

**Examination of the Strategies for Developing Skills Education and Improved Quality of
Technical Education for Rapid Industrialization and Employability in Akwa Ibom State,
Nigeria.**

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the strategies for developing skills education and improved quality of technical education for rapid industrialization and employability in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The researchers assessed the reasons for low interest of skills education by Nigerians. In order to carry out this study objectively, two specific objectives, two research questions and two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted with sample size of 250 drawn from two technical colleges in Akwa Ibom State. A 15-item structured questionnaire tagged, "Strategies for Developing Skills Education and Improved Quality Questionnaire (SDSEIQQ)" designed by the researchers was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while ANOVA was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study anchored on innovation theory proposed by Joseph Schumpeter in 1942 as its theoretical framework. From the findings obtained, it was observed that skills education plays a major role in developing and improving the economic sectors. It was also revealed that government lukewarm attitude and neglect hindered skills education in Nigeria. Furthermore, Nigerians low interest in skills education affect its development in employment of the graduates. The researchers recommended among others that the government of Nigeria through Technical Schools Board and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should embark on general reviewed of the present curriculum and policies of skills education in Nigeria as well as provide infrastructure and facilities for effective training to produce skilled graduates for industrial needs.

Key Words: Education, Developing Skills and Employment

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges posed by the recent economic recession is the massive loss of jobs and closure of many factories and industries. This is a global phenomenon, but its impact is really felt in the developing and third world countries whose economy even in the best of times have been very vulnerable (Ajokporise, 2016). It is the widely held belief of most economists that the way out of the economic recession is for work forces around the world to return to production. An industrial capacity utilization of about 53 percent for a nation like Nigeria, for example, gives cause for concern (Momo, 2012). The implication of this is the dire need to create jobs and avenues for massive employment. Skills acquisition and technical education training offer the best opportunity to produce an employable work force in any country. According to Uwaifo (2015), technical education is the training of technical oriented personnel who are to be the initiators, facilitators and implementers of technological development of a nation. Uwaifo observed that training of its citizens on the need to be technologically literate would eventually lead to self-reliance and sustainability. Skills acquisition/technical education has direct impact or relationship on industrial development by providing technologists ranging from electrical and electronics technologists, metal work technologists, mechanical/automobile technologists, aluminum work technologists, ceramics, paint, bakery, detergents.

Statement of the Problem

In many countries of the world, manufacturing plays an important role in economic/industrial development and accounts for a substantial proportion of total economic activity. Most countries achieve industrial advancement through technical skills and the development of local technology. The Asian countries have seen remarkable growth as a result of their manufacturing, exports and constructive policies and at opening their markets, implement favourable trade and exchange rate policies, attract foreign investment through stable governments and respect for property rights. China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan are cases in point who currently moved from an investment and export driven economy to a consumer driven one.

Unfortunately, in Africa, very few countries have been transformed through industrialization, which is paramount to economic development and sustainable growth. Rather, the tendency is for many African countries, Nigeria inclusive, rich in resources to rely on export of raw and unprocessed commodities. Skills acquisition and technical knowledge are needed to develop local technology which will in turn boost manufacturing of goods and services.

It has been observed that Nigerians develop poor public perception of Technical and Skills Acquisition Education and Training. Nigerian governments recognize the crucial role Technical and Skills Acquisition and Training plays in poverty eradication, job creation, sustainable development and actualization of the National Industrial Revolution Plan. But in spite of these, government fails to reposition this vibrant sector for greater productivity. Individuals also fail to realize the possibilities for progress, employment creation and self-fulfillment that Technical and Skills Acquisition and Training has to offer. Hence, the effect is the neglect of technical education by Nigerians which cause the slow pace of industrialization in the country. The question that may be asked is why do Nigerians develop negative attitudes to technical

education/skill acquisition? Why do Nigerian governments develop lukewarm attitudes to technical education? How can we redirect the interest of Nigerians and the government towards developing local technology, acquisition of technical skills that will enhance industrial development in Nigeria? It is against this background that this work was conducted.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives are the assessment of the role of Technical Colleges in the development of skills acquisition centre's and industrialization of South-South geo-political zone. The following are specific objectives:

- (1) To examine the contributions of technical education and skill acquisition centers of industrialization in south-south Nigeria.
- (2) To examine the extent to which parental attitudes/lack of interest in technical education, societal beliefs and values affect the development of skill acquisition centers/technical colleges in south-south Nigeria.

Research Question

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. In what ways do technical education and skill acquisition contributes to industrialization in south-South zone of Nigeria?
2. How does poor parental attitudes/low interest in technical education affect the development of Technical Education in the study area?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the way technical education contributes to industrialization in south-south Nigeria.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference in poor parental attitudes/low interest in technical education towards the development of Technical Education in South-South Nigeria.

Significance of the study

This study on the development of skills acquisition centers and industrialization in South-South, Nigeria would be significant to students, teachers, government.

To the students, this study would help them appreciate and utilize skills acquired in the training during and after graduation to create self-employment and or work in industries that need their services. To teachers, this study would help develop their mind-set on requirement of the curriculum contents, help teachers on need of retraining themselves through seminars/workshops to utilize the skills needed by the industries. Furthermore, the study would help teachers assist students on excursion to industries to help improve and increase effectively students skills for utilization before and after school. The study would also help teachers realize

that enforcement of students to participate in Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) would positively increase student performance in different areas of skill needs.

To the government and its agencies, it would help them see the area of needs in technical colleges and fund such areas. It would further help government acknowledge those colleges that have dilapidated buildings and equipment to foresee the likelihood of repositioning those machines, buildings and equipment. Additionally, the study will also redirect the government and its agencies on the needs for skills acquisition and self-reliance of the youths in order to curb unemployment.

The Contributions of Technical Education and Skills Acquisition Centers Industrial Development

Skill is the ability to do something well, usually gained through training or experience that is needed while acquisition is the act of getting new knowledge, or skills. This skill can be obtained through education, training or experience that will inculcate into the individual how to carry out or discharge his/her responsibilities very well with the new knowledge. Work done by skilled people cannot be done by just anyone, unlike those task performed by unskilled people. The only irreplaceable capital an organization processes are the knowledge and ability of its people. The productivity of that capital depends on how effectively people share the competence with those who can use it. When a skill is acquired in any discipline, it is assumed that the future gains that would result from it are of greater importance in terms of productivity (Uduma, 2004).

A skill is seen as ability to do something well, usually gained through training or experience. Skill involves the development of a new skill, practice or a way of doing things usually gained through training or experience. The types of skills that can be acquired by the youth include:

- Vocational, carpentry, hair dressing, fashion designing, tailoring design, textile design, catering and hotel management, bakery, tie and dye, bead making and printing technology.

The importance of skills acquisition cannot be over-emphasized because its roles in national development are multi-dimensional, but of particular mention are the following:

- Elimination of hunger and poverty
- Reduction of unemployment
- Reduction of crime through effective engagement of youths (Oryem, 2005).

Skills development has been man's means of material transformation from the earliest of time. But for development to take place, according to Oryem (2005), it takes trained hands and minds to apply the knowledge and techniques effectively. The government of Nigeria should achieve industrialization through technical education and skill acquisition centers as was done by the former Lagos State Governor, Babatunde Fashola. The Governor had established 27 skills acquisition programmes in Lagos mostly in the areas of Fashion design, textile design, hair dressing, welding and fabrication, aluminum fabrication, mat weaving, interior decoration, bakery, catering and hotel management, tie and dye, ceramics and plastic manufacturing, bead making, painting, art, printing technology, furniture.

Besides, the state government also organized various short-term vocational training programmes for both men and women. To ensure that funding is not an issue for the graduates, the State Government established the Lagos State Microfinance Institution (LASMI) to coordinate and disburse loans to them through the approved microfinance banks.

Problems/Challenges Faced by Technical Colleges in the South-South Zone

Technical and vocational education cannot contribute greatly to the reduction of abject poverty, hunger and unemployment because it is handicapped by numerous challenges. The good intentions of successive Nigerian governments about technical/vocational education programmes are still fraught with a lot of challenges which include:

(i) **Inadequate Funding of Technical and Vocational Education:**

No doubt, vocational/technical education has made some notable impacts on the Nigerian society, especially in respect to the products of the training programme who are contributing their quotas to the economic growth and development of the nation through various industrial establishments (Odu, 2013). Inadequate funding of vocational institutions has caused the turning out of half-baked graduates because there is no fund to build and maintain workshops, laboratories or even purchases modern equipment. Staffing of vocational/technical education is generally inadequate because of poor funding. Experienced and skillful teachers have not been employed. Those that were employed because of poor remuneration did not stay longer in the teaching profession, but drift to some other more lucrative jobs especially in the industries and abroad. Consequently, inexperienced and unqualified technical teachers were employed thereby lowering academic standard, resulting to wastage in the achievement of technical education goals.

(ii) **Government Neglect/Lack of Commitment:** Momo (2012) observed that government lack of commitment to technical education and inadequate funding have weakened technical education in Nigeria. A direct consequence of this is that while the number of technical education institution is dwindling that of general education is growing in bounds (Momo, 2012). The commitment of the government to the development of technical education and entrepreneurial development in the zone at this level of education is low, and can be noticed by the non-provision of training materials, renovation of technical schools as done in public secondary schools and training of teachers and personnel for effective implementation. Another noteworthy factor is the incessant changes in government with no corresponding policies some of which do not favour technical and entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

(iii) **Inadequate Facilities:** Most technical colleges in Nigeria do not have laboratories or workshop space, let alone useable equipment and where they exist, they are grossly inadequate, as the workshops only have items or equipment that were provided when the institutions were first established of which most of them are already obsolete or grounded (Ojimba, 2012). It is quite unfortunate and surprising too to know that most technical education department still depends on engineering workshops and lecturers in the University to teach technical education concepts in this 21st century. The available facilities, programmes as at today are inadequate quantitatively and qualitatively and besides they are out-dated. Oryem (2005), opined that only 10 percent of technical colleges in Nigeria have laboratory or workshop space for practical sessions and this has

resulted in the low quality of graduates produce from these college. Oryem also observed that the few colleges that have laboratories experience acute shortage of laboratory equipment and supplies.

Strategies for Developing Skills Acquisition Centers and Improving the Quality of Technical Education

Effective skills acquisition centers and technical education and training for national industrial revolution, is only possible if all the relevant stakeholders play their part. Stakeholders here refers to: Government, training institutions, parents and guardians, development partners and employers, all have important role to play in order to develop skills acquisition programmes and improve the quality of our technical education. The following strategies could be used:

(a) Government

- i. To develop and support implementation of National Technical/vocational education training policies.
- ii. To improve coherence of governance and management. Encourage on the job training for teachers.
- iii. To introduce policies and incentives that will support increased private investors in the sector, corporate organizations participation in skills acquisition and technical education training.

(b) Educational institutions and training providers: or companies.

- i. Establish strong links and collaboration with employers, students and industries.
- ii. Maintain gender in training activities and programmes.
- iii. Institute bursary and incentives schemes for students and trainees.

(c) Parents and Guardians;

- i. Support children and wards to follow a career in skills acquisition and technical education track.
- ii. Refute the perception that skills acquisition and technical education is meant for drop out, non-intelligent or less academically endowed children.

(d) Donors and Development Partners:

- i. Support development and implementation of national technical education policies and strategies.
- ii. Fund small business development research.

(e) Employers

- i. Deliver work place training to employees.
- ii. Contribute financially to national training fund or vocational technical intervention fund (VTEIF).

Modernization of Small and Medium Scale Industries through Technical Education

The importance and contributions of small scale industries to the economic development of the south south zones cannot be over emphasized. In a zone rich with natural resources, it appears that small scale industrialization is the only worthwhile enterprise to occupy the wasted energy of the citizens of the state (Offiongodon, 2001). Small scale industries, from available evidence, make the most important contributions to both the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Employment generation than larger companies. It is because of these unique contributions that governments all over the world have in recent times shown interest in the activities of small scale industries. This has gone a long way to buttress the fact that, there are small businesses all over the world, and in Nigeria, there is no state that has not got a department of small scale industries. This, no doubt, is the reason why the federal Government finds it imperative to lend a helping hand to small scale industrialists. One can summarize the advantages or roles of small scale industries as follows:

Small scale industries (employing 1-20) have a number of advantages. It is less capital intensive and so adds more to national income and employment. It is also the normal school of entrepreneurship. Out of these, thousands small firms will emerge as the Nigerian business leaders of the future. Given the private enterprise system, the only way to industrialize Nigeria adequately is to produce a large class of entrepreneurs with industrial experience. The Vocational and technical education is the university where these classes receive their training. Thus, looking ahead, it is more important to lay the foundation of an industrial class by helping small entrepreneurs through establishment of more technical colleges, skills acquisition centers, vocational centers and large factories.

Moreover, small scale industries have more initiative than the larger firms and thus stimulate industry by creating employment opportunities. For example, in more industrialized countries like Japan and the United States, small scale industries are seen as the pivot upon which the national economy rotates. This is because they out-number the large scale industries and they contribute significantly to the growth of Gross Demotic Product (GDP).

The acquisition and development of entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance and sustainability has many advantages such as:-

- (a) **Enhanced Self Employment:** It enhances self-reliance and employment and as well creates employment for other people.
- (b) **Increased Economic Activities:** Entrepreneurship development in the country has the benefit of increasing economic activities in the nation thereby increasing revenue generation for the nation and making the nation economically alive.
- (c) **Increased Supply of Entrepreneurs:** It also increases the number of entrepreneurs who will accelerate industrial development in the nation.
- (d) **Diversifying Business Ownership:** It also paves way for the production of entrepreneurs in different fields thereby diversifying sources of income to the nation and as well as producing a diversity of products in the country.
- (e) **Reducing Poverty Rate among Citizens:** Entrepreneurial skills enable the graduates to establish many profit making ventures which yield profits to them and

create avenues for improved income to others in the nation thereby reducing the rate of poverty among the citizens (Uduma, 2004).

- (f) **Improved Standard of Living:** Entrepreneurial skills acquisition also helps improve the standard of living of the entrepreneurs and their employees. This goes a long way to enhancing economic growth and development for the nation (Etuk, 2010).
- (g) **Promote Innovation:** Entrepreneurial skills also promote innovative technological ideas and products in the country.

Factors Responsible for the Deteriorating Conditions of Technical Colleges in the South South Zones

Many factors are responsible for the deteriorating conditions of technical colleges and skills acquisition center in South South Nigeria. They include:

(1) Inadequate Number of Qualified Technical Teachers

The available numbers of qualified teachers are unwilling to stay in the programme. Research evidence indicates a short fall of 95.5 percent of teachers who leave the classroom. This observation indicates availability of only 4.5 percent teachers to do the job. Reasons for the short fall are that teachers go for attractive and more paying jobs in industry and commerce. Poor salaries, bad conditions of service and apparent low usage of vocational education in the eyes of favourable treatments in the form of hazard allowance and other benefits, why cannot the vocational technical teachers enjoy the same benefit under our present democratic atmosphere.

(2) Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

It is a common knowledge in vocational education circle that a good number of equipment bought by the Federal Ministry of Education in the past 20 years had become obsolescent, worn out and deteriorated as a result of wear and tear or lack of workshop accommodation. Since practical work constitutes an essential component of vocational and technical education and training, it is obvious that without suitable workshop space, programme implementation and structuring would be very difficult if not impossible. However, this problem can be reduced if the government accords greater financial attention to vocational/technical education (Igwebuike, 2007).

(3) Expensive Facilities and Equipment

While efforts are being made to update curricula and introduce new ones, technical and vocational colleges need tools and equipment for successful implementation of any programme. However, the cost of equipping vocational technical institutions is astronomical and has gone up in recent times. Global financial recession or economic melt-down has further compounded the problem. According to Imarhiagbe (2011), the high cost of procuring vocational technical equipment and the poor resources of Nigeria during this economic recession, politicizing of education in this political period means that vocational technical education programme in this country cannot keep pace with the global strides in technological advancement. How then are training institutions to provide access to the state of the art tools and equipment needed to train people for the new work place? Increased funding on the part of the government is essential,

also, there is need for government to go into partnership with the Ministry of Commence and Industry to create new environment for the production of capable work force (Nwakolu, 2003).

(4) **Poor Students Enrolment**

The situation whereby the number of technical institutions in Nigeria is less than the grammar schools leads to the present enrolment ratio of 1:10 in favour of general secondary education (Nwakolu, 2003). South Korea found herself in this situation until 1990 – 1995 when the government adopted the policy of increasing enrolment in vocational/technical education. With this balanced ratio, unemployment rate was reduced to 2.6% in 1997.

Methodology

Design of the Study

This study employed a combination of descriptive survey design and document analysis to investigate the relationship between skills acquisition and industrialization in the South South geo-political zone of Nigeria. Descriptive survey method is appropriate for describing the deplorable conditions of technical education in the zone. The study was conducted in South South region of Nigeria this area is made up of six states namely: Akaw Ibom, Rivers, Cross River, Edo, Delta and Bayelsa States (Ekpo and Ekpenyong, 2004). The population of the study comprises teachers (principals, head of units), staff of State Technical School Board of National Board for Technical Education (STSB/NBTE) parents and industrialists. Total population of 3800 respondents which make up 2000 teachers obtained from the pay-role of teachers in 2016 in the six technical colleges selected for the study. 1100 State technical school board/national board for technical education 400 parents and 300 for industrialists. Reasons for using these groups are that (principals, head of units), State Technical School Board, National Board for Technical Education (STSB/NBTE) parents and industrialists are the major stakeholders in the development of technical colleges and skills acquisition centers in the study area. From the 9000 population, the sample size of 382 respondents were drawn for the study. This was derived through Tara Yamine Statistical Formula shown below:

$$\frac{N}{1 + N(0.0025)}$$

$$\frac{9000}{1 + N(0.0025)}$$

$$\frac{9000}{1 + 22.5}$$

$$\frac{9000}{23.5} = 382$$

The researcher adopted purposeful or judgmental sampling technical. This technique was necessary in that the researcher wanted to assess the conditions of state government technical colleges and skills acquisition centres especially the first generation colleges established between 1960's – 2000.

The instrument for data collection was a 32-items structured questionnaire titled, “Development of Skills Acquisition Centers and Industrialization in Nigeria (DSACIN)”. This instrument was developed by the researcher to elicit the objective opinions of respondents on the development of skills acquisition and industrialization in Nigeria for effective governmental control, funding and for increase in skill by students in technical colleges through teachers and industrial efforts.

The questionnaire was divided into two main parts, A and B. Part A of the questionnaire was designed to elicit personal information of the respondents. Part B was further divided into five sections in line with the stated objectives of the study to elicit data on the development of technical education and industries.’

The researcher adopted the likert scale of measurement with four options of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Disagreed (D). This study utilized both qualitative and quantitative techniques for the purpose of enriching and validating findings. Quantitative techniques reality allowed the researcher to establish correlation between variables.

The instrument was face validated by four experts from University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State University, Obong University and technical college, Abak. The experts were requested to examine the questionnaire items based on their clarity, appropriateness of language and ability to elicit accurate information in relation to the objectives of the study, research questions and hypotheses. Comments, necessary corrections, modification and amendments were made and thereafter, the instrument was considered valid enough to measure what it is expected to measure. The choice of Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient estimate for the study was based on the fact that the instrument has a scale consisting of 4-points which collected continuous data. This yielded a reliability coefficient of .86 Based on this, the instrument was considered reliable for the study.

The researcher with the help of three research assistants administered the questionnaire on the respondents. The researcher briefed the three assistants on how to administer and retrieve the instrument. Respondents were given enough time to complete the questionnaire. Out of 382 copies that were administered, 380 were retrieved giving a 96% rate of return. The completed copies of the instrument were therefore used for data analysis.

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses.

In testing the null hypotheses, when the calculated F-value is greater than or equal to the p-value, the null hypotheses is rejected in favour of the alternative hypotheses. Furthermore, when the F-value was less than or equal to the p-value, the null hypotheses is retained.

Result

Question 1: In what ways do technical education and skills acquisition centers contributes to industrialization in South-South zone of Nigeria?

Table 4.1: Mean responses of respondents on the ways technical education and skill acquisition contribute to industrialization in south-south zone of Nigeria. n=380

S/No	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1.	Practical skilled manpower for industrial development	3.39	.67	A
2.	Increase foods, clothing and textiles production	3.28	.70	A
3.	Create provision for self-reliance/employment	3.20	.92	A
4.	Reduces students burden on parents after graduation	3.51	.64	SA
5.	Train youths on ICT skills	3.12	.56	A
6.	Reduce crime rate in the society	3.53	.50	SA
Cluster mean		3.33		

Source: Field survey, 2017

The result presented on Table 4.1 shows that technical education and skill acquisition centers contribute to industrial development and societal needs with a cluster mean of 3.33. This reveals that technical education and skill acquisition centers have strong influence on the functionality and improvement of societal needs in the study area. Additionally, items on reduce students burden on parents after graduation and reduced crime rate increases security with highest mean of (\bar{x} = 3.51 and 3.53). This indicates that these items strongly agreed with technical education and skill acquisition centers in the improvement of societal needs in the study area. Furthermore, other items included had their means between (3.28, 3.20 and 3.12) indicating that there is greater influence of technical education and skill acquisition centers on industrial development and societal needs. Moreover, standard deviation ranges of .50 - .67 shows that the respondents were not very different in their responses.

Research Question 2

How do poor parental attitudes/low interest in technical education and societal beliefs/values affect the development of technical education in the study area?

Table 4.2: Mean responses of respondents on the reasons for low interest in technical education and skills acquisition in the study area. n = 380

S/No	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1.	Produce low middle manpower	3.77	2.9	SA
2.	Influence of parent on carrier choice	3.99	.11	SA
3.	Preferences for university education to technical education	3.75	1.2	SA
4.	The belief that T.F is meant for dropout, unintelligent and non-achievers	3.48	.63	A
5.	Interest of government on science education	3.58	2.7	SA
Cluster mean		3.71		

Source: Field Work 2017

The result presented on Table 4.2 shows that low interest in technical education and skills acquisition has a cluster mean of 3.71. This reveals that low interest in technical education and skills acquisition centers has greater impact on the development of technical education and skill

acquisition centers in the study area. Furthermore, items on low middle manpower, influence of parents on carrier choice, parents value on university education, technical education meant for dropout and interest of government on science education have mean of (\bar{x} = 3.77, 3.99, 3.57 and 3.58). This indicates that these items strongly agreed on development and industrialization role of technical education in the study area. Additionally, other item included had mean of (3.48) indicating agreed option. Moreover, standard deviation ranges of 2.7 – 2.9 shows that the respondents were not very diverse in their responses.

Findings of the Study

The result of data analyzed revealed the following findings based on research questions answered and null hypotheses tested.

1. That technical education and skill acquisition centers play a major role in developing and improving the economic sectors in the study area and that technical education and skills acquisition centers have greater relationship and contribute immensely to industrial development and improvement of societal needs in the study area.
2. Due to government lukewarm attitudes and neglect on the improvement of technical colleges and updating of facilities in the colleges, Nigerians therefore develop low
3. interest which hinders the smooth functioning technical colleges in the study area.
4. Challenges faced by technical colleges in south-south Nigeria hinder the development of technical education which thwarted the growth and patronage of technical education by Nigerians.
5. That government neglect of technical colleges/skill acquisition centers has seriously affected the training and quality of technically skilled manpower in the zone.
6. That technical education/skill acquisition enhances the development of small and medium scale industries mostly if citizens and government invest in the system.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this research work are discussed based on the stated objectives of the study. Based on the research question analysed and the hypothesis tested, the alternative hypothesis was accepted which revealed that technical education and skills acquisition centers are hobs that drives industrialization in most advanced countries of the world. Also, rich nations are one that is capable of meeting the economic social, moral and political needs of the citizenry. In confirmation, if Nigerians need to wear clothes, take good food and drinks, drive cars then Nigerians must be willing and capable of producing finished goods. In the same vein, Thompson (2007), reported that technical education and skills acquisition help nations to lay a solid foundation for technological development of a nation.

This observation confirmed what Oryem (2005) opined that it takes trained hands and minds to apply the knowledge and technique effectively. Thompson (2007) further reported that vocational/technical education plays a vital role in growing the United State of America Economy after the Second World War (WW II) and can play a similar role in a growing nation like Nigeria. Creativity is a crucial factor in technological innovations. Vocational education with its objectives has something of value to offer to everybody, its holds the key to national development.

Furthermore, technical education holds the key to industrial development. No meaningful development could be achieved by a nation without sound and qualitative technical education. There is an established positive linkage between economic growth and investment in human capacity building. Technical education/skill acquisition also has an important role to play in industrial development, industrial growth, employment generation and poverty alleviation. Technical and vocational education (TVE) has been an integral part of national development strategies in many countries. The principal aim of technical education has been to turnout skilled manpower needed for industrial and technological development.

The researcher observed that with the development of qualitative technical education and skills acquisition centers, the problem of youth restiveness, high rates of crime and over-dependency on government will be reduced.

The result as presented in Table 4.7 showed that low interest of technical education in south-south Nigerian affects the development of technical education in the study area. Furthermore, the result also revealed a significant influence of poor interest of technical education in the country. This is because the analysis of variance $p < 0.05$ level of significance showed .450, .677, 0.72, .096 and 121 greater or higher than 0.05. This result could be explained in the sense that one's perception may be the singular predictor for an individual to engage in a specific task.

The finding agrees with Offiongodon (2001) who stated that there is a misconception that vocational and technical education is education meant for the dropout, unintelligent and non-achievers. He also observed that many parents especially the elites, the rich and the political class do not encourage their wards to make vocational/technical education a career and those people who opt probably for vocational technical/education programme either by accident or chance are not encouraged because the society does not place any significant value on the programme. Also, too much noise is made on the pages of papers and television about vocational and technical education, but little is done to improve the teaching/learning of vocational and technical education programme in the country.

The wrong perception of technical education was given by the impression that was created by early colonial educators that the learning of vocational skills was for drop-outs and mentally handicapped children. Technical education and vocational studies is capital intensive, thus, Obarisi statement in turn agreed with the findings of the researcher which stated that low interest in technical education and skill acquisition has greater impact on the development of technical education and skills acquisition in the study area. Also, lack of funding of technical and skills acquisition centers by private investors hinders development of industrialization thereby hindering employment. The values system in the country equally affected the patronage of technical education by Nigerians. In Nigeria today too much emphasis is placed on University qualifications not minding whether the holder possesses the required knowledge and skills. But in advanced societies those with technical degrees are highly regarded. For this reasons, secondary school leavers and parents prefer university education to technical education. This agreed with the finding of the research on parental attitude towards choice of career.

Summary

The main purpose of the study was to examine the strategies for the development of skills acquisition centers and improved technical education to boost industrialization in the South South geopolitical zone. Literature related to the study were reviewed, the survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 382 respondents was conveniently selected for the study using Boll and Gall statistical technique. The instrument used for data collection was "Development of Skills Acquisition and Industrialization in Nigeria (DSAIN)". Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while analysis of variance (ANOVA) as used to test the hypotheses under study. The 0.05 level of significance was used for the statistical testing of each of the hypothesis. The results of the analysis revealed that:

1. Technical education and skill acquisition centers develop and improve the economic sectors in the study area and that technical education and skills acquisition centers contributes in greater percentage to industrial development and improvement of societal needs in the study area.
2. Due to government lukewarm attitude and neglect on the improvement of technical colleges and updating of facilities in the colleges, Nigerians therefore develop low interest which hinders the smooth functioning of technical education in the study area.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that:

- (i) Poor perception of technical education by Nigerians significantly affect the development of technical education in Nigeria.
- (ii) There is a significant relationship between technical education/skill acquisition and industrial development.
- (iii) The deteriorating conditions of technical colleges/skills acquisition centers and government neglect significantly affect the training and quality of technically skilled manpower in the zone.
- (iv) Technical education/skills acquisition significantly enhances the development of small and medium scale industries.
- (v) Challenges faced by technical colleges in Nigeria significantly hinder the development of technical education.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion deduced from this study, the following recommendations were made that:

1. The government of Nigeria through the Technical Schools Board should embark on a general review of the present policies of technical education in Nigeria. This could be undertaken by National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and various other institutions such as sensitization on the importance of technical education for self-reliance. Additionally, technical education teachers should be sent on training to improve

on their practical experience. In addition to these, government should create enabling environment, which would attract Nigerian youths in technical education. Teachers should be actively involved in this process. Efforts should be made to ensure that teachers understand the goals and objectives of technical education policies. This is important in view of the fact that teachers play a pivotal role in the policy implementation process.

2. The number of technical colleges in the zone compare to secondary schools is grossly inadequate to boost industrial development. Since technical education is capital intensive, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) corporate institutions, and individuals should be involved and encouraged in the establishment and development of technical education. Adequate investment should be made towards boosting teaching and learning materials in technical colleges and skills acquisition centers.
3. Adequate resources should be allocated to technical and vocational education. Inadequate funding affects the provision of essentials, such as well-equipped laboratories and workshops, relevant textbooks and training manuals. All facilities and equipment required for the training of various trades or occupations are to be put in place in order to enhance training in all technical courses or trade courses.

The government should endeavour to fund technical education and other skills acquisition programmes very well, bearing in mind the capital intensive nature of the programmes, a special fund to be tagged “Vocational and Technical Education Intervention Fund (VTEIF)” should be created and serviced. This should be created for the effective implementation of technical education programmes at all levels. This will help to equip laboratories, workshops, replacement of machines and equipment in technical colleges.

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