An Assessment of Women Participation in Vocational & Entrepreneurial Programme in Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, Bayelsa State

ATEBOH-BRIGGS, Patricia B. & SAM EGBUSON, Blessing
Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education
Sagbama, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

1banbriggs@gmail.com & 2blessingegbuson@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
An Assessment of Women Participation in Vocational & Entrepreneurial Programme in Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, Bayelsa State Two research questions were used for the study. The researcher used all the population of 15 female students as sample for the study. The researchers developed an instrument for the study titled ‘Women Participation in vocational skill program’ (WPVSP). The questionnaire items consist of a three point rating scale instruments used for the study. The instrument was face validated by an expert from centre of entrepreneurship study in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Test- re-test procedure was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, the reliability of the instruments was calculated to be 0.73. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using the simple mean. The findings of the study revealed that female students are active in vocational training organized by the institution. The study also showed that female students cope with the methods adopted by the teachers in carrying out vocational training. Among others, it was recommended that School management should intensify training programs for Women participation in Entrepreneurship Development Centers.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship, Vocational program, Development Centre, Bayelsa State

INTRODUCTION
Education is a basic human right and considered by many as a key tool for national development. National development could be addressed in many ways as the improvement of human capacity building, increasing the skill workforce for modernization or as a matter of personal freedom, developing capacity and empowerment (Alam, 2008). The concept of human capital suggests that education and training raise the productivity level of workers and increase their lifetime earning capacity through skill acquisition (Eze, 2013). Such skills in technical and vocational areas include carpentry, bricklaying, welding, fabrication, typing, poultry, fishing, piggery, baking, sewing and soap production (Eze, 2013). Technical and Vocational Education program (TVE) can provide employment for idle youths. Ezekwesili, (2007) agreed that the citizens of a nation must be appropriately and adequately skilled before they can fight unemployment and poverty.

TVE could be the most effective form of education that can guarantee youth empowerment, job creation and unemployment reduction since it empowers, equips and gives the trainees saleable skills to be self reliant. Usman and Tafida (2009) declared that one of the goals of National Economic Empowerment and
Development Strategy (NEED) is the strengthening of technical and vocational skills to enable people be gainfully employed or be self reliant. Vocational education is designed to prepare individuals in the world of work. Vocational schools are established at secondary and tertiary level to train individuals to acquire skills on different trades. Observation show that in our vocational Institutions, most trades like: welding and fabrication, bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, etc are mostly offered by male students. While female students may be found in trades like tailoring, catering services, and so on. However with the current economic challenges and advancement in the world, lots of women are moving into different trades for the purpose of survival.

Most young school leavers in vocational and technical schools often end up establishing business centers based on their trades. The challenge here is on how to develop and expand their business base after establishment. On this ground, both male and female folks that own different business trade are meant to acquire entrepreneurial skills for self development.

Arogundade, (2011) define entrepreneur as an innovating individual who has developed an ongoing business activity where none existed before. This symbolizes that entrepreneurs are individuals who possess the ability to see and assess business opportunities, to mobilize resources to exploit the opportunities and put in place necessary action-oriented, highly motivated individuals who bear risk to achieve goals. Salami, (2011) also posited that entrepreneurship is the ability to seek investment opportunities and persisting to exploit that opportunities.

Osuala, (2010) stated some of the objective of entrepreneurship as:
1. To provide meaningful education for youth which could make them self-reliant?
2. To provide graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business.
3. To provide graduates with enough training skill needed to do business in the society.
4. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed area.

According to Egboh, (2009), entrepreneurship development enhances the knowledge and abilities of individuals and groups to assume the role of entrepreneur as well as efforts to remove all forms of barriers in the industrial and commercial development of any nation. Abubakar (2010) stated that entrepreneurship knowledge is a sure pathway to liberation of the mind and the improvement of socio economic and business development. With entrepreneurship knowledge, youths are at advantaged to invest in any of the following business areas, which are articulated by Nosike, (2012):

5. Textile and clothing business
7. Production and sales of assorted crafts.
8. Various form of consultancy services.
9. Mining and agriculture.
10. Interior decorator
11. Manufacturing

A Entrepreneurial centers are vital establishments mostly sited in higher institutions for the development of skills that could enhance productivity and earnings. Considering the increasing rate of poverty in emerging economies due to corruption and recession, there is need for women to be empowered through formal education/skill acquisition that can be acquired from Entrepreneurial development centers.

Entrepreneurship can be defined on the other hand, as the attitude developed, skills and actions of an individual commencing a new business venture (Iheonunekwu, 2003). For any business to do well through hard times, it is needful for an entrepreneur to apply creative concepts. An entrepreneur is described as one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise. While this definition may seem plausible, many researchers argue that entrepreneurship as such is still a field with no clear boundaries and that lacks a clear conceptual framework.

Akpom, (2009) in Ordu, (2013) viewed entrepreneur as an individual that initiate an enterprise, the one who puts new forms of industry on his feet, the one who shoulders the risks and uncertainty of using economic resources in a new way and the one with the right motivation, energy and ability to build
something by his or her efforts. Generally, an entrepreneur sees a business opportunities in line with their dreams and applies them rigorously in order to achieve their life ambition or mission. Mark, (2011) in his own view described an entrepreneur as an opportunist that makes plan, starts the business, manages the business and receives profit. An entrepreneur is typically in control of all commercial undertakings, directing the factors of production which are human, financial and material resources that are required to exploit a business opportunity.

In world over, women make up 50 percent of the global population, 40 percent of the global workforce, yet only own about 1 percent of the world’s wealth (Phumzile, 2017). In Africa, women are the backbone of communities and the continent greatest potentials to unlocking economic growth as they provide the majority of labor with the least amount of resources. Reductions in the gender gap in education, health, political participation, and economic inclusion will results in an increase in the continents economic competitiveness (Phumzile, 2017).

This can further be explained that for a society to be viewed as being prosperous, it will be to the extent to which it rewards and encourages entrepreneurial activities. This is because it is the entrepreneurs and their activities that are critical determinant of level of success, prosperity, growth and opportunity in any economy. The role of women to contribute to the development of an economy cannot be over emphasized because It has been estimated by that about 3 billion people of the world’s population live in ‘poverty’ (living on less than $2 per day). Out of this number, 1.3 Billion people live in ‘absolute’ or extreme poverty (living on less than $1 per day) and over two third are said to be women. Women are sometimes denied opportunities; choices, access to information; skills and even education. They often lack access to critical resources of credit, land and inheritance (Robinson-Pant, 2006).

Nigeria is not left out in women empowerment programs. Observation shows that some female entrepreneurs in Nigeria own business such as hair dressing saloon, designers’ stores for ladies, provision shops and so on. Entrepreneurship centre in Nigeria mostly organize trade for both male and female depending on your choice of operation. It is therefore necessary that entrepreneurship centre should be established to explore and create innovative trades for women development.

**Purpose of the Study**
The study looked into an assessment of women participation in Vocational & Entrepreneurial program in Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, Bayelsa State. The study specifically:

1. To determine the extent to which Women participate in vocational trades in entrepreneurship centers at Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, in Bayelsa State.
2. To ascertain female student’s perception on methods adopted in carrying out training entrepreneurship centers at Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, in Bayelsa State.

**Research Questions**
The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent to which Women participate in vocational trades in entrepreneurship centers at Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, in Bayelsa State?
2. What is the perception of female students on methods adopted in carrying out training entrepreneurship centers at Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, in Bayelsa State?

**Scope of the Study**
The study is limited to female students in Federal Polytechnic in Ekowe, Bayelsa State.

**METHODS**
Simple survey design was used in the study. Fifteen (15) female students in Federal Polytechnic in Bayelsa State were used in the study. All the population was used as sample for the study. The researchers developed an instrument for the study titled ‘Women Participation in vocational skill program’ (WPVSP). The questionnaire items consist of a three point rating scale instruments used for the study. The instrument consist of ten questions that was developed to collect data based on the research questions that guided the study, with the response mode of Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Undecided (Un) for WPVSP. The instrument was face validated by an expert from centre of entrepreneurship study in Nnamdi Azikiwe.
University, Awka. Test- re-test procedure was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, the reliability of the instruments was calculated to be 0.73. The questionnaires were administered directly to the respondent by the researcher. The questions were answered using simple mean 3-point rating scale. Items with a mean value of 2.0 above were accepted while items with mean value below 2.0 were rejected. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using the simple mean.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the extent to which Women participate in vocational trades in entrepreneurship centers at Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Women participate in vocational trades in entrepreneurship centers at Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, in Bayelsa State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>U n</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>DECISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There are special skill program for women.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Women participate in specific trade in the school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There are experts who can train women in specific areas.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The school has special trade for women.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>ACCEPT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Women are active in vocational programs organized by the school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>ACCEPT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 1, the result revealed that responses from items 1, 3, 4 and 5 were all accepted to the various questions. While item 2 was rejected. This indicates that Women are active in vocational training programs organized by Federal Polytechnic in Bayelsa State.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of female students on methods adopted in carrying out training entrepreneurship centers at Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, in Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Perception of female students on methods adopted in carrying out the training in entrepreneurship centers at Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, in Bayelsa State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>U n</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>DECISION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teaching method adopted by teacher are adequate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>ACCEPT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students understands teachers approach during training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>ACCEPT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female students are okay with instructors approach.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>ACCEPT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female students can comfortably carryout instructors project without challenge.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>ACCEPT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I can carry out an independent project without teachers supervision.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>ACCEPT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 2 above, it shows that all the responses items were accepted. This indicated affirmation to all the mentioned items.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

From the data obtained from the table, the following were the summary of the findings:

1. The result obtained from research question 1 indicates that Women are active in vocational training programs organized by Federal Polytechnic in Bayelsa State.
2. The results obtained from research question 2 showed that respondent indicated that female students can cope with teaching methods adopted by instructors in vocational training programs organized by Federal Polytechnic in Bayelsa State.
CONCLUSION
In all, the findings of the study revealed that female students are active in vocational training organized by the institution. The study also showed that female students cope with the methods adopted by the teachers in carrying out vocational training. Thus, emphasis placed on implementation of the organizational goals such as the training of women to acquire vocational skills is laudable projects that require commendation, proper orientation and encouragement.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The following are the recommendations for the study:
1. School management should intensify training programs for Women participation in Entrepreneurship Development Centers.
2. The School should introduce more functional Vocational Trades for women that will also train prospective female students to be entrepreneurs.

REFERENCES