

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SKILL-BASED CURRICULUM TO YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study was conducted to assess how the Nigerian secondary school vocational and technical education curriculum was implemented with a view to ascertain the extent to which it has empowered students for self-employment. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample comprised 380 junior and senior secondary school [JSS and SSS] students and 120 teachers, selected from twelve secondary schools drawn across three states in Nigeria, one state from each of North Central, South East, and South West geopolitical zones of the country. Stratified random sampling technique was applied to select student-sample while purposive sampling was used for teacher-sample. The schools covered by the study comprised four categories: federal government school [FGS], state government school [SGS], high class private school [HCPS], and low class private school [LCPS]. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative techniques in data collection and analysis with questionnaires and observation as main instruments. Results revealed that sampled students have learnt significant self-employable entrepreneurial skills in 6 out of 36 vocational areas. Also, their entrepreneurial capability was found low, as there were no significant production of marketable goods and services to show for their practical knowledge. The study recommends, amongst others, integration of entrepreneurship education in the teaching-learning process, as this will enable students to be motivated in identifying entrepreneurial opportunities.

Key words: Nigerian youth, entrepreneurial skills, self-employment, vocational and technical education, skill-based curriculum, implementation

Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 guaranteed for the individual a whole range of basic freedom with education serving as a basic right necessary for the achievement of all other freedoms. The

achievement of the right to education requires that young people be given the opportunity necessary for the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable them lead happy and productive lives as individuals and discharge their social duties for the betterment of life in the society.

Nigeria, having realized the effectiveness of education as a powerful instrument for national progress and development, adjusted her educational philosophy and methodology to match the ideals and challenges of changing economic and social structure of modern society (National Policy on Education 1981, revised 2004). Consequently, in 1982, Nigeria adjusted her secondary educational system to encompass diversified curriculum that integrates academic with technical and vocational subjects, intended to empower the individual for self-employment. According to the National Policy on Education, the broad aims and objectives of secondary education in Nigerian educational system are preparation for useful living within the society (self-employment) and preparation for higher education. (The area that concerns this study is the first objective - preparation for self-employment).

However, almost three decades after adoption of the laudable initiative, majority of Nigerian youth are idle while some are involved in various vices due to unemployment. A good number of students who have completed their secondary education but failed to secure admission into institutions of higher learning are in dilemma. This is because they are not equipped with the requisite skills for self or paid employment (Igwe 2007). It is no longer news that the nation's youth unemployment rate has skyrocketed. Adekoya (1999) claimed that for the Nigerian youth to be empowered economically they should be given the necessary skill acquisition and for this to be done the curriculum should be effectively implemented. Oli (2000) believed that to ensure a positive future for Nigeria, the youth who are believed to be the future leaders of the country ought to be well equipped with basic skills to drive the economy.

Omotosho, Idowu, Esere and Arewah [2009] citing Ipaye [1988] posited that one of the developmental tasks of the youth is the attainment of economic independence which invariably arises from the youth becoming gainfully employed. Consequently, youth unemployment tends to have negative psychological effect on the youth themselves. It leads to maladjustment, and given that young people constitute about 60% of our total population (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010), a society

full of maladjusted citizens is itself sick and cannot progress. The need to address this phenomenon and its attendant problems necessitated this study.

The potential of Vocational and Technical Education

Following the political independence of Nigeria, there was a realization that the type of education our colonial masters left with us needed a critical re-examination of the worth: of content, objectives, relevance, methods, administration, evaluation, and so forth. According to Ezeobata (2007), this period saw a state of affairs in Nigerian education where every subject had to 'prove its usefulness' to retain a place in the school curriculum. This was said to have led the then National Educational Research Council (NERC) to convey a historic curriculum conference at Lagos in 1969. This conference recommended new set of goals and provided directions for major curriculum revision upon which the National Policy on Education of 1977 and the revised policy in 1981 and 2004 were based. Against this background of national aspirations, a new educational system commonly referred to as the 6-3-3-4 system of education emerged. The system consisted of six years of primary school education, three years of junior secondary school (JSS), three years of senior secondary school (SSS), and four years of post-secondary education (Omotayo, Ihebereme, & Maduewesi, 2008).

The implementation of the 6-3-3-4 education system in Nigeria began in 1982 and brought many reforms into the educational system in Nigeria. Among the innovations is the vocationalization of the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. At the junior secondary level pre-vocational subjects were introduced into the curriculum while vocational subjects were introduced into the senior secondary level. The focus of the pre-vocational was to expose students at the junior secondary school level to the world of work through exploration. Such exposure would enable junior secondary school students make intelligent career choice. Among the pre-vocational subjects are practical Agriculture, Home Economics, and Business Studies. Introductory Technology is an integration of components of woodwork, metalwork, basic electronics, applied electricity, water flow technology, airflow technology, food preservation, automobile mechanics, technical drawing, physics, rubber technology, chemistry, plastics, basic building technology, and ceramics. While Business Studies has typewriting, shorthand, bookkeeping, office practice, commerce and computer science as components. Fafunwa (2002) stated that the specific objectives of the Junior Secondary School

Education are to develop in the students' Manipulative skills (Manual dexterity) invention, respect for dignity of labour and above all healthy attitude towards things technical.

At the senior secondary level, recommended vocational /technical subjects include: Agricultural Science, Clothing and Textile, Home Management, Food and Nutrition, Typewriting & Shorthand, Principles of Accounts, Commerce, Woodwork, Technical Drawing, Basic Electronics, Building Construction, Applied Electricity and Auto Mechanics.

The most significant aspect of the National Policy on Education as noted by Dike (2009) is the new focus it gives to Nigerian educational system, the need for the Industrialization of the nation in which technical and vocational education play crucial roles and the realization to change from white collar job oriented educational system to science, vocational and technical oriented educational system which prepares individuals to be self-reliant and useful to the society. This is said to have informed the Federal Government to lay emphases on technical education. Dike (2009) further noted that the five National goals cannot be realized without developing technical /vocational education, a well-rooted technical education that will definitely transform the economic, social and political life-styles of our Nation from the third world to be the first world class.

Uyanya (1989) stated that the most important thing that ever happened to Nigeria is the 1981 National Policy on Education, which emphasizes the acquisition of vocational skill and self-reliance. Puyate (2004) quoted Sower (1971) who observed that vocational/technical education is a means towards industrialization of Nigeria. Olaitan (2007) defines vocational/technical education as that aspect of education which is a skill acquisition-oriented form of training,

Offorma (2005) lamented the growing dependence of our youth on white-collar jobs which are difficult to come by these days. Job employers, according to Offorma, do not emphasize certificates but what one can do and urged youth to seek self-reliance through self-employment.

Vocational-technical education is that aspect of education that gives its recipients an opportunity to acquire practical skills as well as some basic scientific knowledge (Nigerian National Policy on education, (1981). Oni (2007) quoted Puding (1994) who defined vocational-technical education as that type of education, which fits the individual for gainful

employment in recognized occupation as semi-skilled workers or technicians or sub-professionals.

Vocational education could be regarded as that aspect of education, which provides the recipients with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self-employed (Oni 2007). Vocational education nurtures skills that are necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development and thus builds a self-reliant nation.

Two of the aims of vocational-technical education as stated in the Nigerian National Policy on Education (1981: 28) are: "to give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant, and to enable Nigerian young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology". The above aims were stated about three decades ago. Today, according to Oni (2007), the nation still lacks quality vocation-technical education programmes in technical institutions. He however suggested the need to establish good vocational and technical institutions to provide the required training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant. Quality vocational-technical education is also essential in Nigerian institutions to sustain the nation's populace where quality of life is still very poor. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2010) noted that revitalizing this important sector is among the ways to improve economic opportunities for the youth.

According to Dike (2009), vocational and technical education is designed to develop occupational skills to give individuals the skills to "live, learn and work as productive citizens in a global society". Oni (2007) further argues that vocational and technical education holds the key to national development. For Aina (2009), it is an education for skill building and skill identity, which ultimately becomes a means of livelihood. According to Obanya (2007), vocational and technical education is part of integral development of the 'three Hs' - the head, the heart, and the hands which must not be neglected, as doing that will amount to a denial of an individual's integrated personality development.

From the foregoing, it is well recognized that vocational and technical education remains the key to achieving economic empowerment and national development. The researcher is in agreement with the

various opinions expressed on the potential of vocational and technical education in equipping the learners with entrepreneurial skills necessary for self-reliance. However, The extent to which this has been achieved is not yet addressed. This situation calls for a critical appraisal of the implementation of the Nigerian secondary school vocational and technical curriculum with a view to finding out how it is affecting the socio-economic empowerment of the youth.

Problem of the Study

Majority of Nigerian youth are idle and some are involved in various vices due to unemployment. Consequently they cannot raise their socio-economic standard and therefore cannot contribute to nation building. Youth unemployment is a menace and constitutes a real danger and a threat to Nigeria's socio-economic growth. As often said "an idle hand is the devil's workshop" the joblessness of the Nigerian youth today stems from their non-acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. This has further aggravated the youth negative behaviour in the society as most anti-social acts including thuggery, arm robbery, militancy, restiveness, ethnic-political clashes and other social vices in Nigeria could be traced to the high rate of unemployment (Okafor, 2011). Unfortunately, most research studies on youth unemployment have not been able to trace the root cause. This study is designed to fill this gap

Objectives of Study

The main aim of the study was to assess how the Nigerian secondary school vocational and technical education curriculum was implemented with a view to ascertain the extent to which it has empowered students for self-employment. The specific objectives were to:

1. identify practical (entrepreneurial) skills students have learnt in school with which they can create self-employment
2. identify students' entrepreneurial capability i.e. products and services students have successfully produced/ marketed on their own

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What practical (entrepreneurial) skills have students learnt in school with which they can create self-employment?

2. What products and services have students produced /marketed on their own?

Methodology

Research design

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This method was deemed appropriate as it involved the collection of extensive and cross-sectional data for the purpose of describing and interpreting an existing situation under study.

Population

The target population included all students and teachers from public and private secondary schools in Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

In order to have data that is nationally representative, three out of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria were purposely selected: North Central, South East and South West. Using the balloting technique, one state per zone was randomly selected, namely: Nasarawa, Imo and Lagos states respectively. In each state, four school categories were used: federal government-owned school [FGS], state government-owned school [SGS], high-class private school [HCPS], low-class private school [LCPS]. The criteria used in the selection of HCPS and LCPS include: school environment (school climate /facilities), quality of teachers, school plant and building, school fees, school location.

The subjects for the study comprised two sample groups – students and teachers. Student-sample consisted of 380 secondary school students comprising 198 junior and 182 senior students randomly selected from the twelve secondary schools. For teacher-sample, a total of 120 were drawn from the twelve selected schools and derived from variety of disciplines including humanities, sciences, commercial, technical and vocational.

Instrumentation and Validation

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative techniques with two main instruments used in data collection. These were: Student Assessment Questionnaire [SAQ] and Observation Guide.

The SAQ was an 11-item instrument designed by the researcher to elicit information on the variables of the study. It had two parts. Part one was the biodata. Part two contained eight main items. Items 4, 7 and 9

each contained list of 18 vocational and technical subjects requesting respondents to indicate the one(s) offered in school, frequency of practical work on the subjects offered and the subject(s) that offer the most practical skill in the course of their studies, respectively. Item 5 had list of 14 infrastructural facilities requesting respondents to indicate the one(s) available in school. Item 6 contained list of 36 practical (entrepreneurial) skills for respondents to indicate the one(s) they had learnt in school with which they could create self-employment, Items 8 and 10 each contained list of 22 entrepreneurial trades for respondents to indicate the one(s) they could do well and the one(s) they had tried on their own, respectively. Item 11 contained list of 24 products and services requesting respondents to indicate the one(s) they had produced /marketed in the course of their studies.

Observation was conducted in all selected schools using a guide. The guide contained checklist of infrastructural facilities with which to check facilities available in school. Part B of the guide assessed the quality of available facilities, while part C contained list of 18 vocational and technical subjects on which to identify type of instructional materials available as well as products and services produced by students.

The SAQ was content- and face -validated through experts' judgment. The reliability was obtained in a test-retest procedure. The correlation coefficient value of 0.88 was obtained.

Data Collection Procedure

The instruments were administered in respective schools with the help of three specially trained research assistants, one for each state covered by the study. In each school visited, instruments were administered following the same sequence. First, selected students were assembled and administered with SAQ questionnaire. Thereafter, the researcher was taken round school for observation of available infrastructural facilities, instructional materials, as well as products and services produced by students.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from questionnaire were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The cut-off point for judging the significance /non-significance of item scores was set at forty percent [40%]. This was considered appropriate given the nature of the study and taking into consideration the fact that 40% is the pass mark in secondary school

grading. Hence, for entrepreneurial skill, any item with total rating of 40% and above was regarded as highly acquired while any item with total rating below 40% was regarded low. Similarly, for products and services, item score is regarded as either high or low depending on whether it is above or below 40%. The observation data collected were content analyzed.

Results

The results obtained from the analysis of data collected in the course of this study are presented in Tables 1-4 using the research questions as guideline.

Research question 1: What practical (entrepreneurial) skills have students learnt in school with which they can create self-employment?

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of students who felt they have acquired basic entrepreneurial skill by school type

S/ N	Entrepreneurial Skill	FGS		SGS		HCPS		LCPS		Total F	Total %
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Drawing (Fine Art)	55	14.5	35	9.2	97	25.5	27	7.1	214	56.3
2	Sewing (Home Economics)	56	14.7	29	7.6	60	15.8	47	12.4	192	50.5
3	Farming (Agric Science)	41	10.8	34	8.9	58	15.3	45	11.8	178	46.8
4	Cookery (Food & Nutrition)	57	15.0	45	11.8	45	11.8	22	5.8	169	44.5
5	Electrical work (Introductory Tech)	46	5.0	37	9.7	44	11.6	29	7.6	156	41.1
6	Singing (Music)	36	9.5	27	7.1	63	16.6	26	6.8	152	40.0

Keys: FGS [Federal Govt. School] SGS [State Government Schools]
HCPS [High Class Private Schools] LCPS [Low Class Private Schools] N=380

Going by the cut off point of 40%, and going by school type [FGS, SGS, HCPS, LCPS] Table 1 indicates that only in Fine Art [Drawing], Home Economics [Sewing], Agricultural Science [Farming], Food & Nutrition [Cookery], Introductory Technology [Electrical Works] and

Music [singing] did the sampled students signify having acquired significant self-employable entrepreneurial skill. The proportion of students' indication in other vocational areas was rather low. Except in Cookery, which was led by FGS, high class private schools consistently led with high margin in all the areas listed above. Vocational areas where sample students indicated low entrepreneurial skill acquisition include: painting [Art & Craft], typing & shorthand [typing], interior decoration [Home Economics], tie & dye [Fine Art] [Clothing & Textile], composing songs [Music], data processing [Computer Science], computer services [Computer Science], catering [Home Economics], weaving [Art & Craft], poultry [Agricultural Science], sculpture [Fine Art], carving [Fine Art], dress making [Clothing & Textile], fishery [Agricultural Science], electrical work [Applied Electricity] [Introductory Technology], furniture making [Wood Work], gardening [Home Management], mechanical work, welding [Metal Work], bricklaying [Building Construction], draughtsmanship [Building Construction], flower arrangement [Home Management], TV and radio work, carpentry [Wood Work], auto mechanic [Metal Work], calligraphy/sign writing [Fine Art].

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of students who felt they have acquired basic entrepreneurial skill by state/school location

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skill	Imo		Lagos		Nasarawa		Total F	Total %
		F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Drawing (Fine/ Art)	77	20.3	97	25.5	40	10.5	214	56.3
2	Sewing (Home Economics)	70	18.4	77	20.3	45	11.8	192	50.5
3	Farming (Agric Science.)	61	16.1	51	13.4	66	17.4	178	46.8
4	Cookery (Food & Nutrition)	68	17.9	70	18.4	31	8.2	169	44.5
5	Electrical work (Introductory Tech)	50	13.2	70	18.4	36	9.5	156	41.1
6	Singing (Music)	57	15.0	63	16.6	32	8.4	152	40.0

Keys: FGS [Federal Govt. School] SGS [State Government Schools] HCPS [High Class Private Schools] LCPS [Low Class Private Schools] N=380

With the cut off point of 40%, and going by state, Table 2 further confirms that only in Fine Art [Drawing], Home Economics [Sewing], Agricultural Science [Farming], Food & Nutrition [Cookery], Introductory Technology [Electrical Works] and Music [singing] did students signify having acquired significant self-employable entrepreneurial skill. The proportion of students' indication in other vocational areas was rather low (i.e. painting, typing & shorthand, interior decoration, tie & dye, composing songs, data processing, computer services, catering, weaving, poultry, sculpture, carving, dress making, fishery, electrical work, furniture making, gardening, mechanical work, welding, bricklaying, draughtsmanship, flower arrangement, TV and radio work, carpentry, auto mechanic, calligraphy/sign writing). Except in farming which was led by Nassarawa state, Lagos state consistently led with high margin in all the areas listed above.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of students who felt they have acquired basic entrepreneurial skill by class [N=380]

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skill	JSS1		JSS2		JSS3		SS1		SS2		SS3		Total F	Total %
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Drawing (Fine Art)	5	1.3	31	8.2	63	16.6	8	2.1	42	11.1	65	17.1	214	56.3
2	Sewing (Home Economics)	6	1.6	37	9.7	54	14.2	8	2.1	26	6.8	61	16.1	192	50.5
3	Farming (Agriculture Science)	4	1.1	16	4.2	57	15.0	0	0.0	38	10.0	63	16.6	178	46.8
4	Cookery (Food & Nutrition)	5	1.3	16	4.2	27	7.1	4	1.1	32	8.4	85	22.4	169	44.5
5	Electrical work (Introductory Tech)	2	0.5	21	5.5	52	13.7	6	1.6	29	7.6	46	12.1	156	41.1
6	Singing (Music)	8	2.1	20	5.3	45	11.8	7	1.8	17	4.5	55	14.5	152	40.0

With the cut off point of 40%, and going by class in school, Table 3 indicates that only in Fine Art [Drawing], Home Economics [Sewing], Agricultural Science [Farming], Food & Nutrition [Cookery], Introductory Technology [Electrical Works] and Music [singing] did students signify having acquired significant self-employable entrepreneurial skill. The proportion of students' indication in other

vocational areas was rather low. Except in Introductory Technology [Electrical work], which was led by junior secondary students [JSS] 3, senior secondary students [SSS] 3 consistently led in all the other subject areas listed above.

Research question 2: What products and services have students produced /marketed on their own?

Table 4: Frequency and percentage distribution of products and services successfully produced /marketed by students while in school by school type

S/N	Product/Service	FGS		SGS		HCPS		LCPS		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Cake Production	30	8.0	29	7.8	35	9.4	20	5.3	114	30.5
2	Farm Produce	31	8.3	20	5.3	18	4.8	9	2.4	78	20.9
3	Acting	7	1.9	10	2.7	36	9.6	17	4.5	70	18.7
4	Art Work	10	2.7	19	5.1	34	9.1	5	1.3	68	18.2
5	Cookery	12	3.2	22	5.9	16	4.3	17	4.5	67	17.9
6	Tie & dye	19	5.1	9	2.4	20	5.3	17	4.5	65	17.4
7	Typing	23	6.1	6	1.6	28	7.5	5	1.3	62	16.6
8	Dress Making	19	5.1	12	3.2	13	3.5	6	1.6	50	13.4
9	Song Composition	4	1.1	8	2.1	15	4.0	8	2.1	35	9.4
10	Weaving	9	2.4	5	1.3	9	2.4	10	2.7	33	8.8
11	Computer Services	4	1.1	3	0.8	13	3.5	10	2.7	30	8.0
12	Calligraphy	8	2.1	4	1.1	0	0.0	6	1.6	18	4.8
13	Woodwork	2	0.5	0	0.0	11	2.9	4	1.1	17	4.5
14	Mechanical	0	0.0	9	2.4	5	1.3	1	0.3	15	4.0
15	Throw Pillow	5	1.3	3	0.8	2	0.5	4	1.1	14	3.7
16	Electrical repairs	0	0.0	1	0.3	4	1.1	8	2.1	13	3.5
17	Bricklaying	4	1.1	2	0.5	0	0.0	6	1.6	12	3.2
18	Carving	0	0.0	1	0.3	5	1.3	5	1.3	11	2.9
19	Sculpture	1	0.3	1	0.3	2	0.5	4	1.1	8	2.1
20	TV Repairs	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3	7	1.9	8	2.1
21	Radio Repairs	0	0.0	2	0.5	1	0.3	4	1.1	7	1.9
22	Welding	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.1	4	1.1
23	Furniture	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.5	0	0.0	2	0.5

Keys: FGS [Federal Govt. School] SGS [State Government Schools]
 HCPS [High Class Private Schools] LCPS [Low Class Private Schools] N=374

With the cut off point of 40%, it is apparent from Table 4 that there is no significant production of marketable goods and services by Nigerian secondary students within this period of study. Nevertheless, Cake production [30.5%], Farm produce [20.9%], Acting [18.7%], Art work [18.2%], Cookery [17.9%], Tie & Dye [17.4%] and Typing [16.6%] topped the list of goods and services some students have been able to successfully produce.

Observation shows that except in Fine Art, Computer Studies, Music and Technical Drawing, teachers and students had no product or services to show for their practical knowledge in Nasarawa and Imo, in all the school categories sampled. Lagos State also had more students' and teachers' products and services than the other states sampled.

Discussion

The first research question was on practical [entrepreneurial] skills students had learnt in school with which they could create self-employment. Results derived from questionnaire indicated that sampled students from state government school (SGS) and low class private school (LCPS) have not learnt sufficient practical [entrepreneurial] skills to allow for self-employment, as opposed to federal government school (FGS) and high class private school (HCPS). However, further analysis showed that generally Nigerian secondary students have learnt significant self-employable entrepreneurial skills in the following areas: Fine Art [Drawing], Home Economics [Sewing], Agricultural Science [Farming], Food & Nutrition [Cookery], Introductory Technology [Electrical Works] and Music [singing]. Going by school type, HCPS consistently led with high margin in all the areas listed. By state, Lagos led with high margin with exception of Nasarawa that led in Agriculture science [farming]. From the result it is obvious that sampled students signified having acquired significant self-employable entrepreneurial skill in only 6 out of 36 vocational areas. This apparently explains the increasing rate of unemployment and its antecedent social vices amongst youth in the country. The result clearly indicates that vocational /technical education curriculum, though with inherent advantages, does not seem to achieve its purpose, as it has not provided adequate opportunity for skill learning and practical experience needed for self-employment and self-reliance to our teeming youth who are product of the system.

This view validates several other views expressed by Ajala (2002), Babafemi (2007) who described Nigerian secondary education system as

laudable but seems to suffer from poor implementation. Commenting on the poor implementation, Igwe (2007) noted that the secondary school curriculum only prepares secondary school leavers to seek admission to the university as the only option available. Fabunmi (2009) corroborated this view and observed that the school curriculum is not structured to make students self-employable upon graduation. It is therefore pertinent to remind that the goals and objectives of secondary education in Nigeria, which are linked to the philosophy of education, are clearly stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2004). As noted by Offorma (2005), these are laudable goals which if earnestly pursued would produce functional Nigerian citizens who would contribute to the political, social, economic, educational, scientific and technological development of the nation.

However, the practical knowledge students reported to have acquired in the 6 areas could equally be put to use if properly harnessed. These areas can offer income-generating ventures with opportunity for job creation where young people could start up businesses. From the few products and services they reported they could profitably handle in this study, it is apparent that the right handling of vocational and technical subjects in Nigerian secondary schools holds a strong promise to solving the problems of unemployment [with its attendant social vices] and poverty in Nigeria. Unfortunately, Nigerian environment is not business-friendly as the epileptic power supply does not promote entrepreneurship. The fact remains that without first fixing the power problem, it is difficult to empower the youth for job creation and wealth generation.

The result of the study further revealed that students' entrepreneurial capability was significantly low as there were no significant production of marketable goods and services to show for their practical knowledge. Nevertheless, Cake production, Farm produce, Acting, Art work, Cookery, Tie & Dye and Typing topped the list of goods and services some students were able to successfully produce. There is strong possibility that students' low entrepreneurial capability resulted from lack of entrepreneurial knowledge, not knowing they could create wealth with skills acquired. This calls for the need to integrate entrepreneurship education in the teaching /learning process. It could also be due to their lack of interest resulting from public bias against vocational and technical education, in which case adequate public enlightenment campaign be carried out to emphasize their importance.

Without entrepreneurial skills for self-employment, our youth cannot function as the real catalyst of the socio-economic agenda to make Nigeria great.

Conclusion

Evidence yielded by the study revealed that Nigerian secondary school students have not learnt sufficient practical [entrepreneurial] skills to allow for self-employment. The Nigerian secondary educational system is expected to rise to the challenge of equipping the youth with the necessary entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, values and attitude for them to live as competent members of the society and contribute to nation building. Because of fund limitation, there is clearly a need to replicate this study in other states of the federation and even extend it to more schools in the sampled states.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. Students should be encouraged to have interest in the skill-based [vocational and technical] subjects, hence should be accorded appropriate recognition. There is need for a change in the mind-set of youth to see self-employment as an option and be prepared psychologically and emotionally for it. This will enable them to be more motivated in identifying entrepreneurial opportunities. To this end, entrepreneurship education should be part of vocational and technical teaching-learning process.
2. With the recent emphasis on the need for youth self-employment, the Federal Government is equally expected to create the enabling environment that will promote entrepreneurship by ensuring constant power supply in the country, without this the young upcoming entrepreneurs will become discouraged.
3. Real practical work [and not alternative to practical] in vocational and technical subjects should be made compulsory for JSS 3 and SSS 3 students as part of the requirements for their graduation. Each student should be encouraged to produce at least one marketable product or service, and such products should be put up for exhibition. This will further create motivation for entrepreneurship
4. Teachers should be supported through continuous professional development and motivation to enable them prepare the youth for success in the competitive global economy

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