

An Assessment of the Vocational Attitude of Students in Skill-Based Programs in Technological Institutions in Kogi State

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Abstract

This study investigates the positive influence of vocational attitudes of students in skill-based programs in technological institutions in Kogi State. Survey research design was adopted. A well-designed questionnaire was used as a viable instrument to collect data from technological institutions across various locations in the state. Data collected was analyzed using Multiple Regression and Ordered Probit Regression Model. Findings will further measure whether the acquired vocational skill (such as technology adoption, risk-taking/aversion, decision-making, and interpersonal relations skills, have a positive relationship with the self-reliance attitude of learners of technologically-based institutions in Kogi State, using the polytechnics and colleges of education. The study recommends to the government, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders the need to repackage the vocational education program with incentives to further equip the learners to take advantage of the student vocational skill and to identify inherent business or career opportunities in respective programs.

Key Words: *Student Attitude, Technical and Vocational, Skill-Based, Self-Reliance.*

INTRODUCTION

Owing to the many achievements of businesspeople in Kogi State and across Nigeria, entrepreneurship is still a vital field of study for academics. In Kogi State, entrepreneurs frequently act as benefactors, catalysts for innovation and change, and engines of economic prosperity. It is well-known for a wide range of entrepreneurial endeavors, including manufacturing, agriculture, and services. (AP and Ajai, 2016) state that those who have an inclination for entrepreneurship are encouraged to make money, as there is a growing realization that economic growth is not exclusively reliant on revenue from mineral deposits. The government and other stakeholders have made several claims about supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills in Kogi State. In Kogi State, entrepreneurship has a major impact on improvements in well-being, job generation, and a number of assertions regarding the development of entrepreneurial skills in Kogi State have been made by the government and other relevant parties. Entrepreneurship plays a significant role in Kogi State's economic development, job creation, and well-being improvements. The government and other parties are giving this idea more thought.

In Kogi State, entrepreneurial growth and activity continue to be sluggish despite the potential for progress. Improved entrepreneurial abilities, the creation of jobs, and the exploitation of business opportunities, an increase in living standards and inventiveness, the prevention of industrial slums and social unrest are all anticipated benefits of entrepreneurship development. It seems that people are not receiving enough assistance to learn and apply business skills. Additionally, funding for entrepreneurship skill development is insufficient. The likelihood that Kogi State's entrepreneurship development would result in the intended economic advancement is low. Poor delivery of Kogi State's potential for entrepreneurship growth might be linked to government policies and support. Government support for the development of entrepreneurial skills (ESD) is deemed insufficient, according to (Efi and Akpan, 2012)). This has discouraged people from acting with intention and taking advantage of business opportunities, producing a wide range of items, and engaging in innovative activities. The development of entrepreneurship in Kogi State has not been positively impacted by several policy initiatives. These include, but are not limited to, tax, consumer protection, security, and environmental impact. Even though these policies hurt entrepreneurship in Kogi State, (Efi and Akpan, 2012)) noted that progressive entrepreneurship is still hampered by unreliable power supplies and other infrastructure shortcomings, unfavorable fiscal policies, several taxes, fuel shortages and price increases, inconsistent policy, restricted market access, issues with the procurement of raw materials, and unfavorable monetary policies.

In Kogi State, Nigeria, the employability of graduates and entrepreneurship education is a significant concern. After completing their studies, Nigerian graduates frequently face challenges in securing employment, mainly because they lack entrepreneurship skills. According to the study, there is a clear gap between the supply and demand of entrepreneurial skills among graduates and employers, emphasizing the necessity for enhanced entrepreneurship education (Rotimi, Uba and Aruwa, 2022).

Nigeria, with a population of over 200 million people, is the largest country in Africa and ranks eighth in the world with a nominal GDP of 5448.10 billion. Despite these figures, the country is facing significant concerns regarding youth unemployment. According to (Garba et al., 2010), successive Nigerian administrations have expressed particular worry about the increasing rate of youth unemployment and the high levels of poverty. Consequently, Nigeria is placing a stronger emphasis on education that focuses on developing practical skills. For example, an examination of the national policy on technological education indicates that institutions in this category are primarily tasked with imparting the necessary skills to produce technicians, technologists, and other skilled individuals who are capable of entrepreneurship and self-reliance.

Despite the significant expansion of these establishments (such as polytechnics, specialized universities, and colleges of education), there is still an abundance of unprepared candidates in the Nigerian job market. This is compounded by a large number of individuals who are ill-prepared to embark on a career in their chosen field of study.

Statement of the Problem

The need for well-trained graduates with practical competencies is highlighted by the need for skilled labor in Nigeria's rapidly evolving industrial and technological sectors. Like other places, Kogi State's technological institutions have implemented skill-based programs to give students the practical experience and industry knowledge they need to meet these demands. Though these programs are available, questions remain about how well students are engaged, motivated, and how they feel about vocational education in general. These worries make one wonder if students think these programs are a good way to get a job or advance personally.

Prior research on vocational education in Nigeria has frequently concentrated on policy frameworks, program implementation, and curriculum content. The attitudes and perceptions of students in these skill-based programs have received less attention, despite the fact that they may have a big impact on their dedication to learning and success in the job market in the long run. Students may not participate fully in the practical aspects of their education without a positive vocational attitude, which could limit their employability and result in underperformance.

The purpose of this study therefore, was to evaluate the career attitudes of students enrolled in skill-based programs at Kogi State's technological institutions. It seeks to investigate the elements influencing their attitudes, pinpoint problems, and offer suggestions for enhancing program results and student engagement. Policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders must comprehend student attitudes in order to develop more successful vocational education programs that meet the needs of students as well as the demands of the labor market.

Objectives of the Study

1. This study assesses the career-focused mindset of students enrolled in skill-based programs in Kogi State's technological institutes.

2. The study also identified factors, such as individual interests, social expectations, and institutional support, and how they influence students' vocational attitudes toward skill-based programs.
3. It assesses how vocational training affects students' future employment prospects in Kogi State and their career goals.
4. Other tasks were to evaluate how technology-related institutions contribute to skill development and enhance students' attitudes toward their careers.
5. The study determines the challenges students face in developing a positive vocational attitude in skill-based programs, including issues related to facilities, teaching methods, or external pressures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the field of decision-making skills for self-employment, the importance of possessing the right vocational attitude cannot be overstated. According to the research by Faloye and Olatunji (2018), risk-taking, high-level creativity, and drive, which are essential for entrepreneurial success, are closely linked to well-developed vocational skills. Hisrich (2006) also emphasizes the significance of technical skills and business management skills in entrepreneurial involvement. Entrepreneurship revolves around recognizing and capitalizing on opportunities, as indicated by Hisrich (2006) and Ikeme and Onu (2007). They assert that it involves identifying investment opportunities and establishing a profit-oriented enterprise.

Njoku, (2023) emphasized the importance of locating and seizing self-employment entrepreneurial opportunities. Thus, developing entrepreneurial skills is crucial to improving one's ability to quickly recognize and seize opportunities in Kogi State's business environment. The abilities gained should help one develop a unique approach to addressing entrepreneurial challenges, foster self-assurance, and raise one's self-worth and level of self-employment. Youth empowerment, according to Undiyaundeye and Eni (2015), primarily focuses on establishing and sustaining the enabling conditions under which young people can act independently and on their own terms rather than at the behest of others. These scholars list the following as enabling conditions: stable environments of equality, peace, and democracy; political will; adequate resource allocation; supportive legislative and administrative frameworks; access to knowledge and information; and a still, positive value system.

Student Attitudes

Student attitude is a complex idea that is influenced by a wide range of elements, such as peer pressure, parental support, teacher connections, and cultural background. While negative attitudes might impede success, positive attitudes toward learning are substantially correlated with improved academic outcomes. Studies highlight the significance of cultivating good attitudes by proactive involvement, encouraging surroundings, and focused interventions, particularly in fields like STEM, where uncomplimentary attitudes and prejudices have lasting effects. The concept of "student attitude" relates to a student's inclination or thinking towards numerous areas of their

education, including learning, teachers, school atmosphere, and specific subjects. Attitudes can significantly affect students' academic success, motivation, and engagement.

Student attitude is often described as a psychological tendency expressed by evaluating certain entities such as subjects, learning environments, or teachers with some degree of favor or disfavor (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Research highlights several factors which influence student attitudes, among them, the quality of teacher-student relationships, which when positive encourages a supportive learning environment that can enhance students' positive attitudes toward schooling (Pianta, 1999). Peer groups also play a significant role in shaping student attitudes; which according to Ryan (2000), often influenced the attitudes and behaviors of their peers, especially during adolescence. Parental attitudes and involvement in education have also been found to influence how students perceive their schoolwork and the value of education.

Studies show that students who experience high levels of parental involvement tend to have more positive attitudes toward learning and greater academic success (Epstein, 2001). Student attitudes are also shaped by broader socioeconomic and cultural contexts. Research by Sirin (2005) indicates that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often exhibit more positive attitudes towards education due to greater access to resources and support systems. Cultural attitudes toward education can either motivate or hinder students' engagement, depending on the values placed on academic achievement within a given culture.

Vocational Education

Vocational education, according to Danko et al. (2010), is a type of education meant to provide students with the experience and confidence they need to pursue careers in fields based on manipulative skills or non-technical knowledge, such as business education, agriculture, Norte economics, painting, decorating, and technical education. It attempts to develop a worker's skills, abilities, understanding, attitudes, work habits, and appreciation in addition to providing the knowledge and information necessary for them to begin and progress in their career. Technical education, on the other hand, seeks to impart to students an understanding of science and technology concepts and how they apply to modern manufacturing and design. Additionally, it highlights the engineering-related components of vocational education, such as electrical and electronics, mechanical and automotive, building trades, and woodworking.

It entails comprehending and putting into practice the fundamental ideas of science and mathematics. The purpose of technical education, according to (Olaitan, 2016), is to impart concepts, abilities, values related to the environment and the workplace, and knowledge about what one can achieve in life.

History of Vocational and Technical Education

Technology is the application of scientific knowledge to the practical purpose of human life, whereas education is the process of transferring or gaining knowledge, skills, values, and developing good character traits in individuals through formal schooling or teaching. When taken as a whole, the term "technology education" designates a field of study that offers students the

opportunity to acquire the knowledge and abilities needed to solve problems and maximize human potential. (Adamu and others, 2023)

When discussing education throughout history, Abubakar et al. write that "most education came about through participation; preparation for work adult life happened through interaction, not through training in separate, specific institutions." In order to explain this, he said that young people took over their parents' jobs when production remained steady across generations. All they needed to know was what their parents had taught them there, like where to go hunting and fishing, how to till and irrigate the land, and how to feed the herd.

He emphasized further that knowledge is power in any community, but that knowledge could be passed directly from parent to child as long as it remained local and specialized. "In many countries, youth education through on-the-job training is still a common practice. The way that education is delivered has undergone fundamental changes due to shifts in modes of production. Work division became more advantageous as population diversity increased. Learning a specialized trade has become more valuable than relying on inherited abilities. Such knowledge could only be imparted by experts in that trade, who were not often parents.

Public Perception of Vocational and Technical Education

Technical and Vocational Education Although many people in society believe that graduates of vocational and technical education are stupid and underachievers, these graduates are respected or acknowledged by society. According to (Amor, Marigo, and Maurini, 2009), the majority of parents in Nigerian educational institutions do not encourage or support their children to enrol in technical and vocational education programs because these fields are not highly regarded or valued in the community. Candidates' enrollment in technical and vocational education programs in Nigerian educational institutions is impacted as a result. A large number of applicants have little interest in technical and vocational education. Many people pursuing postsecondary education are not interested in vocational and technical education programs. Speaking with potential college of education candidates, it was learned that the NCE (tech) nomenclature used in the majority of Nigerian colleges of education that provide programs in vocational and technical education is the reason behind their lack of interest in becoming teachers. Many people pursuing postsecondary education are not interested in vocational and technical education programs.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The study was conducted in the state of Kogi using a survey as its research design. The population of the study consists of 162 students. This includes all enrolled management and home science students in Kogi State's two education colleges. The sample for this study consists of 162 students. This class consists of 69 male and 93 female students. The study's sample size was established using the Taro Yamen algorithm, which also made use of basic random sampling and purposeful sampling. The instrument used to collect data is a structured questionnaire known as the "Attitude of Students towards Entrepreneurship Questionnaire." The continuum of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used to construct the 20 items of the questionnaire D. The instrument was duly validated by three (3) experts. Of the

specialists, two (2) came from tertiary institutions in Kogi State. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach's Alpha technique. To collect data for the study, copies of the Instrument were given to each respondent in person at their respective schools. Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, in response

S/N	ITEMS	A	D	SD	
1.	I like going to classes on entrepreneurship.	80	40	20	30
2.	My interest in the field of entrepreneurship has grown	80	35	15	30
3.	In my opinion, entrepreneurship is more significant than other courses.	80	45	15	20
4.	I always think about becoming an entrepreneur.	80	48	10	22
5.	I enjoy hanging around with smart business people	80	46	4	30
6.	My passion for entrepreneurship education aids in my ability to spot business opportunities	80	56	4	20
7.	Entrepreneurship education provides the skills necessary to generate new ideas.	80	58	2	20
8.	My interest in entrepreneurship was sparked by modules from the entrepreneurship program	80	68	2	10
9.	Being able to develop business plans piques my curiosity about entrepreneurship.	80	49	11	20
10.	My interest in entrepreneurship has led to an improvement in my knowledge and skills.	80	50	10	20
11.	The prospect of working for myself peaks my interest in starting my own business.	80	68	2	10

12.	Having a fulfilling personal life increases my interest in entrepreneurship.	80	56	4	20
13.	Being unemployed improve my attitude toward entrepreneurship.	80	48	2	30
14.	I find learning about entrepreneurship fascinating	80	57	3	20
15.	I think I can succeed in entrepreneurship.	80	67	3	10
16.	I can succeed in entrepreneurship if given the opportunity.	80	56	4	20
17.	I need to pursue entrepreneurship to advance academically.	80	62	8	10
18.	A key component of my professional development is entrepreneurship.	80	48	2	30
19.	Enrolling in an entrepreneurship course would enhance my social interactions.	80	58	2	20
20.	Learning about entrepreneurship is made easier for me through instruction.	80	48	2	30

Response from Kogi State University, Ayigba

S/N	ITEMS		A	D	SD
1.	I like going to classes on entrepreneurship.	82	40	22	30
2.	My interest in the field of entrepreneurship has grown because of talking entrepreneur classes	82	45	17	20
3.	In my opinion, entrepreneurship is more significant than other courses.	82	45	17	20
4.	I always think about becoming an entrepreneur.	82	48	12	22
5.	I enjoy hanging around with smart business people	82	48	4	30
6.	My passion for entrepreneurship education aids in my ability to spot business opportunities	82	58	4	20
7.	Entrepreneurship education provides the skills necessary to generate new ideas.	82	60	2	20
8.	My interest in entrepreneurship was sparked by modules from the entrepreneurship programe	82	70	2	10
9.	Being able to develop business plans piques my curiosity about entrepreneurship.	82	51	11	20
10.	My interest in entrepreneurship has led to an improvement in my knowledge and skills.	82	53	10	20
11.	The prospect of working for myself peaks my interest in starting my own business.	82	70	2	10
12.	Having a fulfilling personal life increases my interest in entrepreneurship.	82	58	4	20
13.	Being unemployed improve my attitude toward entrepreneurship.	82	50	2	30
14.	I find learning about entrepreneurship fascinating	82	59	3	20
15.	I think I can succeed in entrepreneurship.	82	69	3	10
16.	I can succeed in entrepreneurship if given the opportunity.	82	58	4	20
17.	I need to pursue entrepreneurship to advance academically.	82	64	8	10
18.	A key component of my professional development is entrepreneurship.	82	51	2	30
19.	Enrolling in an entrepreneurship course would enhance my social interactions.	82	60	2	20
20.	Learning about entrepreneurship is made easier for me through instruction.	82	50	2	30

Source: Field Survey by Enejoh Omejeh, 2024

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study's findings demonstrated that both male and female students at Kogi State Polytechnic in Lokoja and Kogi State University in Anyigba had a favorable attitude toward entrepreneurship. This is clear from the fact that participants indicated that they preferred to be around people with creative business ideas, thought that entrepreneurship was a viable career path, and expressed a preference for entrepreneurship programs. The findings support the assertion made by Hannan, Hazlett, and Leitch (2004) that increasing people's favorable perceptions of entrepreneurship education is a requirement for increasing entrepreneurial initiative. The findings corroborate the claim made by Akowe, Usman, and Enejoh (2023) that entrepreneurs must have an optimistic outlook in order to succeed, particularly in the face of challenges and obstacles. Without such a mindset, success is unlikely.

However, are at odds with those of (Ozgen and Minsky, 2013), who found that men had a more favorable attitude towards entrepreneurship than women. The study's conclusions showed that both Kogi State University in Anyigba and Kogi State Polytechnic in Lokoja had a favorable attitude towards entrepreneurship. The results showed that the students agreed that their interest in entrepreneurship education helps them in spotting business opportunities, that entrepreneurship education provides the skills necessary to generate new ideas, that developing business plans heightens one's interest in entrepreneurship, and that an interest in entrepreneurship contributes to improvements in one's knowledge and skills. The results corroborate those of (NDUNGU, 2018), who confirmed that one of the elements influencing a person's desire to become an entrepreneur is their attitude towards it.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey investigated how people feel about starting their own business. The study revealed that student highly value and place a high priority on the course and have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship. The pupils believe that entrepreneurship education adds value to their resumes and provides them with the necessary information to launch and expand their own businesses. Furthermore, there were no differences in the attitude es of students towards entrepreneurship based on gender or type of institution. The study suggests that to improve students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education should be green high priority, the curriculum designers should harmonize the course content of vocational and technical education programs in Kogi State Higher Institution.

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