



TECHNO-VOCATIONAL SKILLS ACQUISITION AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES IN VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: THE CASE OF RIVERS STATE

IGWE, L.E.B¹ and ORAGWU, Angela A.¹

¹Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education,
University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study investigated techno-vocational skills acquisition and poverty reduction strategies in technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State of Nigeria with major focus on the types of vocational and technical programmes offered in technical institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction, the employment prospects of the graduates of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction, and the reforms options to achieve effective skill acquisition for poverty reduction in techno/vocational schools. Three research questions and two hypotheses were posed for the purpose of this study. A descriptive survey of a sampled population of all techno-vocational students in the six (6) techno/vocational institutions in Rivers State. A sample size of 300 students was drawn from the population using the stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire tagged “Techno-Vocational Skills Acquisition and Poverty Reduction Questionnaire (TVSAPRQ)” developed by the researcher was the instrument used for data collection; it was validated and its reliability established at 0.86. The mean and rank order were used to answer the research questions and z-test to test the hypotheses. The study found, among others, that the automobil engineering, catering, building trade, electrical installation, computer craft practice, fine arts, clothing and textile and agricultural science are the types of vocational and technical programmes studied in vocational and technical institutions in Rivers State. The employment prospects of the graduates of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction are to secure employment in Agricultural establishment, secure employment in automobile companies, set up their own business and become self-employed, secure employment in electrical establishments, secure employment in autobody repair and spray painting establishment, and get employment in welding and fabrication companies. Based on the findings, recommendations were made.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Youth Employment, Development, Rivers State

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful instrument for social progress. It is also the greatest power known to man for his own improvement. Even though it is a long-term investment by the country to make it a better place in which to live and a better place in which to make a living,

its power is immeasurable. In economic terms, education created well-educated people that bring their talents, knowledge, skills and experiences to bear as they function in various capacities in the economic and social organizations of the nation.

The more and better education the country provides, the higher the quality of producers and consumers. In consequence, education in Nigeria is seen as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. That explained away the emphasis on science, technical and vocational education in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004). This is a great step in the right direction in providing the skills required for individuals. According to the National Policy on Education, technical and vocational is an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development, a method of alleviating poverty” (NPE 2004:30).

Of course, the reduction of poverty in Nigeria can be predicted on spontaneous acquisition of technical and vocational skills at the higher educational level. This arrangement portends that apprenticeship and vocational training need to be encouraged at the secondary school level. In effect, education should not be restricted to reading and writing only. In Nigeria, education must ensure an all around development of basic skills in an individual and society. The special purpose of education is the training of people for the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The individual and society needs to be equipped for social and economic responsibilities that are gateways for the reduction of poverty. Students should acquire technical and vocational skills for meaningful employment and self reliance.

Nevertheless, education and training were deemed basic ingredients that would enable individuals to escape from poverty by providing them with the skills and knowledge to raise their output and generate income. Education and training are investing in the future while knowledge and skills are the engine of economic growth and social development.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The most appropriate theory for this study is the Human Capital theory. Fredrick Harbison propounds the theory in (1978) and it states that the third level educated manpower should grow twice as fast and second level educated manpower three times as fast as Gross National Product. By third level educated manpower, we mean those who have completed higher education. On the contrary, second level educated manpower refers to those who have completed secondary education.

This theory justifies this study because labour is a productive resource. However, not all kinds of labour yield the same value of productivity. For example, making managerial decisions about what to produce is considered to be more productive work than ordinarily performing a manual task in an industry. But in order to perform successfully the highly productive job of a Managing Director, a worker must have a number of specialized skills, which he has developed through either formal education or on the job training. Therefore, the argument is that the productive skills and degree of knowledge possessed by an individual worker is part of the human capital. Human capital includes accumulated investments in such activities as educating, training and migration. Vocational skills development theories provides the strategies for the effective training. Thus, vocational skills are knowledge indices and attitudinal development of potential abilities to perform a given task according to specification. There are jobs which require great and particular types of skill to accomplish. But to acquire the very vocational skill to perform a given task, requires a great deal of training. In skills acquisition vocational education and training are imperative factors in enhancing the entrepreneurship of the industrial Subsector of the economy.

1.2 Statement of problem

One of the cardinal benefits associated with the introduction of vocational skills into the tertiary education was the reduction of the number of school leavers without employable skills. The acquisition of vocational skills seems to provoke some inherent constraints and strong feeling that one is specially fitted for a certain type of a specific skill. In consequence, those deficient in the appropriate skills eventually becomes social and economic liabilities resulting in unemployment, poverty and youth restiveness. The teaming youths are consequently compelled to be instruments of social vices including cultism and militancy. This issue has been a source of concern to both public and private sector operators. The elements of the problems of this study boarder essential in the identification of the skills taught and acquired in the techno-vocational colleges in Rivers State.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The goals of the study are:

- Ascertain the types of vocational and technical programmes offered in technical institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction;
- Assess the employment prospects of the graduates of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction; and,
- Determine the reform options to achieve effective skill acquisition for poverty reduction in technical/vocational schools.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the types of technical/vocational programmes available in technical institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction?
- What are the employment prospects of the graduates of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction?
- What are the reforms options to enhance effective skills acquisition in technical and vocational schools for poverty reduction?

1.4 Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the types of technical/vocational programmes available in technical institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction.
- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the employment possibilities of their graduates as a means of reducing poverty among youths.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of poverty

Poverty is a plague afflicting people all over the world. It is considered as one of the manifestations of underdevelopment. Poverty is a vicious circle which keeps the poor in a state of destitution and brachial disillusionment. Poverty affects many aspects of human conditions; hence there has been no universal consensus on its definition. A poor person is considered as one without a job, who cannot help himself or cater for his family, who has no money, farm or business (Oseni, Ehikiohia and Ali-Momoh, 2011). A poor person is described as one who is undernourished and ageing fast, one without self confidence looks odd and lives in a scanty environment (Elumilade, Asaolu and Adereti, 2006). Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-

being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. It also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life.

According to Klebanov (1998), the effect of poverty was seen among children as young as two years of age. Poor people, especially women and children, suffer most from various forms of social and economic deprivation, including hunger and malnutrition, inadequate health care, limited access to quality education, and low self-esteem. Young unemployed people without any productive usage of their time are easily entrained into crime and violence. The risk is greatest with unemployed youth in conflict or post-conflict areas. Poverty is therefore a threat to national stability and good governance. The concept of poverty which reflects its numerous attributes is multi-dimensional in nature. Attributes of poverty may be classified into structural, economic, social, cultural and political deprivations the structural dimension appears more permanent and manifests a vicious cycle, reflecting limited productive resources, lack of skills for gainful employment, vocational disadvantage and inadequate income to obtain the basic necessities of life. The social dimension of poverty is largely a gender issue since the greatest weight of poverty is borne by women household heads and children from poor homes.

2.2 The Concept of Vocational education and training

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines vocation as the training that teaches the skills that are needed to do a particular work. Adiele (2008) defines it as the special ability to do a particular job or activity, especially one that renders service to other people. In a similar vein, Okoro (1991:1) defines vocational education as the type of education which provides the skills, knowledge and attitudes, necessary for effective employment in a specific occupation. To Abolade (1957:92), vocational education is the acquisition of skills and competences that can help individuals to function productively in industries and commercial occupations.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004:29) defined vocational education as those aspects of the education process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. What is fundamental in vocational education is the acquisition of skill in occupational preparation. It is a training given to learners in a chosen occupational field.

Technical-vocational 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, 2004). Technical-vocational education is that aspect of education that exposes the learner to the acquisition of demonstrable skills that could be transformed into economic benefits (Akerle, 2007). Technical and vocational education has been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development. Vocational education is geared towards the production of the educated man who can effectively work with his head, heart and hands. The development of the economy and the crave for self-reliance and self-sustainability is the driving force of any techno-vocational programme. Technical-vocational education is, therefore, understood to be:

- An integral part of general education.
- A means of preparing for occupational skills and for effective participation in the world of work.
- An aspect of lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship.
- An instrument for promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development.
- A method of alleviating poverty. (Obanya, 2005)

- The broad goals of vocational and technical education are meant to:
- Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business, particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels;
- Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;
- Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self reliant economically (Obanya, 2005).

2.3 Types of vocational/technical education available in technical institutions

Vocational education is that form of education which aims at providing the individual with skills that will enable him function well and contribute meaningfully to the growth of society at the same time help the individual to become self reliant. Vocational education refers to a scheduled programme of courses designed to prepare students for jobs in the commercial and industry sectors at the completion of the courses, while technical education refers to any type of education in technology (offered at any level of the education system) that aims at producing various types of technological manpower required by the economy (FME, 2003). Vocational skills can be taught in different forms through the schools (School-based), through apprenticeship schemes through the institutions of skill acquisition centres and through on-and-off-the-job training for those already working (Adiele, 2008).

The need to have vocational and technical education taken in our secondary schools is incontrovertible. This is because it is a sure way to endow children with specific sellable skills that can get them self employment. It is also a way of functionalizing our secondary school curriculum as well as being a strategy for poverty alleviation. Moreover, it offers children and adults the opportunity to learn the local craft and to turn some wastes to wealth. Vocational and Technical Education give room for more interactive teaching and participation learning in schools. Above all, pre-vocationalization of education is mandatory at the Junior Secondary level in Nigeria and Ekiti state cannot afford to be an exception. (FGN, 2004; NERDC, 2011).

Basically, there are five types of vocational programmes offered in schools these include: the pre-vocational and vocational programmes offered at the junior and senior secondary school levels; the technical programmes offered in technical colleges, the polytechnics and colleges of education (technical) (National Policy on Education 2004).

2.4 The employment prospects of the graduates of technical and vocational institutions for poverty reduction

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is one of the manpower development programmes of study that is attracting the attention of various countries around the world. This quality equally qualifies it to be seen as the only programme that tackles the menace of poverty and create employment skills. Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) remains the popular means by which trained manpower is produced for economic and industrial growth of both developed and developing countries in the world. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, specifically stated in its National Policy on Education (2004) that, Technical and Vocational Education is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in the sectors of economic and social life. This could be one of the reasons why TVE is integrated in almost all educational levels; primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

Vocational and technical education (VTE) plays a significant role in the socio-economic growth and development of a country. Research findings (Federal Ministry of

Education, FME, 2003; UNESCO, 2005) have shown that countries that have breakthrough in the technology world today are those that have placed more emphasis and invested substantially on vocational and technological education. These countries have also re-defined their technological and vocational education through strategic planning, effective policy and appropriate decision making strategies. Enebe (2000) highlights the significant roles which VTE can play in curbing unemployment and in providing the needed skilled labour for industrialization. For instance, (FME, 2003) acknowledges the outstanding contributions of VTE in the development of advanced countries like the United States of America and Japan.

2.5 The reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition in technical and vocational schools for poverty reduction

A vocational school providing vocational education, is a school in which students are taught the skills needed to perform a particular job (Gordon, 1999). Traditionally, vocational schools have not existed to further education in the sense of liberal arts, but rather to teach only job-specific skills, and as such have been better considered to be institutions devoted to training, not education. Hence, the purely vocational focus began changing in the 1990s "toward a broader preparation that develops the academic" and technical skills of students, as well as the vocational. Typically, most career colleges specifically design their curriculum for fields that have the best current and future growth potential (Gordon, 1999).

In response to criticism about the general employability of the workforce, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills published in 1991 a range of skills that all workforce participants should have. These include the following: Basic Skills, Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Listening, Speaking, Thinking Skills, Creative Thinking, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Knowing How to Learn, Reasoning, Personal Qualities, Responsibility, Self-Esteem, Sociability, Self-Management and Integrity/Honesty (Hyslop, 2000).

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research design for this study is descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised all female technical and vocational students in the six (6) technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State. There are 1,650 female students in federal and state vocational and technical education in the six vocational institutions in Rivers State (Vocational/technical Admissions' office, 2013). A sample size of 300 students was drawn from the population of techno-vocational students using the stratified random sampling technique (150 students from federal and 150 students from state vocational institutions in Rivers State). This represents 18.2% of the population. Questionnaire tagged "techno-vocational skills acquisition and poverty reduction strategies Questionnaire (TSAPRSQ)" developed by the researcher was the instrument used for data collection; it was validated and its reliability established at 0.86. The mean and rank order were used to answer the research questions, while z-test for the test of hypotheses.

3.1 Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the types of technical/vocational programmes studied in technical institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction?

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order of Respondents' Assessment on the types of vocational programmes studied in technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction

	Subjects	Male \bar{x}	Female \bar{x}	\bar{x} \bar{x}	Rank Order
1	Automobile engineering	2.70	2.65	2.68	3 rd
2	Computer craft practice	2.75	2.63	2.56	8 th
3	Electrical installation/maintenance	2.68	2.53	2.61	6 th
4	Building trade	2.68	2.55	2.62	5 th
5	wood trades	2.80	2.73	2.77	2 nd
6	Catering	2.67	2.63	2.65	4 th
7	Clothing textile	2.61	2.52	2.57	7 th
8	Agriculture	2.60	2.61	2.61	6 th
9	Business studies	2.95	2.85	2.90	1 st
10	Fine arts	2.54	2.51	2.53	9 th
	<i>Aggregate Mean Score</i>	2.70	2.62	2.65	

In table 1, ten (10) vocational/technical subjects were examined to ascertain the types of vocational programmes studied in vocational/technical institutions in Rivers State. The respondents agreed to items 1-10 with mean scores greater than the criterion mean score of 2.5. They agreed that automobile engineering, catering, building trade, electrical installation, computer craft practice, fine arts, clothing and textile and agricultural science are the types of vocational/technical programmes studied in vocational/technical institutions in Rivers State. The observed scores are an indication that all the examined subjects were taught in a vocational and technical institution in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What are the employment prospects of the graduates of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction?

Table 2: Mean and rank order of the assessment on the employment prospects of graduates of vocational/technical institutions for poverty reduction in Rivers State.

S/N	Assessed variables				
		Male X1	Female X2	\bar{x} \bar{x}	Rank order
11	To secure employment in Agricultural establishment	3.30	3.15	3.23	1st
12	To secure employment in automobile companies	3.10	2.85	2.97	4th
13	To set up their own business and become self-employed	3.12	3.10	3.11	3rd
14	To secure employment in electrical establishments	3.25	3.11	3.18	2nd
15	To secure employment in autobody repair and spray painting establishment	3.12	2.04	2.58	6th
16	To get employment in welding and fabrication companies	3.26	2.21	2.74	5th
	<i>Aggregate Mean</i>	3.19	2.74	2.97	

Research question 2 ascertained the employment prospects of graduates of vocational/technical institutions as a means of reducing poverty. The male respondents agreed to all the items with mean scores greater than the criterion mean score of 2.5 following the rank order 1st – 6th. The female respondents agreed to items 21-24 with mean scores greater than the criterion mean score of 2.5 following the rank order 1st – 4th. They disagreed on items 25 and 26 with mean scores less than the criterion mean score.

The aggregate mean score of 2.97 showed that the respondents agreed to the employment prospects of the graduates of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction. Thus, the employment prospects of the graduates of technical and

vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction are to secure employment in Agricultural establishment, secure employment in automobile companies, set up their own business and become self-employed, secure employment in electrical establishments, secure employment in autobody repair and spray painting establishment, and get employment in welding and fabrication companies.

Research question 3: What are the reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction?

Table 3: Mean and Rank order of the assessment on the reform options to enhance effective skills acquisitions in vocational/ technical schools for poverty reduction.

S/N	Assessed variables				
		Male \bar{X}	Female \bar{X}	\bar{x} \bar{x}	Rank order
17	Making vocational/technical education compulsory at the basic education level	2.75	2.86	2.81	3rd
18	Inclusion of technical education into teacher education programme	2.56	2.63	2.60	5 th
19	Involvement of corporate organizations in the funding of vocational/technical education	3.10	3.21	3.16	2 nd
20	Out of school skills acquisition and apprenticeship	2.78	2.65	2.72	4 th
21	Funding vocational/technical graduates through soft loans	3.23	3.15	3.19	1 st
22	Providing land for those willing to go into Agricultural practice as a vocation	3.15	3.23	3.19	1 st
	Aggregate mean score	2.93	2.96	2.94	

Table 3 presented the reform strategies to ascertain the reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition for poverty reduction. The respondents agreed to all the items with mean scores greater than the criterion mean score of 2.5 following the rank order 1st–6th.

The result indicates that reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction include: providing loan schemes and land for agricultural practice, involvement of corporate organizations in funding vocational programmes, making vocational education compulsory at basic education level; out of school skills acquisition and apprenticeship, Funding vocational/technical graduates through soft loans, and inclusion of vocational/technical education into teacher education programme. The observed mean scores which were all above 2.50 indicates that all the assessed options were reform strategies that can be used to enhance effective skills acquisition for poverty reduction.

3.2 Tests of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the types of vocational programmes offered to reduce poverty among school leavers.

Table 4 shows the analysis of z-test difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the types of vocational programmes offered to reduce poverty among school leavers. The result of the z-test shows that the calculated z-value of 1.62 is less than the critical value of ± 1.96 at a degree of freedom, 298 of 0.05 significant levels. The null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the types of vocational programmes offered to reduce poverty among school leavers. Both male and female students are of the opinion that the vocational subjects are offered to improve the skills of the students.

Table 4: Analysis of z-test difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the types of vocational programmes offered to reduce poverty among school leavers

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	z-Calculated value	Critical value	Remarks
Male Students	150	2.70	1.21	298	1.62	±1.96	Accepted
Female Students	150	2.62	1.20				

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction.

Table 5: Analysis of z-test difference between the mean scores of male and female students on reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction.

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	z-Calculated value	Critical value	Remarks/ Decision
Male students	150	2.92	1.31	298	1.68	±1.96	Accepted
Female students	150	2.96	1.35				

Table 5 shows the analysis of z-test difference between the mean scores of male and female students on reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction. The result of the z-test shows that the z-calculated value of 1.68 is less than the critical value of ±1.96 at a degree of freedom, 298 of 0.05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction. Both male and female students are of the opinion that there is a need for vocational and technical education reform to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that automobile engineering, catering, building trade, electrical installation, computer craft practice, fine arts, clothing and textile and agricultural science are the types of vocational/technical programmes studied in vocational and technical institutions in Rivers State. The observed scores are an indication that all the examined subjects were taught in a vocational / technical institution in Rivers State.

The need to have vocational and technical education taken in our schools is incontrovertible. This is because it is a sure way to endow children with specific sellable skills that can get them self employment. It is also a way of fictionalizing the school curriculum as well as being a strategy for poverty alleviation. Moreover, it offers children and adults the opportunity to learn the local craft and to turn some wastes to wealth. Vocational and Technical Education give room for more interactive teaching and participation learning in schools. This is in line with the findings of Adiele (2008) that, vocational and technical skills can be taught in different forms through the schools (School-based), through apprenticeship schemes through the institutions of skill acquisition centres and through on-and –off-the job training for those already working.

The test of hypothesis, one showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the types of vocational programmes offered to reduce poverty among school leavers. Both male and female students are of the opinion that the

vocational subjects are offered to improve the skills of the students. They believe that vocational and technical education is a way of functionalizing our secondary school curriculum as well as being a strategy for poverty alleviation. And NPE (2004) revealed that there are five types of vocational programmes offered in schools such as: the pre-vocational and vocational programmes offered at the junior and senior secondary school levels; the technical programmes offered in technical colleges, the polytechnics and colleges of education (technical).

The findings further revealed that the employment prospects of the graduates of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction are to secure employment in Agricultural establishment, secure employment in automobile companies, set up their own business and become self-employed, secure employment in electrical establishments, secure employment in auto-body repair and spray painting establishment, and get employment in welding and fabrication companies. Vocational and technical education (VTE) plays a significant role in the socio-economic growth and development of a country through the promotion of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in the sectors of economic and social life as well as promote essential education which is intended to provide the skills and the manpower for industry and other engineering services required by society. Therefore, the vocational education programme is designed to prepare skilled workers for industry, agriculture, commerce, etc from the upper secondary level. This agrees with the findings of Uche, Nwabueze and Ememe (2009); Karahocaa (2010) that the curtailing menace of unemployment, reduction of poverty and the breakthrough in industrial development that requires the full deployment of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), especially in the present era where the world of work is rapidly changing its requirement for workers from skill based to an ICT capable. This is because recent developments in technology, globalization and changing demand for new skill sets in the job market have necessitated a need for a new teaching and learning paradigm.

The findings of the study finally revealed that the reforms options to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction include: providing loan schemes and land for agricultural practice, involvement of corporate organizations in funding vocational programmes, making vocational education compulsory at basic education level; out of school skills acquisition and apprenticeship, Funding vocational/technical graduates through soft loans, and inclusion of vocational/technical education into teacher education programme. The observed mean scores which were all above 2.50 indicates that all the assessed options were reform strategies that can be used to enhance effective skills acquisition for poverty reduction. This is in line with the findings of Hyslop (2000) that the skills of all workforce participants should have: basic skills, reading, writing, mathematics, listening, speaking, thinking skills, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, knowing how to learn, reasoning, personal qualities, responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity/honesty. However, vocational schools have not existed to further education in the sense of liberal arts, but rather to teach only job-specific skills, and as such have been better considered to be institutions devoted to training, not education. The test of hypothesis two showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on reform options to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction. Both male and female students are of the opinion that there is a need for vocational and technical education reform to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction. They believe that personal qualities, responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, and self-management have promoted job-specific skills.

The educational implications are very challenging. If the students are to start a job without the necessary skills and the abilities, is very sure that they will fail. Technical education facilitates the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. It is therefore a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined work, and advanced and continuing education. Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) systems play a crucial role in the social and economic development of a nation.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is needed to direct those in the sector towards making the individuals intelligent users of our natural resources. Vocational and technical education (VTE) is needed to prevent waste of human resources and poverty reduction. So far, Nigeria has given very little attention to conservation of Vocational and technical education programmes as well as human resources. It is obvious that the waste of labour by improper employment can be largely avoided through vocational and technical training. Such training is the most potent remedy for unemployment. Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

- Teaching vocational and technical subjects should be taken more seriously to raise the interest of students for these vocational programmes.
- Government should provide vocational and technical education institutions with the necessary vocational tools and equipment.
- Students should work towards acquiring the knowledge and skills of vocational and technical education for poverty reduction. This would help them to be creative and innovative.
- There is a need to employ quality vocational teachers to give these students the required and adequate knowledge of vocational training.
- There is a need for vocational and technical education reform to enhance effective skills acquisition in vocational/technical schools for poverty reduction. The personal qualities, responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, and self-management have to promote job-specific skills.

REFERENCES

- Adiele, E. E. (2008). Implementation of School-Based Vocational Education in Rivers State. Uniport (Unpublished Ph.D Desertation).
- Akerele, W. O. (2007). Management of technical and vocational education in Nigeria: The challenges of the country. *Lagos journal of educational administration and planning* 3(1).
- Elumilade, D. O., Asaolu, T. O. and Adereti, S. A. (2006). Appraising the institutional framework for poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. *International Research Journal of Finance and Economics*, 2(4).
- Enebe, T. (2000). Nigerian Education Sector Analysis: An Analytical synthesis of Performance and main issues. New York: New York University.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). Review of the Nigerian Economy Lagos: Office of statistics.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). National Policy on Education. Lagos NERDC Press.

- Federal Ministry of Education (2003). *Education Tax Funds allocation and disbursements by education level in Nigerian. 1999-2002.*
- Gordon, A. (1999). The relevance of National Vocational Education Qualifications (NVQs) in TVE in Nigeria. unpublished conference paper.
- Hyslop, K. (2000). Public Expenditure on Education in Nigeria. Issues, Estimates and some implications. African Region, the World Bank.
- Karahocaa, Q. (2010). Article on poverty reduction. *Journal of international business and AMP; Economics.*
- Obanya, P. A. I. (2005). *Nigeria Education Sector Diagnosis.* Central educational service, Lagos - Nigeria.
- Okoro, O.M. (1999). *Principles and methods in vocational and technical education.* International Labour Organization: Trust Publishers.
- Oseni, A.I., Ehikioya, J. O. & Ali-Momoh, B. (2011). Technical and Vocational Education: Key to Poverty Alleviation in the Third World with Particular Reference to Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice* 2(6); 64-71.
- Uche, C.M., Nwabueze, A.I. & Ememe, O.N. (2009). Developing entrepreneurial skills among university students: A tool for achieving millennium development goals in South-South States of Nigeria. *African Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 3(2); 54-64.
- UNESCO (2004). Final report on meeting of higher education partners (World conference on higher education), Paris, UNESCO, 23 – 28 June 2003.
- Usoro, E. B. (2000). Women in Vocational Education. *Journal of Women in Academics (Jowacs)*, 1(1).

© 2010-2014 Sacha Diamond Academic Publishers,
Meridian Centre, 258 Kingsland Road, Hackney, London E8 4DG, England, United Kingdom.
In Compliance with the Standards Approved by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council

Abstracting and Indexing in:
IndexCopernicus USA, British International Libraries,
Social Science Research Network Worldwide, Econlit (USA), Google Scholar.

For the Advancement of Knowledge to the World. www.sachajournals.com