequate provision of resources in TVET programme is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of the programme. With the provision of these resources, the nitty crittyof the programme is brought to limelight for people to access, thus resulting to the attainment of its stipulated objectives.

Findings further revealed that significant difference was found in the mean ratings of respondents from Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East Senatorial Zones on the various strategies for empowering youth through TVET programme in Rivers State. The existence of significant difference is an indication that respondents have diverse views on strategies adopted for empowering youth. On the other hand, significant difference was not found in terms of challenges. This further presupposes that respondents have similar views on contributing factors to implementing the various strategies.

Conclusion

In view of the findings, it was concluded that adequate awareness of vocational education programme, the development of captivating apprenticeship skill packages, utilisation of appropriate instructional methods and services of qualified facilitators were some of the strategies for empowering youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training programme in Rivers State. Inhibiting factors to the implementation of the various strategies were inadequate facilities, poor funding of technical vocational education and training programme, political instability and poor perception of programme by the public.

Recommendations

Based on the finds of this study, the following recommendations were made.



1. Adequate publicity on the relevance of technical vocational education and training programme should be intensified by National Business and Technical Examinations Board to sensitise the populace especially the youth.
2. TVET Administrators in Education Ministry should ensure facilitators are properly trained with various instructional methods on inculcating the skills to the learners.
3. Funds should adequately be provided by TVET administrators in Education Ministry for the procurement of facilities that will encourage greater participation of youth in vocational technical education programme.

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