Females Enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education in Kano State-Nigeria

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Abstract
The study was a survey research which was sought to examine the enrolment of females in technical and vocational education in Kano state of Nigeria. The data were obtained from technical colleges and secondary schools offering technical courses in the state with a sample of 220 males and females technical teachers as well as 233 males and females final year technical students in the state. Frequency and Percentage were used to analyze the quantitative data. The results revealed that the level of enrolment of females in the area of technical and vocational education is quite low. The government needs to provide institutions that will cater for the females’ gender for the purpose of economic development of the state and the country at large.

Key word: Females, Technical and vocational education
Background

Skills development and technical training are central to economic and technological developments. Skills developments improve output, quality, diversity and occupational safety and improve health, thereby increase incomes and livelihood of poor. It also helps to develop social, capital and strengthens knowledge about informal sector associations, rural organizations and governance (Hartl, 2009). The challenges faced in the twenty-first century which was engineered by capitalism has brought a lot of changes in work, family, community and political life of people at every region of the world, this was triggered by so many factors such as market deregulation, globalization and the need for knowledgeable skilled workers that can confront the economic, social and cultural challenges facing individual regions. While these factors poses challenges in the society, the technical and vocational education and training personnel are faced with enormous task of addressing the need of the society and workers through development, adaptation and re-addressing strategies to tackle these issues (Rojewski, 2009 & Psifidou, 2007).

According to Alam (2008), the knowledge of technical and vocational skills is the prime mover of economic and social development of any nation; therefore, investment in human capital is an investment for the future of any countries. Education and training could be regarded as a bedrock for improvement and has to be problem oriented, person centered, community centered and should be able to carter for social problems which include unemployment, crimes, poverty, health, drug abuse etc. Skill development and training is central to youth employment and enable the youths to be prepared for work in formal and informal sectors of the economy and thus play important role in employment opportunity.

Most countries in the world are faced with the challenges of improving the capacity of their workforce to respond to their own national development needs and the demands of a rapidly changing, more globally competitive world. The future success of nations, individuals, enterprises and communities increasingly depends on existence and possession of transferrable and renewable skills and knowledge. Many, both in the developed and developing countries recognize the important role that TVE plays in equipping individuals with relevant skills and knowledge, hence enabling people to effectively participate in social, economic and technological innovation processes. The globalization process, knowledge economy, advances in technology and increased competition due to liberalization are major forces driving change in the world of work. These have important implication for the demand
of skills, human resource development and training (UNESCO, 2008). Malaysia, Singapore, Korea and Taiwan are one of the industrialized countries in Asia region. For the support of the industrial sector, Malaysia needs skilled personnel that can handle the demand and requirement of the industries and work for the purpose of keeping vision 2020. In order to fulfill this need, the government has provided about 194 technical and vocational institutions in the country with the hope of increasing the number during next plan (Ab.Rahim and Ivan, 2007).

**Technical and Vocational Education across the Globe**

Institute for a Competitive Workforce (2008) reported that, career and technical education (CTE), formerly known as vocational or skilled trades education, presents the business community with an actionable agenda for solving growing workforce shortages in the United States. The term is used to identify the programs that are designed for acquisition of job skills and related academic education in order to enable the graduates’ entry into the labor market immediately after graduation from high school. In a well-designed models of CTE—models that integrate rigorous academics with relevance, project-based learning drawn from the real world of work—students have lower dropout rates, higher test scores, higher graduation rates, higher postsecondary enrollment rates, and higher earnings than students who do not enroll in CTE offerings. At its best, CTE connects challenging technical courses with demanding academics, preparing students for a range of careers. This type of crosscutting, integrated design creates multiple pathways for students to explore and pursue after high school, allowing them realistic opportunities to go on to either a two- or four-year educational institution (or both) or to enter the job market with a wide range of in-demand skills already in hand.

For the purpose of preparing the students for labor market, nearly all the high schools operating in the United States offer introductory courses such as technology education, introduction to computers, word processing etc. About 75% of the students of high schools in the US today offer one or more specialized courses/programs for labor market preparation such as technical and communication, health occupation, business and marketing, agriculture, trade and industrial education, child care etc. The country’s workforce today is having less than 20% of unskilled workers (Lynch, 2009).
In Malaysia, the government policy has been pro-active and skills are used as vehicle to help the economy move up the value chain, ensuring that it adopts a high skilled route to development. Within public policy for skills, the emphasis appears to be shifting towards a market based and stakeholder driven system. This help to ensure that resources are used in a more cost effective manner and ensure that provision is more responsive to stakeholders need. At the same-time government has not forgotten the social dimension and continues to provide opportunities for those who have dropped out of the system or who are unable to find work (ILO, 2010).

Singapore has a unique model which demonstrates the importance of ensuring skill strategies are linked to identify economic goals and their future needs. In Singapore, importance is also attached to the workplace as a means of supporting skill development and the significance given to identifying future skill requirements. However, it is important to realize that a strong emphasis was given to developing the education base prior to supporting skills, especially with regard to producing young people with strong intermediate level skills (Seng, 2012).

In China for instance, there is still an extensive system of vocational institutions and different types of skills programs supported by the government. Central to the different models of provision is the country’s vocational qualification and skill assessment system. There are five of the following levels: junior, intermediate, senior, technician and senior technician grades. However, out of 70 million skilled workers in China, 96 % are in the junior and intermediate grades. When it comes to training institutions the major providers consist of technical schools, vocational schools and technical secondary schools, all of which are supported by Employment Training Centers. These institutions are formal in every region and municipal city in China, providing various types of social training for the unemployed, many of whom are either retrained or new entrants to the labor force. There are estimated to be around 17 000 such institutions across China. Besides the training institutions, China has an extensive range of training programs for pre-employment, on-the-job and support for those between jobs (i.e. retraining). The government has also implemented a program called the Preparation Training for Youth (Hao, 2010).

The China’s government active labor market strategies recognize the need to move people into growth sectors and the importance of employability skills, including entrepreneurship and skills upgrading. A number of initiatives are being implemented to
encourage the development of employability skills, including sending 3,000 workers to schools across China to provide demand-related skill training to around 2.2 million workers. This provides young people with the opportunity to participate in an internship program and gain industrial experience and an understanding of how businesses operate. This scheme is very flexible and enables young people to study vocational subjects on a part-time or full-time basis, as well as through distance learning. Like Singapore, Hong Kong has achieved high growth rates using an export-led growth strategy. Hong Kong covers a small geographical area and economic success has partly been based on developing the skills and competencies of its people. The largest provider of skills in Hong Kong is the Vocational Training Council (VTC). The VTC is a tripartite body representing the interests of employers, employees and academics. The focus is on pre-employment training and programs of study lead to emphasis on developing practical competencies, with 70% of the time spent on practical activities and the remainder 30% on theory. An estimated 160,000 young people graduate from the VTC each year. In the past emphasis has been given to pre-employment training, but in response to the changing demographic trends, courses are being developed for older people in employment (Martinez-Fernandez and Powell, 2009).

Objectives/Research Questions

The objective of the study was to examine the level of females’ enrolment in technical and vocational education in Kano State of Nigeria. It specifically examined the formal technical colleges in the state towards training of individuals for self-reliant.

Research Methodology

The research was basically conducted with both male and female teachers and students of technical colleges as well as the teachers of technical departments at secondary schools in Kano State of Nigeria. The demography of male teachers constitutes 183 male teachers and 218 male students while the females constitute 37 teachers and 15 female students. Both of them teach various aspects of technical courses in their fields of expertise and were fully engaged in the training of students in different aspect of technical and vocational education in the state. While the number students were 15 as presented in Table 2,
though the number of female is not much in this area, it is common in most of the countries including the developed countries to have fewer numbers of female technical teachers.

Findings
The findings of the study show the distribution of males and females for both teachers and students in Kano State of Nigeria.

Table 1: Teachers’ Gender

<table>
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<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>83.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

Distribution in Table 1 shows the gender of the respondents that were constituted for the study, 183(83.2%) of the teachers are males which constitute the majority while 37(16.8%) are females.

Table 2: Gender of students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>233</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The distribution in table 2 shows the gender of the respondents that were constituted for the study, 218(93.6%) of the students are males which constitute the majority while 15(6.4%) are females.

Discussions
The findings revealed that male teachers have a significant number over their female counterparts, indicating that teachers of technical and vocational education are dominated by male. The fewer number of female teachers in technical schools shows that women are inclined to the traditional careers over non-traditional careers and this is consistent with what is obtained in many places as women are underrepresented in career related to mathematics,
science and technology. The findings of this research is consistent with that of Igbe (2007), where he stressed that the belief injected in the women minds as a weaker sex in any physical and psychological activities has affected them in terms of involvement into technical and vocational education programs which made them to develop the notion of being a men affairs only.

Various reasons could be put to explain the low participation of women in technical and vocational education careers. One of such reasons as observed in a research conducted by Egun and Tibi (2010) is the societal stereotype on female gender role and the conflict between work and family responsibility, customs, attitudes and other behavioral decisions which play a significant role in the cultural practices in Nigeria, this has contributed immensely in the obstruction of women career choice in technical and vocational education. Nnachi, (2008) also maintained that, barriers mediate negative consequences in the occupational career of females over males which was reinforced through circumscription and cultural belief that male are expected to perform better in science, mathematics and other technical subjects while females are more better in art subjects such as home economics, textiles, languages etc.

David and Grace (2012) reported that, the involvement of women in technical and vocational education towards national development should not be overemphasized; female teachers will serve as a role model for female students in the choice of their vocational career. In a similar study conducted by Edu and Edu (2012) also revealed that the education and vocational training of women serves as a pillar for many communities as well as national development. It is important to know that such desired development could be achieved through education and training not only vested on men only but also on women as they posed to be an indispensable actor of societal development. Therefore, the researcher believed that women should be encouraged to participate in the field of technical and vocational education for a better development.

However, from the findings of this research, the number of female students that enrolled in technical programs is not encouraging as can be seen that the government does not encourage female technical and vocational education program. Hence, the state has only one vocational school that offers one aspect of technical course in electronics. The findings of this research is consistent with Oni (2006) where he reported that the enrolment of male
students in technical and vocational education program is greater than that of female students over the years. In another study conducted by Ajayi, Akinsanya and Agbajeola (2011), the problem of students’ enrollment was traced as far back as the early period of technical and vocational education in Nigeria, whereby, skill jobs such as electronic, mechanical and architectural designs are considered to be for males and was not conceived for females to be in technical field but in home economics subjects. This led to the establishment and enrollment of technical schools to be strictly for male child in the country. Igbinideon (2011) in his study observed that, as the world is moving towards technological changes in all aspect of education, there is need to encourage female students into vocational programs since the primary aim of education is to assist individuals to realize vocational and occupational competencies. He stressed that, making a career choice by the students of technical and vocational education is the major concern for both the students, parents as well as the government. In a research conducted by Egun and Tibi (2010), females constituted 49% of Nigeria’s population with the majority of the population as illiterates. The disparity in terms of gender literacy has stemmed from lack of access to education, low encouragement to females, high female dropouts due to social problems. However, limitation and poor access to females in the area of technical and vocational education signifies low empowerment of the right group of people that are needed for national development.

**Recommendations**

It is important to recognize the role of females in technical and vocational education in Nigeria as the main contributing factor of social and economic development of the nation. They serve as a role model as well as teachers in any family set up and have a great influence in various angles. Therefore, female education in terms of technical and vocational education should be more focused by the government through creation of additional technical and vocational schools in order to accommodate and train them in different fields of technical and vocational education as they are presently under represented in the country. Though the numbers of technical schools in Kano state are only five with one school belonging to females and the others belonging to males, this is quite not encouraging in a state with over 12 million people. The Nigerian government should be able to provide enough technical institutions that will carter for skills program in a country of over 160 million people with only 132 accredited technical colleges and 70 vocational enterprises centers in the country.
Provisions of technical and training centers will curve away poverty in the state as well provide job opportunity for women in rural area where they are most affected.

References


