

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF SKILLS ACQUISITION FOR SELF-RELIANCE AMONG GRADUATES OF TECHNICAL COLLEGES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study sought to evaluate skills acquisition for self-reliance among graduates of technical colleges in Cross River State, Nigeria. Relevant literatures to the variable of the study was critically examined. Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. A sample of 241 graduates was used for the study. The sampling technique adopted for study was accidental and snowball sampling technique. The main instrument used for the collection of data was the questionnaire with reliability coefficient ranging from .84, .63 and 63 and data raised were analyzed using the simple percentage analysis. The results obtained showed a significant positive influence of skills acquisition for self-reliance among graduates of technical colleges in Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that government should reposition all the technical colleges in Cross River State, Nigeria and Products of technical colleges should be regularly evaluated to provide immediate feedback and spot areas that will require modification in order to continue to sustain and promote the programme. Finally, the study suggested that a replication of this study should be carried out again on the variables that were not previously investigated.*

KEYWORDS: skills acquisition, self-reliance, graduates, technical education, Cross River State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the springboard to socio economic growth and development of every nation. It prepares an individual to live in a dynamic society and contribute to such changes and constantly promote the survival, growth and development of the society. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) viewed technical education as the aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic knowledge. Aina (2010) sees technical education as training for an individual to help him or her acquire skills, knowledge and attitude in a particular occupational area for employment with respect to societal needs.

It was on this basis that, the Cross River State government in line with the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) established the State Technical Education Board (STEB) through edict No 9 of 1991 in fulfillment of a resolution of National Council on Education, to develop and manage science, technical and vocational schools in the state with the sole purpose of improving the quality of science teaching and learning in the state. It was observed that manpower requirement for effective science instruction in the state was inadequate, and the proportion of Cross River State indigenes that enrolled in science and technological courses in tertiary institutions was also very discouraging. Consequently, it was therefore perceived that this problem could adequately be addressed by setting up technical colleges in the state with a separate management board for effective monitoring and supervision.

However, the success of this programme just like any other social action programme depends essentially on effective implementation. Therefore, there is need for its evaluation after over 25 years of its existence. This is particularly so, since evaluation plays a very important role in programme improvement (Yoloye, 1979). Evaluation provides continuous feedback concerning programme strengths and weaknesses; and corrective measures applied to realize programme goals and objectives. Decisions about how to use resources to attain programme goals are all based on the result of evaluation. In fact, evaluation provides basis for continuous monitoring, formulating and reformation of programmes. Evaluation of any educational endeavour is for the purpose of determining the extent to which it is serving the purpose for which it was established. The absence of constant evaluation will leave the programme with risk of failure. Periodic evaluation will bring about improvement, efficiency and accountability. Data is therefore required on the programme quality, suitability of teaching methods, availability and adequacy of teaching and learning materials, and adequacy of staff development.

In Nigeria today, serious concern has been expressed by parents, lecturers, employers of labour and the entire society about the quality of graduates from technical colleges and other related technical education institutions. Several reasons may have been responsible for this, such as lack of facilities, attitude of students to science & technology education and implementation of curriculum.

It is however, no secret that most of our technical colleges have compromised the practical aspect of their instructional delivery. Consequently, the desire of technical education suffers. There is this seeming lack of interest in what transpires in our technical colleges may have affected the quality of graduates produced in such colleges. Therefore, some form of monitoring and evaluation is therefore necessary if technical education is to achieve its objectives. It is at this juncture, coupled with the manner at which our technical colleges are operated, that performance evaluation becomes imperative.

Performance evaluation (PE) is one of the popular approaches of programme evaluation. Evaluation of any educational system is necessary for the improvement of the individuals, society and the system as a whole. The major elements in education that can

be, and have been evaluated are the school programme, curriculum, students' performance, educational personnel and instructional facilities. In Cross River State, the evaluation of school programme within the scope of educational evaluation is limited. Performance evaluation is the careful collection of information about a programme or some aspects of a program in order to assist in decision making. Therefore, the achievement of the set objective of this programme is to support Cross River State in the quest to build a Nation that is technologically self-reliant, and to lay a foundation for true national development. These and more informed this study.

Statement of the problem

The concept of Technical Education is rooted on preparation of students for acquisition of necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to earn employment as expert assistance and professionals in any field of Technology and Engineering. Technical Education is basically occupational education which makes individuals self-sufficient and reliant. It is believed that acquisition of practical skills relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life will improve the standard of living of the people, and assist in eradicating poverty in the society.

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Therefore, the need to evaluate the performance of technical education in the state becomes very imperative. Hence the study sought to appraise the performance of graduates of technical education in terms of skills acquisition for self-reliance in Cross River State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Skills Acquisition for Self-Reliance among Graduates of Technical Colleges

In the past, education in Nigeria was based on the need of the missionaries for teachers and preachers, as well as the need of the government for clerical workers in government offices. Those were the main reasons for early establishment of both elementary and Secondary Schools by the missionaries themselves (Fafunwa, 2004). The early Secondary Schools were the grammar Schools founded after the English System. No technical schools were originally established. As a result of this, education gradually became a means of avoiding manual work hence, the educational system was greatly

criticized and not only for neglect of technical education and training that would have made people to be self-reliant for national development but, being not relevant to peculiar needs of the Nigerian pupils.

Education which is the process of emancipation, civilization and development as asserted by Jibrin, Danjuma and Zayum (2007), is also equated to a key that unlocks the development of personal (self-reliant) and national potentials (national development)..., which is the reason why the government of Nigeria regarded education as an instrument per excellence for effective national development (Jiddere, 2002). Since education has been seen as an instrument for scientific and technological development, amongst others, the Federal Government of Nigeria on the National policy on Education, (2004) listed five main national goals of her education system among which was technical education for a united, strong and self-reliant nation. According to Merrian (2006) Self-reliance simply means reliance on one own efforts and abilities. Igweh (2008) opined that when somebody acquires skills in any occupation, such person can establish his or her own business and even employ others; such person according to him is self-reliant. Bassey (2009), in his opinion declared “self-reliance” as that which pre-supposes the attainment and autonomy without unnecessarily resorting to begging or browning. He emphasized that; “a self-reliant individual is one who achieves steady supply of his needs, one that diversifies his resources to reduce dependency on others for assistance”.

Thus, self-reliance emphasizes growth and development in the life of a citizen, politically, socially and economically. Therefore, a man who is potently self-reliant will ensure an effective control of his resources over national life for proper national development. Nwogu (2009) affirms that self-reliance through technical education should emphasize entrepreneurship awareness for it to be relevant in achieving the national educational aim of inculcating the right type of values and attitudes for survival of an individual and Nigerian society”.

Enahoro (2008), in his view says that technical training is utilitarianism and it is a concept of reorganizing the importance of labour. Therefore, to train someone in his appropriate field and for him to substantially contribute his quota to the overall good of the nation, he has to pass through technical education training. It is a fact that it needs no further investigation to say that when and if it is good with a nation, it is also good with its inhabitants and vice versa.

For this reason, any nation or country that gives proper training in one sided area of importance to her citizenry or gives improper training to people in all areas of importance has nothing to gain. People are differently gifted and therefore, should be given equal technical education training for self-reliance in the different occupational areas. Nigeria should be such that people are trained for the different opportunities or openings that abound in the country, in compliance with the tedious task of giving suitable and proper training to individuals for optimum productivity amongst others.

Today it is unfortunate to mention that Nigeria as a country cannot boast of manufacturing a single pin by them. How could they have achieved this task when the

philosophy of technical education is not judiciously followed and implemented. The sociological influence of the society on technical education has made the matter worse. Technological education has remained a subordinate discipline in terms of societal recognition, inadequate funding and parental/children choice. It is in view of this fact that Kennedy (2008) makes a critique of the various aspects of the philosophy of technical education and analysed the influence of the society on this profession and how Nigeria can move forward.

Prosser (2004) observes that skills acquisition which is the hall mark of technical education is an illusion in Nigeria. For instance technical education teachers now turn the programmes of technical education into a literary kind of education where only theoretical aspects of technical education are taught to the detriment of the practical aspects of the lessons which are over-riding requirement for the establishment of technical education, and if this development is not checked, then the achievement of self-reliance in Nigeria is a failure.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for this study is descriptive design. Descriptive design according to Yabo (2007) is concerned with finding, describing and interpreting an existing phenomenon, condition or relationship between or among people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. This research design is found to be appropriate because the study is on a small group considered to be representative of the entire population. Kerlinger (2006) stated that descriptive survey is aimed at investigating a situation at the time of the study.

The population of this study consists of all the graduates of technical colleges in Cross River State, Nigeria. There are 18 technical colleges in seventeen Local Government Areas in Cross River State. The number of graduates as at 2015/2016, 2017/2018, and 2018/2019, academic session for a period of three years was summed up bringing the population of the study to 2415. These data was obtained from the statistic Department of Cross River State Ministry of Education Technical Education Board, 2020.

In order to have a representation of sample, both accidental and snowball sampling technique was adopted for this study. According to Isangedighi, A. J. et al (2004) sampling technique is a non-probability technique in which the evidence of being drawn by chance is limited. Hence accidental sampling technique was adopted for the study because the researcher only gave the instrument to those he encountered in their places of primary duties such as mechanics workshops, electrical and electronic shops in watt market, vulcanizers, electrical welders and panel beaters within Cross River state.

Equally, snowball was adopted by the researcher to solicit for more respondents for the study. Here the population members act as agents of the researcher by sampling from colleagues, friends or associates that they were in school together. While this goes on, the researcher used the information gathered to get more of these persons. One of the reasons why snowball sampling technique was adopted is because some of the graduates

of related technological institution may likely know other graduates in the same situation as them and could inform other graduates about the study and it benefits having reassured them of their confidentiality.

The sample for the study was made up of 241 respondents which was 10% of the total population of the study. Respondents were drawn from graduates from mechanic workshops, electrical and electronic line in watt market, vulcanizers, electrical welders and panel beaters.

The study required the use of questionnaire. Therefore, an instrument titled Performance Evaluation of Technical Colleges Questionnaire (PETCQ) was used for this study. The instrument sought information on such demographic data as marital status, name of college graduated from, location of the college, sex and age.

To ascertain the validity of this form of instrument, the appropriateness of the content must be validated and this is done through, content validity. To ensure this, major levels of the variables were considered for comprehensiveness an items constructed and selected. Moreso, serious transforming was carried out by the researcher with expects in measurement and evaluation in which thorough scrutiny of the items side by side with the variable under study was carried out.

After the exercise, the instrument was considered to be both construct and content valid to satisfactorily measure the variables of the study. The scores were correlated using Cronbach alpha. The correlation co-efficient values found ranged between $r = .85$ to $r = .63$. These ranges were considered as adequate for study in performance evaluation of technical college's as a result, the instrument was accepted as suitable since it is consistent over time. These findings helped in the acceptability of the usage of the instrument.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the results and discussion of findings. Data were presented on the basis of the research question that guided the study.

Research question one

1. To what extent of self-reliance does a graduate of technical education possess?
To answer this research question, responses to items 1-6 of section B on the questionnaire were analyzed. The result of the analysis is presented in the Table below.

Simple percentage responses of skills acquisition of graduates of technical education for self-reliance through. (N= 241)

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				Total %
		Agree		Disagree		
1	I am a proud owner of a business center and workshop.	146	(61)	95	(39)	241 (100)
2	With the help of my business centre/workshop, I am happily married with children.	190	(79)	62	(21)	241 (100)
3	Upon graduation I am in my family house since I have nothing doing.	139	(57)	115	(43)	241 (100)
4	With the help of my business centre and workshop I can adequately care for both my immediate and extended families.	183	(76)	58	(24)	241 (100)
5	Lack of finance has greatly hindered the establishment of my business center/workshop.	137	(57)	104	(43)	241 (100)
6	I now have a house I can call my own.	143	(59)	98	(41)	241(100)

*Percentage presented in parenthesis

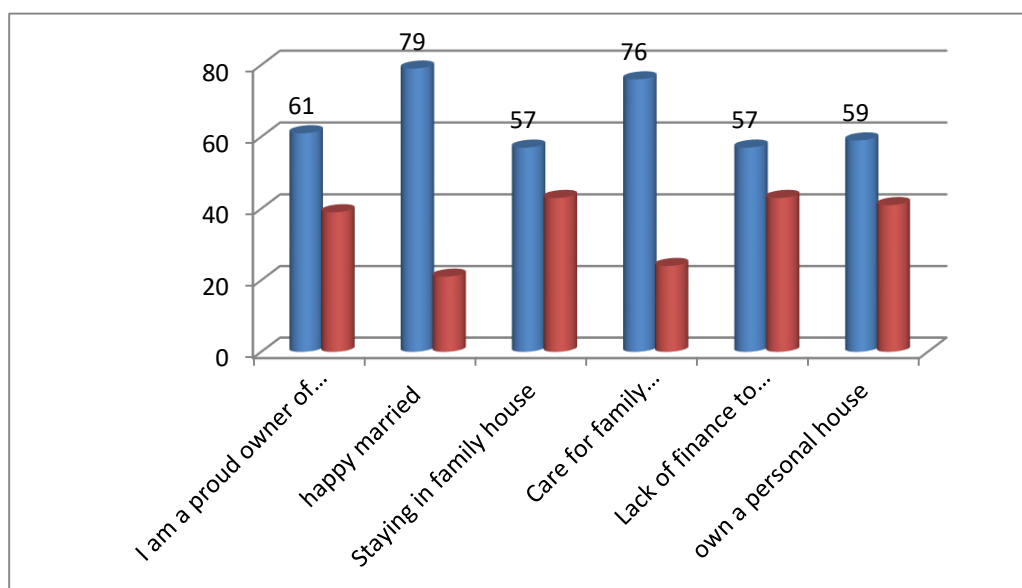
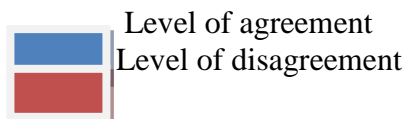


Figure 1: frequency level of skills acquisition for self-reliant of products of technical colleges.

KEY



From Table above, it can be observed that 146 respondents representing (61%) of the total respondents agreed that they are proud owners of business centers and workshops, while 95 respondents representing (39%) disagreed. Also, 190 respondents representing (79%) agree that with the help of their business centre/workshop, they are happily married with children, while 62 respondents representing (21%) disagreed. Also, 139 (57%) agreed that upon graduation they still remain in their family house since they have nothing doing, while 115 respondents, representing (43%) disagreed. Again, 183 respondents, representing (76%) are of the view that with the help of their business centre and workshop they can adequately care for both of their immediate extended families, while 58 respondents representing (24%) disagreed.

Again, 137 respondents representing (57%) agreed that lack of finance has greatly hindered the establishment of their business center and workshop, while 104 respondents, representing (43 %) disagreed. Equally, 143 respondents, representing (59%) agree that they now have houses they can call their own, while 98 respondents, representing (41%) disagreed.

The results of the analysis indicate that the percentages of agreement for all the six items are higher than 50%. This implies that technical colleges in Cross River State have brought about the needed self- reliant for Cross River State and those that reside thereafter.

The above results indicate that the percentages of agreement for all the six items are higher than 50%. This implies that graduates of technical colleges in Cross River State are self- reliant in consonance anticipated wish of Government in establishing this sector of education in the state. The finding of this study is consonance with Igweh (2008) who opined that when somebody acquires skills in any occupation, such person can establish his or her own business and even employ others; such person according to him is self-reliant. Bassey (2009), in his opinion declared self-reliance as that which pre-supposes the attainment and autonomy without unnecessarily resorting to begging or browning. He emphasized that; “a self-reliant individual is one that achieves steady supply of his needs, one that diversifies his resources to reduce dependency on others for assistance” Thus, self-reliance emphasizes growth and development in the lives of citizen, politically, socially and economically. Therefore, a man who is potently self-reliant will ensure an effective control of his resources over national life for proper national development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that graduates of technical education are self-reliant and were contributing to the provision of minimum man-power and economic development of the state.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are reached:

- i. Government should reposition all the technical colleges in Cross River State, Nigeria.
- ii. Products of technical colleges should be regularly evaluated to provide immediate feedback and spot areas that will require modification in order to continue to sustain and promote the programme.

Finally, the study suggested that a replication of this study should be carried out again on the variables that were not previously investigated.

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