

AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATING FACTORS INFLUENCING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS VOCATIONAL SKILLS ACQUISITION



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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to investigate attitudes and motivating factors of secondary school students towards vocational skill acquisition. In doing this two objectives and two research questions were raised relating to attitudes and motivating factors. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population for this study comprised of 1500 (ss1-3) senior secondary school students in 30 schools in Kaduna Metropolis. Simple random sampling was used to select 1500 respondents. Data was collected through the use of 3likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using simple descriptive statistics (percentages). The study found out that above 85% of students in secondary school has positive attitude toward acquisition of vocational skills and it was also gathered that more than 75% of the respondent agreed that the motivating factors include parents, guidance, passion, interest, talents, career choice and availability of resources. However, many students prefer white collar job than a vocational skill, this is due to the importance the government and society attached to certificate, economic value to white collar job and vocational skill. The study recommends that trade certificate should be recognized as equivalent to other certificate by government and society. Also, trade unions should be organized to enhance productivity, professionalism and high economic value. The benefit to government is huge as taxes generated from these categories will improve revenue and state development.

Keyword: *Vocation, Skills, Attitudes, students, Motivation*

Introduction

A vocational skill is the acquisition of specific skills for self-employment or career skills. This type of education is offered to meet needs of individuals and society as well. While the ability of individuals are utilized to the fullest Tum (1996). Vocational skills is one of the national development strategies in many societies as it creates a great impact on human resource development, productivity and economic growth Van Ark (1992).

Vocational skills have been there throughout history. According to Ejifor (2010), skills are well establish habits of doing things by people, skills is the ability

of doing something that comes from training and practice. The courses that sprung under vocational skills were hairstyling, cosmetics and beautification, food and beverage management, fashion designer, and computer specialist. The courses were offered both in private and public institutions. In the United States there were several laws that helped to improve the work force in industries and made sure that there were vocational skills for the economically challenged youth. The laws were known as Manpower Development Training Law, Vocational and Applied Technology law and Vocational Skills law, They focus on learners between the ages of 14 – 16 years. Knoll (1993), believed that, vocational skills began in Italy in the 16th century focusing on vocational education professional. At the beginning the youth received training as builders and stone mason, but this did not make them meet the demand of art and sciences. By the end of 18th century the engineering profession closely related to architecture had been established and was being incorporated in to new technical and industrial colleges in Italy.

In Africa there are diverse systems of vocational skills. Trainings are provided in both private and public polytechnics, enterprises and apprenticeship training centres, for example, opportunities were offered to youths in the West Africa apprenticeship departments for technical and vocational skills acquisition. Though, the points of entry might differ, as Youths in Burkina Faso enter vocational training at the end of primary school after eight years of education, while in Nigeria student enter training at the end of lower or junior school for secondary learners.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. Frankel and Wallen (2000) define survey as the method that involves asking a large group questions about a particular issue. Information was obtained from a sample rather than the entire population at one point in time.

Population of the study and Sampling techniques

The target population of this study comprise of all Senior Secondary (SS) school students within Kaduna Metropolis. A purposeful sampling technique was employed to select 50 SS students from thirty (30) secondary schools in Kaduna Metropolis. The total numbers of respondents are one thousand five hundred (1500) students.

Data Collection Techniques

Questionnaire was used to collect the data for this study. The questionnaire was made up of three sections, section A items include personal data such as, gender and age, section B and C includes ten items each relating to the factors considered under the two (2) dependent variables (attitudes and motivation) Questionnaire was administered to the respondents within the school premise. Consent was granted by the school board and the principals of the school, the 50

questionnaires for each school were handed to the principals and the questionnaires were collected after one week. The students were required to answer the questions individually and return to the principal, There was 100% rate of return.

Data Analysis

The instrument used three point Likert scale, in which the respondents were supposed to point out their mood by indicating Agreed, Disagreed, Not Decided. The frequency count scores were calculated to show the percentage response of each item.

Presentation of Results

The study made an attempt to establish attitudes towards vocational skills and students motivating factors. In order to investigate the above issues, twenty research questions were formulated. The research findings and discussion of the data were collected from secondary school in Kaduna. The chapter is divided into the following sections: A, B and section BC.

Table 1 : Respondents sex

Gender	Responses	Percentage (%)
Male	36	36%
Female	64	64%
Total	100	100

The above table indicate the sex of the respondents, 36% shows the total numbers of boys while 64% indicate the total numbers of girls in the schools.

Table 2 : Age of respondents

Age	Responses	Percentage (%)
12-16	16	16%
16-20	64	64%
20 and above	20	20%
Total	100	100

The above table show that 16% indicate that respondent's age is between 12-16 while 64% are between 16-20 of age and 20 and above which constitute of 20% shows that 20 respondents are within the age of 20 and above.

Section B: Students Attitude towards vocational skills Acquisition

Table 3: Attitude towards vocational skills Scale

S/N	ITEM	Agreed	Percentage (%)	Disagreed	Percentage (%)	Not decided	Percentage (%)	Total
1.	Vocational skills are better than academic skills	1275	85%	225	15%	-	-	1500
2.	People with vocational skills are independent	1200	80%	300	20%	-	-	1500
3.	People with vocational skills are better than others without vocational skills	1350	90%	90	6%	60	4%	1500
4.	After graduation will you take vocational skills	1200	80%	225	15%	75	5%	1500
5.	Vocation allows you to be employer	1125	75%	375	25%	-	-	1500
6.	Vocational skills generate ideas reconstructive	1050	70%	420	28%	30	2%	1500
7.	Vocational skills is useful to people	1275	85%	15225	15%	-	-	1500

8.	With Vocational skill you can never be jobless	1125	75%	330	22%	45	3%	1500
9.	With vocational skills food service don't need to obtain a decree to own a restaurants but with little savings you can start a restaurants	1200	80%	300	20%	-	-	1500
10.	With vocational skills poverty will eradicated from our country	1275	85%	195	13%	30	2%	1500

The table above indicates that, Eighty five (85%) percent agreed that with vocational skills is better than academic acquisition about seventy five (75%) percent strongly agreed that with vocational skills you can be self-employed, and help generate ideas, and be independents, and poverty will be eradicated. Eighty (80%) percent agreed that they may take a vocational skill only if they cannot find a white collar job.

Section C: Student Motivating Factor Scale

Table 4 : Factors that motivate students in choosing vocation ?

S/N	Item	Total agreed	Percent age (%)	Agreed	Percent age (%)	Not decided	Percent age (%)	Total
1.	Parents/guidance motivate students to choose good vocational skills	1125	75%	360	24%	15	1%	1500
2.	Having strong passion for what you want makes students go into vocational skills or academics	1125	75%	315	21%	60	4%	1500

3.	A centre with good materials/equipment motivate students to go into vocational skills	1125	75%	315	21%	60	4%	1500
4.	Students that are motivated to go into vocational skills end up being independent	1200	80%	225	15%	75	5%	1500
5.	Motivation make students identify their talent true academics	1245	83%	240	16%	75	5%	1500
6.	Motivation makes students to be creative through academics	1200	80%	225	15%	75	5%	1500
7.	Passions for vocational skills give us the zeal to activate knowledge an skills	1125	75%	330	22%	45	3%	1500
8.	Vocational skills helps us to know more about our future career	1125	75%	330	22%	45	3%	1500
9.	School/teachers motivate students to choose good vocational skills	1230	82%	270	18%	-	-	1500
10.	Parents/guidance support students in vocational skills they have chosen	1350	90%	150	10%	-	-	1500

The table above indicates that, all the factors motivate students in choosing vocation recodes above seventy five (75%) percent of strongly agreed, while others with agree are fifteen (15%) and above for each factor. the percentages for undecided were five (5%) percent and below.

Findings

The study can concludes that student in secondary school has positive attitude towards acquisition of vocational skills. Parents, guidance, passion, interest, availability of resources, talents, career. What motivate students to choose vocational

skills from the data it was gathered that more 75% of respondents agreed that with good materials/equipment students can be motivated to go into vocational skills.

Discussion

Eighty five percent (85%) of the respondents believed that Vocational skills are better than academic skills, this assertion is in line with the Arusha Declaration which emphasised the need to ensure that the education provided in any system should be relevant to the needs and aspirations of the people inculcating in the people the positive attitude of service to the community. In addition, Nyerere (1967) argued that the kind of education provided should enable people to analyse their problems critically and come up with alternative solutions while inducing in the people the attitude of human equality and the spirit of fighting against the practice of the exploitation of the weak by the strong, especially in the economic field. The main function of education is to provide appropriate skills, abilities and competence of both mental and physical nature as necessary equipment for the individual to live productively in the society (Okocha, 2009).

Bakshi (2005) asserted that there are two types of education, which can be primarily responsible for building the right attitude. There are formal and informal education processes involved. Dib (1988) defined formal education as a systematic, organized education model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms, presenting a rather rigid curriculum as regards objectives, content and methodology. Whereas Informal education is a general term used to describe any form of learning that is outside the standard school setting. It is usually gained through experiences in the social environment, as well as through examining the surroundings one lives in.

Bakshi (2005) further argued that a teacher can play a vital and key role in building the attitude. If the teacher who in the form of a negative influence, can deteriorate the student as the student can follow the wrong steps by the path shown by the teacher. Therefore teachers have a major role to play to act as role model to form student's attitudes. The attitude of youth toward vocational training some things depend on the type of skills available in the training centres, some things, the teachers or the head in charge of training the students, also don't show any positive interest towards his work, in the sense that a students can lose interest in vocational training because of the hardship of the trainer. Not all youth are brought up in a harsh ways by their parent or people around them. But if the trainers possess a bad attitude towards training the students, definitely they students, or the youth in which he/she trained will probably lost interest in what he/she is learning. Vocational training is a programme that is design to help youth in becoming self-dependent, self-employability, and as well to become a useful member of the community to which they live. Attitude of youth toward vocational training as well also depend on the interest the learning show toward what he/she is learning, some youth are being force

to learn one vocational skills or the other by their parents/ guardians, this alone will prevent the youth from learning what he/she is supposed to learn at the training ground because such person was force against his/her will. Availability of resources at the vocational centres also lead to youth attitude toward vocational training. Some youth or students have the interest to learn those skills but the lack of material in the centres or training ground happens to de-motivate the youth, some even feel tired and frustrated about the issues, and some feels that since no materials for them to learn what they are to learn, loses interest and start exhibiting some kind of attitude that he/she is not supposed to possess at school or at the training ground.

Conclusion

The government of Kaduna is committed to vocational skills since it has great impact on human resource development. However, many factors have been identified to be affecting skill acquisition especially among the youth. According to the findings, attitude of learners is a great hindrance to skill acquisition, parents feel that vocational skills is for failures and school dropout as well. This has led to low enrolment in the vocational skills centres and high dropout rates. Vocational skills centres were found to experience financial constraints. Other factors affecting acquisition of vocational skills were lack of parents' involvement in their children's education and teachers. Wide curriculum that could not be covered within the scheduled time was also a factor that was cited as one of the factors that affected acquisition of vocational skills.

Recommendations.

From the findings of this study and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made.

- The government should add more teachers (instructors) at the vocational skills centres.
- The government should add appropriate learning resources and improve physical facilities. For the privately owned centres, the managers should improve the facilities to enable effective skill acquisition.
- A student who graduates from vocational skills centres should be given incentives to encourage them to do better in their vocation and start small scale enterprise.
- Campaigns for vocational skills should be carried out by the education stakeholders in the local community. They should advise the youths on the importance of vocational skills.
- Income generating projects should be introduced in the vocational skills centre's to enable learners meet their economic needs.
- Trade centres should affiliate with financial organization for loan and produce for commercial consumption for their immediate communities.

- All the stakeholders of vocational skills should create awareness on the benefits and importance of vocational skills and give it a more positive approach than it has been before. This will attract more youths to these centres so that enrolment is enhanced and retention of learners in the vocational education centres.

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