

Problems of Vocational Teacher Education in Rivers State of Nigeria

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Abstract *The establishment of Technical/Vocational teacher training institution hinges on the need for adequate vocational teachers/manpower in the educational sector. This paper identified problems facing vocational teacher education in Rivers state. The population of the study is vocational students at tertiary level in the state. Sample of 288 was derived from vocational NCE Students and post NCE students in proportion of 150 and 138 respectively in two tertiary institutions in the state. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Frequency, percentage and chi-Square (X²) were used to analyse the data collected. Results show that there are significant differences on the perception of problems such as poor planning, lack of political will, poor infrastructure and ineffective SIWES in the implementation of vocational teacher trainee programmes.*

Keywords: *Problems, challenges, vocational, teacher and student.*

Introduction

Introduction of technical and vocational education in Nigeria was envisaged as a panacea to technological competence in the educational system and reduction in the unemployment market, yet up till now there are high visible problems. According to Nwoke (1980) National Technical Teachers College (NTTC) now Federal College of Education (technical) Akoka-Yaba, Lagos which was established in 1967 was the first organised training of technical/vocational teachers in Nigeria. The technological progress and development of a country is dependent on the technical and vocational training given to Technical and Vocational Education Teachers. Mbanefo and Bamiro (1989) noted that Nigeria experienced a long history of technical teachers shortage in quantity and quality because there were only two Federal Technical Teacher Colleges in Yaba in Lagos and Gombe in Bauchi State. Adah (2007) said the introduction of technical/vocational subjects in the 6.3.3.4 propels the demand for technical/vocational teachers hence the establishment many to run technical teacher education programmes to award NCE and above.

Though, there was foreign assistance, the need for intensive local trainings of technical/vocational teachers led to the establishment of nine more Federal Technical Colleges and two Colleges of Education (Technical) in Omoku, Rivers State and Potiskum in Borno State in 1989. This emerging necessity gave birth to technical and vocational institutions hence the need to train competent and skill teachers in the vocational technical sub-sector of the Nigerian educational system. Training and re-training in the field of Technical Vocational Education is very necessary in a fast growing technical and scientific global world, where there is out-smarting in the scientific and technological breakthroughs. To reduce poverty and joblessness (unemployment) in our society, technical and vocational teacher education is anchored essentially on the training of the needed teachers from NCE and above, competent in practical skills, knowledge, and attitudes for service delivery in the educational sector. FRN (2004) indicated that Technical and Vocation Education is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding any knowledge relating to occupations in the sector of economic and social life. So by implication various institution and programme that offer vocational and technical education such as apprenticeship, business studies, agricultural science, ICT, Home Economics, metalwork, woodwork, etc and programmes for teachers who work in polytechnics, and colleges of education and allied tertiary institutions are embedded in the policy of productivity and technological growth. The role of the teacher is essential to all

aspect of economic development as the end implementer of educational curriculum. The Federal Government recognises the crucial roles of the technical and vocational institutions as a source of supply of essential skilled manpower for the industries and for self employment as well as of technical and vocational teachers.

Problems in Technical and Vocational Teacher Education

There are many challenges worthy of noting. There is still lack of political will despite promises made by succeeding governments to focus attention on education for the needed economic drive. The political system in Nigeria does not favour continuity of programme or policy initiative made by others hence abandonment of project/programmes. There is need for higher student enrolment by motivating students in VTE through the supply of training materials; and real SIWES practice in reputable firms/industries.

Nworgu (2007) with other expert in the vocational field enumerated the problems as:

1. Lack of participatory framework: When educational reforms are dictated by privilege policy makers without generating it from the people directly involved; thereby creating problems of ownership, sustainability and lack of awareness on the part of those meant to implement the programme/reform.
2. Poor Planning: Executing programme without adequate planning of necessary conditions and infrastructure to put in place is common in Nigeria, and Rivers State is not different.
3. Lack of Capacity: The need for requisite manpower (personnel) and infrastructure are necessary in attainment of goals anchored on efficiency and competence.
4. Lack of Political Will: Most programmes have failed in Nigeria because the government lack the political will in the area of adequate funding and follow-up.
5. Status quo syndrome: Negative attitude towards change and the belief that established modes of operation and practices must be maintain e.g. slowness in adoption E-classroom in almost all our vocational institution in an electronic era.
6. Obsolete curricula/infrastructure: VTE is considered a launch pad for technological development so delay in implementation of policy and poor funding makes products of VTE to be far from acquiring the needed skills demand by industries / establishment expectation fast moving world.
7. Very low student enrolment as students see teacher training as last resort.
8. Very poor teaching learning environment e.g. dilapidated classroom and lecture theatres.
9. Poor quality of academic staff. The best brains look for greener pasture.
10. Ineffective student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES)
11. Poor image of the teaching profession due to perceptual value orientation of teaching profession and vocational training in the social psyche.
12. Poor library facilities. Costly to maintain functional E-brary due to power outage.
13. Poorly/ill equipped laboratories, often with outdated equipment/tools.
14. Poor motivation of teachers and students.
15. Lack of adequate exposure through attendance to conferences and workshops due to no sponsorship or diversion of such funds by administrators (Nwoke, 1989; Okala, 2007; Adah, 2007).

Statement of Problem

Despite the fact that VTE programme has existed more than 20years in Nigeria, the needed facilitation of economic boom through graduate quality is farfetched. Lack of technological know-how and increasing level of unemployment prompted the Federal Government to establish technical colleges of education and centres of excellence in some universities for creative thinking and transformation of knowledge through technological processes into wealth and broader economic bases. Why has this laudable idea not given the needed profit and dividend? This is the thrust of this paper.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify problems facing Vocational Teacher Education programmes in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What are the problems in Vocational Teacher Education programmes?
2. What are the solutions to the challenges in Vocational Teacher Education programmes?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference of NCE Students and Post NCE Students on their perceptual agreement and disagreement of the problems of vocational teacher education so highlighted.

Methodology

The design of the study is survey. The study was conducted in Rivers State where there are two tertiary institutions where vocational teachers are trained. The population of the study is all the students at NCE and Post NCE levels in the schools of vocational education of the institutions. Sample size was 300 but 288 was retrieved as 150 NCE students and 138 Post NCE students. Questionnaire was the instrument used for the collection of data. The questionnaire was structured having two background information, and 15 factors of 4 opinions. The researchers and a colleague assisted in the administration of the instrument and it was retrieved within a space of one week.

For research question one, percentage was used to analyse the data collected at a significant point of 50%. Inferentially, Chi-Square at .05 level of significance was applied to test the hypothesis

Analysis of Data and Discussion of finding

Table 1: Percent (%) analysis f NCE and Post-NCE responses

Item	NA	ND	PA	PD
Lack of participatory framework	62	38	66.7	33.3
Poor planning	93	6.7	75.4	24.6
Lack of capacity	66.7	33.3	74.6	25.4
Lack of political will	67.3	32.7	67.4	32.6
Status quo	60.7	39.3	66.1	31.9
Obsolete curriculum	42.7	57.3	46.4	53.6
Dilapidated classromm/ infrastructure	89.9	10.7	89.9	10.1
Poor quality teachers	42	58	39.1	60.9
Poorly prepared students	65.3	34.7	40.6	59.4
Low enrolment	55.3	44.7	50.7	49.3
Outdated laboratory Equipment	68	32	68.1	31.9
No training materials	78.7	21.3	73.9	26.1
Unserious Students	72.7	27.3	52.2	47.8
Poor Image of TVE	42	58	46.4	53.6
Ineffective SIWES	79.3	20.7	73.9	26.1

NA – NCE Agree; ND – NCE Disagree; PA – Post NCE Agree; PD – Post NCE Disagree

In table 1, percentage of the agreement responses of 50% and above for NCE and Post NCE are 12 and 11 items out of 15 items representing overall percent significance of 80% and 73% respectively. This implies there are problems in vocational training programmes in Rivers State. According to Nworgu (2007), these problems are threats to quality vocational teacher education in this country and by implication Rivers State.

Table 2: - Chi-Square (X^2) analysis on the problems of TVE programmes.

Item	N X^2 cal	Decision	P X^2 cal	Decision
Lack of participatory framework	9.41	S	33.44	S
Poor planning	89.36	S	37.18	S
Lack of capacity	-39.99	N S	42.62	S
Lack of political will	30.63	S	17.19	S
Status quo	7.61	NS	15.60	S
Obsolete curriculum	21.37	S	-29.91	NS
Dilapidated classroom/infrastructure	99.5	S	89.19	S
Poor quality teachers	-30.46	NS	-28.52	NS
Poorly prepared students	33.1	S	-6.17	NS
Low enrolment	29.05	S	-45.72	NS
Outdated laboratory Equipment	19.98	S	-16.67	NS
No training materials	1.36	NS	34.47	S
Unserious Students	63.29	S	-25.51	NS
Poor Image of TVE	7.88	S	-5.88	NS
Ineffective SIWES	55.5	S	33.42	S

N X^2 cal is for NCE ; P X^2 cal is for Post-NCE ; $P < .05$; X^2 - tab = 7.82; df=3

In the above table, calculated Chi-Square (X^2) values 9.41 and 33.44; 33.44 and 37.18; 30.63 and 17.19; 99.5 and 89.19; and 55.5 and 33.42 on the problems of poor planning, lack of political will, dilapidated classroom & infrastructure, and in effective SIWES respectively show there are significant differences on both the NCE and Post NCE on the levels of agreement and disagreement because these values are more than the critical expected value of 7.82 at 5% level of significance with 3 degree of freedom, as such, the null hypothesis saying there is no significant difference of NCE Students and Post NCE Students on their perceptual agreement and disagreement of the problems of vocational teacher education is rejected.

Also, Chi-Square (X^2) analysis in table 2 shows, there is no significant difference on the perception of both NCE students and poor NCE students on the responses on the problems of poor quality teachers, therefore the null hypothesis - there is no significant difference of NCE Students and Post NCE Students on their perceptual agreement and disagreement of the problems of vocational teacher education is accepted on this problem. However, taking a cursory look at the same table 2, there are variations on their level of agreement and disagreement of NCE and Post NCE on problems of lack of capacity, status quo, no training materials. NCE respondents have no significant statistically X^2 calculated value while the post NCE respondents have significant difference on their level of statistical agreement and disagreement.

On the problems of obsolete curriculum, poorly prepared students, low enrolment, unserious students and poor wage/salary of VTE, NCE group have statistical significant in their responses while the Post NCE

had no significant difference on their level of agreement and disagreement on those problems. These problems are not seen in the same light as indicated by the dispersion in both responses. This outcome slightly disagrees with Nworgu (2007), Okala (2007) and Adah (2007) on the problems highlighted, so the generalisation of these problems may be doubtful as per this study.

Conclusion

Technical/Vocational Education and Training in this country is currently an important educational necessity to propel technological aptitudes and inventions. This paper has looked at problems and challenges facing the implementation of Technical/Vocational Teachers' Education programmes in the country focusing on Rivers State. It should be noted that a well thought out programme without proper implementation to achieve desired outcome is a waste of time and economic resources. It is therefore believed the outlined problems or challenges will soon be overcome by strong political will of the policy makers and the willingness of all Vocational Teacher Education policy makers and implementers to match action with words. So there should be commitment of all stakeholders to the development of Technical/Vocational Teachers through quality training in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Students in Vocational Teacher Education Programmes are supposed to be given innovative technologically based training that promotes application of expertise to improving society by fulfilling scientific and technological growth as such, we recommend specifically, the following:

- Need for aggressive implementation of the use of ICT in teaching-learning processes in TVE beyond E-mail access and social networks.
- Need for government to mandatorily train and re-train teachers to capacity in teacher supply and quality of trainees.
- Activities in the classroom should reflect real life economic necessities.
- Effort of Teacher Registration Council Nigeria- TRCN should be geared towards improving the status of the teaching profession. Entrance into the profession should be checked and also teachers remuneration should be competitive to others in public service.
- Need for adequate exposure through Government sponsored attendance to conferences, seminars, and workshops.
- Need for adequate funding of vocational teacher education for the needed impact in teaching and learning.

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