Relevance of Vocational Agriculture Education on the Reduction Unemployment among Nigerian Graduates in Rivers State

Ekezie, A. I. A (PhD) & *Deebom, M. T.

Department of Vocational/ Technology Education
Faculty of Education
Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria
***tambari.deebom@ust.edu.ng**

ABSTRACT
In Nigeria today, unemployment has deepen into the fabric of the economy and among graduates. This has resulted to increase in crime rate in the society. As a means of controlling crime and to reduce unemployment in the country, Nigerian graduates are expected to enroll into on form of skills in Vocational Agricultural Education. Hence, this study examined the relevance of Vocational Agriculture Education on the reduction unemployment among Nigerian graduates in Rivers State. A descriptive survey design guided the study. Three research questions were answered to guide the study with two null hypotheses that were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant. The population of the study comprised 11,683 Nigerian graduates in Rivers State out of which 7,947 were male and 3736 were females. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in the selection of sample while sample size was determine using Taro Yamen. A sample of 742 (Male = 381 and Female = 361) Nigerian graduates in Rivers State were used for the study. The instrument for the study was a survey questionnaire tagged "Vocational Agriculture Education Unemployment Reduction Questionnaire" (VAEURQ). The instrument was structured in the pattern of Likert-4 point rating scale of agreement. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education in Rivers State University. A reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.89 were established for research questions 2 and 3 through Cronbach Alpha while Kuder-Richardson-21 (KR-21) was used to obtained a reliability of 0.86 for research question 1. Frequency and Percentage were used to answered research question 1 while Mean with Standard Deviation was used to answer the research questions 2 and 3 respectively. The independent sample t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses that were formulated at 0.05 levels of significant. It was found that majority of the skills in Vocational Agriculture Education can help in the reduction of unemployment. It was also found that skills acquisition in Vocational Agriculture helps in providing basic needs for the family and that acquisition of skills are in Vocational Agriculture are marred with challenges. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that Nigerian graduate should as much as possible enroll in vocational skills irrespective of the specialization to avert being jobless. Government should ensure that those vocational centres that are public owned such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should be effective in training at a subsidies rate. This will allow graduates even those that are jobless to be able to afford the training fees.
Keywords: Vocational Agriculture, Unemployment, Nigerian Graduates, Reduction

INTRODUCTION

The rate of unemployment has continuously to take its shape in Nigeria and on its economy and increases on daily basis spread across the country. This has cripple many graduates from tertiary institutions and thereby hampered the economy since the graduates are engage in any meaningful activities and services. Yet this problem remains unabated and effective. Based on this, it is highly imperative for policy makers in all profession and discipline and the generality of Nigerian youths to embrace vocational education especially that of Agriculture Education as a means to drastically reduce unemployment in Nigeria. Though there are reasons that have been ascribed to the rising rates of unemployment of Nigerian graduates across the country. Prominent among these causes are societal perceived conception, attitude and prejudice of the populace as a nation towards artisans and vocational education (Agriculture). This has contributed in no small measure to the rate of unemployment in the country. Hence, the majority of the youths are attracted to the profession that the society fancies and applauds even though it may not be fulfilling or adding much substance to self-employment. They get admitted into the tertiary institutions for any course that is available without recourse to their natural abilities. Hence, they graduated and get unemployed culminating to high rate of unemployment.

According to Deebom and Baridoma (2017), the singular act of being educated has resulted to massive number of graduates from various universities, polytechnics, colleges of education etc. It was further observed by the authors that the perceptions of earning a living with university (tertiary institutions) certificate after graduation has endangered Nigerian system of education and have also generate an increase in the number of unemployed graduates. Olubukola (2013) asserted that unemployment is a global phenomenon where eligible workforce of a nation is disengaged in the service of the nation while World Bank (2009) defines unemployment as the share of the labour force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. In order to reduce the rate of unemployment among Nigerian number of graduates roaming about on the street with certificate qualification without having a meaningful source of livelihood, the concept and idea of Vocational Agriculture Education should be embrace by Nigerian graduates of tertiary education.

Prior to this time that is regarded as oil boom, the main stay of Nigeria economy has been agriculture while other vocational trades were supportive as many were professionally trained in one skills or the other for the sustenance and survival. These training were in the form of artisans. Agriculture has been one of the key sectors in the development of Nigeria economy even before the oil boom in Nigeria in the early 1960's and has been a source of food for her citizens. Recently, the Federal Government come to realization that agriculture is still the major sector that holds her economy and now seek for diversification of the economy towards vocalization of agriculture. In the view of Olaitan as cited in Amadi and Nnodim (2011) defined Agricultural Education as the training aspect of agriculture for producing agricultural personnel through the school. It was further that it is a type of education for training people in the art of farming and in the pedagogy of agriculture. Also, Agricultural Education is a systematic programme of instruction for school youths, for the purpose of improving agricultural methods, skills competencies and interest. This implies that Agricultural Education is vocational in nature.

Vocational Agricultural Education is the study of the interrelationship between agriculture as a discipline is also referred to the teaching of skills, knowledge, values and attitude in production of goods, processing and marketing of agricultural and related products (Arokoyu & Ndeobi, 2014). Vocational Agricultural Education is the teaching of agriculture, natural resources and land management through hands on experience and guidance to prepare students (youth) for entry level jobs or to further education, to prepare them for advanced agricultural jobs. Amadi and Ekezie (2018) stressed that Vocational Agricultural Education is being taught at all level of education in order to inculcate in youth the basic skills and knowledge required to sustain them after school, thereby making them productive and self-reliant, instead the reverse has been the case. Self-reliance and employment could be achieved by Nigerian graduates in Agricultural

Trades and also in Vocational Trades. In this paper, Vocational Agricultural Education is trades that are acquire through formal and informal process with the aim of making individual (graduates) self-reliance. Although, all Agricultural trades are vocational in nature but all vocational trades are not agricultural. Agricultural Education trades include:

a. **Aquaculture/Fisheries:** These include Tilapia Production, Tilapia Fingerlinks Production, Cat Fish Production, Cat Fish Fingerlinks Production, Processing/Smoking of Cat Fish, Packaging/ Marketing of Cat Fish among others.
b. **Poultry:** These include Broiler Production, Pullet Production, Layers/Egg Production, Day Old Chicks Production and Processing/Making of Poultry Products.
c. **Crop Production:** These include Vegetable Production (Cucumber, Tomato, Pumpkin, Water Melon, Sweet Corn, Lettuce, Gabbage, Beatrooth, Celeric, Demon Pepper (Hot Pepper), Green Beans (Ayoka), Green Pepper (Ganga)).
d. **Cereals:** These include Rice, Maize, Beans, Wheat, Soya etcetera.
e. **Tree Crop:** Mango Production, Orange Production, Cashew Nut/Fruit Production, Apple Production, Avocado Production, Coconut Production, Pawpaw Production, Oil Palm Production among others.
f. **Ornamental Production:** Ginger, Gallic, Pineapple, Garden Egg.
g. **Livestock's/Mammals Production:** These include Snail Production, Rabbitry, Grass Cutter, Apiculture (Honey Production), Piggery, Goat, Cattle, Donkey and Camel.

For Vocational trades, the following were listed as trades that reduce unemployment among Nigerian graduates if acquired. According to Okwelle and Deebom (2017), vocational skills needed for reduction of unemployment among Nigerian graduates include Welding and Fabrication, Pipe Fitting, Electrical Installation, Computer Networking, GSM Repairs, Electronic Repairs, Veterinary Technology, Hat Making, Radio and Television Services, Painting, Block/Bricks Laying and Mason, Auto Servicing, Photography, Soap Making, Indoor/Outdoor Decorations, Carpentry and Joinery, Fashion Designing, Tailoring, Laundry/Dry Cleaning Services, Food/Catering Services, Furniture Making, Bead Making among others.

The growth in oil boom (crude oil) has caused relatively limited employment growth, and deteriorating education standard. This is because the society only believes that upon graduation, there is an automatic employment opportunities waiting. Also, graduates are hunting to work in the oil and gas sectors thereby nobody wants to study any other specialization that is not oil and gas friendly. Even when they do, they do it on the platform of mere certification and not acquisition. This perception has skyrocket the number of graduates without skills causing graduate employment. Graduate unemployment is define as the process by which job opportunities available does not commensurate with the number of graduates who are willing and qualified to work (Okwelle & Deebom, 2017). Graduate unemployment has become a major problem bedeviling the lives of Nigerian youth, causing increased in militancy, violent crimes, kidnappings, restiveness and socially delinquent behavior and turning graduates to be commercial sex workers. Youth unemployment is deviating to the individual and the society as a whole both psychologically and economically.

It is disheartening that graduate of today find it so difficult to indulge in one form of vocational skill acquisition or the other. All what Nigerian graduates are after is the white collar job that is far fetching from the reality. The questions to ask is will Nigerian graduates remain in the state of unemployment? Can possession of paper certification salvage the situation? In attempt to address these questions, this study is set to find out the relevance of Vocational Agriculture Education on the reduction unemployment among Nigerian graduates in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to examine the relevance of Vocational Agriculture Education on the reduction unemployment among Nigerian graduates in Rivers State. Objectively, this study sought to:

1. Identify skills in Vocational Agriculture Education that can reduce unemployment among Nigerian graduates in Rivers State.
2. Examine the benefits of skills acquisition in Vocational Agriculture to Nigerian graduates in Rivers State.
3. Determine factors hindering acquisition of vocational skills in agriculture by Nigerian graduates in Rivers State.

Research Questions
The following questions were answered to guide the study.
1. What are the skills in Vocational Agriculture Education that can reduce unemployment among Nigerian graduates in Rivers State?
2. What are the benefits of acquiring skills in Vocational Agriculture to Nigerian graduates in Rivers State?
3. What the factors hindering Nigerian graduate acquisition of skills in Vocational Agriculture?

Hypotheses
Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 levels of significance.
1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Nigerian graduates in Rivers State on the benefits of acquiring skills in Vocational Agriculture.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Nigerian graduates in Rivers State on the factors hindering Nigerian graduate acquisition of skills in Vocational Agriculture.

METHODOLOGY
This study involved the gathering of information from a large population of Nigerian graduates in Rivers State; therefore, the study was a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 11,683 Nigerian graduates in Rivers State out of which 7,947 were male and 3736 were females. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in the selection of sample while sample size was determine using Taro Yamen. A sample of 742 (Male = 381 and Female = 361) Nigerian graduates in Rivers State were used for the study. The instrument for the study was a survey questionnaire tagged "Vocational Agriculture Education Unemployment Reduction Questionnaire" (VAEURQ). The instrument was structured in the pattern of Likert-4 point rating scale of agreement. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education in Rivers State University. After the validation, it was administered to 17 male and 10 female Nigerian graduates who were part of the population but were not used for sample in order to test for reliability. For research 2 and 3, a reliability coefficients of 0.84 and 0.89 were establish using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method for the measure of internal consistency while reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained for research question 1 using Kuder-Richardson (KR-21). Frequency and Percentage were used to answered research question 1 while Mean with Standard Deviation was used to answer the research questions 2 and 3 respectively. The independent sample t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses that were formulated at 0.05 levels of significant. The t-test is adopted in this analysis to test large samples because as the sample size becomes sufficiently large, the t-distribution coincides with the z-distribution (Nworgu, 2015; Nwankwo, 2013). If the calculated value of t (tcal) is less than the critical value of t (tcrit), the hypothesis was accepted but if the calculated value of t (tcal) is greater than or equal to the critical value of t (tcrit), the hypothesis is rejected. Percentages below 50% were rejected while those that were equal or greater than 50% were accepted. More so, mean score that were less than 2.50 were rejected while those equal or greater than 2.50 were accepted. The data were analysed with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 18.10.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What are the skills in Vocational Agriculture Education that can reduce unemployment among Nigerian graduates in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Response of Male and Female Nigerian Graduates on Vocational Agriculture Education Skills that can Reduce Unemployment

S/NO	Vocational Agriculture Skills	Male (N = 381)		Female (N = 361)	
A	**Agricultural Skills**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
A_1	**Aquaculture/Fisheries**				
1	Tilapia Production	269	70.6	348	96.4
2	Tilapia Fingerlinks Production	309	81.1	215	59.6
3	Cat Fish Production	321	84.3	219	60.7
4	Cat Fish Fingerlinks Production	280	73.5	233	64.5
5	Processing/Smoking of Cat Fish	197	51.7	189	52.4
6	Packaging/ Marketing of Cat Fish	152	39.9	148	41.0
B_1	**Poultry**				
7	Broiler Production	348	91.3	310	85.9
8	Pullet Production	281	73.8	217	60.1
9	Layers/Egg Production	332	87.1	302	83.7
10	Day Old Chicks Production	328	86.1	286	79.2
11	Processing/Making of Poultry Products	194	50.9	179	49.6
C_1	**Crop Production**				
12	Vegetable Production (Water Leaf)	204	53.5	117	32.4
13	Cucumber	259	68.0	207	57.3
14	Tomato	253	66.4	195	54.0
15	Pumpkin	170	44.6	160	44.3
16	Water Melon	194	50.9	173	47.9
17	Sweet Corn	188	49.3	201	55.7
18	Lettuce	169	44.4	177	49.0
19	Gabbage	203	53.3	211	58.4
20	Beatrooth	176	46.2	169	46.8
21	Celeric	184	48.3	170	47.1
22	Demon Pepper (Hot Pepper)	195	51.2	122	33.8
23	Green Beans (Ayoka)	211	55.4	167	46.3
24	Green Pepper (Ganga)	199	52.2	203	56.2
C_2	**Cereals**				
25	Rice	228	59.8	228	63.2
26	Maize	186	48.8	158	43.8
27	Beans	207	54.3	174	48.2
28	Wheat	173	45.4	161	44.6
29	Soya	185	48.6	194	53.7
D	**Tree Crop**				
30	Mango Production	138	36.2	154	42.7
31	Orange Production	174	45.7	163	45.2
32	Cashew Nut/Fruit Production	204	53.5	111	30.7
33	Apple Production	159	41.7	185	51.2
34	Avocado Production	143	37.5	149	41.3
35	Coconut Production	151	39.6	122	33.8
36	Pawpaw Production	148	38.8	131	36.3
37	Oil Palm Production	202	53.0	179	49.6
E	**Ornamental Production**				
38	Ginger	132	34.6	139	38.5

39	Garlic	160	42.0	137	38.0
40	Pineapple	204	53.5	196	54.3
41	Garden Egg	237	62.2	209	57.9
F	**Livestock's/Mammals Production**				
42	Snail Production	302	79.3	328	90.9
43	Rabbitry	329	86.4	287	79.5
44	Grass Cutter	246	64.6	258	71.5
45	Apiculture (Honey Production)	173	45.4	188	52.1
46	Piggery	226	59.3	280	77.6
47	Goat	133	34.9	154	42.7
48	Cattle	182	47.8	126	34.9
49	Donkey	142	37.3	130	36.0
50	Camel	128	33.6	116	32.1
G	**Vocational Trades**				
51	Welding and Fabrication	304	79.8	238	65.9
52	Pipe Fitting	328	86.1	305	84.5
53	Electrical Installation	311	81.6	328	90.9
54	Computer Networking	342	89.8	340	94.2
55	GSM Repairs	317	83.2	313	86.7
56	Electronic Repairs	333	87.4	303	83.9
57	Veterinary Technology	275	72.2	275	76.2
58	Hat Making	168	44.1	179	49.6
59	Radio and Television Services	329	86.4	258	71.5
60	Painting	319	83.7	222	61.5
61	Block Laying and Mason	196	51.4	214	59.3
62	Bricks Laying	174	45.7	189	52.4
63	Tiling	263	69.0	263	72.9
64	Auto Servicing	311	81.6	310	85.9
65	Photography	304	79.8	325	90.0
66	Soap Making	269	70.6	296	82.0
67	Indoor/Outdoor Decorations	317	83.2	301	83.4
68	Carpentry and Joinery	298	78.2	166	46.0
69	Fashion Designing	218	57.2	288	79.8
70	Tailoring	240	63.0	275	76.2
71	Laundry/Dry Cleaning Services	197	51.7	188	52.1
72	Food/Catering Services	259	68.0	207	57.3
73	Furniture Making	266	69.8	189	52.4
74	Bead Making	246	64.6	216	59.8
75	Foot Wear Designing	174	45.7	116	32.1

Source: *Researchers' Field Data; 2019*

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage response of male and female Nigerian graduates on Vocational Agricultural skills that can reduce unemployment. Item with a percentage of less than 50% (<50%) were considered as skills that cannot reduce unemployment among graduates upon acquisition while item with a percentage of greater than 50% (>50%) were considered as skills that can reduce unemployment upon acquisition.

Research Question 2: *What are the benefits of acquiring skills in Vocational Agriculture to Nigerian graduates in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Mean Response of Male and Female Nigerian Graduates on Benefits of Acquiring Skills in Vocational Agriculture to be Self-Employed

S/N	Item Statement	Male (N = 381)			Female (N = 361)		
		X	SD	RMK	X	SD	RMK
1	Brings employment opportunities	2.98	0.73	A	3.64	1.11	A
2	Increases market competition	3.71	0.60	A	3.08	0.73	A
3	It reduces unemployment	3.00	1.03	A	2.66	0.60	A
4	It provides means of livelihood	2.64	1.21	A	2.57	0.58	A
5	It improves the status of the profession	3.50	0.94	A	2.90	1.04	A
6	It reduces insecurity	3.10	0.58	A	3.05	0.70	A
7	The rate violence will drastically reduce	2.77	0.77	A	3.01	0.65	A
8	It improves the quality of life	2.58	0.63	A	2.77	0.61	A
9	It enhances mental and emotional wellbeing	3.08	0.50	A	2.56	1.07	A
10	It adds value to individual personality	3.33	1.04	A	3.08	0.80	A
11	Ability to provide basic need for the family	2.91	0.70	A	3.11	0.63	A
12	Increase income generating opportunities	3.05	1.01	A	3.43	0.88	A
	Grand Mean/SD	**3.05**	**0.81**	**A**	**2.99**	**0.78**	**A**

Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2019*   A ------- Agreed; D - - - - - Disagreed

Result from Table 2 reveal that the respondents agreed that all the items listed are benefits of Vocational Agriculture that can make graduates to be self-employed if acquired. This is shown in the mean values to be greater 2.50 of the cut-off point. For male respondents, the mean scores range between 2.58 to 3.71 and standard deviation that ranges from 0.50 to 1.21. Also, the result shows that female respondents have mean scores between 2.56 to 3.64 and standard deviation ranging from 0.58 to 1.11.

Research Question 3: *What the factors hindering Nigerian graduate acquisition of skills in Vocational Agriculture?*

Table 3: Mean Response of Male and Female Nigerian Graduates on Factors Hindering Acquisition of Skills in Vocational Agriculture?

S/N	Item Statement	Male (N = 381)			Female (N = 361)		
		X	SD	RMK	X	SD	RMK
1	Negative attitude of job seekers towards vocational skills.	3.39	0.60	A	2.64	1.03	A
2	Wrong impression about vocational skills	2.99	0.81	A	3.71	0.73	A
3	Lack of money to enroll into the training.	3.04	0.72	A	2.88	0.88	A
4	Over dependent of certificate.	2.77	0.55	A	3.06	0.64	A
5	Lack of vocational training centres	2.80	1.03	A	3.18	1.04	A
6	Lack of facilities at the training centres.	3.09	0.84	A	2.60	0.88	A
7	Lack of fund to start up skills acquired.	2.57	1.11	A	3.49	0.66	A
8	Epileptic power supply.	3.16	1.06	A	2.88	1.11	A
9	High cost of training fees.	2.50	0.70	A	3.03	0.73	A
10	Acquisitions of skills are not considered for job placement.	3.11	0.58	A	3.41	0.59	A
11	Employments are purely on certificate.	2.99	0.65	A	2.59	1.03	A
12	Vocational skills are for school drop-out.	3.07	1.21	A	2.85	1.10	A
	Grand Mean/SD	**2.96**	**0.82**	**A**	**3.03**	**0.87**	**A**

Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2019*   A ------- Agreed; D - - - - - Disagreed

Result from Table 3 reveal that the respondents agreed that all the items listed are factors hindering acquisition of skills in Vocational Agriculture Nigerian graduates. This is shown in the mean values to be equal to or greater 2.50 of the cut-off point. For male respondents, the mean scores range between 2.50 to 3.39 and standard deviation that ranges from 0.55 to 1.21. Also, the result shows that female respondents have mean scores between 2.59 to 3.71 and standard deviation ranging from 0.59 to 1.11.

Statistical Test of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significant.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Nigerian graduates in Rivers State on the benefits of acquiring skills in Vocational Agriculture.

Table 4: z-Test Analysis on Benefits of Acquiring Skills in Vocational Agriculture

Group	X	SD	N	df	α	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Male	3.05	0.81	381					
				740	0.05	1.03	1.96	Accepted
Female	2.99	0.78	361					

Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2019*   Accept Ho if tcal < tcrit; Otherwise; reject Ho.

Table 4 shows that male have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.05 and 0.87 while female have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.99 and 0.78 respectively at 0.05% level of significance with a degree of freedom 740. The t-cal value of 1.03 is less than the t-crit value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in mean responses of male and female Nigerian graduates on the benefits of acquisition of skills in Vocational Agricultural Education was thereby accepted. This shows that both male and female accepted that Vocational Agricultural Education is beneficial to reduction of unemployment.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female Nigerian graduates in Rivers State on the factors hindering Nigerian graduate acquisition of skills in Vocational Agriculture.

Table 5: z-Test Analysis on Factors of Hindering Acquisition of Skills in Vocational Agriculture by Nigerian Graduates

Group	X	SD	N	df	α	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Male	2.96	0.82	381					
				740	0.05	-1.12	1.96	Accepted
Female	3.03	0.87	361					

Source: *Researchers' Field Result; 2019*   Accept Ho if tcal < tcrit; Otherwise; reject Ho.

Table 5 shows that male have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.96 and 0.82 while female have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.03 and 0.87 respectively at 0.05% level of significance with a degree of freedom 740. The t-cal value of -1.12 is less than the t-crit value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in mean responses of male and female Nigerian graduates on factors hindering acquisition of skills in Vocational Agricultural Education was thereby accepted. This shows that both male and female accepted that acquisition of skills in Vocational Agricultural Education is hindered by several factors.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result from Table 1 revealed that majority of the agricultural skills was agreed by the respondents that these skills can reduce unemployment among graduates. The study found that vocational agricultural skills such as tilapia production, cat fish production, snail production, broiler production, pullet, day old chick and layers production, welding and fabrication, photography, soap making, GSM repairs, electronic repairs, electrical installation, radio and television services can reduce unemployment among Nigerian graduates. These findings is in corroboration with Okwelle and Deebom (2017) that found that vocational skills needed for reduction of unemployment among Nigerian graduates include Welding and Fabrication, Pipe

Fitting, Electrical Installation, Computer Networking, GSM Repairs, Electronic Repairs, Veterinary Technology, Hat Making, Radio and Television Services, Painting, Block/Bricks Laying and Mason, Auto Servicing, Photography, Soap Making among others.

Table 2 shows the benefit of acquiring skills in Vocational Agriculture to Nigerian graduates in Rivers State. The study found that acquisition of skills in Vocational Agriculture helps to bring employment opportunities, reduces insecurity, ability to provide basic need for the family, enhances emotional and mental wellbeing of an individual, and improves the status of agriculture education profession. These findings upheld that of Amadi and Ekezie (2018) that Vocational Agricultural Education earns the living of an individual through provision of income to train others, providing basic needs, provide employment opportunities. Also, the findings of the study is in line with the submission of Adah and Adejohn (2004) as noted that Vocational Agricultural Education (VAE) can equip students and teachers with adequate knowledge and ability to establish and manage model farming as well as train others who have interest in agricultural occupations.

The result of Table 3 revealed the challenges facing the acquisition of skills in Vocational Agricultural Education. The study found that lack of fund to start up skills acquired, employments are purely on certificate, wrong impression about vocational skills, negative attitude of job seekers towards vocational skills, lack of vocational training centres, lack of facilities at the training centres among others are some of the challenges hindering acquisition of skills by Nigerian graduates. These findings are in agreement with that of Zite and Deebom (2017) who stressed that vocational education are faced with challenges such as lack of qualified training instructors, lack of training facilities. The finding of the study also upheld that of Nnodim & Johnwest (2016) who asserted that lack of adequate facilities/infrastructure, lack of development of vocational skills, lack of fund, insufficient land among others are some factors affecting Vocational Agricultural Education implementation in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Vocational Agriculture Education skills such as tilapia production, cat fish production, snail production, broiler production, pullet, day old chick and layers production, welding and fabrication, photography, soap making, GSM repairs, electronic repairs, electrical installation, radio and television services can reduce unemployment among Nigerian graduates. The study further found that Vocational Agriculture helps to bring employment opportunities, reduces insecurity, ability to provide basic need for the family, enhances emotional and mental wellbeing of an individual, and improves the status of agriculture education profession as some of the benefits of acquisition of skills in Vocational Agriculture Education. Despite these benefits, acquisition of skills in Vocational Agriculture are faced with challenges to include lack of fund to start up skills acquired, employments are purely on certificate, wrong impression about vocational skills, negative attitude of job seekers towards vocational skills, lack of vocational training centres, lack of facilities at the training centres. Conclusively, Vocational Agricultural Education is relevance in the reduction of unemployment among Nigerian graduates in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that:

1. Nigerian graduate should as much as possible enroll in vocational skills irrespective of the specialization to avert being jobless. Acquisition of these skills will make them self-reliant.
2. Nigerian graduates should be aware of the relevance of enrolling into the field of Vocational Agriculture as this will expose them to opportunities that will help in making them self-employed thereby reducing unemployment level in Nigeria.

3. Government should back-up enrollment into Vocational Agricultural Education with scholarship as to motivate students to enroll into this vital field of study.
4. Government should ensure that those vocational centres that are public owned such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should be effective in training at a subsidies rate. This will allow graduates even those that are jobless to be able to afford the training fees.

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