

Constraints and Strategies for Enhancing Female Enrolment in Vocational and Technology Education Programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study seeks to determine constraints and strategies for enhancing female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. This study adopted the survey research design. Population of the study is made up of six hundred and eighty (680) students in the 2015/2016 regular undergraduate students in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. Simple random sampling technique was adopted and a sample size of one hundred and fifty (150) female students was used for this study. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Constraints and Strategies for Improving Students Enrolment in Vocational and Technology Education Programme". The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. It was observed that a wide enrolment gap of male and female students in vocational and technology education programme exists. Based on the findings the following recommendations are made: Federal and State Governments should as a matter of urgency convoke a conference of stake holders in education and women leaders to address the conspicuous gap existing between males and females in Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and chart the way forward; Wives of State Governors should establish women organization in technology to serve as a platform to attract fund and provide adequate sensitization of benefits to female in Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

KeyWords: Constraints, Strategies, Female Enrolment, Vocational And Technology Education Programme, Niger Delta University

Introduction

Education plays an important role in the socio-economic development of a nation. Often, governments commit huge investments to educational projects and programme in order to realize its intended benefits. Notwithstanding improved access to education, females' participation in education in most developing countries are still characterized by disparities.

There has been gender disparity against females. Females have less access (opportunities) to education in Nigeria as compared to males. Females in the context of this study denote girls and women. As observed by Robert, (2005) and Okeke, (2002), fewer girls enroll and complete their education than boys.

Education in the opinions of Igbinedion and Ojeaga (2012) is a veritable means of progress for nations and individuals. Also, Okebukola (2012) aligning with the views of Igbinedion and Ojeaga, opined that education is a process of updating the knowledge and skills of the individual that will be useful to himself or herself and to the community.

Consequently, Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies, related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (UNESCO & ILO, 2002).

Furthermore, Okeke (2005) citing Aina (2006) opined that since the introduction of technical and vocational education in Nigeria educational system some years ago, participation in technical and vocational education programmes has remained low. More so, Yakubu (2006) reported that the total enrolment figure into technical and vocational education programmes in Nigeria as at year 2006 was less than three percent (3%). He further stated that, this figure in comparison with countries target about fifty percent (50%) participation in technical and vocational education. According to Ozioma (2011) the Federal Government wants technical education to occupy a prominent position in our schools; Nigerian schools pay little or no attention to technical education, teachers and students seem not to understand what it is all about and consequently develop some contempt and aversion for technical courses and subjects, teachers, and students now makes technical education to be unhealthy. However, many of the occupation and trades in technical education are regarded as ignoble and unbecoming, an average Nigerian parents does not want their son or daughter to earn a living as a full time farmer, plumber, brick/block layer, carpenter and auto-motor mechanic. For many Nigerians, these trades are for the poor and underprivileged (Ozioma, 2011).

The factors affecting participation of females in technical and vocational education programmes according to Ayonmike (2010); Igbinedion and Ojeaga (2012) are poor societal

perception, poor entry level, lack of recognition and discrimination against graduates of technical vocational education (TVE). According to Ediagbonya, Agbaje and Suberu (2012) posited that the inadequacies of facilities/infrastructural materials, qualified teachers and career counselors have equally not helped out in boosting participation of female in technical and vocational programmes. Furthermore, researches by Olaitan (1992), Amaewhule (2000), Oranu (2003) Aina (2006), Hubert (2006), and Yakubu (2006) identified the major factors affecting participation of female in technical and vocational education to include among others; low societal estimation of technical and vocational education as education for lowest class people education for last resort, for people of low intelligent quotient (IQ), low achievers and low status occupation as well as lack of career awareness in technical and vocational education.

Statement of the Problem:

The participation of female in vocational and technical education programmes in Nigeria institutions is very poor when compared to enrollment in general education programmes (Olaitan, 1992; Amaewhule, 2000; Oranu, 2003; Aina, 2006; Hubert, 2006; & Yakubu, 2006). Despite successive governments' efforts directed at improving Technical Education at all levels to make vocational and technical education attractive and sellable, gender gap still exist. Therefore, this study is set out to identify constraints and strategies for improving female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

Purpose of the Study:

The study seeks to identify;

- i. The constraints on female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa state.
- ii. The strategies to be adopted to enhance females' enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

- i. What are the constraints on female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa state?

- ii. What are strategies to be adopted to enhance females' enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa state?

Methodology:

This study adopted the survey research design. Population of the study is made up of six hundred and eighty (680) students in the 2015/2016 regular undergraduate students in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. The simple random sampling technique was adopted and a sample size of one hundred and fifty (150) female students was used for this study. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Constraints and Strategies for Improving Students Enrolment in Vocational and Technology Education Programme". The questionnaire is on four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D) with a corresponding weight of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The questionnaire was faced validated by three experts in measurement and evaluation in the department teacher education, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State and possible corrections were made as directed by the experts. The questionnaires were administered to twenty (20) students of the department who were not part of the sample under study. The Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability using test-retest method which yields 0.71. This result implies that the instrument is reliable. The researcher administered the questionnaires on the students and collected the questionnaires on the spot which yield a hundred percent return rate. The mean and standard deviation was used to analyze data for the research questions. However, the decision point was 2.50. This implies that any response with 2.50 and above is regarded as agreed, while mean response below 2.50 is regarded as disagreed.

Presentation of Results

Research question 1

What are the constraints on female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Mean responses of the respondents on constraints on female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

S/N	Constraints	X	S.D	Remarks
1.	Lack of female teachers	3.63	0.53	Agreed
2.	Peer group influence to follow the status quo such as early marriage	3.36	0.66	Agreed
3.	Lack of appropriate vocational guidance and career counseling	3.47	0.59	Agreed
4.	Situational challenge such as lack of partner's support	3.28	0.75	Agreed
5.	Security challenges in Amassoma community	3.34	0.64	Agreed
6.	Parental perceptions of costs/benefits of educating girls	2.89	0.97	Agreed
7.	absence of female role models	2.92	0.90	Agreed
8.	Poor training and retraining programme for vocational technical education teachers and instructors	3.37	0.75	Agreed

Data presented in Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed on all the items as constraints on female enrolment in vocational and technology programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. The mean values range from 2.89-3.63 and standard deviation of 0.53 – 0.97 which indicates that the respondents were close together in their responses.

Research question 2

What are the strategies to be adopted to enhance female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Mean responses of the respondents on strategies for enhancing female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

S/N	Strategies	X	S.D	Remarks
1.	Establishment of formal and non-formal female skill acquisition centres	3.34	0.64	Agreed
2.	Employment of female trainers from other states to serve as role models	2.89	0.97	Agreed
3.	Creating conducive environment for practicing female entrepreneurs to transact their businesses	2.92	0.90	Agreed
5.	Advocacy by government and policy makers for implementation	3.37	0.75	Agreed

	of females oriented Technical and Vocational programme			
6.	Career guidance and counseling on Technical and Vocational programme be provided to all female students	3.36	0.66	Agreed
7.	Implementation of the affirmative policies in favour of females, especially with admission, employment and appointment	3.47	0.59	Agreed
8.	Promoting synergy between girls' education and poverty alleviation programme	3.28	0.75	Agreed

Data presented in Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed on all the items as strategies for enhancing female enrolment in vocational and technology programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. The mean values range from 2.89- 3.63 and standard deviation of 0.53–0.97 which indicates that the respondents were close together in their responses.

Discussion

In Table 1, it was found that there are constraints on enhancing female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. Some of these constraints include; Lack of female teachers, absence of female role models, Peer group influence to follow the status quo such as early marriage, Lack of appropriate vocational guidance and career counseling, Situational challenge such as family commitments, lack of partner's support, Poor training and retraining programme for vocational technical education teachers and instructors. This is in agreement with Evans (1995) and United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) (2002) that female in TVET can only be enhanced through tackling all these challenges.

The findings presented in Table 2 show the strategies that would enhance female enrolment in vocational and technology programmes in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. The respondents agreed with all the strategies identified. This is in line with Obaji (2005) that raising national awareness on girl child education and commitment by government and stakeholders to female enhanced TVET programme through advocacy and sensitization of policy makers at all levels, parents, school authorities, other leaders and girls themselves among others would enhance the enrolment of females in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there was still a lot to be done by government and other stakeholders to enhance female enrolment in vocational and technology education programme in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. Based on the findings the following recommendations are made:

1. Federal and State Government should as a matter of urgency convoke a conference of stake holders in education and women leaders to address the conspicuous gap existing between males and females in Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and chart the way forward.
2. Wives of State governors should establish women organization in technology to serve as a platform to attract fund and provide adequate sensitization of benefits to female in Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
3. Money should be earmarked by Federal and State Government and other stakeholders in education and technological development to ensure effective running of female in TVET programme.
4. Implementation of the affirmative action policies should be done in favour of females, especially when it has to do with admission, employment, appointment and other incentives.

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