

INFLUENCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES ON SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OGBA/EGBEMA/NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the influence of Vocational Education Programs on Sustainable Community Development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 625 which comprised 445 Community Development Committee (CDC) members and 180 beneficiaries of vocational education programs in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The entire 180 beneficiaries were sampled; while the proportionate sampling technique was adopted in selecting 25% of the population of CDC members to arrive at the size of 89 CDC members, making a total of 269. Three research questions were posed. A questionnaire titled "Influence of Vocational Education Programs on Sustainable Community Development Assessment Questionnaire" (IVESCDAQ) was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using frequencies, means and standard deviation. The findings revealed that agricultural education, craft education and building technology programs influenced sustainable development in the area of study. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended, amongst others, that Local Government Authorities should establish craft training centers in each local government to empower beneficiaries with skills that will enable them to be self-employed. The acquired skills will increase individual's economic well-being and enhance sustainable community development.

Keywords: Influence, Vocational Education, Sustainable development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is a veritable tool for national development. No nation can develop beyond the quality of education it provides for its citizen. According to Ademola (2012) education is geared towards producing the right type of manpower in the right quality and quantity for nation building. It is a process that enables individuals to live as useful and functional members of a society.

Education means more than just going to school (formal education), there are other forms of education that are equally important and these are non-formal and informal education. Non-formal education involves all kinds of organized, out-of-school learning opportunities provided for people to equip them with necessary skills, knowledge, values, aptitudes etc. to enable them improve themselves and become functional members of their society. This includes all kinds

of vocational trainings, basic literacy education, professional trainings and so on. Informal education on the other hand is a lifelong learning process whereby individuals learn from daily experiences of life. An adult who did not have an opportunity of formal education, may be directly or indirectly involved in education in informal and non-formal settings and one of such education is vocational education (Ovbiagele, 2017).

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2014) places great importance on vocational education. This is because it is one of the strategies for achieving the desired technological and economic development of Nigeria. This implies that vocational education has direct impact on community development since community development is seen as a process in which efforts of people are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities and to enable contribute fully to national progress. (United Nations Organization in Kobani & Alozie, 2019)

1.1 Concept of Vocational Education

The term vocational education has been defined differently by many authors. Ayonmike, Okwelle and Okeke (2015) defined vocational education as those aspects of educational processes involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisitions of the economy and social life.

Amoor (2019) saw it as the core of both individual's and society's economy. The author further stressed that through the acquisition of skills; individuals could explore their environment amid harnessing the resources within it, which could serve them and the society since the wealth of any nation determines its development.

Vocational education according to Ojimba (2012) is a form of education whose primary aim is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation and this encompasses field of Study (agricultural education, fine and applied arts education, business education and vocational trades in soap making, hairdressing, computer training amongst others). Iheanacho (2006) defined vocational education as that aspect of education that deals with business education, farming, book keeping, and bricklaying, amongst others with aims of acquiring vocational skills in these fields.

According to Ojo and Edem (2008) the three main goals of vocational education are (i) meeting society's need for workers; (ii) increasing individuals' options related to work, and (iii) conveying knowledge and/or the relevance of general education in work.

1.2 Concept of Community Development

Different scholars have defined community development in several ways. It is viewed as an educational method, a process of social action and a movement. UNESCO cited in Kobani and Alozie (2019) who define community development as an educational method by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve economic, social and cultural condition of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation, to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. In this definition, there is emphasis on what the people can do. It emphasizes not only that government requires alleviating the suffering of the people but rather, that there should be concerted efforts on the

part of the people to identify their felt-needs, and mobilize necessary human and material resources to satisfy it. Similarly, Mezirow in Oduaran (2004) defines Community development as planned and organized effort to assist individuals to acquire attitudes, skills and concepts required for their democratic participation in efforts aimed at finding solutions to a wide range of community problems. Certain variables are common in these views of the concept by scholars. It can be deduced that community development is a process which culminates from people's effort to change their living conditions through organized and planed programs within the limits of their resources or external assistance.

1.3 Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has been defined by scholars in various ways. Adebola (2007) defines sustainable development as a kind of development that can be initiated and managed properly in such a way as to give attention to continuity and preservation as people explore an explicit available resources for the enlargement of their existence. Kundan in Ugoh, (2008) describes sustainable development as a construct, which envision development as meeting the need of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation.

Okeke in Osuafor (2010) posited that for development to be sustained; there must be human development. According to Arogundade (2011) the major essential tool for achieving sustainable development should include:

1. Improving the quality of basic education
2. Re-orientating existing education programs to address sustainable development.
3. Developing public awareness and understanding, and
4. Providing training for all sectors of private and civil society.

Ojimba (2012) further argues that continued sustainable development is only possible or assured when concrete steps are taken to make the youths acquire skills that will able them to be self-reliant and therefore, become the tools for achieving development and its sustainability. There are many who believe that sustainable development is a complex concept therefore, subject to many varying principles. However, the general principle of sustainable development lies in its very definition: progressive and dynamic ways of meeting today's needs and opportunities in ways that will not undermine or jeopardize the integrity of environmental factors that created that enabling atmosphere so as to be able to meet tomorrow's needs, opportunities and challenges. These needs include economic development, social equality, environmental protection, availability and accessibility of quality health care delivery, housing and accommodation, banishment of poverty, and adequate food for all.

1.4 Influence of Agricultural Education Program on Sustainable Community Development

The crucial role of agricultural Extension (i.e. farmer education) in the social and economic development of the nation cannot be over-emphasized. Never before in Nigerian history has the necessity for educating and raising the productive capacity of our farmers been of such importance as it is today. Increased agricultural productivity depends primarily upon the acceptance of cultural and technological changes at the rural farm level. Nigeria, though an oil and gas driven economy, has the potential for agriculture. The rural dwellers are subsistence

farmers who hardly produce enough for family consumption. The need to provide agricultural services which will help to increase their production capacity is necessary.

According to Ezimah (2004) agricultural extension provides a sound basic for rural development. He furthered that extension is conceived as the development of the individual, village leaders and the rural society as whole and as a continuous education process. The program is meant to bring attitudinal change in the rural dwellers towards agriculture. When there is innovation in farming techniques for instance, there will be introduction of improved seedlings. The farmer will be able to produce for domestic as well as surplus for sales at the market. This leads to socio-economic well-being. Agricultural and vocational education and training programs have played a consistent if limited role in approaches to cultural development and economic growth in developing countries over the 50 years. Vocational programs can be secondary or post-secondary in nature, can focus on direct training for producers or training for individuals who are part farmers and contribute to the post-production process.

Vocational education according to Ojimba (2012) is a form of education whose primary aim is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation and this encompasses field of study (agricultural education, fine and applied arts education, business education and vocational trades in soap making, hairdressing, computer training among others). Vocational education services encompass all aspects of agriculture. It includes the provision of timely information, the linking of farmers with sources of farming inputs and credit facilities and most importantly, the provision of education services to farmers (Ojimba, 2012). Thus, for Nigerian agriculture to improve, our farmers have no alternative but to learn and adopt recommended scientific farming techniques in place of their traditional practices.

1.5 Influence of Craft Education Programs on Sustainable Community development

Although, we have moved long ago from an agricultural society to a post-industrial society, out of date technological processes, such as the making of wood and metal artifacts, are more common than processes, such as working with plastic, service and repair of technical equipment and construction of electronic equipment.

Computers are not used in technology education to a large extent, but usage is expected to increase in the near future. Art is a vocation that can be learned both at the formal tertiary institution and at the informal workshop center. Vocational Education within the context of this definition can therefore be conceptualized as an alternative training program that is designed mostly to improve the employability of participants and also to empower them with work readiness skills. The aim of such training program has been to support participants' inclusion into labour force. The Vocational Education is the inclusion of basic technical and scientific knowledge with the, skill-based vocational programs. It is aspect of Nigerian educational system that provides room for vocational training, skill acquisition and adequate scientific competence.

The vocational training for employment involves accelerated learning and Cole (2012) has assumed that such learning is a complex process of acquiring knowledge, understanding, skills and values in order to be able to adapt to the environment in which we operate. It is, therefore, apposite to state that these types of educational system: vocational is mainly designed to lead participants to acquire life skills, know-how and understanding that are essential for

employment in a particular field of human endeavour, the design of this educative program for livelihood sustenance is based on learning system in which both the soft and hard skills are developed by the organizers within a delivery framework that seeks to promote the inclusion of individuals that participate in the program in national employment schemes. It has been observed from myriads of studies that if the youths of a country fail to acquire vocational skills there are that tendencies of becoming caught up in the web of economic dependency, juvenile delinquency, social aggression and/or depression and hopelessness. This above observation has been the greatest cause of thuggery, hooliganism and prostitution for most youths who have failed in their search of basic sustenance or lack sufficient protection to avoid being lured into such precarious activities that are mentioned above.

Lawal (2014) who opined that for a country to advance socially, economically and technologically, its citizens must be creative and productive with a majority becoming job creators rather than seekers. The author concluded by emphasizing that optimum attention and recognition is to be given to the promotion, of vocational education in Nigeria if the country wants to attain great achievement of productivity and sustainable economic environment and natural development.

The future success of nations, individuals, enterprises and communities increasingly depends on existence and possession of transferrable and renewable skills and knowledge.

1.6 Influence of Building Technology Programs on Sustainable Community Development

Vocational education is described as the training of individuals for the implementation of technological development of a nation by providing the citizens with the right skills necessary for employment (Alam, 2008). The contributions of vocational education in any country in the world today is enormous, hence, it plays a very significant role on the national welfare. The program enlisted among others ranging from welding and fabrication, mechanical/ automobile technology, electrical/electronic technology, woodwork and building technology etc. Technical and vocational education serves as a catalyst for economic, social and political changes of a nation due to its uniqueness in nature (Uwaifo, 2010). Many, both in the developed and developing countries recognize the important role that vocational education plays in equipping individuals with relevant skills and knowledge, hence, enabling people to effectively participate in, economic and building technological innovation processes. These have important implication for the demand of skills, human resource development and training (UNESCO, 2008).

The importance of building technology which is an integral part of vocational education cannot be over emphasized; since this field of study represents a core index of national development. A major distinction between an advanced country and a developing one is to a large measure the difference between their levels of scientific and, technological development in various areas of technology education, building technology inclusive. Thus, it is no exaggeration to assert that vocational education is also the bedrock upon which advanced nations are based (Egboh, 2009).

Vocational technical subjects taught are Building Construction, Woodwork, Metal work, Applied Electricity, Auto-Mechanics, Electronics, Technical Drawing, Agriculture, Book-keeping and Accounting, Commerce, Computer Education, Clothing and Textiles, Food and

Nutrition, Home Management, Shorthand, Typewriting, Fine Art and Music (FRN, 2004). In order to improve the pace of the nation's technological development, these participants should be made to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and desirable work habits. They need to understand and manipulate processes and materials. Consequently, a program is needed to facilitate the acquisition of such skills and knowledge in building construction so that they may gain employment in related industries, be self-employed or pursue higher technological education.

2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Community development in practice thrives on the active participation of citizens in development activities. Such participation enables the people and gives them a sense of ownership of development programs/projects when completed. This ultimately leads to sustainability of community development projects. Unfortunately, communities in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA of Rivers State like most other communities in Nigeria are littered with uncompleted development projects, abandoned projects and projects in disuse. For example, road construction projects all in Omoku Town have been abandoned for years now. Similarly, the low cost houses constructed by the Local Government Authority in Obrikom town amongst others have been abandoned for a long time now. There is the view that the unsustainability of development effort and projects may be attributed to the fact that community members do not contribute actively in terms of material resources and skills required for development programs. This is not unconnected with the fact that most community members lack the finance and requisite skills to actively participate in these projects. This study, therefore, seeks to find out the extent to which vocational education programs enhance the sustainability of community development in the study area.

2.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does agricultural education influence sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does craft education influence sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State?
3. To what extent does building technology influence sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area?

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 625 which comprised 445 Community Development Committee (CDC) members and 180 beneficiaries of vocational education programs in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The entire 180 beneficiaries were sampled; while the proportionate sampling technique was adopted in selecting 25% of the population of CDC members to arrive at the size of 89 CDC members, making a total of 269. A questionnaire titled: "Influence of Vocational Education Programs on Sustainable Community Development Assessment Questionnaire" (IVESCDAQ) was designed and administered to the respondents. The reliability coefficient is 0.82. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies, means and standard deviation.

4.0 RESULTS

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistics on the Extent Agricultural Education Influences Sustainable Community Development

S/N	Items	CDC Members N=87		Beneficiaries N=178		Remark
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
1	Agricultural education improves farmers’ productivity which ensures continuous food supply to your communities.	2.59	0.99	2.96	1.04	High extent
2	Agricultural education encourages more people to go into farming thereby becoming self-employed.	3.14	0.85	3.07	0.82	High extent
3	Agricultural education enhances farmers productivity which increases their income to enable them contribute to development programs in their communities.	2.77	0.95	2.83	0.93	High extent
4	Agricultural education improves productivity and creates more jobs in the farm and outside the farm.	3.16	1.06	3.40	0.89	High extent
5	Through agricultural education more people return to rural areas thereby reducing the impact of rural-urban migration.	2.88	0.78	3.02	0.72	High Extent
6	Through agricultural education local farmers can increase their incomes and afford formal schools for their children.	3.13	0.89	2.99	0.76	High Extent
Grand total		2.95		3.05		

The analyzed data on table 1 revealed that items 1-6 for CDC members and beneficiaries had mean scores that fall within the range of high extent. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed with all the items. With grand mean scores of 2.95 and 3.05 for CDC members and beneficiaries respectively, the answer to research question one is that agricultural education influences sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State to a high extent.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the Extent Craft Education Influences Sustainable Community Development

S/N	Items	CDC Members N=87		Beneficiaries N=178		Remark
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
7	Craft training equips community members with skills that enable them set up small businesses to improve their economic life.	3.20	0.78	3.15	0.83	High extent
8	Craft training equips community members with skills that enable them gain paid employment which reduces the rate of unemployment.	2.96	0.87	2.92	0.96	High extent
9	Craft training equips youths with skills that engages them thereby reduces crime rate in communities.	2.99	0.86	3.24	0.65	High extent
10	Community members who acquire skills through craft	3.38	0.77	3.27	0.80	High extent

	training can use such skills to support relevant development projects in their communities.					
11	Through craft training community members can acquire skills, improve their finances and contribute to levies made for community development projects	2.80	0.98	2.88	1.01	High Extent
12	When community members are skilled and self-employed, cases of youth violence that leads to vandalization of projects will be reduced.	2.67	0.67	2.81	0.76	High Extent
Grand Mean		3.00		3.05		High Extent

The analyzed data on table 2 showed that the items 7-12 for CDC members and beneficiaries had mean scores that fall within the range of high extent. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that craft training equips community members with skills that enable them set up small businesses to improve their economic life, enable them gain paid employment, reduce crime rate and enables them improve their finances so they can contribute to development projects /programs in their communities. With grand mean scores of 3.00 and 3.05 for CDC members and beneficiaries respectively, the answer to research question two is that craft education influences sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State to a high extent.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on the Extent Building Technology Education Influences Sustainable Community Development

S/N	Items	CDC Members N=87		Beneficiaries N=178		Remark
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
10	Community members who have skills in building technology can serve as workforce in development projects that require building.	3.01	0.87	3.00	0.89	High extent
11	Acquisition of building technology skills creates employment for community members which improves their economic life.	2.88	1.06	2.90	1.09	High extent
12	Community members can engage in self-help building projects when they have people who have skills in building technology rather than waiting for external agencies.	3.01	1.00	3.08	0.94	High extent
13	Engaging people in building technology training enables them seek jobs in their communities rather than migrating to urban cities.	2.99	1.00	3.03	0.94	High extent
14	Through building technology training community members become gainfully employed which leaves them with enough money to contribute to levies for development projects in their communities.	3.01	0.91	3.05	0.89	High Extent
Grand Mean		2.98		3.01		High Extent

The analyzed data on table 4.3 showed that items 10-14 for CDC members and beneficiaries had mean scores that fall within the range of high extent. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed community members who have skills in building technology can serve as workforce in development projects that require building, such skills create employment for community members which improves their economic life and they can engage in self-help building projects when they have people who have skills in building technology rather than waiting for external agencies. It also helps them seek jobs right in their communities instead of migrating out of the communities. With grand mean scores of 2.98 and 3.01 for CDC members and beneficiaries respectively, the answer to research question three is that building technology education influences sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State to a high extent.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study for research question one revealed that agricultural education influences sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State to a high extent. Agricultural education improves farmers' productivity which ensures continuous food supply to communities. It encourages more people to go into farming thereby becoming self-employed and enhances farmers productivity which increases their income to enable them contribute to development programs in their communities. This is in line with findings of Ojimba, (2012) who acknowledge that vocational agricultural program includes the-provision of timely information, the linking of farmers with sources of farming inputs and credit facilities and most importantly, the provision of education services to farmers.

The findings of the study for research question two revealed that craft education influences sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State to a high extent. Majority of the respondents agreed that craft training equips community members with skills that enable them set up small businesses to improve their economic life, enable them gain paid employment, reduce crime rate and enables them improve their finances so they can contribute to development projects /programs in their communities. This finding was supported by the findings of Lawal (2014) which reported that "for a country to advance socially, economically and technologically, its citizens must be creative and productive with a majority becoming job creators rather than seekers. The authors concluded by emphasizing that optimum attention and recognition is to be given to the promotion of vocational education in Nigeria if the country wants to attain great achievement of productivity and sustainable economic environment and natural development.

The result of the findings for research question three further revealed that building technology education influences sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State to a high extent. Majority of the respondents agreed that community members who have skills in building technology can serve as workforce in development projects that require building, such skills creates employment for community members which improves their economic life and they can engage in self-help building projects when they have people who have skills in building technology rather than waiting for external agencies. It also helps them seek jobs right in their communities instead of migrating out of the communities. This is in line with the findings of Alam (2008) which revealed that skills on building helps community members take on initiatives to carry out building projects on their

own. They are also able to engage in self-employment where they can offer their services for profit making purposes.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Government through the Ministry of Agriculture should regularly organize agricultural education programs for farmers to improve their skills for effective service delivery since skills in agriculture can improve their farm mechanization which yields more produce and enhances sustainable community development.
2. Local Government Authorities should establish craft training centers in each local government to empower beneficiaries with skills that will enable them to be self-employed. The acquired skills will increase individual's economic well-being and enhance sustainable community development.
3. Non-Governmental Organizations should organize building technology programs in rural communities of various LGAs. This is because acquisition of building skills through vocational education creates more employment opportunities for beneficiaries which enhances sustainable community development.

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