

Strategies for Attracting Vocational and Technical Education Teachers In Delta State Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the strategies for attracting vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State secondary schools. The study adopted the survey research design and was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. The population of the study comprised all the vocational and technical education teachers in the six technical colleges, two women education centres and one youth resource learning centre; totalling 258. The entire population was studied because it was manageable. The data for the study was collected using a 16-item structured questionnaire duly validated by three experts with internal consistency coefficient value of 0.86. The data collected in respect of the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while data regarding the two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test and ANOVA statistics respectively. The study found that effective public enlightenment on the importance of vocational and technical education and award of scholarship could help in attracting prospective VTE teachers to Delta State secondary schools. The study also revealed that the VTE teachers did not differ significantly in their opinion on the effectiveness of the strategies for attracting VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools based on gender and educational qualification respectively. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that the Nigerian Vocational Association (NVA) and other stakeholders in VTE should forge a working relationship with the mass media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector organizations, to carry out periodic enlightenment campaigns to sensitize members of the public on the importance of VTE, thereby removing the misconceptions about VTE and the stigma on the teachers and students alike.

Keywords: Strategies for Attracting Vocational and Technical Education Teachers
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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational and technical education (VTE) was introduced to address unemployment and other major social-economic challenges of the 21st century. The challenges according to Olumade (2013) include globalization, political integration, trade liberalization, an ever changing technological scenario, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution and the consequent rapid pace of social change.

UNESCO (2000) concluded that vocational and technical education shall therefore produce, through the institution of entrepreneurial education, more job creators than job seekers. In fulfillment of this, Nigeria as member nation of UNESCO, introduced the 9-3-4 educational system with the aim of enhancing education and in particular, vocational and technical education. It is expected that the new educational system will lay a solid foundation for industrialization as well as put Nigeria on the same technological pedestal with countries like Brazil, China and India (Obioma, 2009). However, no matter how laudable a curriculum or educational system may appear, its implementation is of paramount importance. The success or otherwise of a curriculum is hinged largely on the degree of implementation which is the role of the teacher. No educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). In agreement with this view, Uwaifo (2005) asserted that education unlocks the door to modernization but the key to that door -is held by the teacher. It is in recognition of the importance the government attaches to the role of teachers that several tertiary institutions have been established. Specifically, Colleges of Education with bias for vocational and technical education were established to train teachers who will go back to teach in primary and junior secondary schools (National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2008). One of such Colleges is the Federal College of Education (Technical) located in Asaba, Delta State.

Vocational education is a practical instruction that gives learners specific occupational skills. Technical education on the other hand, is that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. The terms are often used together to describe the kind of education that gives individuals the skills to learn and become productive citizens for advancement in the world of work. Okolocha and Baba (2016) are of the view that technical and vocational education may be defined jointly but that there exist some differences between them. According to them, every vocational education programme is technical in nature but not all technical education is vocational.

Despite the efforts of government in promoting vocational and technical education, there is still a general shortage of qualified manpower to train the skilled workforce needed to maintain the nation's critical infrastructure and tackle its developmental challenges (Dike, 2009). This trend has resulted in using teachers who are not professionally trained (Azih, 2008). It has been observed in Delta State, that most people classify vocational and technical education oriented occupations among inferior jobs; hence, they would prefer not to be associated with it. Similarly, in spite of strategies adopted by government to attract vocational and technical education teachers over the years, not much success has been achieved. This has resulted to shortage of manpower in that field (Uwaifo, 2005). To address the acute shortage of VTE teachers in the State secondary schools and to encourage new entrants to come in, there has to be deliberate efforts to attract them. These may include public enlightenment on the importance of vocational and technical education and award of scholarship to prospective teachers.

In an attempt to attract and retain VTE teachers, the Federal Government of Nigeria, in conjunction with the United States of America in 1980, introduced the Technical Teachers Training Programme (TTTP). As at 1988 about one thousand, five hundred and forty (1,540) vocational and technical education teachers had been trained under the scheme (Ma'aji, 2002). Ma'aji further reported that the Federal Government entered into a soft loan arrangement with some countries like Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia for the production and supply of pre-vocational and workshop tools and equipment. Despite these strategies by government and in spite of the domestication of the Technical Training Programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions, the programme was a failure due to indiscipline and corruption, (Ma'aji, 2002).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

One of the challenges facing vocational and technical education today is the shortage of qualified manpower to teach the subjects at the secondary schools (Aghanta, 2003). A good number of secondary schools in Delta State offer vocational and technical education; unfortunately, there are very few professionally qualified teachers to handle the subjects (Ministry of Education, Asaba, 2006). This has resulted in using graduates of other disciplines to teach vocational and technical education. Osuala in Azih (2008) described this class of teachers as interlopers. In the same vein, Azih (2008) was of the view that students lose interest in this field of education because of the poor quality and low number of teachers. Vocational and technical education is viewed by some as inferior to other forms of education. As a result, Nigerian Universities pay very little attention to that branch of education (Uwaifo & Uwaifo, 2009). This trend, according to Mureithi (2009), has forced teachers of vocational and technical education to migrate to other professions or specialize in disciplines that appear to be more lucrative or prestigious. This situation actually necessitated this study. Therefore, there is need to attract persons into this discipline highly despised and stigmatized.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the strategies for attracting and retaining vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to:

- ❖ Determine the use of public enlightenment as a strategy for attracting prospective vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State secondary schools;
- ❖ Determine the award of scholarship to students as a strategy for attracting prospective vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State secondary schools

1.3 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- ❖ How could effective public enlightenment on the importance of vocational and technical education help in attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools?
- ❖ How could the award of scholarship attract prospective vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State secondary schools?

1.4 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

- ❖ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on effective public enlightenment for vocational and technical education as a strategy for attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools based on gender.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the award of scholarship as a strategy for attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools based on educational qualification.

2. METHOD

The study adopted the survey design and was conducted in Delta State. The population consisted of 258 vocational and technical education teachers in the state as follows: the six technical colleges, 234; two women education centres, 16; and one youth resource learning centre. The entire population was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain information from the respondents on the strategies for attracting VTE teachers in the State secondary schools. The response pattern adopted for the questionnaire was a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was validated by three experts who were requested to vet the instrument in terms of language, clarity, relevance and relatedness to the research questions and hypotheses of the study. The criticisms of the experts were noted while their suggestions were considered and incorporated in the final draft of the questionnaire. The internal consistency of the instrument was also established through pilot testing method and the data generated thereof were subjected to Cronbach Alpha Analysis which yielded a coefficient value of 0.86. This value was considered high enough for the instrument to be reliable.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers with the help of two research assistants and the data generated were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test for hypothesis 1 and ANOVA for hypothesis 2. Decision regarding the research questions was taken based on the boundary limits of the four -point rating scale while a null hypothesis was rejected where the t or f-calculated value is greater or equal to the table value and retained where the t or f-calculated is less than the table value.

3. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Data in Tables 1 and 2 addressed research questions 1 and 2 while Tables 3 and 4 show results of the null hypotheses.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviations of Public Enlightenment as a Strategy

S/N	Items	Mean	S. D.	Remark
1	Public enlightenment propagates the status of vocational and technical education teachers to the public.	3.56	0.25	Agreed
2	Public enlightenment helps the public appreciate the importance of vocational and technical education.	3.49	0.27	Agreed
3	Public enlightenment removes misconceptions around vocational and technical education.	3.45	0.28	Agreed
4	Public enlightenment encourages young people to embrace vocational and technical education.	3.52	0.29	Agreed
5	Public enlightenment will make curriculum implementers reposition VTE in secondary schools.	3.44	0.33	Agreed
6	Public enlightenment will change the perception of the public concerning VTE teachers.	3.48	0.41	Agreed
7	Career guidance counselors should encourage young people to embrace vocational and technical education.	4.42	0.30	Agreed
8	Public enlightenment gives vocational and technical education prominence in the school system.	3.39	0.29	Agreed
9	Vocational and technical education teachers can help shape public opinion through participation in curriculum planning, design and implementation.	3.47	0.38	Agreed
10	Other staff members need to be enlightened that vocational and technical education teachers are not inferior.	3.54	0.30	Agreed

The data in Table 1 indicated the extent to which the use of effective public enlightenment on the importance of vocational and technical education can help in attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools. The result revealed that vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State agreed that the use of effective public enlightenment on the importance of vocational and technical education can help in attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools. All the ten items listed on effective public enlightenment received mean rating greater than 2.50 which indicated that vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State were of the opinion that the use of effective public enlightenment on the importance of vocational and technical education can help in attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools. The low rating of standard deviation which ranged between 0.25 - 0.41 is an indication that the respondents were not far apart in their responses.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Award of Scholarship as a Strategy

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1.	Scholarship provided for children of vocational and technical teachers up to university level will help attract new vocational and technical education teachers.	3.57	0.28	Agreed
2.	Provision of scholarship for students who are offering vocational and technical education courses in tertiary institutions will be an attraction to vocational and technical education teachers.	3.62	0.26	Agreed
3.	Guarantee of immediate employment to vocational and technical education graduates after enjoying scholarship will help attract people to the profession	3.64	0.26	Agreed
4.	Free overseas training for deserving vocational and technical education students will attract them to the teaching of vocational and technical education.	3.54	0.29	Agreed
5.	Textbooks and other learning materials made free for vocational and technical education students at the tertiary level will attract them to teach vocational and technical education.	3.53	0.33	Agreed
6.	Training in vocational and technical education with pay of teachers in other subjects will attract them to teach vocational and technical education.	3.40	0.38	Agreed

The data in Table 2 reveals how the use of award of scholarship can help in attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools. d that vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State were in agreement that award of scholarship can help in attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools. All the six items listed on the use of scholarship award as a strategy for attracting vocational and technical education teachers recorded mean rating greater than 2.50 which indicated that vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State were of the opinion that the use of scholarship award can help in attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools. Again, the low rating of standard deviation which ranges from 0.18 - 0.38 reveals that the respondents were not far apart in their responses.

Table 3: The z-test Analysis of Male and Female VTE Teachers' Responses on Effective Public Enlightenment

Gender	N	X	S	z-cal	α	Df	z-crit	Remark
Male	143	3.52	0.28					
Female	107	3.42	0.34	1.41	0.05	248	1.96	Retained

Table 3, shows z-test analysis of responses of male and female VTE teachers, on effective public enlightenment, on the importance of vocational and technical education as a strategy for attracting prospective VTE teachers with mean scores of 3.52 and 3.42 respectively. The z-calculated value of 1.41 is less than the z-tabulated value of 1.96 at 248 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained which implies that, the respondents (the two groups) did not differ significantly in their ratings on effective public enlightenment on the importance of vocational and technical education as a strategy for attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA of the Effect of Educational Qualification of VTE Teachers' Responses on Award of Scholarship.

Sources of Variance	SS	df	MS	F-Cal	F-Crit	Alpha Level	Remark
Between Groups	12.62	2	2.73	2.83	3.06	0.05	Retained
Within Groups	129.47	247	13.41				(Not Sig)

The result on table 4 shows that the calculated value of F (2.83) is less than the critical value of F (3.06) at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. This implies that the respondents (the three groups) did not differ significantly in their ratings on award of scholarship as a strategy for attracting prospective VTE teachers in Delta State secondary schools.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The result of the study indicates that VTE teachers in Delta State agreed that effective public enlightenment on the importance of vocational and technical education could help attract teachers to the state secondary school. The outcome of study agrees with Agbulu and Olaitan (2000) who observed that an aggressive campaign (public enlightenment) was carried to village schools throughout the countryside to develop her vocational and technical education; when Japan was to face Russia in war. Evidently, Japan developed her vocational and technical education by correcting the wrong perception of VTE as education for the handicapped or those with low intelligence through aggressive public enlightenment. Hoffmann (2007) also agrees with the findings of the present study when he asserted that public service advertisement (an aspect of public enlightenment) has the central focus on welfare with the main objectives to persuade the audience to implement or support some kind of social and economic cause considered to be beneficial to the general public.

Concerning research question two, the results of the study showed that the respondents agreed that award of scholarship could be used as a strategy to attract prospective VTE teachers to the state secondary schools. This finding of the study is in consonance with the results of various studies of Lui (2007); Lueck (2010) and Berry, Rasberry and Williams (2015) who contended that students and other professionals in the United states were being persuaded to join the teaching profession.

Regarding the null hypothesis one, the outcome indicates that there is no significant difference between the ratings of respondents on effective public enlightenment on the importance of VTE as a strategy to attract the teachers to the state secondary schools. Both the male and female VTE teachers agree that effective public enlightenment will help the public appreciate the importance of VTE and remove the misconceptions about it. With respect to null hypothesis two, the result shows that there is no significant difference between the ratings of respondents on award of scholarship as a strategy to attract the teachers. Irrespective of the educational qualifications of the VTE teachers, they all agreed that provision of scholarship for students who are offering vocational and technical education courses in tertiary institutions will be an attraction to vocational and technical education teachers.

5. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the strategies for attracting vocational and technical education teachers in Delta State secondary schools. From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that effective public enlightenment on the importance of VTE and award of scholarship would help to attract prospective VTE teachers in the state secondary schools. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on effective public enlightenment and award of scholarship as strategies to attract VTE teachers to the state secondary schools based on gender and educational qualifications respectively.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Based on the findings and conclusions from the study, the following recommendations are made: Nigeria Vocational Association (NVA) and other stakeholders in VTE should forge a working relationship with the mass media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector organizations, to carry out periodic enlightenment campaigns to sensitize members of the public on the importance of VTE, thereby removing the misconceptions about VTE and the stigma on the teachers and students alike.
- ❖ Delta State Government should as a matter of responsibility, collaborate with international organizations like UNESCO IICBA, (International Institute for Capacity Building in African) which supports teachers development policies at all levels of education, including VTE and the African Union (AU) which activities in the continent have been geared towards strengthening VTE, to invest in VTE by providing scholarship awards to prospective VTE teachers.

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