



# **Repositioning Skill Development And Learning In Technical Colleges In Anambra State For Survival In COVID-19 Prone Society**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of the study was to measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. A census survey research design was adopted for the study. The population used for the study was 178 teachers and principals in eight accredited technical colleges in Anambra State. There was no sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instrument used for data collection was a 21 item questionnaire grouped into two sections according to the research questions that guided the study. The items were structured in four point rating scale. The instrument was validated and the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded 0.79. Out of 178 copies distributed 163 copies were returned giving 91.57% return rate. Mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics were the statistical tools used. Based on the data analysis, the study identified that government measures ( $X= 3.04$ ) and school administrative measures ( $X= 3.03$ ) for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. Based on the findings of the study recommendations were made among which include; government should construction of spacious classroom/workshop facilities to maintain social distance with steady power sources to the technical colleges and school administrators should developing strategies that will enable the teachers to conduct practice the COVID-19 guidelines.

**Keywords;** Skill development, learning, technical colleges and COVID-19

## **INTRODUCTION**

Learning is usually seen as the output of effective teaching and instructional processes that lead to the development of understanding, skills, values, attitudes and preferences. Learning according to Mbah and Umurhurhu (2016) is a behavioural change that takes place at the end of an interaction between a teacher or instructor and the learners(s). The authors pointed that assessment of learning is through a permanent change in learner's behaviour in the performance of a task, skill and knowledge. It could be seen as a transformative process of taking in information that when internalized and related to proper experience give rise to change in individual skill, attitude and knowledge. Effective learning is required for skill development in different areas of human endeavour.

Skill is a manipulative ability exercise as an expertise in the performance of task. Mbah, Nnadi, Ohagwu and Aduhuekwe (2020) stated that skill is the ability to make purposeful movement that are necessary as it forms the key for individual economic sustenance and social responsibility. Skill development is the practice of learning skills through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort. Onoh (2011) opined that skill development is the process of identifying skill gap, developing and training people to learn the skills in a define process. It is considered as key for productive society and employment. Skill development has been linked to broader education and development strategies as the technical colleges are meant to provide a formal learning environment for skill development in different engineering, technological, art and social areas like home economics.

Skill development of students in technical colleges is a task that ensure proper training of students under the ages of 10-18 years on the various trades and servicing skills for sustainable survival in the society. Technical colleges are post primary education programme designed to train craftsmen and master craftsmen in different vocational/career and technical skill areas. Mbah (2016) and Okolie, Igwe and Elom (2019) stated that technical college programmes are aimed at training intermediate workforce with relevant skills for employment in facilities that machines, electrical, electronics control techniques and materials. Technical colleges are vocational institutions running technical education programme with the objective of training craftsmen and master craftsmen that can use tools and materials properly in production and service setting.

Further, technical colleges are designed to develop abilities, understanding, work habits and appreciation encompassing knowledge, skills and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis. At this technical college level, occupational-specific education is provided to students through technical education instructional approaches. The curriculum of technical colleges (TCs) focus on crafts, engineering trades and technical skills (Okolie, Igwe & Elom, 2019). Amongst the trades offered to students in Nigeria TCs include bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, painting, motor vehicle repair and maintenance, air condition and refrigeration, radio and television maintenance, machining, welding and fabrication and home economics. The trades are properly planned to equip learners to understand skills to be employable in a specific area. Poor implementation of technical colleges programmes according to Akegbejo (2016) have hindered the socio-political, technological and economic development of the Nigeria society.

In recent times, technical colleges like other educational institutions were closed as a result of COVID-19 pandemic which threatens the human existence. The programme of skill development and learning provided to the young human capitals were equally clamped down in order to control the spread of the virus among the staff and students these school. The Federal Ministry of Education through the Permanent Secretary in the ministry on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 ordered the immediate closure of tertiary institutions, secondary and primary school across the nation over the outbreak of the disease in the country. As indicated by Agbele and Oyelade (2020) coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a part of world pandemic caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome. The disease is common in certain species of animals, such as cattle, camels and bats which can be transmitted to human. The first transmission to human was in Wuhan China (Dhawan, 2020). Since then the virus has mostly spread through person to person contact. Ozer (2020) indicated that the most common way that this virus spreads is through close contact with already infected person. When people with COVID-19 breathe out or cough, they expel tiny droplets that contain the virus, these droplets can enter the mouth or nose of someone without the virus, causing the spread of infection to occur.

COVID-19 spread continues, the death rates increase day by day, life comes to a halt and its control or total end still unpredictable. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the educational system, learning in formal and informal setting with other skill development activities have reduced due to restriction of movement as billions of students and millions of educators are affected by school closure and others restrictions. Muhammed and Kasim (2020) pointed that COVID-19 has disrupted the landscape of learning by limiting how students can access learning across the country. Most of the schools try the use of distance learning and internet based learning as alternative to normal educational processes disrupted by the pandemic. In skill development and learning at the technical college level, COVID-19 equally affected the students, teachers and their interaction in practical skill learning. In attempt to use distance learning strategy to continue the teaching and learning programme, the environment and facilities were not yet ready for normal teaching not to talk of the practical skill teaching. Despite the COVID-19 vaccine and government strategies to contain the spread, students and teachers still need to maintain social distance, washing of hands and use of face mask in all their academic activities and interactions. Based on theses, there seems to be a total avoidance of practical teaching and participation in the COVID-19 prone learning environment following the guideline given by Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) on opening of schools.

There is need to address the challenges faced by teachers and instructors in technical colleges in teaching practical skills to students in COVID-19 prone society. The government and technical college school administrators need to address some pending issues of concern in practical skill training to promote skill development and learning in the COVID-19 prone society. Dhawan (2020) stressed that government at all levels need to provide enabling environment, support and facilities to

ensure that students develop their potentials for sustainable society in the new normal of COVID-19 prone society. The new normal in educational system occasioned by COVID-19 needs the administrators of technical colleges to manage and utilize available materials and money to improve practical skill learning. These government and school administrative measure need to be identified and implemented to ensure improve teaching and learning for sustainability of skill development in Anambra State. It is on this background the need arise to determine the measures needed to reposition skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the years, the global community had fought various health scourges which threatened the human existence on the face of the earth. The world is currently witnessing the COVID-19 pandemic which has ravaged the world social, political, economic, health and education condition. It created a psychological fear which has lead to the closing of all public gathering and total lockdown of of all socio-economic activities. The pandemic interrupted the education processes in several ways. The technical schools are not left out as the COVID-19 pandemic hindered skill development and learning as the students' interaction were limited following the NCDC guideline.

The technical college programme need to continue in the new normal of COVID-19 prone society proving salable skills for sustainable technological, social and economic development. Lack of needed attention to this would deprive the young generation in the technical colleges the access to practical teaching and learning. The government, school administrators and teachers should implement measures that will promote effective teaching and learning in technical colleges for skill development. If this measures are not identified, there would be no means of promoting practical teaching and interaction in the new normal of COVID-19 prone society. This would affect the skill acquisition and employability of the students on graduation. Consequently, there is need to determine the measures to reposition skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The study specifically sought to determine the;

1. government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society.
2. school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society?
2. What are school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H<sub>01</sub> There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

H<sub>02</sub> Significant difference does not exist on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

### **METHOD**

This study adopted a census survey research design. According to Alio (2008) and Nworgu (2015) survey research design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few of them the entire group. This design was adopted due to the polychotomous instrument used and the opinions of the principals and vice principals were sought for. The area of the study was Anambra State of Nigeria. Anambra State is one of the five states in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population comprised 178 teachers and principals in eight

accredited technical colleges in Anambra State. The population was determined based on the field survey conducted by the researchers. The number was manageable and as such, there was no sampling.

The data collection was carried out using 21 item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the review of related literature. The instrument was structured in four point response scales. The instrument was validated by three experts in Technology and Vocation Education and Measurement and Evaluation. Their corrections and suggestions were used to produce the final instrument used for the study. The instrument was trial tested using 20 copies on technical college teachers in Enugu State who were not part of the population under study. The reliability coefficient yielded 0.79 using Cronbach Alpha method. This 0.88 coefficient is in-line with Uzoagulu (2013) that reliability index of 0.80 to 1 shows that the instrument is highly reliable.

Three research assistants were used in the administration of the questionnaire and out of 178 copies distributed 163 copies were returned giving 91.57% return rate. Weighted means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. Decisions on the research questions were made using the lower and upper limits of the mean based on a four point scale. The standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the opinions of the respondents. The t-test statistics of no significance difference was used to test the null hypotheses. The significant value (at 2-tail) was compared with .05 level of significance at the appropriate degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was not rejected where the significant value was less than the .05 level of significance value at appropriate degree of freedom; otherwise the null hypothesis was rejected.

## RESULTS

The results of the study obtained were presented in Tables based on the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study (see table 1-4).

**Table 1. Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on the measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society**

S/N	measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges for survival in COVID -19 prone society includes;	Principals N= 28		Teachers N= 135		Overall		Decision
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	$\bar{X}_G$	SD <sub>G</sub>	
1	Construction of spacious classroom/workshop facilities to maintain social distance	3.05	0.84	2.92	0.79	3.04	0.83	Agree
2	Provision of steady power sources to the technical colleges	2.76	0.62	2.72	0.58	2.73	0.58	Agree
3	Retraining technical teachers on the new normal of COVID-19 prone society	3.05	0.69	3.07	0.68	3.06	0.69	Agree
4	Providing financial assistance to school administrators for meeting the COVID-19 guidelines for school programmes	3.01	0.76	3.00	0.74	3.01	0.76	Agree
5	Restructuring of school medical centres to test and vaccinate students	3.01	0.75	2.97	0.79	3.00	0.75	Agree
6	Supervision of facilities used for practical skill learning	3.03	0.72	3.00	0.74	3.03	0.72	Agree
7	Employment of medical personal to manage the school medical center	3.01	0.76	3.17	0.72	3.03	0.76	Agree
8	Provision of free internet services for distance and blended learning interaction	3.00	0.74	3.00	0.74	3.00	0.74	Agree
9	Procurement of more computer system/computer aided tools for practical	2.98	0.82	3.32	0.85	3.14	0.82	Agree
10	Developing policy that will enable the schools return to normal academic programme	3.07	0.68	3.04	0.71	3.04	0.70	Agree
11	Provision of hand washing system at strategic locations in the various technical schools school	3.38	0.70	3.34	0.71	3.34	0.70	Agree
	<b>Cluster Mean/SD</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Note: X =Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = Number of respondents

The result of data analysis presented in Table 1 above shows that the overall mean rating of the respondents on the 11 items ranging 2.73 and 3.34 respectively indicating agree. This means that the identified are the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical

colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The items have overall cluster mean of 3.04 and standard deviation of 0.73. The low level of standard deviation of 0.73 shows obtained indicates that the respondents have consensus opinion in their responses to the items on government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

**Table 2. Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of principals and teachers on the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society**

Variables	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Decision
Principals	28	0.426	161	0.670	0.29310	0.68797	NS
Teachers	135						

The result of t-test analysis in Table 2 shows that the t-value at 0.05 level of significant and 161 degree of freedom for the 11 items is 0.426 with a significant value of 0.670. Since the significant value of 0.670 is more than the 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis is not significant. This means that there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

**Table 3**

**Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on the school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society**

S/N	school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges for survival in COVID -19 prone society includes;	Principals N= 28		Teachers N= 135		Overall		Decision
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	$\bar{X}_G$	SD <sub>G</sub>	
12	Developing strategies that will enable the teachers to conduct practice the COVID-19 guidelines	3.26	1.01	3.28	0.94	3.27	0.94	Agree
13	Provision of hand washing system at strategic locations	2.92	0.90	2.90	0.75	2.91	0.76	Agree
14	Monitoring of staff and in observing the COVID-19 pandemic guiding in workshops/classrooms	3.00	0.91	3.07	0.86	3.06	0.87	Agree
15	Introducing alternative measures to teaching students in workshop without face to face contact	3.02	0.85	2.91	0.75	2.95	0.75	Agree
16	Maintaining facilities to meet the needs requirement in practical skill development	2.92	0.67	2.96	0.78	2.95	0.77	Agree
17	Developing blended teaching strategies to meet the learners needs in COVID-19 prone society	3.00	0.85	3.03	0.72	3.03	0.73	Agree
18	Provision of facemask and other facilities for reducing the spread	2.92	0.67	3.05	0.78	3.04	0.76	Agree
19	Enforcing the COVID-19 guideline among the students in their workshop interactions	3.25	0.75	3.03	0.76	3.05	0.75	Agree
20	Motivating staff on the need to continue practical teaching on the new normal	2.99	0.63	3.03	0.78	3.02	0.76	Agree
21	Collaborating with relevant bodies to improve the teaching of skills in the new normal	3.08	0.79	3.03	0.81	3.04	0.81	Agree
	<b>Cluster Mean/SD</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Note: X =Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = Number of respondents;**

The result of data analysis presented in Table 3 depicts that the overall mean rating of the respondents ranges from 2.91 to 3.06 indicating that the itemized are the school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The overall cluster mean of 3.03 further shows that the respondents agree to the 10 items. The low cluster standard deviation of 0.79 obtained from data analysis indicates that the opinion of the respondents does not differ remarkably.

**Table 4. Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of principals and teachers on the school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society**

Variables	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Decision
Principals	28	0.523	161	0.601	0.33308	0.63626	NS
Teachers	135						

The result of t-test analysis in Table 4 shows that the t-value at 0.05 level of significant and 161 degree of freedom for 10 items is 0.523 with a significant value of 0.601. Since the significant value of 0.601 is more than the 0.05 level of significant, the null hypothesis is not significant. This means that there is no significant difference with respect to the items on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of data analysis according to research question one showed the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The findings indicated that the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges for survival in COVID -19 prone society includes; Construction of spacious classroom/workshop facilities to maintain social distance, provision of steady power sources to the technical colleges, retraining technical teachers on the new normal of COVID-19 prone society, providing financial assistance to school administrators for meeting the COVID-19 guidelines for school programmes, restructuring of school medical centres to test and vaccinate students, supervision of facilities used for practical skill learning, employment of medical personal to manage the school medical center, provision of free internet services for distance and blended learning interaction and procurement of more computer system/computer aided tools for practical. The implication of the findings of the study was that the identified government measures are required for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The findings of the study were in line with Muhammed and Kasim (2020) that infrastructure for online, distance and blended education system needs to be strengthened for utilization by the technical teachers in practical skill teaching. Agbele and Oyelade (2020) further noted that stakeholders like government needs to organize in-service training to improve teachers' teaching competencies in blended teaching in skill learning. These therefore support the findings that government measures are needed for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges for survival in COVID -19 prone society. Further, the findings with respect to hypothesis one showed that there was no significant difference on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The implication of no significant difference was that responses of principal and teachers and students had no effect on the identified government measures for repositioning ratings of principals and teachers on the government measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society for survival in COVID -19 prone society.

Furthermore, the findings of the study in research question two revealed that school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. Among the identified school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges includes; developing strategies that will enable the teachers to conduct practice the COVID-19 guidelines, provision of hand washing system at strategic locations, monitoring of staff and in observing the COVID-19 pandemic guiding in workshops/classrooms, introducing alternative measures to teaching students in workshop without face to face contact, maintaining facilities to meet the needs requirement in practical skill development, developing blended teaching strategies to meet the learners needs in COVID-19 prone society, provision of facemask and other facilities for reducing the spread, enforcing the COVID-19 guideline among the students in their workshop interactions, motivating staff on the need to continue practical teaching on the new normal and collaborating with relevant bodies to improve the teaching

of skills in the new normal. The findings of the study showed that the itemized are school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The findings of the study were in line with Ozer (2020) that school authorities needs to develop programmes and alternative means to ensure that teaching and learning continue in COVID-19 prone society. It is evidence that providing the learners with interactive learning platform that would encourages independent learning, self-study and digital skill acquisition would facilitate learning outside face to face. Moreover, the findings in hypothesis two showed that significant difference does not exist on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. This means that being a principals and teachers had no impact on identified school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges in Anambra State for survival in COVID -19 prone society. The findings of no significant difference were in consonance with Nnadi, Ohagwu and Aduhuekwe (2020) that the teachers and principal as educators have the same opinion on the measures for repositioning skill acquisition and learning.

## CONCLUSION

The impact of COVID-19 remains a big lesson to the world which also revealed the benefits of online/virtual teaching in students learning. It has shown that there is no other option than to adapt to the dynamic strategies and accept the new normal in developing students' skills in technical colleges. One good effect of COVID-19 is that it has force government and some schools which were earlier reluctant to change and accept modern technology and its implementation in students learning processes. Following the nature of some technical college subjects and programme, there is need to identify measures to reposition and restructure skill development and learning in COVID-19 prone society for improved service delivery.

The study identifies the government and school administrative measures for repositioning skill development and learning in technical colleges for survival in COVID-19 prone society. These findings would enable the government and institutions to ensure that skill development and learning provided to the students meets the needs of the students and society at large following the new normal.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should construction of spacious classroom/workshop facilities to maintain social distance with steady power sources to the technical colleges.
2. Government should providing financial assistance to school administrators for meeting the COVID-19 guidelines for school programmes.
3. School administrators should developing strategies that will enable the teachers to conduct practice the COVID-19 guidelines

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