

Stakeholders' Perception of Skill Adequacy of Vocational Training Component of a University of Education in Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract. The trend of high rate of youth unemployment and underemployment, most especially the graduates in Nigeria appears to have defied solution, several social reforms and economic initiatives of the government notwithstanding. Thus, this study sought to investigate stakeholders' perception of skill adequacy of vocational training component of a University of Education in Southwestern Nigeria. One research question with three hypotheses were generated for the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The sample comprises 504 students of 300 level, 58 lecturers and 61 senior members of non-academic staff. Questionnaire on Stakeholders' Perception of Students' Acquisition of Vocational Skills (QSPSAVS) ($r=.84$) was used in data collection. Data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA. The results indicate that stakeholders' perception (Grand Mean = 2.96) of the adequacy of vocational skills acquired by the student trainees was high. Meanwhile, differences in perception of adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees based on type of stakeholders ($F_{2,497} = .391$; $p (.676) > .05$) and gender ($t = -1.753$; $p (.080) > .05$) were not significant. Further, there is no significant interaction influence of category of stakeholders and gender ($F_{2,493} = 1.490$; $p (.226) > .05$) on perception of adequacy of the skills acquired by the student trainees. In conclusion, all the stakeholders were of similar views that the vocational training component of teacher education programme in the University was worthwhile. Thus, the University management should foster the

sustainability of the intervention amongst other recommendations.

Keywords: Stakeholders' perception, skill adequacy, vocational training, gender, University of Education

1. Introduction

University education is a tool by which high level manpower is raised for the economic activities of a nation. The high level manpower constitutes a group that drives the economy of any nation. Apart from the primary aim of university education which is human capital production and development, it also helps to foster social and political security of human society. The labour market is the place where human capital being produced in the university and other tertiary institutions of learning are required and needed. Thus, mutual relationship exists between the two. The university and other tertiary institutions of learning are believed respond to the need, aspirations and yearnings of the labour market. The labour market is also expected to provide a space for every human capital by mean of expansion and enhancement in response to ever growing human population.

The population of Nigeria according to 2006 census was 140,431,790. As at 2017, the population estimate of the country stood at 191,836,000 (Wikipedia, Feb. 10, 2018). The growth in population as indicated by the estimate is staggering and so one would expect a corresponding increase in other macro and micro

economic indices. The situation analysis as at third, quarter of 2017 indicates that 40.0% translating to 34.02 million of the labour force (85,088,000) in Nigeria were unemployed and underemployed. (Federal Republic on Nigeria, 2017). Breakdown of the statistics reveal that 52.65% (22.64 million) of the youth aged 15 to 35 years were unemployed. Disaggregating the data further, 33.1% and 34.2% of youth aged 15 to 24 were unemployed and underemployed respectively. The percentages for unemployment and underemployment among the other category of youth aged 25-34 were 20.2% and 22.3%. The statistics generally describe the youth population across gender, location and educational status. From the figures it is obvious Nigeria is having serious socio-economic challenges on hand ranging from poverty, social insecurity to political insecurity.

Statistical information (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2017) further show that out of 13.06 million graduates of universities and other tertiary institutions of learning 50.0% (6.53 million persons) were either unemployed or underemployed. Their counterparts with secondary school qualifications recorded 39.1% aggregate for unemployment and underemployment translating to 11.58 million persons out of 29.61 million individuals that make up the group. Out of 25.19 million individuals that never attended school, 43.1% (10.86 million persons) were either unemployed or underemployed. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017) employment, underemployment and unemployment are considered as a function of a person's involvement or otherwise in economic activity even if that activity is performed solely to make ends meet and not for satisfaction or enjoyment. The document further reveals that an individual is considered underemployed if he/she works less than 40 hours but at least 20 hours per week or is engaged in an activity that underutilizes his skills, time and educational qualifications. On the other hand, it states that an unemployed person is one who is actively looking for work but could not find work for at least 20 hours during the reference week. Labour force population comprises persons within the age

range of 15 to 64 years who are willing and able to work.

Available statistics (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2017) reveal that unemployment rate in the country as at the last quarter in 2017 was 18.8%. Attendant consequences of this social menace are being felt across the length and breadth of the country in the form of youth restiveness, incessant advance fee fraud (419), kidnapping, armed robbery incidences, ritual killings, and Boko Haram insurgency. All these social crimes were on the increase compared to the experiences of the 1970s. The government have always responded to this social menace called unemployment through social reforms and economic initiatives. Successive governments according to Ekong and Ekong (2016), Odeh and Okoye (2014), Owenybiugie and Ediagbonya (2014) have introduced intervention programmes and strategies to stem the tide of unemployment in the country. Notable among them are Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN), Better Life Programme, Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS). The graduate job creation loan Guarantee Scheme, Agricultural Sector Employment Programme, National Agency for Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), the Youth Enterprise with innovation in Nigeria (YOU-WIN), the Osun State Youth Employment Scheme (O'YES), Family Support and Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) and N-SIP (A National Social Investment Programme) with a dimension of N-Power Teacher Corps for graduates as N-Power Agro, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach, and N-Power Community Health (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2017).

N-SIP is the most recent of the social reforms and economic initiative of the government. It was introduced by the Federal Government in 2016, with over 170,000 graduates out of which about 200,000 applicants were recruited under

N-Power Teacher Corps for graduates (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2017). In 2017, about 2.5 million applications for the same scheme were received. All the social reforms and economic initiatives described above except for N-SIP have failed to achieve much as desired in terms of expectation of the teeming graduates from our tertiary educational institutions. The belief system of an average Nigerian graduate is to secure a white-collar job to which salary and incentives are attached. And so, they are not prepared for any intervention that will require them undergoing fresh vocational training, which in some cases will involve submission of their certificates as part of the collateral in order to benefit from the loan and/or grants attached. Attempt at addressing the existing gap is what informed the vocational training being incorporated unto the mainstream of degree programme at TASUED. It was on this premise, this study seeks to investigate stakeholders' perception of skill adequacy of vocational training component of a University of Education in Southwestern Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

The trend of high rate of unemployment and underemployment of graduates in Nigeria calls for the attention of all relevant and well-meaning stakeholders in social and economic sectors of the polity. Several intervention strategies in the form of short and long term offer of credit facilities to the unemployed graduates were being deployed by the government. Amongst these is a much recent short term measure involving graduates empowerment scheme of the Federal Government known as N-Power Teacher Corps. However, the generality of these graduates at the point of graduation were without any vocational skills they can readily market. Direct response from the University to this menace was the introduction of compulsory vocational programmes designed to empower the students with acquisition of vocational skills in addition to proficiency training in cognate professional area of interest. On this note, Centre for Vocational Studies (CENVOS) of Tai Solarin University of Education was established to offer students vocational and entrepreneurial

skills. In favour of the intervention, assessment of the perception of the major stakeholders becomes imperative. Thus, this study seeks to investigate stakeholders' perception of skill adequacy of vocational training component of a University of Education in Southwestern Nigeria.

3. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the stakeholders' perception of skill adequacy of vocational training component of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagan. The specific purposes of the study are to:

- ascertain stakeholders' perception profile of adequacy of skills acquired by student trainees in vocational areas of choice
- determine the influence of category of stakeholders on perception of adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees in vocational areas of choice
- determine the influence of gender of stakeholders on perception of adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees in vocational areas of choice
- determine the interaction influence of category of stakeholders and gender on perception of adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees in vocational areas of choice

4. Research Question

What is the profile of stakeholders' perception of adequacy of skills acquired by student trainees in vocational areas of choice?

5. Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of types of stakeholders on adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED in vocational areas of choice

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of male and female stakeholders on adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED in vocational areas of choice.

HO₃: There is no significant interaction influence of type of stakeholders and gender on

perception of adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED in vocational areas of choice

6. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design is considered appropriate because it allows for collection and description of characteristics about the population of interest which in this case consists of 300 level students, lecturers and senior members of non-academic staff of Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijagun, Southwestern Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 5,035 students of 300 level, 294 lecturers and 404 senior members of non-academic staff of TASUED. The lecturers and senior members of non-academic staff alongside the students were considered appropriate because the staff enjoy the privilege of periodic invitation to exhibition of products from these vocational units mounted by the students. Beyond this, the students are exposed to public observation of these members of the University community during the practical sessions of examinations. The sample for the study comprises 10% (n=504) of 300 level students distributed across textiles, fruit juice making, Microsoft and computer training and fashion design areas of vocation., 20% (n=58) of lecturers and 15% (n=61) of senior members of non-academic staff. The clusters of the sample were drawn using simple random sampling technique. On a specific note, clusters of the students were met during their practical session and from each cluster, respondents were drawn using balloting approach involving Yes or No to draw the sample without replacement. The same approach was applied to draw the samples of the lecturers and non-academic senior members of staff before which, the staff lists had been collected from the registry unit of the University.

Questionnaire on Stakeholders' Perception of Students' Acquisition of Vocational Skills (QSPSAVS) was developed by the researchers for data collection purpose. The instrument consists of sections A and B. Section A captures demographic information about gender and category of stakeholders. Section B measures the perception of stakeholders on the skills acquired by student trainees. The total number of items in the instrument was 13. The response format of the instrument was a four point Likert scale: 1 = strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Agree (A) and 4 = Strongly Agree (SA).

The instrument was reviewed in content, grammar and structure by two experts in Educational Evaluation. Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the version of the instrument. Reliability test of the instrument was performed using Cronbach alpha with .84 coefficient of internal consistency for the instrument. The instrument was administered to the students during periods for vocational studies while lecturers and senior members of non-academic staff were met in their offices where the instrument was administered.

Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation in answering the research question. The applied decision rule states that a mean score of below 2.5 indicates disagreement of stakeholders' perception while a mean score of 2.5 and above indicates agreement. T-test, one-way Analysis of variance and three-way Analysis of variance were used in testing the null hypothesis.

7. Results

Answer to Research Question One

What is the profile of stakeholders' perception of adequacy of skills acquired by student trainees in vocational areas of choice?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of stakeholders’ perception of adequacy of skills acquired by student trainees

| S/N | Student trainees have | Mean | S.D | Decision |
|-----|---|------|-----|----------|
| 1. | ability to procure relevant resources in making their products | 2.86 | .74 | Agree |
| 2. | ability to keep to required specification when making their products | 2.97 | .71 | Agree |
| 3 | ability to provide appropriate setting in making their products | 2.99 | .80 | Agree |
| 4 | ability to observe safety precautions in the process making their products | 3.02 | .87 | Agree |
| 5 | ability to dispose waste products appropriately into the environment | 2.72 | .98 | Agree |
| 6 | ability to clean up the environment thereafter the process of making their products | 2.97 | .87 | Agree |
| 7 | ability to procure genuine materials from the market at reasonable prices | 3.00 | .84 | Agree |
| 8 | ability for appropriate packaging of their products | 3.03 | .82 | Agree |
| 9 | ability for appropriate storage of their products | 3.03 | .85 | Agree |
| 10 | ability to market their products | 2.97 | .83 | Agree |
| 11 | ability to preserve their products within a reasonable period of time | 2.98 | .84 | Agree |
| 12 | ability for reactive thinking | 3.05 | .80 | Agree |
| 13 | ability for effective time management | 2.93 | .84 | Agree |

Given the results on Table 1, high mean scores indicating strong agreement of the stakeholders were recorded for students’ ability for creative thinking (\bar{x} = 3.05), ability for appropriate packaging of products (\bar{x} = 3.03), ability to observe safety precautions in the process of making a new product (\bar{x} = 3.02) and ability to procure genuine materials from the market at reasonable process (\bar{x} = 3.00). Other skills observed among student trainees perceived by the stakeholders as being adequate include ability to preserve new products within a reasonable length of time (\bar{x} = 2.98), ability to observe required specification when making a new product (\bar{x} = 2.97), ability to provide appropriate setting at workshop in making new products (\bar{x} = 2.99), ability to clean up the workshop environment thereafter the process of making a new product (\bar{x} = 2.97) and ability to market their products (\bar{x} = 2.97).

Few other areas of vocational skills among student trainees of Tai Solarin University of Education perceived to be adequate are possession of ability for effective time management (\bar{x} = 2.93), ability to procure relevant resources in making a new product (\bar{x} = 2.86) and ability for appropriate disposal of wastes into the environment (\bar{x} = 2.72)

Testing Hypothesis One

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of type of stakeholders on adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED in vocational areas of choice

Table 2: Test of ANOVA indicating perception of skills

| | SS | Df | MS | F | Sig |
|----------------|-----------|-----|---------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 31.254 | 2 | 15.627 | .391 | .676 |
| Within Groups | 19851.648 | 497 | 39.943. | | |
| Total | 19882.902 | 499 | | | |

Given the results ($F_{2,497} = .391$; $P>.05$) on Table 2, it is obvious there is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of type of stakeholders on adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED in vocational areas of choice. In other words, the perception of the stakeholders was uniform and so the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Testing Hypothesis Two

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of male and female stakeholder on adequacy of the skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED in vocational areas of choice.

Table 3: Group mean differences between male and female stakeholders on adequacy of vocational competencies acquired by student trainees of TASUED

| | N | Mean | S.D | Df | t | Sig. | Remarks |
|--------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------|------|-----------------|
| Male | 225 | 37.97 | 6.51 | 495 | -1.753 | .080 | Not significant |
| Female | 272 | 38.15 | 6.15 | | | | |

Looking at the t-test results ($t = -1.753$; $P > .05$) indicated on Table 3, it is evident that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female stakeholders on adequacy of the vocational skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Testing Hypothesis Three

HO₃: There is no significant interaction influence of type of stakeholders and gender on perception of adequacy of the skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED in vocational areas of choice.

Table 4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| | Type III sum of squares | Df | MS | F | Sig. |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-----|-----------|----------|------|
| Corrected model | 298.752 | 6 | 49.792 | 1.253 | .278 |
| Intercept | 70412.433 | 1 | 70412.433 | 1772.522 | .000 |
| Stakeholder | 110.196 | 2 | 55.098 | 1.387 | .251 |
| Gender | 140.642 | 2 | 70.321 | 1.770 | .171 |
| Stakeholder x Gender | 118.356 | 2 | 59.178 | 1.490 | .226 |
| Error | 19584.150 | 493 | 39.724 | | |
| Total | 761547.000 | 500 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 19882.902 | 499 | | | |

Given the results of Two-way Analysis of Variance ($F_{2,493} = 1.490$; $P > .05$) test on Table 4, there is no significant interaction influence of type of stakeholders and gender on perception of adequacy of the skills acquired by the student trainees of TASUED in vocational areas of choice. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

8. Discussion of Findings

On account of the results of this study, the perception of the stakeholders comprising of lecturers, senior non-academic staff and students was positive on agreement scale for adequacy of skills acquired by student trainees in vocational areas of choice. The vocational areas of choice available to the students include textiles, fruit juice making, Microsoft and computer training, fisheries, fashion design, skills to practice and prosper in the labour market were attested to as being adequate among the trainees. The stakeholders are of course in the best position to know better because they are directly or indirectly involved in the intervention. The finding supports Mustapha and Greenan (2016) who reported a favourable attitude toward

employability of vocational graduates for educators in Malaysia. This finding is in contrast to the negative report of ineffectiveness (Odeh & Okoye, 2014) of Federal Government economic initiative involving National Directorate of Employment (NDE). The view demonstrates their appreciation and belief in the intervention. This implies, the skills are in tandem with demands of labour market in the area of semi-skilled requirements. The finding supports a similar study (Owenbiugie & Ediagbonya, 2014) on relevance of entrepreneurship education at the colleges of education level in which the perception of business education students was found to be positive.

Expectedly, difference in mean scores of type of stakeholders and mean gender difference for perception of adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees were not significant. The issue of skills acquisition is beyond the status or gender of an individual. Adequacy of skills constitutes a general issue that does not require an individual to be male or female or lecturer or otherwise to appreciate. By observation, it is either the skills are there or not.

In the same vein, the interaction influence between the two variables: type and gender of stakeholders on perception of adequacy of skills acquired by the student trainees was not significant. This further confirms the findings severally about the two variables above.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the perception of the students, lecturers and senior members of non-academic staff who incidentally constitute the major stakeholders of the academic community of Tai Solarin University of Education were of the opinions that the vocational trainees were adequate in skills of production, packaging, procurement of raw materials and disposal of wastes amongst others. Since these stakeholders constitute a critical unit of the public, it is a pointer that the products from the vocational enterprise of these trainees would readily sell to the generality of the public. Interestingly, the perceptions of the stakeholders were uniform for adequacy of skills among the trainees through the intervention training programme.

On this note, the following recommendations are made:

- The University management should demonstrate strong will power at maintaining and sustaining the intervention programme.
- The University management should invest more on input resources aimed at expanding the intervention programmes.
- The Federal Government should be directly involved in granting take off loan at a very low interest rate to fresh graduates through the Bank of Industry for whoever with requisite skills that shows interest.
- The Federal Government through the National Universities Commission should adopt the intervention programme as a viable economic empowerment and unemployment scheme for replication in all Universities in the country open to all undergraduate students.

- The Federal Government should demonstrate strong political will in establishing Vocational and Entrepreneurial Commission to partner the National Universities Commission on the responsibility of regulating vocational and entrepreneurial studies in the Universities.
- The mandate of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) of the Federal Government should be expanded to incorporate the funding of Centre for Vocational and Entrepreneurial Studies established in all Universities

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