

The Inclination to Self-Employment of Graduating Students of Vocational Education in College of Education, North-West Nigeria

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This research is financed by TETFund IBR Project Nigeria

Abstract

The main objective of this research was to find out the inclination of graduating students of Vocational Education to self-employment with the skills acquired from Colleges of Education, North-West Nigeria. Effective acquisition of vocational skills inculcates entrepreneurial skills that help the graduating students to be self-reliant, this will in turn bring about national develop, hence they will be self-employed. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in 14 Colleges of Education in North-West Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised 445 respondents, made up of 325 Vocational Education graduating students and 120 lecturers. The research instrument was structured questionnaire based on the research objective. The instrument was designed to elicit the ratings mean of respondents on the 5-point Likert-type rating scale. The mean was used for answering the research question, while t-test was used for testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the finding revealed that graduating students of Vocational Education in these Colleges are inclined to self-employment with the skills acquired to a great extent. It is recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria should have a free interest loan scheme that will provide initial take-off capital for vocational graduating students who are willing to engage in self-employment.

Key words: Vocational Education, Graduating students, Colleges of Education, Self-Employment

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/15-11-04

Publication date: October 30th 2024

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of Vocational Education is to prepare individuals for gainful employment whether paid employment or self-employment, the emphasis is on exposure to and acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant and adequate for employment. Vocational Education is highly mandated to provide these training to students. The extent to which students acquired and applied these learning is highly questionable. Vocational education can, by appropriate training, ensure individuals full employment even in our present weak economy, by equipping them with life-long skills for self-employment. Atah and Akeke (2021) stated that Vocational Education is education that prepares people for a skilled craft as artisans, trade as tradespersons, or work as technicians. Vocational Education can also be seen as that type of education given to an individual to prepare that individual to be gainfully employed or self-employed with requisite skill. As such, a variety of components fall under the Vocational Education umbrella: agricultural education, business education, family and consumer sciences, health occupations education, marketing education, technical education, technology education, and trade and industrial education. The vocational curriculum can be identified as a combination of classroom instruction, laboratory work, industrial training programme and teaching practice. Vocational preparation must always be viewed against the backdrop of the needs of society and of the individual. While meeting the demands of the economy, the abilities of individuals must be utilized to the fullest. Meeting the internalized job needs of individuals is a crucial objective of vocational education.

The National Policy on Education (2013) defined Vocational Education as that aspect of education, which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills, as well as basic scientific knowledge. Vocational Education programme in the Nigeria educational system can be identified at 3 levels according Chukwudi (2018). These levels are: elementary school level, secondary school level and post-secondary school level. Vocational education is called career and occupation education. National Commission for Colleges of Education listed the following programme under Vocational Education in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. They are: Agricultural Education, Business Education, Fine and Applied Arts and Home Economics (NCCE 2020).

Skills acquisition, as the name implied is the ability to learn a skill. A skill could be seen as intellectual, such as learning to listen, speak, read and write. It can be manual such as learning to type on key board or

making of bread or cake. One acquires skills by learning them and this has been man's means of material transformation from the earliest of times. According to Atah (2019) it takes trained hands and minds to apply the knowledge and technique effectively. For example, in the medieval times, apprenticeship became a normal method of entry to a craft guild. Ben (2010) stated that Vocational Education is a kind of education, geared towards the production of the educated man who can effectively work with his head, heart and hands. Ayonimike, Okwelle, and Okeke (2019) sees vocational education as a kind of education or training that equips the learner with saleable or entrepreneurial skills. Abdulkarim (2017) also defines vocational training as the type of education which has to do with productive work. The importance of vocational training or education cannot be over emphasized. Obisanya (2010) describes Vocational Education as an essential ingredient on re-orientating the mindset of Nigerian students towards self-employment or job creation. Dede (2015) identifies four minds for a vocational future which are: the designing mind, opportunity recognising mind, the resilient mind and the risk managing mind. Ojei (2010) opined that vocational skills acquisition have been identified as a panacea for the high youth unemployment, poverty and hunger in Nigeria, where statistics have shown that 60% of the unemployed population of the country are unskilled. He further stated that effective engagement of youths in skills acquisition is an intervention mechanism in the eradication of unemployment and poverty in the society. Vocational skills training could help the youths to be self-employed or be relevant in the world of work, thereby preventing poverty and providing for them a more fulfilled life. Therefore, graduates trained in a range of vocational and technical skills end up not only becoming self-employed and self-reliant, they also become employers of labour. The student's mind set can influence the outcome of the vocational training or education.

Ezeamagu, Mary, and Owolabi (2021) in stressing the importance of vocational skills acquisition argues that for the progress of human race, vocational education has been a consistent and identifiable element and that vocational education has been part of the foundation of men's creative and progressive development. When graduates acquire skills through vocational training, there is high tendency that they would become useful to themselves in particular and the society at large. According to Sodipo (2018) the acquisition of the requisite skills is a means of increasing the productive power of any nations. Consequently, he added that the Nigerian society should recognize the fact that every citizen should be equipped to contribute effectively to the welfare of the country. The acquisition of such practical skills is important because when efficient and skillful hands are employed in any fields of human endeavours, high productivity is usually achieved. Economically, maximum skills acquisition by vocational students and others will help to enrich the Nigerian society in this way, tend to make possible sustainable development. He further opined that a rich nation is one that is capable of meeting the economic, social, moral and political needs of the citizenry. Nigeria as a nation will enjoy sustainable development if vocational education students in particular and all other students in general acquire maximum skills acquisition and competencies in their specialties.

Furthermore and politically, practical skills acquisition tends to promote personal and national greatness. Sodipo (2018) pointed out that the behaviour of an individual in a society or the behaviour of a nation in a community of nations may be influenced by the skills and competencies possessed by that individual or nation. Socially, the acquisition of maximum skills helps a person to provide amusement, happiness, love, affection and enjoyment to other individuals as well as the entire nation at large. It also helps to reduce criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, and other social vices among the youths. To the vocational education students, maximum skills acquisition helps them to be engaged in productive work either for themselves or for employers of labour. This enables vocational education students to qualify for and hold productive employment as well as increases their productivity and earns more remuneration. Other importance of acquiring maximum skills and competencies includes: it reduces the drop-out rates among the Nigerian youths, it helps to make the youths intelligent users of the products of technology as well as the most reliable vehicle for economic prosperity and diplomatic supremacy of the Nigerian nation. These benefits of maximum skills acquisition are still there if vocational students will think twice and change their negative attitudes towards it and turn to develop themselves sufficiently in the skills and competencies inherent in vocational education programmes of their institutions. In fact, when vocational education students fail to acquire maximum skills from the programme, this in turn affects sustainable development negatively.

There is cyclical unemployment in Nigeria. There are fewer white collar jobs waiting for college graduates. The way out of unemployment is to equip college students with skills which will enable them to be self-employed, create jobs for themselves, employ others, become innovators and entrepreneurs. Vocational Education aimed at producing professionally qualified individuals who would teach effectively, render community services and conduct research and also with adequate skills and knowledge for office and self-employment in the world of work. The findings of this study would be of tremendous benefits to Colleges of Education, Federal Government of Nigeria, National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, students of Vocational Education and it will serve as reference materials for other studies.

2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to find out the inclination to self-employment of graduating students of vocational education with the skills acquired from training in Colleges of Education, North-West Nigeria.

3. Research Question

The following research question was answered in line with the objective of the Study: to what extent are graduating students of Vocational Education incline to self-employment with the skills acquired from training in Colleges of Education, North-West Nigeria?

4. Hypothesis

To guide the research study, one null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of graduating students and lecturers of Vocational Education in Colleges of Education, on the extent graduating students are incline to self-employment with the skills acquired.

5. Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in 14 Colleges of Education (5 Federal Colleges of Education and 9 State Colleges of Education) in North-West Nigeria. The North-West Nigeria comprised seven states which are Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States. The population comprised all Vocational Education graduating students and lecturers in Colleges of Education in North West Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised 445 respondents, made up of 325 Vocational Education graduating students, 120 lecturers. The research instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire based on the research objective. The instrument was designed to elicit the ratings mean of respondents on the 5-point Likert-type rating scale as follows: Very Great Extent (VGE) 5-pts, Great Extent (GE) 4-pts; Moderate Extent (ME) 3-pts; Little Extent (LE) 2-pts and None At All (NAA) 1-pt. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of research assistants. Out of 456 copies of questionnaires administered, 445 were retrieved.

The mean was used for answering the research question, while t-test was used for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis was done using the statistical package for social science (SPSS). The null hypothesis was accepted for the probability value was less than or equal to the criterion probability value of 0.05, otherwise the null hypothesis was rejected.

6. Result

Research Question: To what extent are graduating students of Vocational Education inclined to self-employment with the skills acquired from training in Colleges of Education?

Table 1
Mean Rating of Respondents on the Extents to which NCE graduating students are inclined to engage in self-employment with the skills acquired from NCE Vocational Education in Colleges of Education.

S/No	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	The training graduating students received from vocational education is enough to help them start businesses of their own.	3.57	.85	Great Extent
2.	The training helped them to get ideas on the type of business to engage	3.71	.72	Great Extent
3.	The practical experiences the students undergone can help them to set achievable goals for their businesses	2.51	.72	Moderate Extent
4.	The training received is enough for them to sell their products and services well	2.60	.69	Moderate Extent
5.	Graduating students are not afraid of competition	3.86	.86	Great Extent
6.	Graduating students can identify their target market	2.71	.90	Moderate Extent
7.	Graduating students know what their customers desire	2.80	.84	Moderate Extent
8.	Graduating students know the amount of money needed to start their businesses	4.10	.80	Great Extent
9.	They have ability to make profit from their businesses to sustain their family	3.85	.91	Great Extent
10.	Graduating students can raise money from their saving and know	2.86	.90	Moderate

	how to source for loan to finance their businesses			Extent
11.	They are trained how to operate their businesses to give them adequate return on investment of time and money	2.64	.89	Moderate Extent
12.	They have acquired enough training to face the risks involved in being self-employed	4.15	.87	Great Extent
13.	They know different methods of getting credit facilities at low interest rate	2.69	.75	Moderate Extent
14.	They know the advantages of private businesses and what it involved.	4.20	.83	Great Extent
15.	Graduating students would have economic independence if they have their own businesses	3.78	.73	Great Extent
16.	Having close relatives who own businesses will not influence them negatively	3.66	.86	Great Extent
17.	They have received enough training on how big entrepreneurs in Nigeria started in a little way	2.81	.90	Moderate Extent
18.	Attending a course in Vocational Education gingered them to have a business of their own	2.60	.84	Moderate Extent
19.	Training at NCE equipped them to set up business ventures on their own	3.54	.80	Great Extent
20.	They will be able to complete projects and tasks once they start them	3.65	.91	Great Extent
	Cluster Mean	3.64	.89	Great Extent

The data in Table 3 revealed that eleven (11) items have mean scores ranging from 3.51 to 4.20 which were within the boundary limit for Great extent. This implies that Vocational Education NCE graduating students in Colleges of Education, North West Nigeria, are inclined to engage in self-employment with the skills acquired to a Great extent. However, 9 items had their mean scores ranging from 2.51 to 2.86 which were within the boundary limit for Moderate Extent. This implies that Vocational Education NCE graduating students in Colleges of Education, North West Nigeria, were considered to be inclined to self-employment with the skills acquired to a moderate extent. The table further revealed the cluster mean of 3.64 which is within the boundary limit for Great extent, implying that all the items in the table indicated that Vocational Education NCE graduating students in Colleges of Education, North-West Nigeria are considered to be inclined to self-employment with the skills acquired to a Great extent. This is supported by the standard deviations on each of the items as well as the overall standard deviation which ranges from .72 to .91 which shows the similarity to the opinions of the respondents.

Table 2:
t-test Analysis of Mean Responses of NCE graduating students and Lecturers of Vocational Education from Colleges of Education on the extent students' are inclined to self-employment.

Variable	N	Sample mean	sample std. dev.	t-value	Df	sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Graduating students	325	2.99	.414	-.77	305	0.64	NS
Lecturers	120	3.08	.391				

Table 2 showed the t-test used to analyse the mean responses of graduating students of Vocational Education in Colleges of Education North-West Nigeria and Lecturers of Vocational Education on the extent graduating students of Vocational Education are inclined to self-employment. The statistical result shows that the items tested are not significant. The sig. value of 0.064 at 0.05 level of significance shows that the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of graduating students and Lecturers on the extent graduating students of Vocational Education are inclined to self-employment is, therefore, accepted. This means that graduating students' and Lecturers' responses on the extent graduating students of Vocational Education from Colleges of Education North West Nigeria are inclined to self-employment are the same or similar.

7. Discussion

The result of the finding in Table 1 revealed that lecturers and graduating students of Vocational Education in Colleges of Education North-West Nigeria responded to most of the issues on the extent graduating students of Vocational Education are inclined to self-employment with the skills acquired from the training they received from Colleges as to a great extent. This finding is consistent with the natural factors used to describe

an entrepreneur, as stressed by Nambajimana and Mbonimana (2019) who did a work on Entrepreneurial Success: An exploratory study among entrepreneurs. The summary of their findings shows that an entrepreneur or self-employed must have a drive for achievement and must possess internal locus of control, self-confidence, innovativeness, good communication and decision-making skills, high self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, perseverance, social skills, honesty, trust, accountability, spirituality, good ethics, determination, and flexibility. One of the arguments that accounts for the secrets of self-employed success is the willingness to take risks (Makhbul and Hasun, 2021) through creativity and innovation, foresight and imagination. Concurrently, Izedunni and Okafor (2010) added that experience has shown that a successful self-employed entrepreneur makes careful calculation. In the same vein, Arogundade (2019) states that failure of people to take risks, to a very high extent, affects the level of productivity and entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria. He further stated that entrepreneurs should not shy away from necessary and unavoidable risks, which will build tolerance of risk, creativity, self-reliance and ability to adapt to situations for self-employment in the pursuit of success.

Indrajit (2021) studied employability and job expectations of university students using a sample of 68 undergraduates to ascertain the extent employability and expectations affect job opportunities of educated youth. The findings confirmed the view that there is a mismatch. The author claims that the more person are educated, the greater the likelihood that they may be unemployed. This situation arises out of high rate of entry to the labour force on one hand and the relatively sluggish expansion of the economy.

The result of hypothesis in Table 2 showed that there was no significant different between the mean responses of NCE graduating students of Vocational Education in Colleges of Education and Lecturers on the extent graduating students are inclined to self-employment with the skills acquired from training in Colleges of Education, North-West Nigeria.

8. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study on the extent to which graduating students of vocational education in College of Education, North-West Nigeria are inclined to self-employment, the following conclusions were drawn. National Certificate of Education (NCE) graduating students of Vocational Education from Colleges of Education, North-West Nigeria are inclined to self-employment with the skills acquired from NCE to a Great Extent. However, the finding indicated that 9 items in questionnaire in the table out of 20 items have their mean rating to a Moderate Extent. The cluster mean showed that all the items in the table indicated that graduates are considered to be willing to engage in self-employment with the skills acquired to a Great Extent. Unemployment among youths of NCE institutions has become a societal menace that should be of grave concern to all and sundry. The purpose of seeking formal education is to acquire knowledge, obtain a certificate and subsequently get employment, to be able to sustain oneself with the basic needs and wants of an individual. Unfortunately, this is not to be as graduates roam the streets seeking for white collar jobs that are not available. The graduates are frustrated, sad and at times go into all manners of crimes and criminality in order to survive. They are useless to themselves, their families, friends and the society at large. Factors such as lack of employable skills, self-interest, being risk averse, not being innovative or creative and not having task approach skills that will enable them to venture into self-employment or become entrepreneurs are some of the factors affecting the graduating students.

9. Recommendations

1. Vocational Education institutions must find ways to ensure that their graduates are well equipped with the needed skills required for self-employment in the 21st century.
2. Vocational Educators in higher institutions should accord vocational skills acquisition and entrepreneurship their rightful place in tertiary institutions. These will expose undergraduates early enough to self-employment and entrepreneurship.
3. Administrators of vocational education programmes should regularly organize in-service training to train and retrain vocational educators on current trends in the utilization of new technologies in the classroom for vocational education lecturers.
4. There should be adequate provision of infrastructures like buildings for lectures and laboratories, electricity, generators or solar energy to supply constant light for students practical and assignments.
5. Vocational education curriculum should emphasis more on skills and practical works and internship with less emphasis on theoretical lectures to enable the students master the act of self-employment.
6. The Federal Government of Nigeria should have a freed interest loan scheme that will provide initial take-off capital for vocational graduating students who are willing to engage in self-employment.
7. The interest free loan should have a grace period of 3 to 5 years before repayment to allow graduates to stabilize during the gestation period.

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