Ways of Repositioning Vocational and Technical Education Programme in Senior Secondary Schools of Niger State.

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Abstract

The Study was designed to determine ways of repositioning Vocational and Technical Education at senior secondary school level in Niger State. Specifically the study assessed Vocational and Technical Education subjects offered in senior secondary schools .problems facing Vocational and Technical Education in senior secondary schools and ways to reposition Vocational and Technical Education in senior secondary schools of Niger State. Three research questions and two hypotheses were formulated based on these to guide the study and the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research was adopted to seek the views of 212 Administrators/ Teachers and 558 students of senior secondary schools in Niger State using simple random sampling technique. A 32- item questionnaire was developed by the researchers and validated by experts in Industrial and Technology Education and used for data collection. Mean, standard deviation and Z- test were used to analyze the data. The findings from the study revealed that only 2 technical subjects were offered in senior secondary schools, poor funding, shortage of teachers were the problems hindering the implementation of the programme. Aiso, some ways of repositioning VTE were identified. Based on these findings it was recommended among others that; Vocational and Technical Education programme in National Policy of Education should be fully implemented in senior secondary schools and there should be adequate public enlightenment campaign on the importance of the vocational and technical education as a tool for National Development.

Introduction

Before the coming of missionaries and colonial masters, our ancestors were engaged in various forms of vocational training; because they are of believe that individual must be skillfully developed to contribute positively in the society which he or she lives in. Umoh and Nkuma (2003) opined that learning and practice of vocational skills such as blacksmithing, weaving, building, leather working, clothing dying, cooking, hair plating, farming and others have been on with the people, before formal system of vocational education. These skills are usually transferred from parents to their children and also through apprenticeship. Vocational education as a formal education came to formalize the old system of vocational training. Mogajin (1998) described vocational education as an education which significantly contributes to the manpower needs of a nation. Mogajin further stressed that vocational education is a total experience of the individual whereby he learns to successfully carry on a gainful occupation and to participate effectively in the National economy. Esene and Agbobu (1997) see vocational and technical education as an economic education as it is geared to the needs of the job market and thus contributes to National economy system. Vocational and technical education is a form of education which emphasizes the development of occupational skills needed as preparation for work. It promotes the dignity of labour by entrenching work as the goal of education (Nanpon, 2008). Uwaifo (2009) stated that vocational and technical

education provides various avenues for discovering and developing the individual's potential for work. It has a broadening effect, which motivates learners to be more exploratory, realize their capabilities and develop their potentials for success in the world of work. Forshey (1970) in Uwaifo (2009) opined that there is a very good reason for young people to begin the process of being productive in the world as soon as they are capable of doing so. This is simply what vocational and technical education opts to do.

Nigerian needs a type of education that will prepare individuals for a productive life in a world that needs best possible contribution from every person. Vocational and technical education which in its real meaning is, preparation for career or for one's calling in life. Therefore, our educational system should welcome vocational technical education as a major factor in determining a new path which lies in the development and management of technology and future progress of the Nation. For Nigerian's economy to be positively channeled in this 21st centaury, vocational and technical education should be accorded priority in our educational system (Nanpon, 2008). FRN (2004) defined secondary education as the education children received after primary education and before tertiary education. It has its broad goals as preparing the individual for useful living within the society and higher education. Okoro (1993) averred that one of the main objectives of the National policy of education is to make senior secondary school leavers immediately employable by including technical, commercial and other vocational courses into the senior secondary programme. Okoro, said the objective is based on two assumptions:

i. That the major reason why most secondary school leavers are unemployed is that they have no vocational skills.

ii. That the senior secondary schools can teach the necessary skills thus ensuring mass employment of school leavers.

In support to this, Moja (2000) in his analysis on Nigeria education sector, stated that prior to 1982 Nigeria secondary schools system prepared students for numeracy and literacy education. A scarcity of jobs to high unemployment and a high failure rate that proved to be expensive for the state, form the new structure of education system which includes vocational and technical education in secondary school curriculum. The objective of secondary education according to FRN (2004) in related to vocational and technical education includes:

i. to offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talent, opportunity and future roles;

ii. to provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professionals grades; and

iii. to provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agriculture, industrial, commercial and economic development.

The senior secondary school subjects are grouped into three, core subjects, vocational electives and non electives. The vocational electives subject include among others, Agriculture Science, Applied electricity, Auto-mechanic, Building construction, Clothing and Textile Fine Art, Technical Drawing and others.

Osuji (2004) lamented that, the percentages of transition from secondary education to tertiary education from 1996 – 2002 were below 20 percent for each year. The questions we need to put to heart are; where are remaining people not admitted? And what are they doing? Nanpon (2008) observed that many Nigerians have lost faith in school because of the failure of the school to guarantee the good life for those who have received learning. Okorie (2001) opined that the major aim of secondary education in Nigeria is to train one to be resourceful so that by the time of graduation they will be able to work and be useful to themselves and the society. But reverse was the case, about 60 percent of youth who are mostly secondary school leavers remained unemployed, because they lack necessary skills needed for employment. Today in Nigeria, the high incidence of school dropout among secondary school students clearly highlights the importance of career development, which is achievable through vocational and technical education These students who could not fit into the academic oriented curriculum would need practical skill to enable them function profitably in the society. Secondly, the graduates from these existing schools system invariably enter the job market seeking employment that does hardly exist in this country today. To draw the majority of these job seekers out of the unemployment market, vocational and technical training in secondary school become the most potent elixir (Uwaifo, 2009).

Okorie and Ezeji (1988) stressed that development programmes cannot be executed without skilled manpower. However, the amount of skill required depends on the current level of development. The economic development at a satisfactory rate is likely to be very difficult in Nigeria unless our educational efforts are geared towards a massive education for skills development. Iyaji, (2005) lamented that the backwardness of Nigeria technologically and the alarming rate of unemployment are consequences of low emphasis on vocational and technical education. To combat the menace facing the State and the entire National in term of unskilled secondary school leavers there is need to reposition Vocational and Technical Education in senior secondary schools of Niger State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of study was to ascertain the ways of repositioning Vocational and Technical Education in senior secondary schools of Niger State. Specifically the study assessed;

1. vocational and Technical Education subjects offered in senior secondary schools of Niger State.

2. the problems hindering effective implementation of vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools of Niger State.
3. the ways of repositioning vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools of Niger State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What vocational and technical education subjects are offer in senior secondary schools of Niger State?
2. What are the problems hindering effective implementation of vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools of Niger State?
3. What are the ways of repositioning vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools of Niger State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the $p < .05$ level of significance.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Administrators/ Vocational and Technical Education Teachers and Students of senior secondary schools on ways of repositioning vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools of Niger State.

Ho2 There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Administrators/ Vocational and Technical Education Teachers and Students problems hindering effective implementation of vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools of Niger State.

Methodology

Survey research design was used for this study. The population of the study consists of Administrators/ Teachers and Students of senior secondary schools in Niger state, 600 students and 225 Administrators/teachers were sampled using Simple Random Sampling technique from each geo-political zone. A structured questionnaire was developed by the researchers and used in collecting data. The questionnaire has four points rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagreed. 825 copies of questionnaires were distributed to Administrators/Teachers and Students and 770 copies were returned, 212 Administrators/Teachers and 568 students. The data collected were analyzed using Mean, Standard deviation and Z-test. The cut-off of Mean was fixed at 2.50, therefore any item that had a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as agreed while below was considered

disagreed. For testing hypothesis the value of the Z-critical is 1.96, so if Z-calculated is equal or less that Z-critical it was considered significant and above was considered not significant.

Results

Research Question 1

What vocational and technical education subjects are offer in senior secondary schools of Niger State?

Table 2

Mean Responses of Administrators/ Teachers and Students on Vocational and Technical Education Subjects offered in Senior Secondary Schools of Niger State.

N_1= 212 and N_2 = 568

S/N	ITEM	$\overline{X_1}$	$\overline{X_2}$	$\overline{X_t}$	Remarks
1	Agriculture Science	3.68	3.77	3.73	Agreed
2	Applied Electricity	1.06	1.41	1.42	Disagreed
3	Auto Mechanics	1.08	1.32	1.20	Disagreed
4	Building Construction	1.05	1.34	1.20	Disagreed
5	Computer Education	1.86	2.38	2.12	Disagreed
6.	Fine Art	1.02	1.32	1.20	Disagreed
7	Home Economics	2.58	2.60	2.59	Agreed
8	Metal Work	1.11	1.23	1.17	Disagreed
9	Music	1.16	1.01	1.09	Disagreed
10	Technical Drawing	2.29	2.41	2.35	Disagreed
11	Type Writing	1.03	1.42	1.23	Disagreed
12	Wood Work	1.01	1.21	1.16	Disagreed

N_1 and N_2, Number of Administrators/Teachers and Students; $\overline{X_1}$ =Mean responses of Administrators/Teachers; $\overline{X_2}$ = Mean responses of Students

$\overline{X_t}$ = Mean responses of all respondents.

The Table 1 revealed that majority of items were disagreed as the Vocational and Technical Education subjects offered in senior secondary schools and respondents jointly agreed with item 1 and 7 as the only Vocational and Technical Education subject's offers in senior secondary schools in Niger State.

Research Question 2

What are the problems hindering effective implementation of vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools of Niger State?

Table 2.
Mean Responses of Administrators/Teachers and Students on the Problems Hindering Effective Vocational and Technical Education in Senior Secondary Schools of Niger State.

N_1= 212 and N_2 = 568

S/N	ITEM	$\overline{X_1}$	$\overline{X_2}$	$\overline{X_t}$	Remarks
1	Poor funding of secondary education	3.65	3.24	3.43	Agreed
2	Negative society attitude towards vocational education	3.72	3.81	3.77	Agreed
3	Shortage of vocational guidance counselor	3.68	3.72	3.70	Agreed
4	Ineffective teaching of pre- vocational subjects	3.82	3.64	3.77	Agreed
5	Ill equipped library with Vocational and technical education text books	3.32	3.52	3.42	Agreed
6	Lack of vocational and technical education workshops/laboratories in schools.	2.65	2.74	2.70	Agreed
7	Scarcity of qualified and skilled vocational and technical education teachers.	2.58	2.60	2.59	Agreed
8	Large number of students per class.	2.71	2.83	2.80	Agreed
9	Shortage of electric power supply.	3.50	3.68	3.59	Agreed
10	Poor maintenance culture on part of Administrators, Teachers and students	3.66	2.61	3.14	Agreed

N_1 and N_2, Number of Administrators/Teachers and Students; $\overline{X_1}$ =Mean responses of Administrators/Teachers and Students; $\overline{X_2}$ = Mean responses of Students

$\overline{X_t}$ = Mean responses of all respondents.

Table 2 revealed that the respondents jointly agreed with all items as problems hindering effective implementation of vocational and technical education programmes in senior secondary schools of Niger State.

Research Question 3

What are the ways of repositioning vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools of Niger State?

Table 3
Mean Responses of Administrators/Teachers and Students on Ways of Reposition Vocational and Technical Education in Senior Secondary Schools of Niger State

N_1= 212 and N_2 = 568

S/N	ITEM	$\overline{X_1}$	$\overline{X_2}$	$\overline{X_t}$	Remarks
1	Adequate public enlightenment campaign on the importance of Vocational Technical education.	3.64	3.38	3.42	Agreed
2	Organization Career days in schools regularly.	3.42	3.20	3.31	Agreed
3	Employment of vocational guidance counselor	3.68	3.74	3.81	Agreed
4	Effective teaching of pre- vocational subjects	3.05	3.61	3.33	Agreed
5	Equipped library with Vocational and technical education text books	2.86	2.88	2.87	Agreed
6	Building of vocational and technical education workshops/laboratories in schools.	3.68	3.78	3.71	Agreed
7	Training of qualified and skilled vocational and technical education teachers.	2.58	2.60	2.59	Agreed
8	Large number of students per class.	3.11	3.23	3.17	Agreed
9	Effective of electric power supply.	3.16	3.01	3.09	Agreed
10	Positive maintenance culture on part of Administrators, Teachers and students	3.29	3.41	3.35	Agreed

N_1 and N_2, Number of Administrators/Teachers and Students; $\overline{X_1}$ =Mean responses of Administrators/Teachers; $\overline{X_2}$ = Mean responses of Students $\overline{X_t}$ = Mean responses of all respondents.

Table 3 shows that the respondents agreed to all items ranging from 2.75- 3.81 as a ways to reposition vocational and technical education programmed in senior secondary schools of Niger state.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 4

Z-test Analysis of administrators/Teachers and Students on Mean Responses Problems Hindering Effective Implementation Vocational and Technical Education in Senior Secondary School of Niger State

(P< .05).

Respondents	Standard Deviation	Z- Cal	Z- Critical	Remark
Administrators/Teachers	10.08			
		0.08	1.96	No Significant
Students	8.12			

Table 4 revealed that calculated Z does not exceed the Z- critical value; this signified that there is no significant difference between the means responses of Administrators/ Teachers and Students on problems hindering effective implementation vocational and Technical education in senior secondary school of Niger state.

Table 5

Z-test Analysis of Administrators/Teachers and Students on Ways of Reposition Vocational and Technical Education in Senior Secondary School of Niger state

(P< .05).

Respondents	Standard Deviation	Z- Cal	Z- Critical	Remark
Administrators/Teachers	14.11			
		0.26	1.96	No Significant
Students	13.68			

Table 4 revealed that calculated Z does not exceed the Z- critical value; this signified that there is no significant difference between the means responses of Administrators/ Teachers and Students on ways to reposition vocational and Technical education in senior secondary school of Niger state.

Findings/ Discussions

The analysis of findings in Table 1 revealed that the respondents disagreed with majority of the items as subjects offers in senior secondary schools of Niger state and they agreed that the students offers Agriculture Science and Home Economics as the Vocational and Technical Education subjects. The findings of this study are not coming as surprise because Okorie and Ezeji (1988) and Iyaji (2005) in their works observed that there is low emphasis on vocational and Technical Education in our secondary schools which led to high rate of unemployed among the secondary school leavers thereby causes social menace in our society.

The findings are not in consonance with Okoro (1993) and FRN (2004) which stated that to make secondary school leavers immediately employable technical and vocational education courses must be included in their curriculum. The analysis on the findings regarding the factors hindering effectiveness of vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools revealed that schools are poorly funded, negative societal attitudes towards the programme and poor maintenance culture of the facilities. Orikpe (1994) and Ukut (2004) cited in Isaac (2005) which they lamented that the teaching and learning of vocational and technical education programmes is been challenged numerous problems which hinders it effectiveness. Some of the hindrances outlined were poor funding of the programme which they tagged as the major factor hindering it effectiveness, negative societal attitude towards the programme as people sees it as education for those who cannot coped with general education and people usually shows non- challant attitude toward government property (Saba, 2006).

The findings regarding ways to reposition vocational and technical education in senior secondary schools among others are; adequate public enlightenment campaign on the importance of vocational technical education, employment of vocational guidance counselor in schools and Workshops/Laboratories should be built and equipped with up-to-date equipment. In support of these findings, Ezeabikwa (2005) in his work recommended that for our nation to move forward technologically and economic wise there should be sanctions for non implementation of vocational technical education programmes in our senior secondary schools. Nanpon (2008) supported that Government should also be committed and pragmatic in the implementation of the vocational elements in JSS and SSS levels. He further stressed that for proper teaching of vocational technical education courses up-to-date equipment and material should be made available and the students can be motivated through interaction with well qualified career guidance counsellors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. It has become a fact that Nigerians are good in planning but failed to implement what they have planned effectively and for Niger state to develop technologically. Vocational and technical education programme in the Nation Policy of Education should be fully implemented in the senior secondary schools of Niger state.
2. The negative perception of society towards vocational and technical education ought to be changed by the Niger State Government through public enlightenment campaign on the importance of the vocational and technical education to national development.
3. The Niger State Government and Stakeholders should make resources available in building vocational and technical education workshops/laboratories in the schools and it should be fully equipped with up- to- date equipment and machines for proper skill acquisition.

4. Communities and NGO's should partner with the Niger State Government to fund vocational and technical education programmes.

Conclusion

It is easier for a Carmel to pass through the eye of the needle than any nation to have meaningful industrial and technological development without training her citizens in skill. The more skill training the citizens of a nation receives the more develops the nation becomes in terms of industrial technology and economic growth. Therefore Niger state must wake up from sleep and implement the vocational and technical education programmes in secondary schools curriculum with proper funding of the programme that will make the nation free from all the menace caused by unemployed senior secondary school leavers.

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