

Poverty reduction through vocational and technical education among graduates in Oyo State Nigeria

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Abstract

Poverty and unemployment especially among the graduates have remained major challenges threatening the economic growth and development of Nigeria. Towards poverty reduction Vocational and technical education is imperative. Therefore, this study examined poverty reduction through vocational and technical education among graduates in Oyo State, Nigeria. Four research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. A total of 390 vocational and technical education students formed the sample size of the study out of 3,900 graduates. A structured questionnaire developed by the researchers tagged: Poverty Reduction through Vocational and Technical Education Questionnaire (PRVTEQ) validated by three (3) experts was used for the study. Split half method was used to established reliability coefficient and the overall reliability coefficient was also established at 0.87 using Cronbach Alpha. The data generated for the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings showed among others that vocational and technical education increase pace for technological innovations, improve citizens standard of living, facilitate social Economy growth and development and promote political stability. Based on the findings the researcher recommended among others, government through its agencies should map out strategies of reaching out and providing funds for individuals who are willing to set up businesses and that school management should provide more vocational centers for skills acquisition towards poverty reduction.

Keywords: graduates, poverty reduction, vocational and technical education

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has been labeled as a great country supposedly because of the immense human and natural resources. Most individuals are still quite impoverished in spite of enormous endowment in human and material resources. In addition, unemployment is seen as a serious concern especially among the working people which led to poverty in the country. Poverty is the inability of an individual or a group to obtain the basic requirements of existence such as clothing, food, health, portable water, housing and the like. Oduma (2017) viewed poverty as an inability of an individual to obtain a minimal quality of living assessed in items of basic consumption demands or income required to satisfy them. Clark, in Oduma (2017), said that it is a state of inadequacy, deprivation, desire deficit, owing nothing at all or having not having not enough of all the necessities of life, having too little to exist.

Poverty is a state of penury, lack of luxuries and essentials of life. Thus, the need to produce entrepreneurs that will help to contribute to the development of the nation's economy and also defend nation's economy from possible collapse. Hence, training pupils with entrepreneurial spirit is vital for poverty reduction in the nation. According to UNESCO (2021), vocational and technical education (VTE) are "those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the paper of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic life". VTE thus equips people not only with occupational skills, but with a broad variety of information, skills and attitudes that are increasingly recognized as vital for meaningful involvement in work and life. Examples of the benefits include self-awareness and self-esteem, and increased interpersonal, citizenship, communication and entrepreneurial abilities. This concept stresses the relevance of the acquisition of practical knowledge, skills and attitudes in any training delivered by VTE providers.

VTE is a training and education that pertains to a certain trade in which the learner participates and directly develops the society in a particular group of techniques. It is an education that offers individuals the tools to live, learn and work as a productive citizen in a global society. It gives skills; information, attitude and value needed for work place, and prepares learners for profession, based on manual and practical activities. VTE provides skills and knowledge geared toward rural development, such as farm-related skills and knowledge, the establishment and maintenance of small and medium-sized firms that are directly tied to rural requirements and demand, among other things. In Africa, this can go a long way toward reducing rural-urban migration, as individuals will acquire skills that will keep them occupied while living in the countryside. VTE also has the potential to reduce the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, particularly among the youth and women, because it provides the much-needed skills for the development of the informal sector. By participating in VTE, individuals are positioned to actualize self-employment, thereby alleviating competition for a limited number of available positions in the official sector.

Technical and vocational education and training have long been recognized around the world as effective tools for alleviating poverty and promoting technological development. Consequently, the survival of a developing country like Nigeria, particularly in the twenty-first century, is heavily reliant on good, relevant and modern technical and vocational education and training programs that are functional and effective. Vocational and technical education is a process of teaching learners in a formal setting how to generate business ideas, evaluate alternatives with the goal of taking into consideration the capabilities of the entrepreneurs, conduct feasibility studies, write a bankable business plan, organize and manage the business with passion, creativity, and innovation with a vision to make a profit (Ubong, 2018; Kalu et al., 2017).

Aside from that, vocational and technical education is about more than just educating someone how to run a company. It is all about fostering innovative thinking while also instilling a strong sense of personal responsibility and accountability. Students learn how to start a firm and become an entrepreneur through vocational and technical education. An entrepreneur is someone who takes the initiative to start and own a business from the ground up and nurture it to growth and profitability, or who takes the initiative to take over an existing business and infuse new ideas or innovations into it in order to make it better than it was before he took over the business (Opate, 2016). The

term "entrepreneur" refers to someone who takes on the financial risk of starting and managing a new business enterprise. The venture can be founded on completely original ideas, innovative methods of doing things, a novel setting, or the attempt of something no one else has attempted before.

However, Nigeria, like the majority of developing countries around the world, is confronted with a slew of issues and harsh realities, including poverty, unemployment, conflict, and sickness. Among these are the unemployment situation, according to Major (2016), has posed a significant threat to the very existence of individuals in most developing countries, thereby highlighting the importance of vocational and technical education in the training of educated men and women who can function effectively in the society. Involves providing young graduates with sufficient training and support that will enable them to establish careers in small and medium-sized businesses, instilling the spirit of perseverance in youths and adults that will enable them to persevere in any business venture they embark on, facilitating the transition from a traditional to a modern industrial economy, and providing functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and independent contractors (Adetayo & Amede, 2021; Okeke, 2013).

Despite the critical roles played by vocational and technical education, poor knowledge-based, economic, and competitive spirit, a lack of enterprising culture, a scarcity of vocational and technical education teachers, insufficient materials and equipment, insufficient funding, and other factors, among others, are working against the development of vocational and technical education in Nigeria, and particularly in Oyo State, Nigeria. Employment, which leads to poverty, is a serious social problem that is currently threatening the economic development of the country of Nigeria. Thus, it is necessary to change students into self-assured and goal-oriented individuals in order to bridge the gap between unemployment and job creation. Therefore, this study examined poverty reduction through vocational and technical education among graduates in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Problem statement

The quest to reduce unemployment and improve the lives of Nigerian has made various governments to establish various poverty alleviation programme since independence. These include operation feed the nation, family support programme, national directorate of employment, youth empowerment scheme, n-power among others. Despite all these efforts, the economic condition in the country subsists with massive graduate unemployment and poverty including Educational Management graduates. The federal, state and local governments have repeatedly stated that government cannot provide jobs for all teeming unemployed youths in the country. Since the government cannot provide the jobs for the large pool of the unemployed graduates, then there is need to help students to acquire skills and devise strategies for employment creation through vocational and technical education towards poverty reduction in Nigeria particularly in Oyo State.

Vocational and technical education help to develop risk-taking skills, communication skills, human relation skills, project development skill and drafting skill for poverty reduction and others among all. Researchers have confirmed that the causes of poverty in the nations is due to ineffective teaching of vocational and technical education, hence, there is need for employment creation through vocational and technical education so as to reduce high rate of poverty in Nigeria.

Research objectives and questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate poverty reduction through vocational and technical education among graduates in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to: (1) identify various employment opportunities available through vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria; (2) examine the roles of vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria; (3) determine the factors militating against vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria; (4) describe the strategies for promoting vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria.

The following research questions guided the study. (1) What are the various employment opportunities available through entrepreneurship education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria? (2) What are the roles of vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria? (3) What are the factors militating against vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria? (3) What are the strategies for promoting vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria?

RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive survey design was used to carry out this study. Three thousand nine hundred (3900) vocational and technical education graduates in Oyo State formed the total population of this study. Ten percent totaling 390 respondents formed the sample size for this study. An instrument developed by the researchers tagged: Poverty Reduction through Vocational and Technical Education Questionnaire (PRVTEQ) validated by three (3) experts was used for the study. The instrument was designed on four (4) ratings scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the assigned numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The pilot study conducted yielded a split – half reliability coefficient of .87 which was high enough for the instrument to be considered reliable. A total of 390 copies of instrument were distributed online to the respondents and the same number was retrieved which represent 100% rate of returned. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Therefore, items with mean score of 2.50 and above were considered Agreed while items below 2.50 were considered Disagreed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 1

In the first research question, we asked about the various employment opportunities available through vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria. The mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on employment opportunities available through vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 revealed various employment opportunities available through vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction with mean ratings ranged from 3.31 to 4.33 and a weighted mean of 3.90. The standard deviation ranged from 0.63 to 1.30 indicating agreed.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of respondents' perception on employment opportunities

S/N	Available skills area in:	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Shoe making	4.07	0.74	Agreed
2.	Soap making	3.64	0.76	Agreed
3.	Chin chin	3.80	0.74	Agreed
4.	Bread Making	3.86	0.93	Agreed
5.	Hat making	3.66	0.71	Agreed
6.	Event management	4.08	0.63	Agreed
7.	Cake making	4.11	1.17	Agreed
8.	Tailoring (Fashion Design)	3.31	1.30	Agreed
9.	Mental Fabrication	4.09	0.73	Agreed
10.	Traditional Dancing	4.33	0.72	Agreed
	Weighted Mean/SD	3.90	0.84	Agreed

Research question 2

In the second research question, we asked about the roles of vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria. The mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the roles of vocational and technical education is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the roles of vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Increase pace for technological innovation	3.21	0.86	Agreed
2.	Improvement of living standard of citizen	3.11	0.81	Agreed
3.	Facilitates socio-economic growth and development	3.01	0.88	Agreed
4.	Employment and wealth creation	3.04	0.90	Agreed
5.	Promote political stability	2.83	0.85	Agreed
	Weighted Mean/SD	3.04	0.86	Agreed

Table 2 revealed the roles of vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction with mean ratings range from 2.83 to 3.21 and a weighted mean of 3.04. The standard deviation ranged from 0.81 to 0.90 indicating agreed.

Research question 3

In the third research question, we asked about the factors militating against vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria. The mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the factors militating against vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the factors militating against vocational and technical education

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Deficient VTE equipment and machines	3.29	0.81	Agreed
2.	Short fall in VTE funding	3.30	0.83	Agreed
3.	Gender disparities	3.19	0.84	Agreed
4.	Insufficient competent teachers	3.22	0.96	Agreed
5.	Labour market demands and trends	3.16	0.71	Agreed
	Weighted Mean/SD	3.23	0.83	Agreed

Table 3 revealed the factors militating against vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction with mean ratings range from 3.16 to 3.30 and a weighted mean of 3.23. The standard deviation ranged from 0.71 to 0.96 indicating agreed.

Research question 4

In the forth research question, we asked about the strategies for promoting vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria. The mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the strategies for promoting vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the strategies for promoting vocational and technical education

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Development of internship programme	3.00	0.96	Agreed
2.	Establishment of vocational centers	3.19	0.99	Agreed
3.	Competency based recruitment for teachers	3.09	0.78	Agreed
4.	Partnering with relevant agencies to ensure that students are well equipped.	3.08	0.89	Agreed
5.	Creating conducive environment for the training of students	3.21	0.86	Agreed
6.	Provision of adequate facilities in entrepreneurial centers	3.11	0.81	Agreed
7.	Effective utilization of laboratories	3.01	0.88	Agreed
8.	Establishment of Vocational and technical education boards to supervise and monitor Vocational and technical education programme	3.04	0.90	Agreed
9.	Career seminar for students on the benefits of becoming an entrepreneur for self-reliance towards poverty reduction	2.83	0.85	Agreed
10.	Teaching should balance theoretical and practical aspects	3.08	0.89	Agreed
11.	Provision of incentive system for motivating and rewarding teachers	3.21	0.86	Agreed
12.	Visiting acquisition centers by teachers and students	3.11	0.81	Agreed
13.	Influencing undergraduate mind set at all levels to learn trade	3.01	0.88	Agreed
14.	Development of creativity and innovative ideas among students	3.44	0.72	Agreed
15.	Incorporation of school based learning	3.21	0.88	Agreed
	Weighted Mean/SD	2.88	0.86	Agreed

Table 4 revealed the mean ratings and standard deviation on the strategies for promoting vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction with a mean score ranged from 2.83 to 3.44 and weighted mean of 2.88. The respondents however in table 4 indicated that all the items are closely related and based on the findings, the standard deviation of all items were ranged from 0.72 to 0.99 meaning agreed.

Discussion of findings

The findings as shown in Table 1 revealed that shoe making, soap making, chin chin, bread making, hat making, tailoring, event management, cake making and others among all are the employment opportunities available through vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings of this study agreed with that of Nwosu (2017) who posited that vocational and technical education provide skills area in hair dressing, metal fabrication, shoe making, disinfectants, headgear preparation, car security system and traditional dancing. However, vocational and technical education in Nigeria amongst other things seeks to provide students in tertiary institutions with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of ventures towards poverty reduction.

With respect to Table 2, the findings of the study revealed that vocational and technical education increase pace for technological innovation, improvement of living standard of citizen, facilitates socio-economic growth and development, employment and wealth creation and promote political stability. The finding of this is in consonance with the findings of Adetayo and Amede (2021) who asserted that the following are some Vocational and technical education prospects: it raises productivity through technical and other forms of innovation, it is a powerful tool for job creation, it facilitates the transfer of technology, it plays a strategic role in commercializing new innovations and products, it plays a crucial role in restructuring and transforms motion of economies, it makes markets more competitive and thereby reduces both static and dynamic market ineffectiveness and it improves the social welfare of a nation.

The findings as shown in Table 3 revealed that deficient VTE equipment and machines, short fall in VTE funding, gender disparities, insufficient competent teachers and labour market demands and trends. The finding of the study is corroborated by the submission of David (2017) who found that in competencies of teachers, poor attitudes of vocational and technical education and inadequate instructional materials and equipment for teaching and learning are the major challenges of vocational and technical education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The findings as shown in table 4 revealed the strategies for promoting vocational and technical education as a panacea to poverty reduction with agreed responses from the respondents. This study is in conjunction with the findings of Loo (2018) who noted that adequate funding is crucial to the adequacy and effectiveness of vocational and technical education and training programme, including procurement of expert for entrepreneurship training, provision of quality infrastructural facilities and sponsoring students to field trip for their entrepreneurial growth.

CONCLUSION

Given the present economic reality, it is imperative that the issue of employment creation through vocational and technical education among individuals be given serious attending. Hence, vocational and technical education is a strong force that has impact on employment generation towards poverty reduction in the present day in Nigeria. In order to reduce poverty and create wealth, vocational and technical education is considered as a panacea to equip students with necessary skills that will enable them functions effectively in the society. Hence, more attention must be given to educational sector.

Based on the findings and discussions of the study, the following recommendations were made. (1) Government through its agencies should map out strategies of reaching out and providing funds for individuals who are willing to set up businesses. (2) Frequent review of vocational and technical education curricular is necessary to include relevant components as may be required from time to time. (3) School management should provide more vocational centers for skills acquisition towards poverty reduction. (4) Government should create a conducive market for the sales of locally manufactured products to improve the nations' economy towards poverty reduction.

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