

CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY TRADE STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS POST-SECONDARY TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed construction technology trade students' attitudes towards post-secondary technical vocational education and training in Benue State, Nigeria. Two research purposes, questions and one null hypothesis were raised to guide the study. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study was 130 which comprised 55 carpentry and joinery students and 75 Block-laying/Bricklaying and concreting students in science and technical colleges within Benue State. A 10-item attitude scale titled: Construction Trade Students Attitudes towards Postsecondary Technical Vocational Education and Training (CTSAPSTVET) rated on a 3-point category was used as instrument for data collection. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to answer all the research questions whilst an inferential statistics of independent sample t-test was employed to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the data analysed revealed amongst others that: Carpentry and Joinery students who are said to constitute the predominant prospective entrants for post-secondary technical vocational education and training programmes are of a neutral disposition as regards whether they would pursue studies in this area. Attitudes of Block-laying / Bricklaying & Concreting students towards post-secondary technical vocational education and training are ambivalent. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that: Vocational guidance counselors, teachers and school principals should always organize orientation and workshops for carpentry and joinery students where these students will be educated on the importance of post-secondary technical vocational education and training programmes. Vocational guidance counselors and technical subject teachers should always provide a proper orientation for block laying / brick laying & concreting students on the need to advance in their already chosen trade.

INTRODUCTION

The need for sustained efforts in recruiting individuals in to all levels of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) most especially in Nigeria is apt. This is because it has been widely adjudged that the right type of education would set Nigeria on the pedestal of sustained economic growth and development is TVET. Realizing this fact, the (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014) through its National Policy on Education has not only advocated the integration of productive work into learning but also stipulated the establishment of multi-purpose vocational centres in order to facilitate the training of artisans, craftsmen and technicians. There is a growing awareness of the need for skill training in development efforts, however, there seems to be lack

of adequate information on the concept of linkage between education skill development which has been shown in the implications of innovations and policy formulations concerning TVET programmes in the context of individual (Vector, 2011). Furtherance to this notion, Okocha (2009) posited that education generally aims at inculcating knowledge, attitudes, skills, values, and beliefs into an individual to assist him/her achieve a reasonable degree of competence in the various facets of everyday life. In a nutshell, therefore, the main function of education particularly TVET is the provision of appropriate skills, abilities and competences of both mental and physical nature as necessary equipment for the individual to live productively in the society. Technical Vocational Education and Training is education that has more to do with practical work leading to a particular occupation or career. It provides activities for learning by doing and enables individual differences to be catered for (Besonact, 2011). To further buttress this assertion, Kane (2009) observed that, it is obvious that in technical vocational education and training programmes, individuals find satisfaction and joy in learning.

A lot more advantage abound in this type of educational programme in the course of learning such as willingness and eagerness of the individual to learn and focusing talented efforts upon the critical domestic issues of development. TVET can provide the rehabilitation needed in work places for workers. This is important in order to update the skills needed for technological improvement in our industries and society at large. Timar (2001) explained that although the acquisition of skills is an aptitude for quick perception and quick solution of problems, all requirements for a good worker makes selection necessary. Continuing, Timar explains that "Acquisition of require occupational skills entails carefully and methodically prepared special courses of fairly long duration even for the performance of a restricted number of operations".

With regards to this assertion, Okocha (2009) suggests that schools should provide skill training and prepare children for meaningful life in their local communities as a necessary innovation to meet the demands of recent trends in social and economic change, for example, consider small experimentation with 6-3-3-4 educational approach as the only way to reduce the wasteful mismatch between education and employment. Technical Vocational Education and Training is the hub of any economy of a nation just as the wheel rotates around the hub; the economic sector of Nigeria rotates around technical vocational education and training considering the current socio-economic, scientific and technological development of Nigeria. Rashtriya (2005) pointed out that the wealth and prosperity of a nation depends on the effective utilization of its human and material resources through industrialization. Rashtriya further maintained that the use of human material for industrialization demands its educational skills. Industry opens up possibilities of greater fulfillment for the

individual. Nigeria's resources of manpower can only become an asset in the modern world when trained and educated. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is fundamental to the development and industrialization of nations. Thus the skills, abilities and competencies that are needed by the nation are embedded in technical vocational education and training, which are central to a nation's social and economic emancipation (Haney, 2002). Consequently, any nation that believes in education as an instrument for national development has to recognize the significance of technical and vocational education and training and must accord it the desired attention and support (Osuala, 2004). It is in this wise that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) through its National Policy on Education places serious emphasis on the development of technical and vocational education and training for overall development of the nation. However, the much talked about TVET development may not materialize unless the youth develop knowledge, interest, attitude and manipulative skills required for the construction and production of basic necessities of life. Kehinde and Adewayi (2015) observed that one of the goals of TVET is to increase the employability of school leavers. However, due to public prejudices against TVET, that goal seems not to have been realized, which explains the prevalence of poverty, unemployment, prostitution, drug abuse, hunger, violence, insurgency, armed robbery and other forms of social vices in Nigeria today (Trudi-Harris, 2004).

The non-objective preconceived notion about TVET programmes over the years as an educational track for the less academically endowed students has a significant influence on the preference of other type of educational programmes. This could be linked to the public view or perception towards TVET programmes which has been orchestrated by parents/peer attitudes towards TVET career track. According to Hogg and Vaughan (2005), attitude is "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols". In corroboration, Mcleod (2014) view attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour. Mcleod further advanced the structure of attitudes to include the affective, behavioural and cognitive component. While the affective component involves a person's feelings/emotions about the attitude object, the behavioural component involves the way we have influences on how we act or behave and the cognitive component has to do with a person's belief/knowledge about an attitude object (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005). One of the underlying assumptions about the connection between attitudes and behaviour is that of consistency. This therefore means that we often or usually expect the behaviour of a person to be consistent with the attitudes that they hold towards certain events and objects (Eagly & Haiken, 2007). Mcleod (2014) noted that the strength with which an attitude is held is

often a good predictor of behaviour. The stronger the attitude, the more likely it should affect the behaviour. According to Katz (2001), attitude strength involves importance/personal relevance and knowledge. Importance/personal relevance refers to how significant the attitude is for the person and relates to self-interest, social identification and value. For instance, if an attitude has a high self-interest for a person (that is, it is held by a group the person is a member of or would like to be members of, and is related to a person's values), it is going to be extremely important and as a consequence, the attitude will have a very strong influence upon the person's behaviour. By contrast, an attitude will not be important to a person if it does not relate in any way to their life (Katz, 2001). The knowledge aspect of attitude strength covers how much a person knows about the attitude object. People are generally more knowledgeable about topics that interest them and are likely to hold strong attitudes (positive or negative) as a consequence.

Attitudes based on direct experience are more strongly held and influence behaviour more than attitudes formed through hear-say, reading or watching television. Attitudes also serve functions for the individual. These functions as observed by Katz (2001) include: self/ego expressive, adaptive and ego defensive. Science and technical college students who happen to be the vast majority of the prospective candidates for post-secondary TVET must have been influenced to behave either positively or negatively towards this career path. The attitudes of critical stakeholders such as (parents, guardians and peers) towards TVET could go a long way in influencing science and technical college students towards TVET career track. This could be easily noticeable in the enrolment patterns of these programmes in our high institutions of learning as compared to others. These young adults over the years tend to behave negatively towards TVET because they are virtually surrounded by individuals who also do not possess positive attitudes towards TVET. Although, in the last decade, there seemed to be more awareness on the part of stakeholders on the vital role of TVET towards industrialization and transformation. For this and many other reasons implies that the present attitudinal pattern of prospective individuals (science and technical college students) towards this form of education be explored to understand and fine-tune the way forwards.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to assess the attitude of construction technology trade students' towards post-secondary technical and vocational education and training. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

Attitude of Carpentry & Joinery students' towards post-secondary technical and vocational education and training;

Attitude of Block-laying / Brick laying and concreting students towards post-secondary technical vocational education and training.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the attitude of Carpentry and Joinery students towards post-secondary technical vocational education and training?
2. What is the attitude of Block-laying / Brick laying and concreting students towards post-secondary technical and vocational education and training?

HYPOTHESIS

One null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho: There is no significant difference between the attitude of Carpentry and Joinery students and Block-laying/Bricklaying and Concreting students towards post-secondary technical and vocational education and training.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the descriptive survey design which aimed at assessing the attitude of construction technology trade students towards post-secondary technical and vocational education and training programmes. The population of the study was 130 construction trade students (55 Carpentry and Joinery students and 75 Bricklaying/Block-laying and concreting students). A 10-item attitude scale weighted on a 3-point category of Agree (3) undecided (1) Disagree (2) was used as instrument for data collection. In line with the purpose of the study, the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer all the research questions whilst an inferential statistics of independent sample t-test was employed to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. When $p\text{-value} \leq \alpha$ value, the null hypothesis was rejected and when $p \geq \alpha$, the null hypothesis was retained. The analysis was conducted with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question One

What is the attitude of Carpentry & Joinery students towards post-secondary technical and vocational education and training?

Table 1

Attitude of Carpentry and Joinery Students towards Post-Secondary Technical Vocational Education and Training (n = 55)

S/N	Statements	M	SD	Remarks
1	I see Technical, Vocational Education and Training as a good discipline.	2.07	0.85	Undecided
2	I do not just have interest in studying Technical, Vocational Education and Training	2.05	0.87	Undecided
3	Technical, Vocational Education and training programme will provide me with useful knowledge and skills.	2.19	0.95	Undecided
4	Technical, Vocational Education and Training is a total waste of time and financial resources.	2.25	0.90	Undecided
5	Courses in Technical, Vocational Education and Training are too abstract to understand.	2.21	0.82	Undecided
6	Courses in Technical, Vocational Education and Training are meant for older individuals.	1.47	0.87	Disagreed
7	Technical, Vocational Education and Training programmes are suitable for economically disadvantage students.	1.39	0.73	Disagreed
8	Technical, Vocational Education and Training courses are much better than other programmes for entrepreneurship	2.28	0.89	Undecided
9	Studying Technical, Vocational Education and Training courses will inhibit my progress in future.	2.08	0.81	Undecided
10	Technical, Vocational Education and Training courses are bases for the development of my environment.	2.33	0.77	Undecided
	Average Mean and Standard Deviation	2.05	0.85	Undecided

Keys: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Result of presented in Table 1 revealed that carpentry & joinery students are of a neutral disposition as regards post-secondary technical vocational education and training. This is indicated in their average mean response of 2.05. However, carpentry & joinery students perceived technical vocational education and training the educational programme meant for older individuals and that, studying TVET courses will inhibit their progression in future. This is shown in their mean response of 1.47 and 2.08 as contained in items 6 and 9 respectively.

Research Question Two

What is the attitude of block laying / brick laying & concreting students' towards post-secondary technical vocational education and training?

Table 2

Attitude of Block laying / Brick laying and Concreting Students' towards Post-Secondary Technical Vocational Education and Training (n = 75)

S/N	Statements	M	SD	Remarks
1	I see Technical, Vocational Education and Training as a good discipline.	2.94	0.81	Agreed
2	I do not just have interest in studying Technical, Vocational Education and Training	2.24	0.99	Undecided

3	Technical, Vocational Education and training programme will provide me with useful knowledge and skills.	2.01	0.79	Undecided
4	Technical, Vocational Education and Training is a total waste of time and financial resources.	2.14	0.85	Undecided
5	Courses in Technical, Vocational Education and Training are too abstract to understand.	2.11	0.83	Undecided
6	Courses in Technical, Vocational Education and Training are meant for older individuals.	2.07	0.81	Undecided
7	Technical, Vocational Education and Training programmes are suitable for economically disadvantage students.	2.39	0.84	Undecided
8	Technical, Vocational Education and Training courses are much better than other programmes for entrepreneurship	1.39	0.85	Disagreed
9	Studying Technical, Vocational Education and Training courses will inhibit my progress in future.	2.22	0.91	Undecided
10	Technical, Vocational Education and Training courses are bases for the development of my environment.	2.13	0.89	Undecided
	Average Mean and Standard Deviation	2.13	0.87	Undecided

Data presented in Table 2 revealed that block laying / brick laying & concreting students do not regard post-secondary TVET as entrepreneurial courses but consider TVET as a good career track as indicated in their mean responses of 1.39 and 2.94 for items 8 and 1 respectively. However, the participants are of a neutral disposition as regards TVET. This is indicated in their overall mean response of 2.13.

Hypothesis One (Ho₁)

There is no statistically significant difference between the attitude of Carpentry & Joinery students and Block-laying/Bricklaying & concreting students towards post-secondary TVET.

Table 3

Independent sample t-test of Carpentry & Joinery Students and Block laying / Brick laying & Concreting Students Attitude towards Post-Secondary Technical Vocational Education and Training ($n_1=55, n_2=75$)

Group	N	M	SD	t	df	p.value	Remarks
C & J	55	21.33	2.83	0.34	128	0.73	NS
BBC	75	21.23	3.12				

NS = Not Significant, $p > 0.05$, $df = 128$.

Result of data as presented in Table 3 showed that there is no significant difference between the attitude of Carpentry & joinery and Block laying / Brick laying & Concreting students towards post-secondary TVET, $t_{(128)} = 0.34$, $p = 0.73$. The null hypothesis of no significance is there for retained.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings of the study revealed that carpentry and joinery students who are said to constitute the prospective entrants for post-secondary TVET programmes are of a neutral disposition as regards whether they could pursue studies in this area. This is clearly indicated in their average mean and standard deviation ($M=2.05$, $SD=0.85$). This finding is contrary to the revelation made by Trudi-Harris (2004) who asserted that secondary school students tend to have negative attitudes when it comes to TVET programmes whether at the post-primary or post-secondary level. This is to say that, this group of individuals are rather not aware or properly informed by the appropriate stakeholders such as vocational guidance counselors, teachers and parents on the importance of TVET programmes to them as individuals and the society at large. In corroboration, Haney (2002) posited that children of school age need to be introduced to TVET careers and be made to understand that careers in TVET will enable them empower themselves to become self-sufficient. This is especially as we now live in a world where almost everything is technologically driven; with the attendant disappearance of "white-collar jobs". The implication of this finding is that we now have secondary school students who are not aware of the viability of TVET career track either as a result of ignorance or failure on the part of critical stakeholders to own-up to their responsibilities by providing the necessary career information to these students.

Findings of the study as presented in Table 2 further revealed that the attitude of Block-laying / Bricklaying & Concreting students towards post-secondary TVET is neutral. That is to say that, Block-laying / Brick laying & Concreting Students perception toward post-secondary TVET is neither negative nor positive. This is indicated in the average mean and standard deviation ($M=2.13$, $SD=0.87$). For instance as to whether Block laying / Brick laying & Concreting Students perceived post-secondary TVET as being too abstract for their understanding or that it's a career track not meant for young individuals, they hold a neutral disposition. However, they display a positive attitude by attesting that post-secondary TVET is a good career path but do not consider TVET course as being entrepreneurial in nature with means and standard deviation of ($M=2.94$, $SD=0.81$, $M=1.39$, $SD=0.85$) respectively. These findings are in line with that of Victor (2011) which revealed that among factors responsible for student's negative attitudes towards TVET at the university and collages of education level is the lack of proper career guidance and poor attitudes with regard to their self-worth in spite the many job opportunities and career satisfaction offered by this skill oriented programme. However, the findings are in disagreement with the study carried out by

Okocha(2009) and Besonact (2011) which posited that technical college students have a negative attitude towards post-secondary TVET studies. Although, judging from the perspective that this category of students must have already been familiar with TVET careers since they undergo post-primary TVET training, one would be tempted to say that they ordinarily would hold a positive perception rather than been neutral to the affairs of post-secondary TVET. The implication of these finding is that there is something fundamentally wrong with the kind of post-primary TVET system they must have passed through. Also, this could further imply that the post-primary TVET system must be made to stimulate the desire and interest of their students at the post-primary level towards post-secondary TVET. Findings of the study as presented in Tables 3 further revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of Carpentry & Joinery Students (CJS) and that of Block-laying / Brick laying & Concreting Students (BBCS) towards post-secondary TVET. This finding is contrary to the wide speculations in the public domain that CJS would rather differ in their attitudes towards post-secondary TVET as compared to their BBCS counter-part. This finding is in line with the assertion made by Okocha (2009) and victor(2011) that school children of similar ages share the same views and thoughts. Students in Carpentry & Joinery and those in Block-laying / Brick laying & concreting all live in the same society. Therefore, what goes on in the polity tends to affect all thus, the reason why they must have shared similar views about post- secondary TVET.

CONCLUSION

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) have been adjudged as one of the key components of economic transformation of the Nigerian nation. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that, construction trade students constitute are the prospective candidates for post-secondary Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)displayed neither positive nor negative attitudes towards post-secondary TVET. Furthermore, Carpentry and Joinery students attitude and that of their Block laying / Brick laying & Concreting counterpart as regards post-secondary TVET do not differ significantly. This is to say that, both categories of students rather have neutral attitude towards post-secondary TVET. It now behooves on critical stakeholders to evolve workable strategies aimed at instigating a positive attitude towards this important form of education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Vocational guidance counselors, teachers and school principals should always organize orientation workshops for Carpentry and Joinery

Students where these students will be educated on the importance of post-secondary Technical Vocational Education and Training programmes.

- Vocational guidance counselors and technical subject teachers should always provide proper orientation for Block-laying / Block laying & concreting students on the need for them to advance in their already chosen trade by considering post-TVET programmes.

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