
Approaches for Reforming Students' Unionism in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions for Acquisition of Requisite Skills in TVET Programme

Goma, Oraibi T. & Wordu, Chiduhiegem C.R.

Department of Technical Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State
oraibigoma@gmail.com, revchidiwordu@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study looked at the means of reforming students' unionism in Nigerian tertiary institutions through acquisition of requisite skills in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes. The study employed descriptive survey design with the population of 1,904 (1,603 students and 301 lecturers) in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. A total of 450 respondents (300 students and 150 lecturers) was the sample of the study selected through purposive sampling technique. One research question was posed and one hypothesis formulated for this study. A structured questionnaire validated and with reliability coefficient of 0.78 was the instrument used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using statistical mean to answer the research question while z-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 5% level of significance. The result revealed that students' unionism faces lots of confrontations which need to be overhauled in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It was therefore recommended that the school authority should support the students' unionism in order for the union to live up to its expectation especially in acquiring requisite skills (practical and entrepreneurial), among others.

Keywords: Reformation, Students' Unionism, TVET and Tertiary Institution.

Introduction

Students' unionism is an association of students in an institution which creates forum for the effective and mutual interaction among students; hence, it is the government of the students. Like any other government, it consists of the executive, legislative and the judiciary arms (Subiru, 2009). In the contrary, it is very unfortunate to observe that majority of students' union programmes which were established to guide, maintain and enhance the participation of the students in educational excellence has been hindered as a result of non-challant attitude, gangsterism, deviant behavior and cultism. Thus, there is no gain saying that the students' union does not enjoy wide range of popularity and benefits. These bodies of self-government do have a significant influence on the student's acquisition of requisite skills. This is because, the students' union programmes touches all the aspects of students life. The activeness and doggedness of students unionism is gradually dwindling as a result of the above challenges faced by the students, these challenges have made majority of the students' union leaders unable to cope with the enormous tasks and responsibilities placed on them by the unions (Alomi, 2007).

Consequently, Alex (2008) ascertained that students problems increases on daily basis and therefore suggested that in order to combat these problems it will be pertinent to integrate an overhauling approach to students' unionism which will trigger systemic change that will benefit the entire students. Subaru (2009) in support of the above statement observed that

organizing seminars and workshops outside for newly admitted students orientation programmes will further change their mind-sets and prepare them on the issues ahead, he further noted that the provision of health care centre, information technology centre, library, basic infrastructural amenities and certain part of entrepreneurial education will boost the students' knowledge. Adesina (2009) in his own part asserts that students' union leaders should in course of effective leadership delivery obtain certain levels of academic performance because those students who are low academically and mentally deficient will only be interested in popularizing their positions instead of promoting good morals and excellence. He further suggested that the modus operandi of becoming a students' union leader should be based on the pursuance of knowledge and acquisition of requisite skills because students' union leaders who are knowledgeable and skilful will a pass on the acquired knowledge and skills to the students they are leading.

The above assertions of acquiring requisite skills by students' body are tailoring towards TVET programme. That is why the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) in its policy document stipulates among other objectives of TVET is to give and impact the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant and enterprising economically. To achieve this objective, Ede (2013) in his study recommended that provision of entrepreneurial skills in TVET will provide students the learning experiences and/or activities which will help them attain the competencies to be self-reliant/self-employed. In consonance with the above, Anumnu (2011) noted that if entrepreneurial skills is acquired it will make the students to be creative; innovative capable of creating employment for themselves and others as well as to reduce over-dependency of the students on the government for gainful employment.

Furthermore, Alhassan (1991) suggested that there is need for training and retraining of students who are potential students' union leaders because it will create an enabling environment which will foster cooperation, unity and team work, in adherence to the suggestion of Alhassan above, the researcher believed that this will certainly add values, inculcate good morals, enhance learning, improve participations, encourage handiwork and reduce the present challenges faced by students' unionism. Therefore, overhauling students' unionism in Nigerian tertiary institutions becomes a serious challenge in technical vocational education and training (TVET) programmes for acquisition of requisite; hence, this study.

Statement of the Problem

Ayodele (2004) ascertained that the existence of students' unionism enhances processes of school administration, facilitates effective communication between the school authorities and the students and further proffer programmes that will enhance acquisition of practical and entrepreneurial skills among students. Contrary to the assertions of Ayodele above, several issues according to Okoh (2012) have resulted to lots of controversies at several tertiary institutions over the influence of students' unionism in acquiring requisite skills in Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) programmes in the nation's tertiary institutions as a developing world, ranging from the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education relative to their counterparts in the developed world with a particular focus on their welfare (Okoh, 2012). It is therefore, the concern of this study to investigate the approaches for reforming students' unionism in Nigerian tertiary institutions for acquisition of requisite skills in technical vocational education and training (TVET) programmes.

Research question

One research question guided the study:

What are the approaches that can be used to reform students' unionism in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Hypothesis

Also, one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of respondents on the approaches for reforming students' unionism in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Methodology

The study employed descriptive survey design. A sample of four hundred and fifty (450) copies of structured questionnaires with six (6) items was administered to students and lecturers of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

The instrument used for the collection of data was a structured questionnaire tagged 'Approaches for Reforming Students' Unionism in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions for Acquisition of Requisite Skills in TVET Programme(ARSUNTARSKTEVETP)' with 6 items on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) =4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The instrument 'ARSUNTARSKTEVETP' was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Reliability on the data collected through a pilot test on 30 respondents selected from students and lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers state who were not part of the sample of the study. The coefficient of reliability obtained was 0.78. This was believed to be high enough for the instrument to be used for the main study.

The researchers personally went to the institutions to administer the 450 copies of the questionnaire. All were properly completed and retrieved on the spot. The statistical mean was used to answer the research question. An item with a calculated mean value equal or greater than 2.50 (2.50 – 4.00) was accepted, while the calculated mean of an item less than or equal to 2.49 (0 - 2.49) was rejected. An inferential statistics of z-test was used to test the only null hypothesis at 0.05 level of confidence. It was decided that where z-calculated value was equal or greater then table z-value, it indicates significance difference, so reject the null hypothesis but otherwise, accept the null hypothesis.

Results

The results of the analysis of the study are presented in Tables 1 and 2

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Score and Standard Deviation on the Approaches for Reforming Students' Unionism in Nigerian tertiary Institutions for Acquisition of Requisite Skills in TVET Programme

S/N	Item	Students, N=300			Lecturers, N=150		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Provision of entrepreneurial skills will make students to be self-reliant	3.69	1.86	Accepted	3.84	1.98	Accepted
2.	Intensifying acquisition of practical skills will make students to be independent and self-employed after graduation.	3.50	1.66	Accepted	3.60	1.79	Accepted
3.	Organizing regular seminars and workshops will enhance students' union activities in the school.	3.55	1.72	Accepted	3.64	1.82	Accepted

4.	Training and retraining of students' will foster unity, cooperation and team work among students	3.54	1.70	Accepted	3.76	1.88	Accepted
5.	Students with low academic achievement should not be allowed to hold positions in students unionism	2.25	0.65	Rejected	2.80	1.10	Accepted
6.	Massive leadership training of studentsunion leaders will trigger systemic change that will benefit the students.	3.64	1.80	Accepted	3.80	1.90	Accepted
Grand		3.36	1.57	Accepted	3.57	1.75	Accepted

Table 1 revealed that item 1 shows that provision of entrepreneurial skills will make students to be self-reliant with mean scores of 3.69 and 3.84 which is accepted, item 2 shows that provision of practical skills will make students to be independent and self-employed even after graduation with mean scores of 3.50 and 3.64 which is accepted, item 3 which exhibited the mean score of 3.55 and 3.64 implies that organizing of seminars and workshops will enhance students' union activities in the school, item 4 exhibited mean scores of 3.54 and 3.76 which implies that training and re-training of students will foster unity, cooperation and team work among students, item 5 which exhibited rejected mean score of 2.25 (students response) and accepted mean score of 2.80 (lecturers response) and this implies that students with low academic achievement should be not be allowed to hold positions in students' unionism. The data in item 6 shows that massive training of students will trigger systemic change that will benefit the students' union with mean scores of 3.64 and 3.80 which is accepted. This implies that table 1 revealed that Students accepted items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and rejected item 5 with mean values of (3.36) above 2.50. On the other hand, Lecturers also accepted items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and rejected item 5 with mean values of (3.36) above 2.50.

Table 2: z-test of respondents' on the approaches for overhauling students' unionism in Nigerian tertiary institutions for acquisition of requisite skills in TVET programme

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	z-cal.	z-crit.	P	Df	Remarks
Students	300	3.36	1.57	-1.06	± 1.96	0.05	448	Not Sig.
Lecturers	150	3.57	1.75					

From Table 2, since the calculated value of z-ratio (-1.06) was less than the critical value of z-ratio (± 1.96); the null hypothesis was accepted indicating that there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents on the challenges of safety and health management schemes among construction firms in Nigeria.

Discussion

The study revealed that training and retraining of students will make them to be self-reliant/self-employed and as well create an enabling environment which will foster cooperation, unity, team work, and good morals enhance learning and reduce the challenges faced by students' unionism in tertiary institutions. This is in consonance with the study

of Alhassan (1991) who suggested that there is need for training and re-training of students who are potential students' union leaders because it will create an enabling environment that will foster cooperation unity and team work among students.

The study also revealed that provision of practical and entrepreneurial skills if acquired will enable the students to be creative; innovative and capable of creating employment for themselves and others and as well reduce over-dependency of the students on white collar jobs. This result has strong similarity with the findings of the Anumnu (2011) and Ede (2013); who opined that practical and entrepreneurial skills if acquired will make the students to be creative, innovative capable of creating employment for themselves and others and as well reduce over-dependency of the students on the government for gainful employment.

Conclusion

Students' unionism in tertiary institutions has been seen as one of the citadel of academic excellence since it facilitates effective interaction and communication between the students and the school authorities. Thus an approach to overhaul it cannot be overemphasized. The paper therefore concludes that massive training of students and their union leaders in the area of acquiring requisite practical and entrepreneurial skills will go a long way to checkmate the activities of students' unionism. The paper therefore recommends the followings among others:

1. Training and retraining of students should be paramount as this will make students to be self-reliant/self-employed and as well create an enabling environment which will foster cooperation, unity, team work, and good morals enhance learning and reduce the challenges faced by students' unionism in tertiary institutions.
2. The activities of students' unionism should be overhaul for effective and efficient participation of students by creating awareness to the students through regular seminars and workshops.

References

- Adesina, O. (2009). Agencies of Education and Socialization. Unpublished Monograph: University of Ibadan.
- Alex, C.O. (2008). Student Leadership and Academic Performance. A Study of Student Club Leader. Retrieved 10th September, 2009 <http://www.csusedu/oir/Assessment>.
- Alhassan, D.K. (1991). Teaching Effectiveness: The Nigeria Today. *Journal of Teacher Education* 1(6),1-33.
- Alomi, R.A. (2007). Some Thoughts on Educational Services in the National Policy on Education *Journal of Applied Research in Education*, 6(1),6-10.
- Anumnu, S.I. (2011). Motivating the Nigeria Child Towards Entrepreneurship Education: The Challenges of Women in the New Millennium: *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education* 5(2), 134-143.
- Ayodele, J.B. (2004). The Role of Head Teachers in School Unionism. A Paper Presented at the Annual National Conference of Nigeria Association for Educational Administration and Planning, University of Ibadan.
- Ede, E.O. (2013). Novel Technical Teacher Education Programme: Unpublished Monograph: UNN Nsukka.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004). *National Policy on Education* (4th Edition) Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Okoh, P.S. (2012). Challenges of Students' Unionism in Nigeria. A Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of University of Lagos.
- Subiru, S.T. (2009). Infrastructure, Welfare Services and Students Perceived Motivation to Learning in Higher institutions. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Lagos.