



Exploring Strategies for Integrating Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) into Almajiri Schooling System for Sustainable National Development in North Eastern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) play a vital role in national development. One of the most important features of TVET is its orientation towards world of work and the emphasis of its curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills. However, introducing some elements of Technical vocational education and training (TVET) into Almajiris curriculum could make the Almajiris fit into the society more, since education is defined as the process of giving intellectual, moral and social instruction to learners. This implies that TVET is packaged and structured to impart skills necessary for emergent of entrepreneurial labour force that could encourage wealth generation in the African environment and not just alleviate poverty but eradicate it all. This goes to say that, TVET provides for varied training needs of learners that have different academic and socio-economic background such as the Almajiris, and prepares them for self or gainful employment. It offers practical instruction that gives learners specific occupational skills. Consequently, Descriptive survey research design was adopted with a population of 27,426 and a Sample size of five thousand one hundred and seven respondents (5,107) were used. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made: (1) the skills identified in this study should be integrated into the curriculum of TVET for training of Almajiris students in TVET training centers. (2) Workshop and seminars should be organized for TVET teachers on current technologies/issues in TVET from time to time. (3) Teachers of TVET should endeavour to adopt identified teaching and evaluation strategies for training of their Almajiris students in TVET training centers. (4) Training equipment, machines and books should be donated to Almajiris students in TVET training centers by government, non-government organizations and employers of labour in order to teach skills to Almajiris students of TVET training centers.

Keywords: Almajiris, Integration, Technical Vocational Education and Training, Training

INTRODUCTION

There Almajiris abound in all the cities, towns and villages in the Northern part of Nigeria. The Almajiris even now their presence is being felt by other parts of the country. The Almajiri sleep in the out-house or on verandas of dilapidated houses which also serve as their schools or classes in the day time. Every day they are seen carrying plastic bowls, dressed in tattered clothes and mostly without shoes begging. There are pupils of Islamic knowledge known and referred to as Almajiri. The word Almajiri as written by Kabiru (2010) quoting Sheik Abba Aji, a renowned Maiduguri-based Islamic scholar, as a word borrowed from Arabic language which was derived from the word 'AlMuhajir' meaning a seeker of Islamic knowledge. Its origin was the migration of Prophet Mohammed (SAW) from Mecca to Medina. Those

who migrated with the prophet to Medina were called “Al-Muhajirrun”, meaning emigrants. These emigrants had no means of livelihood on getting to Medina, but based on the fraternity established by the prophet, between their hosts, the emigrants were co-opted into different trades and vocations as apprentices who were paid for their services. Current, happenings in Nigeria in particular, Kabiru (2010) reported that there are more than 10 million Almajiris on the streets of northern Nigeria, without formal education and invariably going to face a bleak future. The government and people of the north have left this situation to continue probably due to what many people derived from it. In their thinking, the education of many is the liberation of all, a situation which will create competition and which will make government lose their exalted positions, as such these children are neglected and even subjected to all sorts of ill treatment.

According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) ‘every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability’. The policy on education in Nigeria has always meant well for the development of both the individual and the nation at large; different regimes (uniformed and civilian) have pursued educational programmes with vigour. It is on record that Northerners have ruled this country for longer period than the other part of the country. The former administration (President Jonathan) showed sudden renewed interest in the Almajiri syndrome and the need to integrate them into the formal school system. The Nigerian government formally signed into law Almajiri education on the 10th April 2012. In his presentation to the National Economic Council in July 2013, the then Minister of state for Education, Ezenwo N. Wike wrote that, to ensure that Almajiris are provided with opportunities for access to Basic Education:

- (i) Federal Government set up the National Committee on Implementation of Almajiri Education Programme
- (ii) The Committee is charged with integrating the Almajiris into the UBE Programme without prejudice to acquiring a sound mastery of Qur’anic knowledge
- (iii) The programme is to help in the acquisition of skills to enable them participate more actively in the society. The Almajiri Education Programme is in line with the Transformation Agenda of the administration under President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan,
- (iv) The transformation agenda has a key component on education and human capital development
- (v) The 4-Year Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Sector: 2011-2015 has been developed to actualize the Transformation Agenda
- (vi) The Almajiri Education Programme is concerned with Access to Quality Education; which are the two strategic goals of Nigerian Education.
- (vii) Which deals with skills acquisition in which can be gained through technical vocational education and training (TVET).

On the 10th of April, 2012, the president, Dr. Goodluck E. Jonathan took a bold step by formally undertaking a pragmatic move towards the reformation of the Almajiri schools in Nigeria; Nigeria became the first West African Country to formally give a serious and practical approach to the integration of the Almajiri School into the formal school system. This was a welcome development as the population of abandoned and under feed children roaming our streets will be given a transformed future. The occasion which took place at an Almajiri Model School, Gagi, Sokoto State, brought the actualization of the age long dream of the Almajiri modern school system. The President declared that this programme will cover up to 9.5 million Almajiri population scattered across the Northern States. The President added also that the school would provide the children with a conventional quality education as envisaged under his administrations education policy thrust. Expressing his observation on UPE, Taiwo (2006) wrote that, the previous education scheme or programme failed due to factors such as poor planning; lack of financial support, mismanagement of resources allocated to such programmes; changes in Government; inconsistency on the part of policy makers and implementers; lack of monitoring, evaluation mechanism, and supervision as well as technical know-how. However, introducing some elements of Technical

vocational education and training (TVET) into their curriculum could make the Almajiris fit into the society more, since education is defined as the process of giving intellectual, moral and social instruction to learners.

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) play a critical role in the nation development. One of the most important features of TVET is its orientation towards world of work and the emphasis of its curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills (Bureau of the conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union AU, 2007). This implies that TVET is packaged and structured to impart skills necessary for emergent of entrepreneurial labour force that could encourage wealth generation in the African environment and not just alleviate poverty but eradicate it all. TVET can be delivered at different levels of sophistication (AU, 2007). This goes to say that, TVET provides for varied training needs of learners that have different academic and socio-economic background such as the Almajiris, and prepares them for self or gainful employment. It offers practical instruction that gives learners specific occupational skills (Dike, 2009).

TVET refers to a range of learning experiences, which are relevant to the world of work. It is education which is mainly to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, and understanding, necessary for employment in a particular occupation, trade or group of occupations (Atchoarena and Delluc, 2001). The integration of TVET into qur'anic schools will perhaps help the Almajiris to acquire saleable skills and equip them with knowledge and attitude necessary for self-employment upon graduation.

Suleiman (2004) defines integration as a means of diversifying the curriculum to allow the core- courses of basic education to be taught at the Almajiri school level. According to Adegbanjo (2008), skills are the combination of knowledge and abilities needed to have a career. Today, the Almajiris who are unskilled seem to be more of a social problem than a productive potential of a society. The more skills and knowledge people have the more likely they are able to search for the development of their society, state and nation at large. Skills could be acquired through Technical vocational education and training, as defined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) involves the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Technical and vocational education could include among others, wiring, welding, and building construction, painting, dyeing and bleaching, furniture making, embroidery, tailoring, farming and weaving. Integration means merging two things or two systems together to form a whole. In this case, it is the combination of the Technical and vocational education with Almajiri system of education. The concept of integration as clearly understood is the introduction of the basic technology education i.e. woodwork, electrical wiring, welding, handcraft, mechanic, painting and life skills of modern type of education into the traditional Almajiri school system (Mahuta, 2009). In other words, it connotes injecting the essential components of technical schools into Almajiri schools. The concept of integration means to join elements of basic technology that is, technology type of education together with traditional Almajiri school systems without interfering with the goals of the Almajiri school system.

Furthermore, the integration of TVET and Almajiri curriculum may expand the horizon of the Almajiris and widen their skills. More so, integrating TVET into the Almajiri education system as formal school system will serve as a ground for the correction of wrong indoctrination and manipulation. This modern Almajiri schools with a well-funded TVET program may be a breeding ground for the training and making of future Nigerian technicians, engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, political leaders and experts in all other fields of human endeavours. Fowoyo (2010) observed that, 'educated and enlightened citizen are easy to rule and govern because they would realise and appreciate the effort of the government and make meaningful contributions to assist her'. In a tranquil atmosphere, people will develop their abilities, potentials and express freely the creativity in them. It is in light of these, therefore that the researchers intent to carry out a research work on the integration of TVET into the Almajiris schooling system for sustainable national development in north-eastern of Nigeria.

Suggestions for the Integration of TVET into Almajiri Schools System

The following solutions according to Jibrin (2008) allow the original Almajiris School programme to operate without interference and could effectively contribute to the successful operation of the integrated education curriculum.

1. The present administration should provide adequate funding to the Almajiri school programme as the former administration has taken a giant step towards modernizing the school system.
2. There should be collaboration between the technical institutions and the Almajiris school programme in order to provide them with the missing links.
3. The integrated programme is expected to run alongside the existing Traditional Almajiri study. Even though a minimum number of contact hours have been prescribed, the curriculum is to be implemented at the discretion of each Qur'anic school; that is, Qur'anic education will continue to operate as it is now without interference. The Mallams will continue to run their Qur'anic education programme as usual.
4. Government should encourage the visitation of technical facilitator, experts in the field of technical and vocational education to further strengthening the programme and achieve the target goals.
5. Government should encourage the idea of visiting Qur'anic schools. Instead of the Mallams moving with the learner from one village to the other, they should be encouraged to move alone, through some incentives.
6. Special training should be organized for the Almajiri mallams (teachers), to give them sense of belonging, direction and to absorb them into the formal school system.
7. Opportunities should be given to those among them who may want to further their studies to tertiary institutions.
8. The community where the integration is taking place should be involved in the programme implementation.
9. Government can also secure proper information and can effectively monitor the operation of such schools. The end result is that Qur'anic schools need to be put into the planning process of basic education at hands of the Government. Just as other forms of schools, Qur'anic schools need to be catered for by the government. After all about half of the school age children attend such schools, especially in the North.

The absence of the above items leads to the roaming of Almajiris from one town to another which leads them into enrolment into the current situation of insurgency in the country; this is a gap that this study intends to fill. Therefore, the study is to find out ways of exploring strategies for integrating TVET into the Almajiri schooling system for sustainable national development in North Eastern Nigeria.

For effective teaching to take place, the teacher must stimulate, encourage and maintain active participation of the learners. This would require a balance between what is taught and how it is taught. Thus, successful technical education does not depend only on the teacher's mastery of the subject matter but also, the teaching method employed. Hence Ogbonna (2009) stated that one of the most influential factors of transfer of learning is the teacher's methods of teaching. In line with the foregoing, this research study is on the Exploring Strategies for Integrating Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) into Almajiri Schooling System for Sustainable National Development in North Eastern Nigeria

Statement of the Problem

The Almajiris are pupils enrolled in traditional Almajiri schools that are prevalent in many parts of Northern Nigeria. Although Almajiri (Quranic) schools are highly revered religious institutions that have played vital roles in Muslim societies in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria, the challenging demands of modernity tend to put the future of these schools at risk. Concerned over the future of millions of children enrolled in Almajiri schools has led to the official adoption of integration policy by the Federal Government to position them within the framework of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme for the purpose of attaining Education for all (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The former administration of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan took a bold step by formally undertaking a pragmatic move towards the reformation of Almajiri schools in Nigeria under his transformation agenda and to create over one hundred Almajiri schools (boarding schools) in major areas of the North in order to provide them with a life line and future hope to reduce the high rate of children roaming around the street more especially in the North Eastern part of the country. The contentious issues which seem to devolve on the implementation of this policy viz-a-viz the peculiarities of these schools, their pupils, skills to

acquisition process, management of the schooling system and the funding which have the tendency to exclude rather than integrate them into the regular schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore strategies for integrating TVET into the Almajiri schooling system for sustainable and national development. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Identify the trades that can be integrated into the Almajiri schooling system.
- ii. Identify the strategies for integration of pre-vocational skills into Almajiri schooling system.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the researchers in carrying out the study;

- i. What are the trades that can be integrated into the Almajiri schooling system?
- ii. What are the strategies for integrating pre-vocational skills into Almajiri schooling system?

Hypothesis

To guide the study, the following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Almajiri school teachers and teachers in TVET institutions on pre-vocational skills that will be integrated into Almajiri schooling system.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The design involves collecting data and describing it in a systematic manner, the characteristics features or facts about a given population (Sambo, 2005). This design is considered appropriate in line with Akuezulo and Agu, (2003) who described it as a design used in a situation where the study employs questionnaire to determine opinions, preference, attitude and perception of people about an issue. Descriptive survey design was therefore considered appropriate for the study because it seeks to identify attitude and opinions of Almajiris, Mallams and the communities of the importance of integrating TVET into Almajiri schooling system for sustainable and national development particularly in North-Eastern States of Nigeria.

This study cover the entire North-Eastern states of Nigeria stretching from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Yobe and Taraba States where these schools(Almajiri school) are situated and which was enough for the population of the study. The North East has geographically boundary of attitude of 6.26° and longitude 4.92° North equator with total area of 103,639 Km²(Nigeria North East, 2012)

The population for the study was made-up of all 27,426 of the entire Almajiris, in the area of the study in which the schools are situated within the North East State of Nigeria.

Considering the size of the population, the researchers decided on a Sample size of five thousand one hundred and seven respondents (5,107) Almajiris. In arriving at this number, the researchers made reference to Akuezuko and Agu (2003) which suggested that a sample of 30 subjects and above is large enough and that less than 30 is small.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample for the Study in each state of North Eastern Nigeria

S/N	States In North East	Teachers (Mallams)	Students (Almajiris)
1.	Adamawa	Alaramma Mal.Abdulrahman	205
2.	Bauchi	Sheik Dahiru Bauchi	1282
3.	Borno	Sheik Mal. Buzu	1654
4.	Gombe	Alaramma Goni	974
5.	Yobe	Alaramma Mal. Karami Buzun Komi	761
6.	Taraba	Alaramma Mal, Abbas	231
TOTAL			5,107

Source: Field Survey 2017

A questionnaire titled “Integrating TVET in Almajiri system for Sustainable and National Development (ITVETISND)” into Almajiri Schooling System was developed by the researchers. Items were drawn from literature. The ITVETSND was used to assess the integration of TVET into Almajiri Schooling

System for Sustainable and National Development in North-Eastern States of Nigeria. The questionnaire was used to elicit information that answered the research questions and the hypothesis.

The questionnaire was divided into Two Parts. Part I sought for bio data information on the respondents. Part II elicited responses based on the research questions. The instrument contains 34 items with a four-point likert scale type.

The researcher and research assistants administer the questionnaire and checklist to the respondents. The researchers made use of research assistants to ensure immediate completion and return of the completed questionnaire. The researchers and the research assistants went round to collect the completed questionnaire.

The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions, while the null hypothesis was tested using the Z-test at 0.05 level of significance. Decision for accepting or rejecting an item or group of items were based on 2.50. Therefore any item with mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed while below 2.50 were regarded as disagreed. In testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated Z-value were compared with the critical or table-value where the calculated Z- value is equal to or above the table-value the hypotheses is rejected, but if the calculated Z-value is less than the critical or table value the null hypothesis is upheld or accepted.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in tables, based on the research questions and hypothesis.

Research Question 1

What are the trades that can be integrated into the Almajiri schooling system?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the integration of TVET Trades into Almajiri schooling system

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Sd	Remarks
6	Road Side Mechanics/Auto Mechanics	40	36	2	2	3.42	0.67	Agreed
7	Vehicle Panel Beating	42	18	15	5	3.21	0.96	Agreed
8	Vehicle Spraying and painting	60	10	17	3	3.41	0.91	Agreed
9	Refrigeration and Air Conditioning	48	31	1	0	3.57	0.56	Agreed
10	Carpentry and Joinery	55	5	19	1	3.42	0.89	Agreed
11	GSM Maintenance	70	7	2	1	3.82	0.52	Agreed
12	Embodory (SP)	8	2	55	15	2.03	0.78	Disagreed
13	Foundry (Metal Casting) Works	36	27	14	3	3.20	0.86	Agreed
14	Ceramic Works	43	20	5	12	3.17	1.08	Agreed
15	Tie and Dye Works	50	20	7	3	3.46	0.81	Agreed
16	Tailoring	60	17	2	1	3.70	0.58	Agreed
17	Block Moulding and laying/	50	18	10	2	3.45	0.80	Agreed
18	Radio and Television Repairs	65	10	4	1	3.73	0.61	Agreed
28	The duration of the training to be specify	60	10	17	3	3.41	0.91	Agreed

From table 2, the findings of the study revealed that all of the 99% of the respondents agreed with a high mean score of (3.82) and a Standard deviation of (0.52) that, the TVET trades can be integrated into the Almajiri schooling system, which can empowered them to be self-reliant. While 1% of the respondents are not in support with mean score of (2.03) and a Standard deviation of (0.78) are not in support of the TVET integration into the Almajiri schooling system.

Research Question 2

What are the strategies to be adopted for pre-vocational skills in the Almajiri schooling system?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the strategies to be adopted for pre-vocational skills in the Almajiri schooling system

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Sd	Remarks
19	Using modern hand tools for teaching during practical's	27	40	5	8	3.07	0.89	Agreed
20	Using well equipped and organized workshop for practicals	55	20	4	1	3.61	0.64	Agreed
21	Grouping students into small groups during practicals for monitoring	70	4	5	1	3.78	0.60	Agreed
22	Establishing Workshops at the Almajiris School	65	13	1	1	3.77	0.52	Agreed
23	Assigning them into the VTE Centers based on the choices of Specialization (On the Choice of Trade)	40	27	3	10	3.21	100	Agreed
24	Visiting relevant TVET industries for practical skill acquisition (field trip)	65	13	1	1	3.77	0.52	Agreed
25	Interact with Mallams to identify the appropriate time for TVE institution	50	20	8	2	3.47	0.77	Agreed
26	Identify both formal and Informal TVE workshops that the trainees can be attached	40	36	2	2	3.42	0.67	Agreed
27	Specify Number of Trainees that can be engaged in the programme based on the available skills centers.	42	18	15	5	3.21	0.96	Agreed
28	The duration of the training to be specify	60	10	17	3	3.41	0.91	Agreed

From table 3, the findings of the study revealed that all of the respondents agreed with a mean score of (3.78) and a Standard deviation of (0.60) as stated that, integrating into the Almajiri schooling system will allowed students (Almajiris) to engage themselves in practicing on what they would learned for a living, learning practicals, using modern hand tools for teaching during practicals, using well equipped and organized workshop for practicals, grouping students into small groups during practicals for monitoring, always inviting TVET experts from TVET industries to give lectures to the (Almajiris) students on practical innovations, always teaching practicals in a well-organized and equipped workshop, visiting relevant TVET industries for practical skills acquisition (field trip), and allowing knowledgeable students to teach colleagues practical concepts and some of the instructional strategies for improving practical skills acquisition of students' performance in TVET training centers in Northern part of the Nigeria.

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Almajiri school teachers and teachers in TVET institutions on pre-vocational skills that will be integrated into Almajiri schooling system.

Table 4: z-Test Comparison of Almajiri school teachers and teachers in TVET institutions on pre-vocational skills that would be integrated into Almajiri schooling system.

	One-Sample Test					
	z-test Value					
	z	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper	
Strongly Agreed (SA)	11.662	9	.000	51.400	41.43	61.37
Agreed(A)	5.592	9	.000	20.100	11.97	28.23
Disagreed(D)	3.417	9	.008	6.100	2.06	10.14
Strongly Disagreed (SD)	3.320	9	.009	3.400	1.08	5.72

Table 4 shows the summary of the result of z-test analysis for testing H₀₁ using the Almajiri school teachers and teachers in TVET institutions z-test statistics. Testing this data at 0.05 level of significance, the summary of the analysis presented in table six shows that the analysis returned a z-calculated of (11.662) with z-critical value of (3.320). This indicates that there is no significant difference in the integration of TVET institutions on pre-vocational skills that integrated into Almajiri schooling system. The null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference in Almajiri school teachers and teachers in TVET institutions on pre-vocational skills that will be integrated into Almajiri schooling system.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study are discussed in relation to available literature. The discussions are arranged in the same order with the research questions and hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed that TVET trades can be integrated into the Almajiri schooling system, which can empowered them to be self-reliant. This finding is supported by Mahuta, (2009) that, Integration means merging two things or two systems together to form a whole. In this case, it is the combination of the Technical and vocational education with Almajiri system of education. The concept of integration as clearly understood is the introduction of the basic technology education i.e. woodwork, electrical wiring, welding, handcraft, mechanic, painting and life skills of modern type of education into the traditional Almajiri school system. Shaba, (2005). Supported that, skills acquisition is the foundation for independent survival of an individual. A man who has acquired useful skills can help himself and at the same time help other people.

Findings of the study revealed that, using modern hand tools for teaching during practicals, using well equipped and organized workshop for practicals, grouping students into small groups during practicals for monitoring, always inviting TVET experts from TVET industries to give lectures to students on practical innovations, always teaching practicals in a well-organized and equipped workshop, visiting relevant TVET industries for practical skill acquisition (field trip), are some of the instructional strategies for improving practical skills acquisition of students’ performance in TVET in training centers in North East Nigeria. These findings were in agreement with the opinion of According to Gonzovic (2013) TVET is a systemic process of acquiring and upgrading requisite knowledge and skills needed for self-reliance. TVET is the education for those who need it, those who want it, and those who want to progress by it (Okoye, 2013). This implies that an individual who acquires those competencies and some psychomotor skills in TVET is already empowered to be self-reliant and that students and teachers should be visiting TVET industries at the end of each lesson for better understanding of some TVET concepts, inviting TVET personnel from industries to deliver lessons on new innovations in TVET industry and applying appropriate strategies for teaching TVET concepts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in training centers in North East Nigeria is all about teaching skills acquisition to Almajiri students for self-reliance and national development. Technical and Vocational Education in technological training institutions is full of vocational and exclusive emphasis on skill, knowledge and attitude. It is paramount that technical teachers should adopt suitable methods for teaching practical skills to Almajiri students

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The skills identified in this study should be integrated into the curriculum of TVET for training of Almajiri students in TVET training centers.
2. Workshop and seminars should be organized for TVET teachers on current technologies/issues in TVET from time to time.
3. Teachers of TVET should endeavour to adopt identified teaching and evaluation strategies for training of Almajiri students in TVET training centers.

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