

Relevance of Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes for Employment in an Era of Dwindling Economy in Bauchi Metropolis

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Abstract

The study was conducted to find out the relevance of vocational skill acquisition programmes for employment in an era of dwindling economy in Bauchi metropolis. Two research questions were formulated for the study. An 11 items questionnaire was developed and used to get responses from the trainees. A descriptive survey was employed for the study. The questionnaire was validated by two experts from Vocational and Technology Education Department. Mean statistical tool was used to analyze the data collected. The result of the study indicated that the most important objectives of vocational skill acquisition programmes were to enable youth to acquire vocational skills that would provide gainful employment as well as raise their standards of living. Also the trainees perceived the relevance of skill acquisition programmes as centers for imparting marketable skills that focus more on practical aspect than theory. It was recommended that training courses should be relevant to the need of the sectors and target group. Those training centers should serve as places for providing employment opportunities to the public since our economy is declining and government opportunities are less because of scarce resources.

Keywords: Vocational, Skill Acquisition, Training, Youth.

1. Introduction

Historically, Nigeria has been facing a number of problems since the period of independence in 1960; among which are social and economic problems such as poverty, diseases, youth empowerment and general under development, in spite of the abundant material and human resources youth represent the future and hope of every country for development. The over-increasing social vices among youth, the challenge posed by

unemployment and the general economic depression being experienced in most of the states calls for the need to evolve a reliable alternative remedies to engage youth into a useful and gainful livelihood.

Skill acquisition centers are one of the strategies employed by various states and the federal government to eradicate poverty and sustain economic growth. It is believed that universally that youth are the leaders of tomorrow but this can only come to manifestation if they are properly developed and equipped with needed skills and capacity that will prepare them for future challenges and leadership roles (Fashola, 2009). The cause of the programme was the increase in the rate of unemployment, poverty and youth unrest in the nation. The objectives of skill acquisition centers is to as stated by the National policy on Education (2004) are:

- Empower the youth who have no opportunity of having university or any tertiary education the acquisition of various skills that would enable them to be self reliant and become responsible citizen of the country.
- Reduce unemployment and the number of youth engaged in unproductive pursuits
- Provide additional source of income
- To act as a forum for youth o exchange ideas that will improve their economic status and enlighten youth as the importance of education or learning a trade and support them in the establishment of their own business.

The need for establishing skill acquisition is the fact that not everybody would want a formal and complete education. But even if we do have a formal and complete education today, the color of the global economy is changing and therefore, certificates from any university are no longer a meal ticket, it is only a step to finding the part to that meal ticket. People must be ready now to use their talents; to use their skills to earn a living. Any nation that does not produce what it seeks to consume is looking for trouble (Fashola, 2009).

Therefore, lack of acquisition of vocational skills on the part of individuals has been the bane of the Nigerian economy, because the educational system operated at post-independence placed emphasis on academic excellence rather than acquisition of vocational skills which prepares the individual for a more useful and fulfilling life with in the society. These culminated to be the need for establishing skills acquisition centers across the nation (Omoruyi & Osunde, 2006).

2. Statement of the Problem

The most serious socio-economic problems facing youth are youth restiveness, high rate of unemployment, low education and low self esteem. Most of these problems are compounded by the fact that most school graduates normally rely solely on the government because they do not have skills to be self-employed and rely upon. About 70% of Nigerians lives below poverty line and survive on less than one dollar per day. More also it is widely acknowledge that, unemployment is the major concern of National and International organizations like Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP).

The study therefore, focus on the relevance of vocational acquisition centers in alleviating the problems facing youth and to improve their social economic development

3. Objectives of the Research

The main objective of the research is to find out the relevance of vocational skill acquisition programmes for employment in an era of dwindling economy. Specifically the research intends to:

- To find out the objectives of vocational skill acquisition programme in an era of dwindling economy.
- To find out the perception of trainees on the relevance of vocational skill acquisition programmes in an era of dwindling economy.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the research:

- What are the objectives of vocational skill acquisition programmes in an era of dwindling economy?
- What is the perception of trainees on the relevance of vocational skill acquisition programmes in an era of dwindling economy?

5. Research Methodology

The design for the study is survey and the area of the study is Bauchi metropolis. The population of the study comprises of all the trainees of the 37 vocational skill acquisition centers in the metropolis. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 5 centers because each center specialized in different skill. Forty (40) trainees were randomly selected from the training centers making a total of two hundred (200) respondents. Structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and were developed based on the research questions. Research question one (1) contains five (5) items and research question two (2) contains six (6) items. All the items are arranged under four (4) points Likert type scale as:

- 4- Strongly Agreed (SA)
- 3- Agreed (A)
- 2- Disagreed (D)
- 1-Strongly Disagreed (SD)

The instrument was validated by two (2) lecturers in Vocational and Technology Education Department of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. Data was collected through personal contact with the help of a research assistant. The data collected were analyzed using mean and the cut of point is 2.5. Computed mean value of 2.5 and above was considered agreed while computed mean value below 2.5 was considered disagreed.

6. Result and Discussion

Research Question one(1)

What are the objectives of vocational skill acquisition programmes in an era of dwindling economy?

Table One (1) Mean responses on the objectives of vocational skill acquisition programmes in an era of dwindling economy

| S/N | Items | Mean | Remarks |
|-------------------|--|------|---------|
| 1 | Programmes enable youth to acquire vocational skills that would provide gainful employment | 3.4 | Agreed |
| 2 | The programmes makes trainees self-reliant | 3.2 | Agreed |
| 3 | It raises trainees general standard of living | 3.2 | Agreed |
| 4 | It helps the trainees cope with technological changes | 2.8 | Agreed |
| 5 | Enable trainees to become productive and useful citizens | 3.1 | Agreed |
| Grand Mean | | 3.14 | |

From the table above, research question one of the study showed that the most important and strongest objectives of vocational skill acquisition programmes in an era of dwindling economy are to enable the participants or trainees acquire vocational skills that would make them self-reliant as well as to become more productive and useful citizens in the country and also raising their standard o living. The findings are in line with the National Policy on Education (2013) which stated that the objectives of vocational skill programmes is to enable trainees to acquire skills that are self –reliant so as to raise their standard of living.

Research question two (2)

What is the perception of trainees on the relevance of vocational skill acquisition programmes for employment in an era of dwindling economy?

Table Two: Mean responses on the relevance of vocational skill acquisition programmes in an era of dwindling economy.

| S/N | Items | Mean | Remarks |
|-------------------|---|------|-----------|
| 1 | The programme equips youth and adult with most of the necessary skills required for employment and upgrade their job performance. | 2.8 | Agreed |
| 2 | The programme is given prominence through proper funding and provision of good infrastructure | 2.2 | Disagreed |
| 3 | The center serves as a place for self actualization programmes to the youth | 2.8 | Agreed |
| 4 | The center imparts marketable skills to unemployed youth | 2.8 | Agreed |
| 5 | The curriculum focus more on the practical aspect than theory | 3.2 | Agreed |
| 6 | The programme should be supported by both government and private organizations | 3.1 | Agreed |
| Grand Mean | | 2.82 | |

From the table above, research question two revealed that the trainees perceived the relevance of skills acquisition programmes as a centre for imparting marketable skills that focuses more on the practical aspect than theory. But unfortunately, the youth for whom the programmes are meant for were found not to be adequately motivated for the programme because it was not given prominence through proper funding. The statement was in line with Olateju (2003) which stated that unemployment and poverty cannot be eradicated unless skill acquisition programmes are given prominence in the country through proper funding and provision of infrastructure.

7. Conclusion

This study found out that the most important objectives of vocational skill acquisition programmes were to enable youth to acquire vocational skills that would provide gainful employment for self-reliant so as to raise their general standard of living. Also in the study it was found that the centers focuses more on the practical aspect than theory as well as imparting marketable skills to unemployed youth for self actualization.

8. Recommendation

Vocational skill acquisition programmes is a process of human resources development. They provide the skilled personnel needed in this country as a developing nation. In order to achieve the objectives and mission of the programmes the following steps or measures should be taken into considerations.

Training courses should be relevant to the need of the sectors and target group.

- Income generated by trainees should be use judiciously without extravagancy so as to give an avenue for growth, expansion and diversification in the economy.
- Training courses should be updated with the technological advancement in the society.
- Discipline should be made effective in the training centers so as to make the trainees value their vocation and be useful citizens in the society.
- Those training centers should serve as places for providing employment opportunities to the public since our economy is declining and government opportunities are less because of scarce resources.

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