

Assessment of Poverty Reduction among Female Graduates in Techno-Vocational Institutions in Rivers State, Strategies, Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract

The study examined assessment of poverty reduction among female graduates in techno-vocational institutions in rivers state, strategies, prospects and challenges. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and representative sample of 313 federal and 637 state female students of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State giving a total population of 950, representing 50% of the total population sample size was used. A stratified random sampling was used to reflect the six (6) technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State. The questionnaire titled “Assessment of Poverty Reduction among Female Graduates in Techno-Vocational Institutions Questionnaire” (APRFGTVIQ)) was complimented with observation schedule as total items of 24. The instrument was designed and validated by the researcher and its reliability index of 0.91 was established using test-retest method. The data were analyzed using mean rating, standard deviation, rank order and z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that techno-vocational programmes help to reduce poverty among female graduates in technical/vocational institutions in Rivers State. It was concluded, based on the findings, that techno-vocational programmes play significant roles in the reduction of poverty rate among female graduates in technical/vocational institutions in Rivers State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that; enlightenment campaign should be given to the female youths on the significance of technical-vocational programmes on poverty alleviation; provisions of necessary resources for the teaching and learning of technical-vocational programmes in technical-vocational institutions in Rivers State, and the 9-3-4 system of education should be properly implemented, so that technical and vocational education can be given its rightful place in the scheme of things in providing the needed manpower to propel the technological advancement of the nation.

Keywords: Assessment, Poverty Reduction, Female, Graduates, Techno-Vocational, Strategies, Prospects Challenges, Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

Education at tertiary level is seen as the greatest instrument for change, where prospective learners are provided with the opportunity to develop cognitive perspective, affective disposition and psychomotor competence thereby equipping themselves with the skills and strategies of education be an entrepreneur is to initiate and build an organization rather than just being a passive part of one (Oloko, 2015).

The consortium for entrepreneurship education supports the concept that, entrepreneurship is a lifelong learning process that has five distinct stages of development, which are: basics, competency awareness, creative applications, startup and growth because to be successful in a business, there is need for one to be focused, visionary and flexible. They are needed skills and qualities for sales and marketing, skill and financial know-how, self-motivation, communication skill, administrative skill, thinking skill, enterprising skill, leadership skill, problem solving skills, risk taking skill, time management skill and information skills since entrepreneurship is about risk taking and risk taking is about survival (Onyene, 2014).

Technical and vocational education, women empowerment education, governments entrepreneurship initiatives and individuals concepts are not completely new in Nigeria. The national directorate for employment (NDE) was established to mitigate the effects of youth unemployment in Nigeria in 1986, and it is one of such example of technical-vocational education programme. The NDE was designed to inculcate into graduates the ability to recognize business opportunities and mobilize for self-employment. According to Scort (2015), technical and vocational education refer to the aspects of educational process involving general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, as well as the acquisition of practiced skills, attitude, understandings and knowledge rating to occupations in various sections of economic and social life.

According to UNESCO (2003) and FRN (2004), there is a dire need for brief elaboration in terms of, “education” and “training”. Essentially, the goal of “education” is to solve the independent problem with different depth of understanding. Thus, what appears to be taking place in the changing world of work is the convergence between the rate of poverty in developed countries and underdeveloped countries like Nigeria, in which the poverty index is on the high side due to numerous reasons like, high level of corruptions among the political elite, bad leadership style, etc. (Dike, 2014).

According to Osani (2014), poverty is a plague affecting people all over the world, because it is a vicious circle which keeps the poor in a state of destitution and brachial disillusionment. It affects many aspects of human conditions; hence, there has been no universal conserves of someone without job, who cannot help himself or cater for his family, who has no money, farm or business (Mommon, 2016). Poverty has been identified as a major obstacle to the realization of women’s human rights and one of the most surreptitious forms of violation of a woman’s rights. The reduction of poverty in Nigeria amongst women can be predicted on spontaneous acquisition of technical and vocational skills at higher educational level. However, education should not be restricted to reading and writing only; rather, education must ensure an all-around development of basic skills in an individual and society, since the special purpose of education is the training of people for the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The individual and society need to be equipped for social and economic responsibilities that are gateways for the reduction of poverty. Students should acquire technical and vocational skills for meaningful employment and self-reliance.

The World Bank (1996) observed that the poverty level of Nigeria contradicts the country’s immense wealth. The country is endowed with abundant human and natural resources, petroleum, gas and large untapped solid mineral resources, which if properly explored and harnessed, would obviously enhance the nation’s wealth creating potentials and living standard of its citizens. Consequently, to reduce her level of poverty is one of the challenges facing Nigeria. Poverty constitutes a serious obstacle to Nigeria’s socio-economic growth and development. Some anti-poverty initiatives by both past and present government, as recorded by

National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2005), include Family Support Programme (FSP) (1984), Better Life Programme (BLP) (1987); the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) (1989), Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN) (1989), and Community Bank (CB) (1990). Schools integrated some of the principles of the anti-poverty initiatives for poverty reduction as strategies into their curriculum. Hitherto, huge resources had been devoted to poverty reduction initiative in Nigeria. However, education and training of women are the basic ingredients that would enable them escape from poverty, by providing them with the skills and knowledge to increase their output and generate income. Education and training are investments in the future, while knowledge and skills comprise the engine for economic growth and social development.

Conceptual Classification on Techno-Vocational Skills

Vocational technical education is undoubtedly a very important aspect of the Nigerian educational system. It develops occupational competence and teaches the skills that enable an individual to earn a living (Dike, 2014). The National Policy on Education (2014) defines vocational technical education as that aspect of education that leads to the acquisition of practical applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. Neoga (2014), declared technical vocational education as viable industries and a prerequisite to a new world of technological order and therefore, requires adequate support of human material resources. However, vocational technical education and training in Nigeria.

Nwogu (2013) emphasized entrepreneurship awareness and its relevance in achieving the national educational aim of inculcating the right type of values and attitudes for survival of an individual and the Nigeria society. Enahwo (2009) in his view said that vocational training is utilitarianism and it is a concept of reorganizing the importance of labour. Therefore, to train someone in his appropriate field and for him to substantially contribute his quota to the overall good of the nation, he has to pass through vocational technical education and training. It is a fact that needs no further investigation, it is good with the nation, and it is also good with its inhabitants and vice versa. For this reason, any nation or country that gives proper training in a one-sided area of importance to her citizenry or gives improper training to people in all areas of importance, has nothing to gain. People are differently gifted and therefore, should be given equal vocational/technical education and training, for self-reliance in different occupational areas. Nigeria should be a nation where people are trained for different opportunities or openings that abound in the country, in compliance with the tedious task of giving suitable and proper training to individuals for optimum productivity, among others.

Vocational/technical education gives individuals the skills to live, learn and work as productive citizens in a global society. Technical and vocational education has many prospects. It can be used as a catalyst for creating employment opportunities. Thus, it is a panacea for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Vocational and technical education according to Oloko (2016), is the core of individual's and the society's economy. He stresses further that through the acquisition of skills, individuals could explore their environment and harness the resources within it, which could serve them and the society, since the wealth of the society, determines to a large extent, the development of the society. Okorie (2014) noted that vocational and technical education is fundamental for rapid technological advancement. In Nigeria, there has been emphasis in recent times on improving vocational and technical

education in tertiary institutions, basically for combating unemployment and poverty, as well as improving the economic performance of the nation.

According to Adeneyi (2007), successive governments have over emphasized on other university education programme above the equally important technical and vocational education. Further on this, Oloko (2013) observed that what is needed is for the government to give adequate and equal attention to all the various levels of education of the citizenry, for the best interest of the country and the growth of the national economy. Unfortunately, the government's emphasis on vocational and technical education programme in Nigerian universities is merely on the pages of papers and television. Technical education facilitates the acquisition of practical and applied skills, as well as basic scientific knowledge. It is therefore a planned programme of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined work, with advanced and continuing education (CTE, 2009), Nuru (2007) indicated that changes in a country's economy are required to prepare young people for future job because technical and vocational education has important roles to play in this process. Technical and vocational education has been an integral part of national development.

According to Scort (2015), the Dutch school system pays attention to high standards in mathematics and the provision of technical education at ages 14-16, for a third of all pupils, and widespread vocational education at 16+. Unfortunately, Nigeria does not seem to give technical and vocational education the attention it deserves in the industry and life after graduating from various vocational and technical institutions in Rivers state and beyond. May (2006), also posits that the neglect of technical education in the areas of adequate personnel, financial support and facilities to encourage technical and vocational education is robbing the nation of the contributions her graduates would make to the economy. Furthermore, Asogwa and Diogu (2017) maintained that there is an urgent need for people's attention to be redirected towards self-reliance and sustainable means of livelihood that technical education provides.

Statement of the Problem

Despite incredible technical vocational educational reform process by the federal government of Nigeria (FRN) and aims at technological process and competitiveness, it appears that there are no clearly navigated paths to achieve poverty alleviation through needed techno-vocational programmes given to female students of various technical-vocational institutions in Rivers State and beyond.

The researcher wondered why most of the poverty reduction programmes set up by previous Rivers state governments failed as a result of lack of practical skills, which could be acquired through the technical, vocational, entrepreneurship educational programmes, with proliferation of schools, which led to rapid reduction of the quality of technical and vocational education that would have enabled female students to grow into functional members of the society, for example, no provision for enterprise, in various kinds of self-employment after graduation and the concern for acquisition of knowledge and skills in Rivers State techno-vocational institutions is so enormous to be neglected because of its implication for employment (or unemployment). The Rivers State technical-vocational education reform did not foster the needed entrepreneurship skills, competencies and attitudes necessary to embrace technical-vocation as a career option.

Apparently, most Rivers State female graduates from tech-vocation institutions had received inappropriate entrepreneurship, technical and vocational education, leading to unemployment after graduation from their various technical-vocational institutions. Most unemployed female graduates roam the streets, sometimes they become exposed to crimes and political thuggery, prostitutions, child trafficking etc. because their as it is nowhere suggested in the vocational curricula that self-employment is a very possible outcome. Therefore, the concern of this study, is to assess the poverty reduction among female graduates in techno-vocational institutions in Rivers State, strategies, prospects and challenges.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the assessment of poverty reduction among female graduates in techno-vocational institutions in Rivers State, strategies, prospects and challenges. More specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine the relevance of techno-vocational skills offered in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State.
- To ascertain the adequacy of technical/vocational programmes offered in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State.
- To ascertain the challenges on effective teaching of technical/vocational subjects for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following three (3) research questions have been posed to guide the study:

- RQ¹:** To what extent is the relevance of techno-vocational skills offered in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State?
- RQ²:** To what extent is the adequacy of technical and vocational programmes offered in technical/vocational institutions to reduce poverty among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State?
- RQ³:** What are the challenges on effective teaching of in technical/vocational subjects technical/vocational institutions, for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were used to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho¹:** There is no significant difference between the mean rating of federal and state female students on relevance of technical/vocational skills offered in technical/vocational institutions, for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State.
- Ho²:** There is no significant difference between the mean rating of federal and state female students on adequacy technical/vocational programmes offered in technical/vocational institutions to reduce poverty among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State.

Ho³: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of federal and state female students on the challenges to effective teaching of technical and vocational subjects in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction female graduates of TVE in Rivers State?

METHODS

A descriptive survey research designed was used to sort on the assessment of poverty reduction among female graduates in techno-vocational institutions in Rivers State, strategies, prospects and challenges. The population of the study comprised all female students in the six (6) technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State; this consisted 625 in federal and 1,275 in state giving a total of 1,900 female students of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State. A representative sample of 313 (federal) and (637) state female students of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State giving a total population of 950 representing 50% of the total population sample size. Stratified random sampling was used to reflect the six (6) technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State to ensure that the sampling was not based on favour or disfavor of any institutions in the State.

A questionnaire titled “Assessment of Poverty Reduction among Female Graduates Techno-Vocational Institutions Questionnaire” (APRFGTVIQ) was complimented with observation schedule. The questionnaire consisted of two sections; section A and B. Section A consisted six (6) demographic variables while the section B consisted eighteen (18) items questions, the address, the three research variables postulated above, and was structured on a four point Likert rating scale viz: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4points, Agree (A) – 3points , Disagree (D) – points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point giving a total of 24 items. The researcher designed and validated the instrument and to establish the internal consistency of the instrument, test retest method was used. The two sets of scores were correlated using the Cronbach alpha and this provided the correlation of each item with the sum of all the other items (that is, co-efficient of inter-item correlation) which yield a reliability of 0.91 which indicated high reliability. All the copies of the questionnaires were administered to the students by the researcher and collected it on the spot, by so doing; all the copies administered were retrieved. Mean rating, standard deviation and rank order were used to analyze the three research questions posed, while statistical test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The following results are shown below:

Research Question 1

To what extent is the relevance of techno-vocational skills offered in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean scores and rank order of respondents' assessment of the relevance of techno-vocational skills offered in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State

S/N	Assessed variables	Federal		State		$\frac{\sum x_1x_2}{2}$	Rank order	Decision Rule
		(\bar{x})	SD	(\bar{x})	SD			
1	Vocational programmes offered in school is capable of producing business managers	3.61	1.90	3.99	1.99	3.55	2 nd	Agreed
2	Capable of preparing students for occupational fields for effective participation in the world of work	3.03	1.74	3.11	2.76	3.07	5 th	Agreed
3	Capable of introducing students to technical skills	2.94	1.71	3.04	1.74	3.49	3 rd	Agreed
4	Capable of exposing students to career awareness and options in the world of work	3.66	1.91	3.57	1.89	3.62	1 st	Agreed
5	Capable of exposing students to complexity of technology	3.47	1.86	3.49	1.87	3.48	4 th	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean Score	3.34		3.34				
	Average Aggregate Mean Score	3.34						

In table 1, all the five items from (1, 2, 3, 4 & 5) mean rating scores were above the criterion mean score of 2.50. The respondents from the federal technical and vocation institutions has a mean of 3.61, 3.03, 2.94, 3.66 and 3.47 respectively, and the respondents from the state technical and vocational institutions has a mean of 3.49, 3.11, 3.04, 3.57 and 3.49 respectively. The average aggregate mean score of 3.34 is greater than the 2.50 criterion mean score. Thus, this implies that the technical and vocational skills offered by the technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State are relevant to reduce poverty among the female graduates in techno-vocation institutions in Rivers States.

Research Question 2

To what extent is the adequacy of technical and vocational programmes offered in technical/vocational institutions, to reduce poverty among female graduate of TVE in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean scores and rank order of respondents' adequacy of technical and vocational programmes offered in technical/vocational institutions to reduce poverty among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State

S/N	Assessed variables	Federal		State		$\frac{\sum x_1x_2}{2}$	Rank order	Decision Rule
		(\bar{x})	SD	(\bar{x})	SD			
6	Training in technical craft to earn a living	3.48	1.87	3.44	1.85	3.46	3 rd	Agreed
7	Training in agricultural and commercial skills	3.12	1.77	3.22	1.79	3.17	5 th	Agreed
8	Training for self-relevance	3.32	1.83	3.36	1.83	3.34	4 th	Agreed

9	Graduates are able to set up their own business to be self-employed	3.72	1.92	3.68	1.92	3.70	1 st	Agreed
10	Able to secure employment on graduation	3.64	1.91	3.68	1.92	3.66	2 nd	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean Score	3.46		3.48				
	Average Aggregate Mean Score	3.47						

In table 2, all the five items from (6,7,8, 9, & 10) variables mean rating scores were above the criterion mean score of 2.50. The respondents from the federal technical-vocational institutions made 3.48, 3.12, 3.32, 3.72 and 3.64 respectively and the respondents from the state technical-vocational institutions made 3.44, 3.22, 3.36, 3.68 and 3.68 respectively. The average aggregate mean score of 3.47 was greater than the criterion mean score of 2.50, thus, this implies that there is adequacy in technical and vocational programmes offered in technical/vocational institutions and they help to reduce poverty among female graduates of technical/vocational institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 3

What are the challenges on effective teaching of technical/vocational subjects in technical-vocational institutions, for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean score and rank order of the challenges on effective teaching of technical/vocational subjects in technical-vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State

S/N	Assessed variables	Federal		State		$\frac{\sum x_1 x_2}{2}$	Rank order	Decision Rule
		(\bar{x})	SD	(\bar{x})	SD			
11	Inadequacy of vocational teachers	2.97	1.72	2.93	1.71	2.95	7 th	Agreed
12	Continued use of unqualified personnel	3.18	1.78	3.12	1.76	3.15	4 th	Agreed
13	Poor infrastructural base	3.42	1.84	3.48	1.86	3.45	3 rd	Agreed
14	Poor attitude of parents towards vocational educational subjects	2.98	1.71	3.02	1.73	3.00	5 th	Agreed
15	Lack of interest in vocational subjects among students	2.58	1.61	2.66	1.63	2.62	8 th	Agreed
16	Poor social status assigned to vocational subjects b the society	2.98	1.71	3.02	1.74	3.00	5 th	Agreed
17	Poor funding of vocational programmes by government	3.74	1.93	3.68	1.91	3.71	1 st	Agreed
18	Poor learning environment	3.66	1.91	3.74	1.93	3.70	2 nd	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean Score	3.19		3.20				
	Average Aggregate Mean Score	3.20						

In table 3, all the eight items from (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18) mean rating score were above the criterion mean score of 2.50. The respondents from the federal technical-vocational institutions has a mean of 2.97, 3.18, 3.42, 2.98, 2.58, 2.98, 3.74, 3.66 and 3.19 respectively and the respondents from the state technical-vocational institutions has a mean of 2.93, 3.12, 3.48, 3.02, 2.66, 3.02, 3.68, 3.44 and 3.20 respectively. The average aggregate mean score of 3.20 is greater than the criterion mean score of 2.50, thus, this implies that there are numerous

challenges facing teaching of technical/vocational subjects in technical-vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of technical/vocational institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of federal and state female students on relevance of technical/vocational skills offered in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-test analysis of the difference between the mean rating of federal and state female students on relevance of technical/vocational skills offered in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State

Variable respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z-calculated	z-critical value	Decision
Federal	313	3.34	1.83	948	±1.72	±1.96	Accepted
State	637	3.34	1.83				

Table 4 shows that the z-calculated value of ±1.72 was less than the z-critical value of ±1.96 with 948 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance and was accepted since the z-calculated value (1.72) was less than the z-critical value (1.96); thus, this implies that both federal and state female students agreed that technical-vocational skills offered in the technical-vocational institutions are relevant in poverty alleviation among female graduates of technical and vocational institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of federal and state female students of adequacy the technical/vocational programmes offered in technical/vocational institutions to reduce poverty among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State.

Table 5: Z-test on the difference between the mean rating of federal and state female students on adequacy of technical/vocational programmes offered in technical/vocational institutions to reduce poverty among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State

Variable respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z-calculated	z-critical value	Decision
Federal	313	3.46	1.86	948	±1.52	±1.96	Accepted
State	637	3.48	1.86				

Table 5 shows that the z-calculated value of ±1.52 was less than the z-critical value of ±1.96 with 948 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance and was accepted, since the z-calculated value (1.52) was less than the z-critical value (1.96), thus; this implies that both federal and state female students agreed that the adequacy of technical-vocational programmes offered by the technical-vocational institutions help in reducing poverty among female graduates of technical-vocational institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of federal and state female students on the challenges on effective teaching of technical and vocational subjects in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State.

Table 6: Z-test on the difference between the mean rating of federal and state federal students on the challenges on effective teaching of technical and vocational subjects in technical/vocational institutions for poverty reduction among female graduates of TVE in Rivers State

Variable respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z-calculated	z-critical value	Decision
Federal	313	3.19	1.79	948	±1.83	±1.96	Accepted
State	637	3.20	1.79				

Table 6 shows that the z-calculated value of ± 1.83 was less than the z-critical value of ± 1.96 with 948 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance and was accepted since the z-calculated value (1.83) was less than the z-critical value (1.96), thus; this implies that both federal and state female students agreed that there are numerous challenges facing the teaching and learning of technical-vocational programmes in technical-vocational institutions in poverty reduction among female graduates of technical-vocational institutions in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

The results in table one revealed that the z-calculated value (3.34) was greater than the z-critical value (1.96) and showed that techno-vocational skills offered by the technical/vocational institutions in Rivers State are significant in reducing poverty among the female graduates. The findings also agreed with Obiyai (2014) that technical and vocational education is expected among other things, to assist students acquire relevant occupational, technical, entrepreneurial skills and prepare for future occupations and make successful transition from school to the world of work or self-employment.

According to Oloko (2013), findings revealed that technical/vocational education is significant to make most of our youths be self-reliant, which is a vital key to self-realization, better human relationship, national efficiency as well as social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress. The curriculum should therefore emphasize self-employment that gives way to the acquisition of the right type of value and attitude for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society. Okozors findings (2014), revealed that skill acquisition as a tool for man power development prepares individuals for gainful employment and minimizes unnecessary dependence on others. Okozor believes that sellable skills in vocational activities promote cooperative activities and better resource management through the culture of maintenance, which reduces waste and abandonment of repairable goods and equipment.

The results in research question 2 and hypotheses 2 revealed that both federal and state female students in technical-vocational institutions in Rivers State agreed that technical/vocational programmes offered by the technical/vocational institutions curriculum are adequate enough to reduce poverty among the female graduates in Rivers State. This finding is

consistent with the position of Okoh (2016), in this study, vocational skills and attitudes provide benefits to the society even beyond their application to business activities. Such skills as creativity and having initiative can be useful to people in their daily responsibilities and existence. Oloko (2016) also averred that technical and business skills need to be provided to those who choose to be self-employed or who need to start their own ventures. In line with Baduwi findings (2014), for Nigeria governments to reduce the poverty rate among our female graduates, adequate enlightenment campaign should be given on the significant of technical/vocation education to their lives because it can help them become self-reliant and open their own small business enterprises. For these enterprises to be started and sustained, people with vocational skills are needed.

Vocational skills development programmes (VSDP) can be regarded as any comprehensive programmes by planned effort, undertaken by an individual or group of individuals or any institution or agency to develop competency in people, and that will lead to self-employment, economic self-sufficiency and employment generation through long term education or short-term training (Allaivadi, 2014). The research question 3 revealed the numerous challenges facing the effective teaching of technical/vocational subjects in technical/vocational institutions in Rivers State for poverty reduction of poverty among female graduates. Based on the results in table 3, it shows that the average aggregate mean score 3.20 was greater than the criterion mean score 2.50. This finding is in agreement with the views of Poli (2014), who confirmed that inadequate supply, in quantity and quality of technical-vocational education, hampers the successful utilization of technical-vocational equipment for the teaching and learning of instructional activities. This finding agrees to Nwangwu (2016), who presented the challenges of technical-vocational programmes to include, government attitude, societal attitudinal barriers, lack of qualified personnel and absence of basic facilities among others.

The finding is in line with the statement of Anwor (2014), who affirmed that poor public perception toward technical-vocational education, absolute discrimination, negligence and bias against vocational education by the Nigerian society, are some of the major challenges the technical-vocational education is passing through in Rivers State and beyond. Weak monitoring and evaluation of technical-vocational programmes affects its successful implementation because of non-compliance to the programme due to poor educational policies that affect the programme. Oranu (2014) observed that the present practice in vocational education curriculum development in Nigeria encourages lack of harmony between educational practice and the world of work. Unavailability of an integrated curriculum for the proposed TVE entrepreneurship education is also a challenge.

CONCLUSION

The need to integrate and assess different strategies for poverty reduction among female graduates in techno-vocational institutions in Rivers State has been examined in this paper. The reality is that it is time for the Rivers State government to act on the proper ways of inculcating techno-vocational programmes into secondary schools system because, this will help future generation of youths to benefit from these programmes by being self-employed, and by this way, they can be sure of growing the economy through local efforts rather than depend on others to grow the economy, as is presently the case.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, and as in line with the conclusion above, the following recommendations were proffered:

- The Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board should improve the image of techno-vocational programme through effective publicity that should be carried out in the media. Nigerians should be sensitized through the media to know the value of services-related jobs like vocational agriculture, distributive education, Home economics education, Trade and industrial education, business and office education and technical education.
- There should be a private-public-partnership (PPP) agreement with the technical-vocational institutions in Rivers State on how to integrate and have the acquisition of vocational, technical and entrepreneurship skills.
- Teaching and constant review of technical-vocational education syllabus/curriculum should be done in line with global practice, by the Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, in respect of affiliated discipline among the female students.

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