



Gender Participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated gender participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training among students in Technical Colleges in Rivers State. Three research questions were answered while three hypotheses were formulated for the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Total sample of one hundred and twenty seven (127) teachers were used in the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was validated and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions; while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that gender participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State is affected by societal belief in early marriage, parental preference and priority to each child, as well as teacher's disposition to student's sex. Consequently, among other things, it was recommended that, Technical and Vocational Education and Training participation should be made free at all levels; the society needs to be enlightened on the implication of gender inequality. The societal traditional practice of early marriage for the girl child should be discouraged. Parents should give equal treatments to their children and see education as a concept that must be embraced and a means to poverty eradication. Teachers should discontinue gender participation in the school system and give equal treatment to every student. To avoid students losing interest in Technical and Vocational Education and Training, guidance counsellors should give appropriate occupational information to all students before choosing any career.

Keywords: Gender, Participation, Education, Technical, Vocational Education, Training.

INTRODUCTION

Technical Vocational Education and Training broadly refers to deliberate interventions to bring about learning which would make people more productive (or simply adequately productive) in designated areas of economic activity (Okwelle, 2013). Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) equips people with manipulative ability for production of goods and services, which serve as a catalyst in the process of change in the society. It helps people to be self-reliant and make direct and meaningful contributions to the growth of national economy (Chuma, 2012). Furthermore, Ayonmike (2014) posited that technical vocational education and training (TVET) has become one of the key policy priorities in education and training in Nigeria due to the recognition of its effects on social and economic empowerment of the society. In Nigeria, TVET has been identified to provide requisite skills and build human capacities especially in key priority areas including science, technology and engineering that support the achievement of its vision of becoming a prosperous and industrial nation by the year 2020 (Kelechi, 2014).

In both developed and developing countries, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) equip both men and women with the necessary skills to perform their assigned personal and societal responsibilities. For the individual, technical and vocational education and training provides the necessary skills and attitudes with which he can live a more successful life and contribute more meaningfully to societal development (Nwaokugha, 2009).

Gender refers to society's division of humanity, based on sex, into two distinctive categories (Ifeanacho, 2009). Gender guides how females and males think about themselves, how they interact with others, and what position they occupy in society as a whole. Thus gender also operates as a dimension of social inequality. This participation, which has historically favoured males, is no simple matter of biological differences between the two sexes. Females and males do of course differ biologically, but this participation is complex and inconsistent in our Technical Colleges in Nigeria (Iloegbunam, 2010). In Nigeria, a developing country, technical vocational education and training of both men and women is very vital for the overall development of the nation. Both boys and girls have vital roles to play towards the growth and development of the society. However, in Nigeria, women constitute the majority of the unskilful adults (Simipri, 2015). As a result, women do not have equal opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. In both rural and urban areas, many women perform unskilled and menial jobs, some occupy the lowest cadre in the job hierarchy; earn little wages after over-working themselves (Ameachi, 2014). This is substantiated by (Aminigo, 2006) who reported of gender differences in all socio-economic attributes of income, wages, skills, health and poverty widened in developing countries because women cannot have access and control over resources, benefit from economic opportunities, and influence their power in political arena. Gender participation in education is not about political back-passing or propaganda. It is not about the number of women in politics or governance, and not about separate schools for both sexes. It is also not about the levels of educational attainment/achievement of boys and girls, nor the female/male ratios of the population. It is not about which of the sexes can contribute more to benefit the family. It is about equal access to education and retention of these students (Epelle, 2003).

Causes of Gender Participation in Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET)

The issues of gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria is a reality but the fact remains that there is no policy or public pronouncement by government that appear to support or encourage such an ugly trend of event. Gender participation in most cases is made by those who appear to be very myopic in reasoning and in complying with their tradition and culture. In the light of the devastating impact of gender participation in societies, the following factors are being identified.

1. Tradition and Culture

The tradition and culture of some societies are dehumanizing to the extent that they inhibit the rights of women to education in Nigeria, when one talks of inequality one quickly remember his or her tradition and culture that show that way of life. It is certain that culture and tradition are to be protected but to an extent. This implies doing away with those parts that are discriminating in nature especially to the females. Ali (2013) contends that some of those odd practices have imposed un-progressive and specific roles on the females to deprive them of economic, political, social and human resources. Ezeam (2008) posits that because of tradition and culture the natives refuse the education of the female daughters. The obvious reason being that they are afraid of their daughters and are duly protected against danger by not sending them to school in most part of the country, both the culture and certain family traditions restrict women from participating in certain occupations. This scenario explains why females at times exhibit nonchalant attitude towards technical and vocational Education and training in the Technical Colleges.

2. Parents' Attitude toward Children Education

The major problem about gender participation in its entire ramification in the modern society is rooted to parental upbringing and orientation which is predicated on the patriarchal society where the men dominate almost every sphere. Many gender stereotypes have evolved in favour of the male gender. In Nigeria, many cultural constructions are on the social sphere tend to project the gender as worthy of social investment. Many times show a positive attitude and preference towards the education of their male children. This is a reflection of the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian, thereby subjecting the females to play supportive roles that do not required technical vocational skills. Obada (2008) posits that most societies that are patriarchal lend further credence to their privileged position accorded men. This is to say that female children on the average do not enjoy property from their parents in compliance with the tents of the society.

3. Teachers Attitude toward female in Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The school environment and in particular, the attitude of teachers towards female students is a key area of concern. Kito (2008) observes that the behaviour of many teachers makes female students lose confidence in their academic ability. Consequently, they resort to learning helplessly. She notes that both male and female teachers spend more time talking to the boys than the girls in the class. Various kinds of literature exist on the attitude of teachers towards their male and female students all over the world. Kito further acknowledges that evidence from Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Guinea depict teachers' perception in both males and females with regard to academic superiority of the boys over the girls. Hence, the teachers get attracted and pay more attention to the boys. He further reveals that the Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda teachers are said to devote all their attention to boys while girls are completely ignored. In Cameroon, teachers accept to teach boys. As a result, they focus more attention on boys than girls in the classroom.

The use of label of teachers on students has potential discouraging the enrolment and completion of educational career by girls labelling according to Omokhodien (as cited by Okeke, 2008) is a means of identifying anything or anyone. It could be a natural name, a nickname or a given name. Labelling a student may have either a positive or negative reputation. The behaviour of students changes accordingly with the attitude of teachers towards them in relation to the label used. Often times, male teachers take offence at the pride and arrogance of some female students and are therefore compelled to have negative attitude towards such students.

Statement of the Problem

In some part of Rivers State, females are excluded from participating in educational activities such as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) (Ikenga, 2009). Instead young females are married at their youth ages instead of sending them to school to acquire technical-vocational skills. In some families, parents force their daughters to get married while the money realized from it, is used to educate their male counterparts who are generally believed to take up their father's position when he died (Epelle, 2009). In some studies conducted in part of the country, it was revealed that some teachers contributed to gender inequality as they discourage girls from choosing certain school training owing to their perceptions that girl's education ends in the kitchen. As a result, their subjects were tailored along the line of becoming good house-wife's and mothers. The boys were encouraged to go into science (Simipri, 2015). Gender participation has been identified as a national problem. Therefore, the problem of this research paper is to identify gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training participation among students in Technical Colleges in Rivers State, with the aim of proffering recommendations in order to encourage equal right to both sexes in education.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training among students in Technical Colleges in Rivers State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which societal believe affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent to which parental preference affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State.
3. Determine the extent to which teachers' attitude contributes to gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed in the study;

1. To what extent does societal belief affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does parental preference affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does teachers' attitude contribute to gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated at 0.05 level of significance in the study;

- 1 There is no significant difference in the opinions of male and female teachers on the extent societal belief affects gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State.
- 2 There is no significant difference in the opinions of male and female teachers on the extent parental preference affects gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State.
- 3 There is no significant difference in the opinions of male and female teachers on the extent teachers' attitude affects gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State.

METHOD

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive research design. The population for this study included 127 male and female technical vocational teachers from four (4) Technical Colleges across Rivers State at the time of the study. The entire population of 127 teachers was used for the study, therefore there was no sampling carried out. This was because the population was considered manageable due its small size. Out of this population, 72 teachers were male while 55 were female teachers.

The primary instrument used for this study is the questionnaire titled "Gender Participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training Participation Questionnaire" (GPTVETQ). The questionnaire contained a well-structured twenty (15) items for the purpose of generating data for the study. The responses to the instrument items were based on the five-point Likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), Low Extent (LE) and Very High Extent (VHE) with corresponding numerical values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1.

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument the research questionnaire containing well structure items was presented to three experts in Technical Education for scrutiny. Their observations and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft of the questionnaire. Also, to determine the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest technique was used. The instrument was administered on twenty (20) teachers drawn from technical colleges in Bayelsa State which was outside the sampled schools. A reliability coefficient index 0.83 was established using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The instrument was therefore judged as reliable.

In analysing the data generated for the study the research question were answered by using statistical Mean while the three hypotheses were tested using the t-test at 0.05 level of significance. A criterion mean of 3.00 was adopted for the study. Based on this, any mean response equal to 3.00 or above was considered as high extent while any mean response less than 3.00 was considered as low extent. The null hypothesis was accepted if the $t = \text{calculated value}$ is less than $t \text{ critical (table) value}$ and accepted otherwise.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does societal belief affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Mean Response on Social Belief and Gender Participation

S/N	ITEMS	Male (N = 72)			Female (N = 55)		
		M	S.D	Decision	M	S.D	Decision
1	People’s belief on early marriage leads to gender participation in TVET.	3.67	1.36	H E	3.80	1.32	H E
2	There is gender participation in TVET based on the belief that women’s place is in the kitchen.	3.75	1.32	H E	3.65	1.35	H E
3	Females are given out for marriage at the expense of their participation in TVET	3.79	1.34	H E	3.98	1.16	H E
4	Females children are forced into early marriage while the proceeds are used in educating the males	3.89	1.31	H E	3.89	1.29	H E
5	Most people consider educating females in TVET Technical Colleges as a waste of resources, since they will be given out in marriage	3.74	1.32	H E	3.82	1.17	H E
Average Mean/SD		3.77	1.33		3.83	1.26	

Source: Field survey

Table 1 shows that both male and female respondents rated all items as high extent regarding the extent societal belief affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State. However, a standard deviation value ranging between 1.17 to 1.35 implies that the respondents were close in their opinion.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does parental preference affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Mean Response on Parental Preference and Gender Participation

S/N	ITEMS	Male (N = 72)			Female (N = 55)		
		M	S.D	Decision	M	S.D	Decision
1	Females are preserved for domestic work instead of going to TVET school.	3.67	1.35	H E	3.84	1.29	H E
2	Females are nurtured to take care of the home while the males are at school acquiring TVET	3.79	1.32	H E	3.76	1.32	H E
3	Most parents have natural inclination to training their male children in TVET	3.63	1.39	H E	3.76	1.33	H E
4	Most parents prefer participation of TVET for their male children at the expenses of the females	3.74	1.27	H E	3.98	1.18	H E
5	Most parents do not seem to give equal participation of TVET opportunity to their male and female children	3.72	1.33	H E	3.96	1.02	H E
Average Mean/SD		3.71	1.33		3.86	1.23	

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 shows the mean value ratings of both male and female respondents above 3.00 cut off is an indication of high extent regarding the extent parental preference affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State. A standard deviation value ranging between 1.02 to 1.39 suggests that the respondents were close in their opinion.

Research Question 3: *To what extent does teacher's attitude contribute to gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?*

Table 3: Mean Response on Teacher's Attitude and Gender Participation

S/N	ITEMS	Male (N = 72)			Female (N = 55)		
		M	S.D	Decision	M	S.D	Decision
1	Technical teachers differ in their life disposition towards TVET students.	3.74	1.34	H E	3.76	1.17	H E
2	The behaviour of most TVET teachers affect the students learning ability negatively.	3.75	1.28	H E	3.78	1.32	H E
3	Teachers preferring special interest in the male students for TVET may result to gender participation.	3.75	1.18	H E	3.84	1.20	H E
4	Teachers encourage the male students in their choice of subject leading to science, medicine, engineering and law rather than TVET.	3.58	1.42	H E	3.91	1.02	H E
5	Most teachers are fond on using derogatory words and remarks on female TVET students.	3.71	1.38	H E	3.71	1.37	H E
Average Mean/SD		3.71	1.32		3.80	1.22	

Source: *Field Survey*

Table 3 shows that the mean responses regarding the extent societal belief affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State were above 3.00 cut off mean value, hence high extent. However, a standard deviation value ranging between 1.17 to 1.38 implies that the respondents were close in their opinion

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers regarding the extent societal belief affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?

Table 4.6: t-Test for Responses on Social Belief and Gender Participation

Groups	N	M	S.D	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	72	3.77	0.85	125	-0.42	1.96	Accepted
Female	55	3.83	0.81				

Source: *Field Data*

Table 4.6 reveals that the calculated value of t (t-cal, degree of freedom of 125) = 0.42 is less than critical value of t (t-crit, degree of freedom of 125) = 1.96. Based on this, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers regarding the extent societal belief affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers regarding the extent parental preference affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?

Table 4.7: t-Test for Mean Response on Parental Preference and Gender Participation

Groups	N	M	S.D	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	72	3.71	0.93	-0.99	1.96	Accepted
Female	55	3.86	0.78			

Source: Field Data

Table 4.7 shows that the calculated value of t (t-cal, degree of freedom of 125) = 0.99 is less than critical value of t (t-crit, degree of freedom of 125) = 1.96. Based on this, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers regarding the extent parental preference affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers regarding the extent teacher's attitude affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State?

Table 4.9: t-Test for Mean Response on Teachers' Attitude and Gender Participation

Groups	N	M	S.D	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	72	3.71	0.90	125	-0.62	1.96	Accepted
Female	55	3.80	0.77				

Source: Field Data

Table 4.9 shows that the calculated value of t (t-cal, degree of freedom of 125) = 0.62 is less than critical value of t (t-crit, degree of freedom of 125) = 1.96. Based on this, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers regarding the extent teacher's attitude affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result from the analysis in Table 1 with respect to the first research question reveals that both male and female teachers agree that societal belief affect gender participation in Technical Vocational and Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State to a high extent. This finding is in agreement with observation of Obada (2009) who opined that traditional practices and observances of culture in terms of giving the female children for early marriages accounted for females low education level. This does not limit their enrolment figure but perpetuate ignorance among women, which in turn affect their participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training in our Technical Colleges in Rivers State. Similarly the result collaborated with the findings of Akpotohwo and Ehimen (2014) who carried a study on gender disparity in acquisition of technical vocational skills in Delta State and found that societal belief affect gender disparity on a high extent. Furthermore, the test of hypothesis indicated that that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers regarding the extent societal belief affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training.

The result from the analysis of the second research question as shown in Table 2 reveals that both male and female teachers agree that parental preference affect gender participation in Technical Vocational and Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State to a high extent. Parents decide to send their sons rather than, their daughters to school. This finding is consistent with findings of Fubara (2010) who carried a study on gender disparity in acquisition of technical vocational skills in Delta State and found that parental preference affect gender disparity on a high extent. Similarly, the result of the hypothesis testing as shown in Table 5 signifies that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers regarding the extent parental preference affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training. Based on this, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that

there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers regarding the extent teacher's attitude affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training.

Analysis of data in Table 3 revealed that both male and female teachers agree that teacher's attitude towards students affect gender participation in Technical Vocational and Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State to a high extent. In line with this finding is Kito (1994) who observed that the behavior of many teachers make fame students lose confidence in their academic ability. Consequently, they resort to learning helplessly. Kito further noted that both male and female teachers spend more time talking to the boys than the girls in the class. Various kinds of literature exist on the attitude of teachers towards their male and female students all over the world. Similarly the result collaborated with the finding of Fubara (2010) who carried a study on gender inequalities in education in secondary schools in Rivers State and found that teachers' behaviours (attitude) affect gender inequality on a high extent. Furthermore, the corresponding null hypothesis was accepted as shown in Table 6, implying that there was no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers regarding the extent teacher's attitude affect gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training.

CONCLUSION

Education perceived as a means to an end as it serves as source of empowerment to the beneficiaries. Gender participation is associated with people's belief in marriage, parental preference and teacher's attitude towards certain sex of the students. The view that women's place is in the kitchen is another silent point that is provoking gender participation in Technical Vocational Education and Training participation in Nigeria. The society should give equal treatments to both men and women in order minimize gender participation in Technical Vocational Education. The study concluded that if the students are given equal opportunity by their parents, then gender participation will gradually be eliminated in our school system and training. Teachers should treat the students' equal and simple and clear methods in teaching Technical Vocational Education and Training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings made by the study and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made;

1. That Government should provide equal education for all and supervise the school system to ensure equal and uniform provision of services in order to eradicate gender participation in Nigeria.
2. The societal traditional practice of early marriage for the girl child should be stopped.
3. Parents should give every child equal right to qualitative education in order to have a gender free society.
4. Teachers should stop gender participation in the school system and give equal treatment to carry early students.

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