

Roles of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Curbing Electoral Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: - This study focused on the roles of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design guided the study. The population comprised 42 Technical and Vocational Education and Training lecturers in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. No sampling was done as the population was manageable. Three research questions and one hypothesis was formulated for the study. A questionnaire titled "Role of TVET in Curbing Electoral Violence" (RTVETCEV) was developed to elicit responses from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts in the fields of Vocational and Technology Education and Training and Political Science. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Reliability coefficient. Statistical Mean was used to answer the research questions while standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity in the responses of the respondent and z-test was used to test the hypothesis. The reliability coefficient achieved was 0.84. The study found that youth unemployment, quest by politicians to acquire power at all cost are some of the causes of electoral violence in Rivers State. The study showed that Technical and Vocational Education and Training plays the vital role of helping to groom youths to be self-reliant and meaningfully engaged by equipping them with the required technical and vocational skills. Among the recommendations in the study is the establishment of well-equipped vocational and technical education training centres in each of the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State for the training of youths.

Keywords: Curbing, Rivers State, Election, Violence, Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

I. INTRODUCTION

Electoral violence in Nigeria is one of the pressing issues that needs urgent solution. According to Gani (2016), Nigerians are always sensitive to national and state political stability and have always demanded safe strategy whenever elections are getting dysfunctional. Elections are key pillars of democracy and have become the commonly accepted means of legitimizing government, once elections are flowed; it is an invitation to violence to states which may snowball into political instability.

Rivers state like many other Nigerian states has been recorded for electoral conflicts. Politicians in Nigeria have over the years become more desperate and daring in taking

and retaining power and more intolerant to opposition, criticism and efforts at replacing them (Atemika, 2015). Electoral violence is any act of violence perpetrated in the cause of political activities, including pre, during and post election period and may include any of the following acts; thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meeting, or voting processes or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral process. Some of the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria are attributed to political interest of political Godfathers, political intolerance and electoral brouhaha (Egobueze, 2013). These conflicts orchestrated by political elites and allies, have been for selfish actualization using the unemployed youths or political sons to achieve their inordinate interest. They go to the extent of manipulating the youths to accepting them as the corner stone for their (youth) survival. They arm these youths with dangerous weapons to persecute the election in their favour. Igbuzor (2010) explained that most of this youths used by these politicians are the unemployed youth and those that are not self-reliant (those that lack technical and vocational skills).

Statement of the Problem

Like many states in Nigeria, Rivers State has had a sad history of political violence since 2003 general elections. The dramatic conduct of the 2015 election and the painful event that claimed the life of many Rivers youths which emanated from electoral violence allowed the fear of future elections. The March 19th and December 10th 2016 legislative re-run elections brought an unimaginable harvest of death in Rivers State due to some factors that were debated by some of the political gladiators in the state. In the buildup of the election, there were several beheadings, some were buried alive which others were immolated in various parts of the state (The Sun News Paper 5th January, 2018). Electoral violence in Rivers State and in Nigeria at large calls for urgent solutions. Today's government, non-government agencies, individual, groups and religious bodies are calling for the reduction in the use of Nigerian youth for electoral malpractices or to cause electoral violence rather the youths (unemployed youths) should be meaningfully trained in vocational, technical or

entrepreneurial skills. According to Ochogba and Amaechi (2018), technical skills are relevant for youth empowerment in Rivers State and that the acquisition of these skills by youths will empower youths to be self-reliant thereby reducing the level of insecurity in the state. It is because of this that the study was designed to investigate the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify causes of electoral violence in Rivers State.
2. Identify the TVET skills for curbing electoral violence in Rivers State.
3. Find out the roles of TVET in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of electoral violence in Rivers State?
2. What are TVET skills for curbing electoral violence in Rivers State?
3. What are the roles of TVET in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of TVET lecturers in Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) on the roles of TVET in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

It is imperative to clarify major concepts in the paper in order to situate them within the context of the study.

Electoral Violence

Electoral violence is one of the social vices that needs to be tackled urgently. Igbuzor (2010), sees electoral violence as any act of violence perpetuated in the cause of political activities, including pre, during and post election periods and may include any of the following acts; thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling station, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person. Ugbaibe (2010) pointed out that the objective is to influence the electoral process with the sole aim to win political competition or power through violence or subverting the ends of the electoral and democratic process through the mobilization of security outfits, ethnic militias, unemployed youths as thugs, community vigilante groups.

Electoral violence in Nigeria is one of the few issues that do not follow the normal historic ethno-religious or sectional divides. One of the most pressing questions challenging

Rivers State and Nigeria at large is how to hold peaceful elections. This is important because Rivers State elections have frequently triggered conflict that has resulted to loss of lives. Scott (2012) asserts that indeed, the continued resurfacing of political violence's and thuggery are hinged on certain factors both within and from outside Rivers State. Among other things what makes youth vulnerable to the acceptance to thuggery includes phenomena of Godfatherism, desperate attitude towards politics by the party leaders and members, money politics, unemployment, lack of vocational and technical skills in the aspect of their youths, promises of money, employment (government affiliated jobs) and future development projects in their communities among others (Mbeya, 2013). Unemployment and lack of vocational and technical skills of many youths in Nigeria (Rivers State) has resulted in more and more youths who do not have purchasing power and has social consequences as it increases the rate of crime (Olajide, 2014).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as opined by Nuru (2006), is the appropriate training in skills, abilities and knowledge both mental and physical given to an individual to enable him/her enter and progress in a chosen and trained occupation. Okwelle (2013), referred to TVET as a deliberate intention to bringing about learning and training which would make people more productive in designated areas of economic activity. The primary objective of all TVET program is the acquisition of skills and attitudes for gainful employment in a specific occupation or profession area. TVET is a vehicle upon which the skills of workforce are built (Enyekit et al 2011). It is an instrument for change and development and a provider of service oriented skills, which plays a significant role in economic revival for sustainable human capital development, it as well equips youths with technological skills and managerial skills to manage human and material resources of their own business through the acquisition of skills and competencies in areas of TVET. According to Dokubo (2010), the physical, social and psychological learning environments of technical and vocational education programmes are also of enormous importance to the realization of such objectives. TVET is widely recognized as having a significant role to play in an individual's life and the life of a nation in the modern society (Okwelle & Dokubo, 2018).

Akerele (2007), asserted that unemployment is a condition in which people who are willing to work the normal wage rate are unable to find jobs. Unemployment of the youths has led to tremendous increase in criminal activities and social vices in Nigeria, in line with this view; Anyanwu (2009), asserts that poverty and unemployment are potential sources of political instability in Nigeria for disenchanting, disgruntled and revolutionary elements in the society. Borrowing a leave from this it will not be far from the truth to assert that unemployment and lack of vocational skills are one of the developmental problems that causes the youth to

indulge in electoral malpractice and violence in Rivers State. In line with this view, Okafor (2011), explained that vocational training for youths is a favourite for reducing electoral violence. Such effects are informed by a widely held assumption: that idle young people, lacking licit opportunities to make a living are a ready pool of recruits for armed movement. David (2010), pointed out that through apprenticeship and TVET, specific technical skills are acquired, such as automobile, machinery, welding and fabrication, plumbing and pipefitting, phone repairs, masonry, scaffolding, forging etc. the acquisition of technical skills has been noted to be very instrumental to both human and national development. Supporting this, Ogundele (2013) stated that the acquisition of vocational/technical skills for a particular job can be able to transform the trainee to become self-employed and to contribute to the development of the society.

Where there are no idle youths who are willing to ferment trouble for the politicians, the reserved option will be bitterness expressed through the available media channels. Mbaveren (2013), explained that the youths are targeted as the instrument of perpetuating violence and, they are vulnerable to money and other gifts which can make them participate irrespective of the dangers involved in executing each mission. Electoral violence erodes positive social capital across Nigeria political landscape, the youths are being destroyed, they are wounded and even killed, their future development is negatively affected, and their leadership inheritance is destroyed.

Effective utilization of VTE and proper implementation of the training programmes will inculcate the necessary skills and competences that would help the youths to be self-reliant. Electoral violence will be drastically reduced if not completely eradicated in Rivers State, if the youths are properly trained in vocational and technical skills and as well engage to be self-reliant.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 42 TVET lecturers, which comprised 16 Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt lecturers and 26 Ignatius Ajuru University of Education lecturers. It was a census as the entire population were studied. The instrument that guided the study was structured questionnaire titled "Role of TVET in Curbing Electoral Violence" (RTVETCEV). The instrument was partitioned into three sections, structured in the pattern of 5 point Likert rating scale of agreement. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and one expert in Department of Political Science, University of Port Harcourt, Choba. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient after administering to 8 TVET lecturers in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa. The coefficient achieved was 0.84. Mean was used to answer the research questions while standard deviation was used to

determine the homogeneity in the responses of the respondent and z-test was used to test the hypotheses. All the copies of the instrument were completely filled and returned by the respondents. In Analyzing the data, mean value less than 3.00 was rejected while mean value equal to or greater than 3.00 was accepted.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Respondents opinion on causes of electoral violence in Rivers State

Items	RSU TVET Lecturer s (n=16)			IAUE TVET Lecturers (n=26)		
	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	Rmk	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	Rmk
Intolerance to criticisms of opposition	3.90	1.41	A	3.67	1.56	A
Hatred of an aspirant	3.82	1.47	A	3.68	1.53	A
Unemployment	3.77	1.44	A	3.62	1.55	A
Financial inducements	3.93	1.33	A	3.59	1.54	A
Poverty	3.79	1.52	A	3.64	1.52	A
Ethnic sentiments	3.83	1.48	A	3.62	1.52	A
	3.84	1.49	A	3.66	1.52	A
Quest to take or retain power at all cost.	3.84	1.50	A	3.71	1.51	A
Peer pressure	3.80	1.52	A	3.66	1.57	A

Source: Field survey, 2019, \bar{X} (Mean) SD (Standard Deviation), Rmk (Remark), A (Accept).

Data from Table 1 above shows the respondents agreed that intolerance to criticisms of opposition, hatred of an aspirant, unemployment, financial inducements, poverty, ethnic sentiments, quest to take or retain power at all cost, peer pressure as the causes of electoral violence in rivers state as they were all above mean rating of 3.0. This present finding is in tandem with the opinion of Egobueze (2013), who opined that some of the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria are attributed to political interest of political Godfathers, political intolerance and electoral brouhaha. Igbuzor (2010), added that most of those used by politicians to carry out electoral violence are the unemployed youths and those that not self-reliant.

Table 2: Respondents opinion on TVET skills for curbing electoral violence in Rivers State

Items	RSU TVET Lecturers (n=16)			IAUE TVET Lecturers (n=26)		
	X ₁	SD ₁	Rmk	X ₂	SD ₂	Rmk
Machining	3.81	1.50	A	4.86	1.62	A
Automobile	3.92	1.39	A	4.91	1.52	A
Welding and Fabrication	3.79	1.49	A	4.80	1.82	A
Forging and Foundry	3.96	1.32	A	4.93	1.45	A
Carpentry/furniture making	3.83	1.49	A	4.84	1.67	A
Plumbing and pipefitting	3.84	1.49	A	4.85	1.67	A
Phone repairs	3.84	1.49	A	4.82	1.77	A
Masonry	3.88	1.48	A	4.88	1.64	A
Fishery	3.76	1.54	A	4.30	1.86	A
Electrical installation/maintenance	3.71	1.56	A	4.30	1.86	A

Source: Field survey, 2019, X (Mean) SD (Standard Deviation), Rmk (Remark), A (Accept).

Data from Table 2 shows responses of the respondents on the TVET skills needed for unemployed youths for self-reliance in Rivers State. The mean responses of RSU and IAUE TVET lecturers shows that all the variables, such as: machining (3.81 & 4.86), Automobile (3.92 & 4.91), welding and fabrication (3.79 & 4.80), forging and foundry (3.96 & 4.93), carpentry and furniture making (3.83 & 4.84), plumbing and pipefitting (3.84 & 4.84), phone repairs (3.84 & 4.82), masonry (3.88 & 4.88), fishery (3.76 & 4.30) and electrical installation and maintenance are all among TVET skills needed by the unemployed youths to be self-reliance in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the view of Ogundele (2013), that the acquisition of TVET skills for a particular job can be able to transform the trainee to becoming self-employed and to contribute to the development of the society.

Table 3: Responses opinion on the roles of TVET in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State

Items	RSU TVET Lecturers (n=16)			IAUE TVET Lecturers (n=26)		
	X ₁	SD ₁	Rmk	X ₂	SD ₂	Rmk
It is a vehicle upon which the skills of workforce are built	3.79	1.51	A	4.90	1.52	A
It helps to groom future self-reliant youths with the required skills and flexibility for sustainability	3.87	1.39	A	4.84	1.64	A
It is a provider of service-oriented skill	3.77	1.50	A	4.77	1.85	A
It leads to the much desired human capital development in the economy	3.92	1.30	A	4.86	1.53	A

It equips youths with managerial skills	3.82	1.48	A	4.83	1.67	A
Total	3.83	1.44		4.84	1.64	

Source: Field survey, 2019, X (Mean) SD (Standard Deviation), Rmk (Remark), A (Accept).

Data from Table 3 shows responses of the respondents on the roles of TVET in curbing unemployment in Rivers State. The mean responses of RSU and IAUE TVET lecturers showed that TVET plays the following roles in curbing the menace of unemployment; it is a vehicle upon which the skills of workforce are built (2.79 & 4.90), it helps to growing future for sustainability (3.87 & 4.84), it is a provider of service oriented skill (3.77 & 4.77), it leads to the much desired human capital development in the economy (3.92 & 4.86), and it equips youths with managerial skills (3.82 & 4.82).

This is in consonance with the statement of Enyekit, et al (2011), that TVET is a vehicle upon which the skills of workforce are built, it is an instrument for change and development and a provider of service oriented skills, which plays a significant role in economic revival for sustainable human capital development, it as well equip youths with technological skills and managerial skills to manage human and materials resources of their own business through the acquisition of skills and competences in area of technical and vocational education training. Also Dokubo (2015), stated that for economic development, it is important to inculcate technical skills of vocational education to our adults and youths.

Null Hypothesis

Table 4:

Comparison of difference between the mean responses of RSU and IAUE TVET Lecturers on the roles of TVET in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State

Group	N	M	SD	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
RSU TVET Lecturers	16	3.83	1.44			
IAUE TVET Lecturers	26	4.84	1.64	2.09	2.02	Rejected

Data from Table 4 above revealed that z-calculated value was greater than the z-critical value of 1.96. Hence, there was significant difference in the mean responses of RSU and IAUE TVET lecturers in Rivers State on the role of TVET in curbing electoral violence in Rivers State.

IV. CONCLUSION

There has been great concern over the means of reducing electoral violence in Rivers State. Based on the findings it was deduced that among others, desperacy of

politicians, intolerance of opposition criticism, use of force to disrupt voting processes or political party members meetings, youth unemployment, money politics and poverty are some of the causes of electoral violence. It was also revealed that TVET can play an active role in curbing electoral violence since it helps to groom future self-reliant youths with the required skills and flexibility for sustainability, provides service oriented skills, leads to the much desired human capital development in the economy and serves as vehicle upon which the skills of workforce are built.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be the establishment of well equipped TVET centres in each Local Government Area of Rivers State for the training of youths.
2. There should be regular orientation program in all the Local Government Areas to inform the unemployed youths on the importance of TVET programmes and the benefits of being self-reliant.
3. Periodic enlightenment programs should be done on the menace of electoral violence and the associated penalties as stipulated by INEC and other relevant authorities.

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