

TVET, EMPOWERMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION AMONG WOMEN IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focuses on TVET as a strategy for the empowerment and poverty reduction among women in Ogun State, Nigeria. It specifically examined technical and vocational skill areas which women can embrace and the extent to which they could be effective in empowering women and reducing poverty among them. The study is a survey of an ex post facto design and the population comprised women in both formal and informal technical and vocation education and training as well as those in technical and vocation businesses in Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 250 women from the study population as the sample. A structured questionnaire with a 4-point likert type scale was used as the instrument of data collection. Data were analysed with simple percentage and frequency counts and the hypotheses were subjected to ordinary least square regression of two separate models for women empowerment and poverty reduction as functions of TVET. It was found that TVET, if well implemented and embraced, will significantly enhance women empowerment and serve as an effective instrument in reducing poverty among women in Ogun State and by implication in Nigeria. The study recommends among others that TVET programmes should be given adequate priority by all stakeholders and necessary resources needed to facilitate women active involvement in technical and vocational activities should be provided by government and industries.

Keywords: *Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Women Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation*

Introduction

Education is undisputedly considered as the pivot for technological, economic, social and political development of nations. Nations all over the world recognize the need for practical and functional components of education in which skill acquisition and competency development will engender productivity and enhance the development of societies and per capital income of individuals. The achievement of personal and collective success in any productive activity rests on different considerations and reasons, the human resource being the most important as people determine and control other resources that are involved in production activities either for services or goods.

In most societies and economies, women occupy unique roles and perform important task of shaping or modelling the attitude of people towards nation building. More than ever before, women are increasingly becoming significant players in every sphere of development and their right to partake in political, economic, social, education, technological development, etc. on equal basis with men formed a part of the global sustainable development goal and declarations (Helga, 2011; Onwuka, Nwadiubu, & Isiwu, 2019). The calls for gender equality and women involvement in the production sector of a nation further amplify the roles of women in overall national economic development.

However, unemployment, poverty and poor education especially of the girl child have remained persistent among the Nigerian societies and are major concerns for national economic and social development. While unemployment of young women, graduates, able and ready to-do women is on the increase with deteriorating situations and growing concern for discrimination, harassment, etc., poverty manifests in our societies in the form of lack of good income, insufficient resources for livelihood, malnutrition and in worse cases, hunger, humiliation and homelessness (Adepoju, 2002; Anyanwu, 2010; Onwuka, et al, 2019). These problems have been found by many studies to be related, in part, to low or poor productive skills to either create jobs or to fit adequately into the productive sectors of an economy.

With new and emerging roles of women in the broad development of nations and societies, women empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion and has gained prominence as a developmental issue. According to Helga (2011), when girls and women have adequate and relevant training or education, they

are likely to experience better standard of living, recognized in societal issues and development and will be able to voice ideas on decision bothering on national development. As such, empowerment and poverty alleviation always form part of the reasons for women involvement in productive activities.

Empowerment is encompasses upgrading and enriching the abilities, capacities and known limitations of an individual or group of people making economic decisions and ensuring that the decisions are capable of being transformed into desired and meaningful results (World Bank, 2011). According to Zimmerman (2000) it is a process involving psychological inclination and belief of people in embracing positivity of their own doings, worth and capabilities on social and economic matters. It includes an individual belief and perception of self-worth, self-image, competence and capacity development efforts that are geared towards being self-dependent or reliant. Ugoh (2008) in Okwelle and Deebom (2017) posit that one of the many ways through which the purpose of empowerment in developing societies could be achieved or assured is skill acquisition in relevant and demanding vocations that can guarantee lucrative and profitable engagements and self-dependence, hence, national economic development.

The foregoing suggest that women empowerment will denotes the creation of an environment capable of not only allowing women to earn a living but also encourage or stimulate them to make decisions that will give personal and societal benefits (World Bank Group, 2011). It covers all efforts and process of strengthening the economic, social and political engagement and involvement of women, ensuring gender equality that will guarantee respect, dignity and right to make choices, live, work and partake in any engagement and in any place. Good empowerment will enhance their confidence, self-worth, social status, financial or economic control and foster higher opportunity for education and employment in an environment free of hostility, gender-based biases and humiliation (Ogbe, 1996; Important India, 2015; Akudo, 2013).

In Nigeria, women empowerment is part of economic development initiatives reflecting poverty reduction measure for economic, social and psychological reasons (Ogbe, 1996; World Bank Group, 2011). The prevalence of poverty and hardship especially among women in Nigeria has been notably high (Adepoju, 2002; Anyanwu, 2010; Onwuka, et al, 2019; Aluko & Mbada, 2020) and is severe and worsening among rural women (Ayoade, Ogunwale & Adewale, 2011). In response to poverty and related problems, Nigeria, had implemented series of economic and development programmes which up till date are yet to yield desired result and meaningful success (Aluko, 2003; Okonjo-Iwuala, 2013). To many, poverty is endemic in Nigeria, it is distressing disheartening situation in which large number of people may not have food, housing and health security and people are involved in struggle, on daily basis, against hunger, lack of housing and health facilities (Aluko, 2003).

In conceptualising poverty, King and Palmer (2007) considered three factors - *vulnerability* (occasional experience of poverty and insecurity), *inequality* (deprivation relative to other people), and *collective poverty* (of regions, nations, groups). They submit that poverty is not the same as vulnerability or inequality. The distinction between poverty and any of vulnerability and inequality is central to the understanding of the difference between being 'prone to poverty' and being 'anti-poverty'. This is because people who are not currently 'poor' but vulnerable to poverty may become poor if preventive steps and efforts are not taken or where appropriate measures are not put in place. Poverty, according to Aluko (2003) is multidimensional in nature and depicts a state of economic and social deprivation, poor or very low income, lack of access to education, health care, and food shortage (Oriahi & Aitufe, 2010; Ayoade, Ogunwale & Adewale, 2011; Aluko & Mbada, 2020) and results in mortifying social status, self-esteem and self-actualisation (Nwachukwu, 2014).

According to King and Palmer (2007), three kinds of poverty reduction or alleviation are *poverty alleviation*, *lifting people out of poverty* and *poverty prevention*. Poverty alleviation simply implies lessening or easing the symptoms or seriousness of poverty but not changing poor people from 'poor status' to 'non-poor status'. *lifting people out of poverty* means reducing poverty in its real sense, that is, facilitating a fall in the percentage of poor people or turning people from 'poor status' into 'non-poor status'. *poverty prevention* as the term literarily suggests, means empowering people to avoid falling into poverty or preventing poverty among people by dealing with factors that could plunge them into poverty or eliminating their vulnerability.

The key to any of the poverty reduction measures lies in economic growth with abundant employment opportunities for everyone (Nwachukwu, 2014). Important means of facilitating women empowerment and lessening the consequence of gender-related issues in modern times is by arming the girl child with adequate and relevant 21st century skills and competence and education and providing a system that ensures her employment in the real productive sector (Acha, 2014). Hence, issues bothering on economic development, poverty reduction and empowerment of the citizenry prompt nations to adapt innovation-driven approaches and

trainings. Identifying such approaches and strategies, Okorieocha and Duru (2013) were of the view that one education or training initiative and content that is focused on turning out technological and industrially relevant and competence individuals is TVET. Similarly, Chukwuedo and Omofonmwan (2015) submits that an important and indispensable form of education and training programme that can give the nation the required and demand-driven human resource that will be capable of advancing the technological and industrial sectors for sustainable social and economic development is TVET.

According to Okwelle (2013), TVET is a methodical and purposeful learning aimed at making people remarkably productive in designated occupations and economic activities. Dawodu (2006) in Alhassan and Abdullahi (2013) see technical and vocational education and training as a proven learning and skill development approached that have been employed by some countries to achieve prosperity and economic control. In the Nigerian National Policy on Education, TVET is used to refer to the learning of technologies and related tools and processes, acquisition of practical skills, shaping of attitudes, learning and understanding business occupations of any kind in addition to general education (Nwachukwu, 2014; Chukwuedo & Omonfonmwan, 2015; Okwelle & Wordu, 2016). According to Alhasan and Abdullahi (2013) TVET plays essential roles in empowering individual to be useful to themselves and to their communities by stimulating productive and entrepreneurial culture and aspiration.

The foregoing suggest that good and quality TVET programme is a viable learning option capable of achieving sustainable empowerment among people (UNESCO, 2012). Hence, for Nigeria to achieve a sustainable empowerment, efforts are being geared towards preparing young men and women employment with emphasis on technical and vocational education and training (Okwelle & Deebom, 2017).

With the objectives and practical training component of TVET, it is seen as having the potent force to drive the productive sector of an economy and serve as a key to poverty reduction and empowerment toward social and economic productivity and competitiveness. Therefore, countries, all over the world, are making efforts to promote TVET. The recognition of women in development agenda and their inclusion in development goals imply the need to carry women along in the developmental efforts for self-sustenance which could only be achieved through education and training programmes such as Technical, and Vocational Education and Training (Adelakun, Oviawe and Barfa, 2015).

Considering the objectives of the TVET, the traditional and emerging roles of women in economic and social development viz-a-viz the demonstration of their potentials in the realization of development, it is important to examine the extent to which TVET could contribute to the empowerment and poverty reduction among women. The study specifically aimed at determining how Technical and Vocational Education and Training could be used as a vehicle for ensuring gainful employment and empowerment of women in Ogun State, Nigeria and consequently address problem of poverty among women in the State.

Method

Descriptive survey approach was used in carrying out this study. The population comprised all technical and vocational women in the formal and informal education sectors and all women in technical and vocational ventures or businesses in Ogun State. In the formal sector, women in technical-oriented and vocation-based programmes in Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Universities and Technical Colleges were covered while in the informal sector; women in technical or vocational related business activities and training were involved. Convenient and simple random sampling techniques were adopted for sample selection and a total of 250 women were selected.

Table 1: Cronbach’s Alpha

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Cronbach’s Alpha Value</i>
TVET	0.879
Women Empowerment	0.765
Poverty Alleviation	0.813

The main instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire developed with close ended questions on a 4-point likert scale. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. This yielded reliability coefficient of 0.879, 0.765 and 0.813 respectively for TVET, women empowerment and poverty alleviation, indicating values greater than 70% which shows level of the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument used.

Results and Discussion

250 questionnaires were administered out of which 238 were retrieved and used for analysis. For the purpose of analyzing the research questions, frequency count and mean rating were used while ordinary least square was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was decided that a null hypothesis should be accepted if the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, otherwise, the hypothesis should be rejected.

Figure 1 below shows the percentage responses obtained from each of the different TVET related sectors where respondents were chosen for the study. The chart shows that 20% of the sampled women were selected from Polytechnics, 19% from Colleges of Education, 16% were from Universities, 11% were in Technical Colleges while 13% and 21% were respondents from the informal vocational training centres and vocational businesses respectively. The chart shows that information vocational training centres had the lowest representation in the study sample.

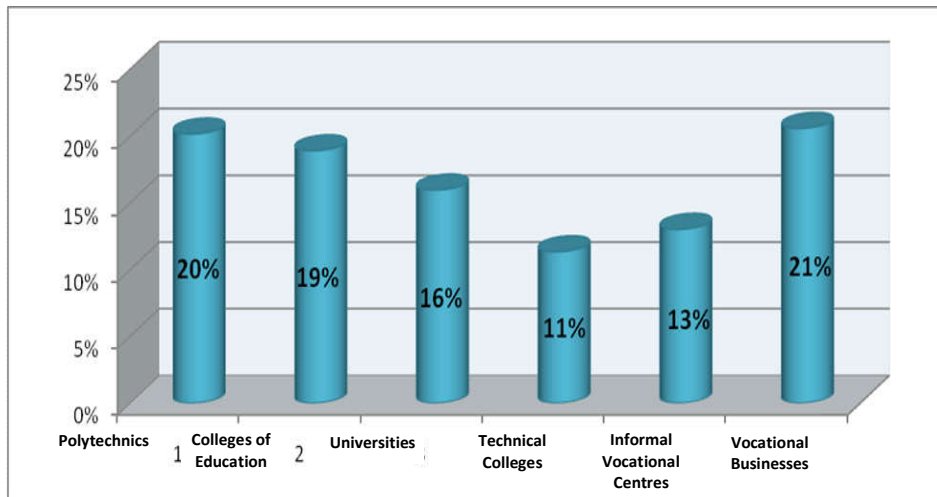


Table 2: Mean Rating on the various technical and vocational skill areas available for the empowerment and poverty reduction among women in Ogun State, Nigeria.

S/No	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	
1	Computer Software Design	111	74	33	20	3.16	
2	Piping and Fitting	26	14	112	86	1.92	
3	Photography	98	87	32	21	3.10	
4	Web page design	90	93	32	23	3.05	
5	Food and Catering Services	138	84	11	5	3.49	
6	Event Planning and Management	124	94	12	8	3.40	
7	Soap Making	88	102	32	16	3.10	
8	Barbing/Hair Dressing	131	85	12	10	3.42	
9	Laundry and Dry Cleaning Services	75	54	65	44	2.67	
10	Fashion Designing	175	51	5	7	3.66	
11	GSM Repairs	32	32	87	87	2.04	
12	Snail Production	76	92	43	27	2.91	
13	Fishery	97	85	33	23	3.08	
14	Home Decoration and Painting	135	68	12	23	3.32	
15	Bead works	178	53	5	2	3.71	
16	Art work and Designs	94	76	33	35	2.96	
17	Tie and Dye Making	117	64	33	24	3.15	
18	Hair styling	141	87	4	6	3.53	
19	Cosmetology	132	98	5	3	3.51	
		Grand X				—	3.11

Table 2 shows the mean rating on the various technical and vocational skill areas available for the empowerment and poverty reduction among women in Ogun State, Nigeria. It indicates that all the TVET skill areas listed were accepted to be good for women empowerment and through which poverty could be alleviated or prevented. Item listed on serial number 2 and 11 had mean values of 1.9 and 2.04 respectively which are lower than the calculated mean value of 2.5, hence piping and fitting and GSM repairs are not regarded as a viable TVET areas for women folk.

Test of Hypotheses

The formulated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level using Ordinary Least Square Regression for women empowerment and poverty reduction. The results are as follows:

Hypothesis I: TVET does not have any significant contribution to the empowerment of women in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.891 ^a	.793	.791	.795

a. Predictors: (Constant), TVET

Table 3 shows that there is a strong positive relationship between women empowerment and TVET with correlation coefficient of 0.891. The R-square statistics is the proportion of variability in the data set that is accounted for by the statistical model. The above interprets that TVET accounts for 79.3% of the variation in women empowerment.

Table 4: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.156	.141		8.225	.000
TVET	.103	.061	.107	1.974	.027

a. Dependent Variable: Women Empowerment

The result as presented in the table above indicates that in the absence of TVET, other variable contributes about 15.6% increase in women empowerment. However, TVET contributes about 10.3% increase in women empowerment with standard error of 0.061 and t-value of 1.974 and the p-value is 0.027 which is less than the 5% significance level. With this, the alternative hypothesis is accepted; hence we can conclude that TVET has significant contribution to women empowerment.

Hypothesis II: TVET does not have significant contribution to poverty alleviation in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.991 ^a	.982	.972	.655

a. Predictors: (Constant), TVET

Table 5 reveals a strong positive relationship between TVET and poverty alleviation with correlation coefficient of 0.991. The R-square value gives the variability in the data set accounted for by the statistical model. The above reveals that TVET accounts for 98.2% of the variation in poverty alleviation.

Table 6: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	0.316	.041		7.215	.000
TVET	.213	.071	.127	3.000	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Poverty Alleviation

From the table above, TVET contributes about 21.3% increase poverty alleviation with standard error of 0.071 and t-value of 3.000 and the p-value is 0.001 which is less than the 5% significance level. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that TVET have significant contribution to poverty alleviation among women in Ogun State.

The results imply that TVET is significantly potent in contributing to the empowerment and poverty alleviation among women, especially in the identified areas of TVET. The result shows that TVET has the potential of producing demand-driven industrial/technological manpower for sustainable advancement as well as social and economic development as submitted by Okorieocha and Duru (2013) Chukwuedo and Omofonmwan (2015). The result clearly portray skill acquisition and utilisation in technical and vocational areas as lucrative empowerment options capable of engendering enterprising and productive attitudinal disposition of women and a paradigm shift in women socio-economic engagement and participation. This corroborates Dokubo and Dokubo (2014) that TVET contributes to the development of trained manpower and impacts the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen and women who will be enterprising and self-reliant through their technical skills. the findings of the present study emphasizes the efficacy of technical and vocation education and training not only in equipping women for economic self-reliance but also in fostering their inclusion, social and political relevance to developmental efforts of their immediate communities and the nation at large as posited by Adetakun, Oviawe and Barfa (2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

From this study, it is concluded that there are many TVET areas in which women can go to acquire skills that are important to engender good living and economic sustenance. The importance of women in the economic development of the nation and in societal well-being demand responsive and functional empowerment approach capable of equipping them with the necessary and relevance competence to leverage socio-economic quagmire plunging the nation. If TVET is given adequate attention and funding, it will not only equip women with skills, but also empower them and reduce the consequence of economic hardship among women in the society. It has been found that TVET has the efficacy of reducing poverty among Nigerian women and also empower them socially and economically. A purposeful and deliberate empowerment intervention for women through technical and vocation skill acquisition, development and utilisation will manifest in their inclination for productive and profitable engagement and consequently, remarkable fall in poverty index among such women.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that all concerned should put hands on deck to ensure that TVET is given adequate priority as most developing economies are driven by technical manpower. Necessary mechanisms should be instituted to encourage women involvement in technical and vocational activities and training with a view to empowering the women gender against problem of insecurity, risk exposure and to alleviate poverty among them.

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