

Attitudinal changes towards Vocational & Technical Education; Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract: The research was conducted to ascertain level of awareness and attitude of parents, students and the public towards technical and vocational system of education. A sample of 400 students from various secondary schools, 400 parents in the community and 400 private/public employees completed a questionnaire that was designed to validate the study. Percentage scores were used to answer the research questions. Results show that students, parents have exhibits negative attitude towards acquiring skills/knowledge from technical colleges. Only 22.5, 35 % of the students, parents preferred acquiring awards from technical colleges; 77.5, 65 % students, parents preferred their wards to acquire knowledge from university system of education. It was observed that parents with low economical, educational status in the society tend to encourage their wards to undergo Technical and Vocational system of Education. While, students from poor economic background belief that university system of education is meant for the wealthy family. On the basis of these findings, proactive recommendations were made to improve attitudinal change towards technical and vocational system of education.

Keywords: Attitude and attitudinal change, technical and vocational Education,

I. INTRODUCTION

It is universally recognized and accepted on the indispensable roles by education in the development of individuals, societies and a country (1). The global acceptance or claim that education is a vital ingredient in all spheres of human endeavors today cannot be over-emphasized. In a personal point of view, it's the key that opens door to economical, technological, political and social national development. It is referred to the means/road map to bring individuals from ignorance to lamplight; it's an ever ready training tool in sharpening and transforming the individuals to consistently adjust him/her to the changing world (2). It's a life -long learning process and an absolute right to every individual. In this study, emphasis is based on the technical and vocational system of education.

Vocational education can be referred to a workshop-based education for training manpower needed for national development anywhere. As a workshop-based education, it is concerned with the methods of processing raw materials into finished products of economic value using the right tools and equipment. It is not limited to processing of raw materials (3).

Technical Education is the form of education that comprises of the training in skills necessary for acquisition of formal

basic technical groundwork in both sciences, applied sciences and of course humanity with the sole aim to create in an individual or individuals a sense of change of change with specific direction, progress and the capacity, confidence to favourably compete in the global community (4). Vocational and technical education (TVE) has been an integral component for national developmental strategies in many societies and countries because of its significant effects on human, resource/capital development, productivity and economic growth. Adenle & Olukayode (2007) described technical and vocational education (TVE) as a systematic programme with manifold navigations capable of transforming Nigeria from her present economic status of a consumer/importer into a producer/manufactures nation. Bennell (1996) opinioned that all countries (especially developing countries) need a balanced and robust development through all of the educational sectors in order to make significant progress in terms of national development. Ebong (1996) described technical education as the basis and centrality in the process of increasing economic efficiency and social consistency national productivity. It enhances the overall productivity and intellectual flexibility of the labor force; ensures that a country is competitive in world markets now characterized by changing technologies and production methods. As such, no country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital (8). It raises people's productivity and creativity, promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. In addition it plays a very crucial role in enhancing industrial capacity, securing economic, social progress and improving income distribution (8,9).

Nigeria is in a verge of collapse by a threat that tends to affect her capacity to transform crucial aspect of her socio-political, economic and technological line: this menace is centered on the indifferent or possibly refusal of its citizenry to develop right attitudes towards all system of education in the country. Consequently, the failure of consecutive governments to overcome this ugly phenomenon has eventually led to stigmatization of the average Nigerian both at home and abroad (10). This stigmatization has eaten deep into the fibre of the educational sector of the country and has remained one of the greatest impediments to equitable development. This stigma can be referred to what I call 'Preferential syndrome'. Potential icons of our great country trend to the background the acquisition of knowledge from the technical and

vocational system of education while majority prefer to pursue certificate from the university system of education as a result of what is generally recognized or honored and forget the facts that each system of education have their peculiarity in achieving nation's set goals. This so call preferential attitude tend to weaken the country's level of productivity because the average Nigeria is socially and physiological affected by this stigma.

Given the enormous benefits of TVE, the attitudes toward it, condition of learning, infrastructural facilities and services remained regrettable. Students, parents and of course the society needs to be enlightened to come to the understanding of the realities and possibilities in acquiring technical and vocational education. It had never come to their sub-consciousness that this negative attitudes and nether rating of products from TVE educational have a rebounding effect on the country's educational system and the society at large.

Products from the TVE in the country are not recognized and possibly marginalized from those of the universities. These affect the passion to acquire skills or knowledge from the TVE. No or few parent nowadays advices his or her wards to pursue certificates from this system of education, some even by words or deeds categorically discourage interested children from pursuing the award offered from TVE but rather force or encourages their wards to pursue the award offered by the university even if the child do not possess the capacity. Worse still, parents serving in organizations with such certificates if asked or given an option to continue in his/her award acquired or change to the university award/certificate will not hesitate choose to dump the award from the TVE and joyfully embrace that from the university because he/she is burnout and seen or paid lower than the university graduates. These of course discourage students embracing the system of education.

The aim/objective of this research is to;

- 1) To determine the public attitude/perception towards technical and vocational education.
- 2) To determine parental, private and public influence towards technical and vocational education and
- 3) Identify how parents, private and public organizations can impact
- 4) To determine why an average Nigerian student, parents even the public finds it difficult to adapt to attitudinal change towards acquiring skills and awards from technical and vocational education.

A self-organized structured questionnaire titled 'Technical and Vocational Education- attitudinal Assessment contains 10 items/questions, three items for each category aside category C & D with two items only as shown below;

SECTION A: To Ex-students, Students in SSS 3

- 1) How well are you informed or aware on the establishment of technical colleges (Monotechnics, Polytechnics and Colleges of education) across the country?
 - A. I am fully aware
 - B. I am not aware
 - C. I am partially aware
- 2) In your pursuit to acquire further training/skill in life which of these award/certificate do you preference?
 - A. Certificate from technical colleges
 - B. Certificate from the university
- 3) Why the choice?
 - A. Personal reasons
 - B. it is well recognized in the country
 - C. it helps in job creation and be self dependant

SECTION B: To Parents

- 4) How well are you informed or aware on the establishment of technical colleges (Monotechnics, Polytechnics and Colleges of education) across the country?
 - A. I am fully aware
 - B. I am not aware
 - C. I am partially aware
- 5) As a parent to a ward, which of the institution would you like your ward to acquire further knowledge?
 - A. Technical colleges (monotechnics, polytechnics & college of education) only
 - B. University education only
 - C. Both technical and university educations?
- 6) What was the reason for your choice in question 5?
 - A. Personal reasons
 - B. it is well recognized in the country
 - C. it helps my child to be an employer of labour and be self dependant

SECTION C: To Public Organization

- 7) Which of these products (award/certificate) would be your preferred choice in fostering the organization?
 - A. Products from technical colleges (monotechnics & NCE only)
 - B. products from polytechnics only
 - C. Products from university only
 - D. Products from both A & B
- 8) What is the reason of your choice?

- A. *Personal*
- B. Graduates from the selected institution are generally accepted and add to organizational values
- C. Graduates from the selected institution are highly skilled.

SECTION D: To Private Organization

- 9) Which of these products (award/certificate) would be your preferred choice in fostering the organization?
- A. Products from technical colleges (monotechnics & NCE only)
 - B. Products from polytechnics only
 - C. Products from university only
 - D. Products from both A & B
- 10) What is the reason of your choice?
- A. *Personal*
 - B. Graduates from the selected institution are generally accepted and add to organizational values
 - C. Graduates from the selected institution are highly skilled.

II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This aspect of the study is of paramount importance. This is important due to the fact that a neutral understanding and agreement are needed from respondents of different individuals. Particularly, this refers to geographical, respondent, background and study selected population scopes.

i. Geographical Scope

For the purpose of this study, the geographical scope is limited to students, parents, public and private organization of a particular area in the state only.

ii. Respondent Scope

The study was designed to survey students accessible in the school, parents in the community and both managerial and non-managerial staffs of the researched organization.

iii. Background Scope

The study involves the use of one survey (questionnaire surveyed only)

iv. Study Selected Population

The choice of selected population used for this research was driven by the need to gather/obtain relevant information from internal students of the schools, management or full time/pensionable staffs of surveyed organizations. This becomes essential in making accurate assessments, conclusions and recommendations at the tail end of the research. The rate of response was determined using mathematically expression as shown below.

$$\text{Response Rate} = \frac{\text{Total no of Responses}}{\text{Total no of questionnaire distributed}} \times 100$$

III. METHODOLOGY

The method of research adopted in this study is based on the descriptive survey method (questionnaires only). The questionnaire is used to gather vital information for analysis. It was used to gather facts and opinions from a selected population been researched. Two experts in evaluation, measurement and administration from ABU affiliated programme in college of education Minna, Niger state were used to validate the instrument. The researcher administered a total of 1350 copies of questionnaire were given out. This was made possible to respondents using the school management staffs and teachers to each of the selected students; to the employees through some selected staffs of the organizations while questionnaires were issued to parents individually through the researchers. The respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire and return back to their representatives. A sum total of 1200 questionnaires were returned back to the researchers. The descriptive survey was organized and presented to three categories of individuals as thus:

Category A:

Involve some selected Ex-students and SSS 3 students from the following schools; Government Science College, Supreme International school, Government Day Secondary School, Federal Government College (FGC), Government Technical College and NUT Model Science School, located in Chanchaga, Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. 400 questionnaires were completed and returned by the respondents.

Category B

Involve some selected parents in the community. 400 questionnaires were completed and returned by the respondents.

Category C

Involve some selected staffs and management staffs in public organizations such Scientific Equipment Development Institute (SEDI), Niger State Water Board (NSWB) located in Chanchaga, Minna- Niger State and Technology Incubation Centre (TIC) in Tunga area of the state. 180 questionnaires were completed and returned by the respondents.

Category D

Involve some selected staffs and management staffs in private organization such Maizube Company Ltd located in Maitumbi, Golden Age Company Ltd in Tunga and Imurat plastic Company located in Tudun Fulani. 220 questionnaires were completed and returned by the respondents.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1: Degree of awareness on the establishment of various educational systems

	Monotechnics & N.C.E			Polytechnics			Universities			Total
	Informed	Not	Partially	Informed	Not	Partially	Informed	Not	Partially	
Students	44	12	5	85	4	-	250	-	-	400
Parents	66	9	10	100	-	-	135	-	-	400
Public/private organization	133	-	-	132	-	-	135	-	-	400
Sum Total of Respondents										1200

Table 1 shows that 44 (4%) of the respondents are fully informed of the establishment of technical colleges (monotechnics, N.C.E) across the country while 85 (7%) and 250 (21%) of the respondents are fully informed on the establishment of polytechnic and university institution in the country.

Table 2: Rating preferences towards various educational systems

	Monotechnics & N.C.E	Polytechnics	University	Total respondents
Students	5	85	310	400
Parents	30	110	260	400
Public Org.	15	60	105	180
Private Org.	85	100	35	220
Sum Total of Respondents				1200

Table 2 shows that 30 (<3%) of the parents preferred to send their wards to a monotechnic or NCE, 110 (9.2%) preferred the polytechnic and over 200 (22%) of parents preferred their ward to attend the university institution. Only 5 (0.4%), 85 (7%) of the students preferred undertaking technical colleges and polytechnic system of education while over 300 (26) of the students choose the university education.

Table 3: Rating reasons for choices made

	Monotechnics & N.C.E	Polytechnics	Universities	Total respondents
Personal	85	120	195	400
Generally recognized	10	150	240	400
Highly skilled & enable job creation	185	205	10	400
Sum Total of respondents				1200

Table 3 shows opinions of respondents in terms of potentials embedded in each educational system. 10 (1%) and 150 (13%) respondents preferred the monotechnics & NCE, polytechnics but greater number of respondent (240) preferred the university system but it is generally recognized or honoured in

the society. 185 (15%) and 205 (17%) respondents preferred the monotechnic & NCE system rather than the university system because products from these institutions are technically oriented and enable job creation.

V. DISCUSSION OF DATA

The research ascertained attitude of students toward various educational systems established in the country. Results of the study showed that very minimal number of students and parents has little or no knowledge on the existence of technical colleges such as the monotechnics and N.C.E but shows higher knowledge on the establishment of polytechnics and universities across the county. The high un-awareness of the establishment of technical colleges in the community can be attributed to the facts that the students, parents are not adequately informed on the importance of acquiring skills from this system of education. Perhaps, no monotechnic established in the state or possibly loose or have no societal impacts.

An average potential higher education student and parents to greater extent pursue certificate awarded by the university system than other system of education because it is believed that the quality of technical and vocational education is poor and cannot provide sufficient significant knowledge for jobs. Gallart (1988) in his claims, stated that students of technical and vocational education suffer anxiety about the purpose of the system, being only preparing laborers to get more profit from them, saying it is a moral obligation to eradicate such anxiousness and help them understand that technical and vocational education has two significant roles - preparing skilled manpower for the world of work, and opening the door for TVE students to pursue higher education with a solid foundation.

Majority of students, parents support the fact that the university system of education is well recognized and accrued so much respect than other educational system but accept the fact that it does not promote self-dependence/skilled and job creation. Products from these monotechnics, NCE do promote the creation of job and are well skilled. Further investigation was carried out to find out reasons for the various responses. Answers given by respondents from the private sectors indicates that products from the technical colleges are well skilled in their various professions than the university product, thereby little or no further training are needed (been economical to maximize profit).

Furthermore, parents with low socio-economical (economical and educational) status in the society tend to encourage their wards to undergo Technical and Vocational system of Education. While, students from poor economic background belief that university system of education is meant for the wealthy family.

On the other hand, replies from the public sector agree to the fact that products from these vocational and technical systems of education are highly skilled but lack proper and technical

communication skills when compared to products from the university. Perhaps, the high float of students pursuing university education is to work with the federal government in the country rather than been self-employed. This is because it is say that that jobs secured with the federal government is known to pay more and possesses high degree of job security than jobs with the private sectors. No individual will want to be employed, receiving a stipend as basic monthly salary and in a short relief of his/her job.

Attitudinal Change

People in their level of abilities attempt to strive to maintain psychological balance between the three attitudinal elements namely; beliefs, feelings and actions, and between different attitudes. Attitudinal change can be motion of change in the same direction (e.g. a passive or unemployed individual(s) to capitalize on the importance of VTE, make adequate efforts to be an employer of labour) or change towards the other direction (reject change).

Other attitude change are turning dislike into like, unfavorable into favorable. It can be influenced and enhanced with time.

Enhancing attitudinal change is the social responsibility of both the government, private and the masses. It's hinged on four of the most common motivating factors; promoting formidable teams comprises of professionals from different level of educational system to work together in solving problems without any form of bias among themselves because if employees have negative attitudes toward other employees due to their differences in educational system or standard productivity tends to decrease. Secondly, employers should create an environment of mutual trust and open communication. Thirdly, there must be an equal and adequate management support (provide tools, training, etc.) and lastly, provide equal opportunities for personal growth and promotion to all employee irrespective of your level of education attainment.

VI. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION(S)

Attitudes have a profound impact on virtually every aspect of our lives endeavours; this can be observed from the little or no national economic growth and job creation among the teeming population of unemployed youths in the country. It is observed that majority of the masses (students, parents) lack knowledge on the significant roles that can be played in acquiring vocational and technical system of education this may have resulted to exhibition of negative attitudes towards vocational and technical education. The overarching dilemma can be attributed to high degree of un-awareness; unhealthy competition among products from various educational institutions which has crept into the public and private sectors in the area of employment (i.e. values and attitudes do influence behavioral choices and productivity). Based on these, it is highly recommended that:

- i. Technical/Vocational board officials can promote VTE by setting up technical and career guidance and

- ii. Entrepreneurial development studies should be driven proactively in tertiary institution by involving students in VTE and awarding 2nd certificate in VTE
- iii. The federal government should inert a workable policy/law regarding job security in the private firms and ensure balanced salary scale between the private and government sectors.
- iv. Vocational and Technical Education curriculum should be embedded into the primary and secondary school scheme. It will help to pattern students' attitude and perception towards Technical Education and Vocational Training
- v. Students from the A-level should be mandated to obtain vocational and technical trainings in various technical colleges before advancing to the university system of education. This will enable students to acquire adequate, basic and effective skills in the field of professionalism for technological and economic advancement.
- vi. Educational & Policy Makers can promote TEVT through adding supplementary subject regarding Technical and Vocational studies and its importance with respect to economic development. Parents with low economical, educational status in the society tend to encourage their wards to undergo Technical and Vocational system of Education. While, students from poor economic background belief that university system of education is meant to wealthy family. On this note, Government have significant role in ensuring good standard of living for her citizenry.
- vii. Educational curriculum should be improved significantly to ensure that it is comprehensive and to increase the likelihood of students continuing the practice of the skills/crafts long after leaving secondary school.
- viii. The government is seen to plays significant role in changing the attitude of students towards vocational and technical education. This can be achieved by providing adequate and effective instructional manuals/materials, up-to-date-scientific and engineering equipment, as well as well-trained personnel's/teachers present in a school before been licensed or given approval be given for vocational training in any field of vocational training across the country.
- ix. Stigmatizations in its various forms by parents, industries, government institutions and organization and indeed the entire public were identified as factors affecting students' attitude towards vocational and technical education in Nigerian Education fronts. It is therefore imperative that this system of education be formalized.

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