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AN ASSESSMENT OF RESOURCES AVAILABILITY IN PRE-VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS AND ACADEMIC GOAL ACHIEVEMENT IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKOKO-EDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR JOB CREATION.

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Abstract

The study assesses the level of teaching and non-teaching resources availability and students' goal attainment in pre-vocational subjects in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. The 28 junior secondary schools and the outputs of the schools form the population of the study. The 28 junior secondary schools were purposively selected while a sub-set of 298 outputs of the Junior secondary schools were sampled for closer analysis. The junior secondary school teacher availability checklist and the junior secondary school goal achievement checklist were the two research instruments utilized to generate the data for the study. The data gathered was analysed using average, means, percentages and standard deviation. It was found that 21.43% of the required teachers were in post while 78.53% required teachers were not deployed. Of a 3.27 mean score, a 0.15 standard deviation was recorded. Meaning, the practical components were properly handled, especially in the crop farming aspect of agricultural science. The Implications of the findings for job creation in the state, were discussed. Specifically, home economics modernized the traditional meal preparation as it combines hygiene, balance, neatness, courtesy and modernity in not only preparing meals but also serving customers with dignity as meal preparation has become big business in modern society. All this may be missing in the absence of the practical demonstrations of themes taught in pre-vocational

skills. Recommendations for improvement were made so that basic education would be more relevant to students and the society.

Keywords: teaching resources, physical resources, pre-vocational studies, academic goal, job creation.

Introduction

The junior secondary school is the level of education students are admitted after attaining primary education. By the UBE Act 2004, it is a continuation of the elementary school. It is otherwise called upper basic education and upon completion, a certificate called Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) would be offered. It precedes the senior secondary school which leads to studies in the tertiary level of education. Thus, the junior secondary school consolidates on the foundations built at the lower and middle basic education so that the curriculum of the senior secondary education can be easily comprehended by learners. The pre-vocational subject was introduced to junior secondary school in the 2013 curriculum modification at that level of education. As it is presently constituted, two main subjects, namely, Home Economics and Agricultural Science formed the present pre-vocational subjects offered at the upper basic level (Federal Ministry of Education, 2012).

The importance of home economics and agricultural science to the well-being of individuals and nations cannot be over-estimated. Both dwell among other themes on food, which is germane in providing healthy living for individuals and the entire society. Agricultural science at the upper basic education level provides a platform for students to learn modern methods of cultivating crops, rearing animals, agro-business and sustainability of the environment. According to Ndem and Akubue (2016), agricultural science provides food, raw materials, shelter, rural development, foreign exchange to the nation, employment and income to the farmers and his family. Upon graduation from school, beneficiaries of the upper basic education could venture into agricultural engagement in the larger society. Izuchukwu (2011), opined that agriculture in Nigeria provides employment opportunities for the teaming population, eradicates poverty and contributes to the growth of the economy. For a healthy national development, the agriculture sector should be supportive, dependable and capable of providing food security for its people.

The National curriculum of Agriculture (in Ndem and Akubue, 2016), stated the goal of introducing agricultural science in the secondary school curriculum as follows.

- To stimulate and sustain students' interest in agriculture
- To provide the students the interest to progressively advance in farming
- To advance food production through improvement of agricultural production techniques in students.

- To provide occupational entry level skills in agriculture to the interested students.
- To prepare students adequately for producing and marketing farm commodities efficiently and profitably.
- To enable students, acquire basic knowledge and practical skills required for future studies in agricultural field (FGN 2007).

Home economics on the other hand, encompasses themes focused in Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles, Home Management, Child Development, Family and Marriage relationship among others (Salami, 2018). No doubt, the relevance of both subjects in the over-all development of society cannot be over emphasized. Hence, their introduction at the basic education unit is indisputably appropriate and complementary. Home economics contributes to societal well-being in the following ways.

(a) Improving the quality of everyday life of individuals, families and households.
(b) Advancing the protection of families.
(c) Promoting equal rights for men and women and
(d) Supporting the education of children, community and vocational training (Salami, 2018).

It is germane to emphasize therefore, that the curriculum of the Universal Basic Education in making provision for the teaching of agricultural science and home economics could improve on the general well-being of both the beneficiaries and the larger society if the necessary learning inputs are provided. Teachers as change agents in the school system, could process both the human inputs and the physical resources to achieve the set goals of the level of education. Teachers are specialists in their various areas of focus. They are specially trained to bring out the latent traits in a child through guided processes, mentorship and encouragement. In comparison, like a farmer sowing seeds, the teacher creates conditions for children to grow as creative and critical thinkers (Urevbu, 2018). Thus, the presence of teachers in the educational system is a major factor in the success of educational programmes implementation.

No doubt, education brings about productivity, creativity, initiative, innovativeness and inventiveness (Aghenta, 2006). These could only be possible where well trained and motivated teachers are deplored to teach the subjects for which they were trained to handle. Apart from the

traditional expectation of the teachers to teach the students, it is believed that the 21st century teacher is no longer the only 'know it all' custodian of knowledge but one that could facilitate the evolving of the child's creativity and will power to go beyond certain understanding. Omoifo (2016) identified some characteristics the 21st century teacher should possess. According to her, teachers must have the following traits:

- Possess learning to learn skills,
- Intrapersonal and interpersonal skills,
- Emotional intelligence in addition to mental and cognitive intelligence, and
- Must be creative and must possess hard and soft skills (Omoifo 2016).

These traits could assist the teachers of home economics and agricultural science to handle the task before them more aptly and professional as they teach pre-vocational studies. But the situation as reported in many studies is inadequate supply of teachers to the school system in Edo State. (Imakpokpomwan & Aghenta, 2008, Olubor, Imakpokpomwan & Edeki (2020), Ofoegbu (2017) Imakpokpomwan, Olubor & Edeki,(2022).

This research effort is anchored on Bandura (2001) Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura believed that humans are agents of development, and their learning is influenced by three main factors, namely, cognitive behaviour and the environment. The inherited traits which form the cognitive assist individuals to learn. Certain behaviour could influence what and how people learn. He added that the environment shapes human learning as it is bound to motivate the learner to master the act and reproduce the knowledge for the benefit of others. He argued that humans learn by observing the behaviour of other people, which in turn motivate the learner to master and reproduce such knowledge for utilitarian values to his society and improvement of his environment. The theory is apt for the teaching of pre-vocational studies in the Upper Basic Education level. A good number of the students, especially in the rural setting, would be introduced for the first time to modern methods of cultivating agriculture or home economics. The new understanding could impress them to carve for a life career in this direction. Later in life, some of the learners could become teachers of Agriculture Science or Home Economics or Pre-Vocational Studies, practitioners of any of the components of Pre-Vocational Studies, business executives or financiers of the activities in agriculture and home economics components in order to improve his environment. Knowledge of

Pre-Vocational Studies becomes a foundation upon which such new undertaking or cultivation is based because he/she was exposed to them in the Upper Basic Education classes.

Statement of the Problem

If education is 'an instrument per excellence for social and economic transformation of Nigeria, as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), then the place of teachers in translating educational policy to reality cannot be over emphasized. Teachers are the change agents who with the right processes can combine and transform the varied education inputs into quality graduates. The government in its desire to provide quality education to its citizens averred that she would strive to provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement (FGN, 2014, section 2 sub-section 13 (b)). Possibly, teachers of pre-vocational studies are not adequately deployed for the services of the upper basic education in line with government intention of equipping the students for greater service for national development. If education provision is adequate and students' academic goal attainment is strong enough, the output of the education level would be propelled to benefit individuals, the nation and humanity in general. From observation, it appears that pre-vocational teachers are not adequately deplored to teach the subject at the universal basic education level. On the same vein, the facilities for teaching the pre-vocational subjects appeared to be inadequate for the preparation of the students for the world of work. If these vital resources are lacking or inadequately deplored, the students may miss out on the objectives expected to be attained in the Pre-Vocational Studies. This informs the need for this study to find out what the actual situation about the resources provision in the teaching of Pre-Vocational Studies in the Upper Universal Basic Education Level is in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo state.

Research Questions: In order to understand the operation of the phenomenon, three research questions were raised viz;

Research Question 1: How adequate is the teacher deployment for Pre-Vocational Studies in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State?

Research Question 2: What is the level of non-teaching resources available to teach the Pre-Vocational Studies in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State?

Research Question 3: What is the perception of the Upper Basic Education leavers on the academic goal achievement in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State?

Methodology

This research adopted the descriptive survey; being an ex-post facto study of the phenomenon that has already occurred but for which available data was collated and analysed. The population of this study is the 28 Junior Secondary schools and the outputs of the school. The respondents were teachers of the pre-vocational subjects and the students who have completed the Upper Basic Education Level in the 2021/2022 academic session in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. A sub-set of 298 students were sampled for closer analysis. Two research instruments were developed for the study. They are the Pre-Vocational Studies Teachers and the Physical Resources Availability Checklist (PSTPRAC) and the Upper Basic Education Goal Achievement Questionnaire (UBEAQ). Multi-sampling technique was adopted; thus, Purposive sampling was used for the school and teachers of pre-vocational studies in the Local Government Area. Simple random sampling was used to sample the responses of respondents for academic goal achievement. Data analysis was done with the aid of descriptive statistics such as simple mean, percentage and standard deviation.

Research Question 1: How adequate is the teacher deployment for Pre-vocational Studies in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State?

Table 1 presents the schedule of Pre-vocational Studies teachers available in Upper Basic Education in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State.

Table 1: Pre-vocational teachers required and available in upper basic education.

S/N	Subjects	Teachers Required	Teachers Available	Remarks
1	Agricultural science	15	05	Inadequate
2	Home Economics	13	01	Inadequate
	Total	28	06	Inadequate

Table 1 is the schedule of teacher requirement and availability for Pre-Vocational Studies in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. The schools required 28 teachers of pre-vocational studies to teach in the Upper Basic Education level in the local government area. Out

of the required number of teachers, six are available which translates to 21.43% availability while 78.57% are not in post.

Research Question 2: What is the level of non-teaching resources available to teach Pre-Vocational Studies in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State?

Table 2: Pre-vocational studies non-teaching resources available in Akoko-Edo LGA.

SN	Subject	Non-teaching Resources Required	Required	Non-teaching Resources Available	Remarks
1	Agricultural science	(a) Crop farm	28	28	Available
		(b) Animal farm	28	None	Not available
2	Home Economics	Laboratory	28	None	Not available

Table 2 presents the non-teaching resources available in the Upper Basic Education level in Edo State. It shows that in Agricultural science, two major farms are required; crop farms and animal farms which are for practical demonstration. A total of 28 crop farms were required, and a total number of 28 was available. In like manner, 28 animal farms were expected to be in place for rearing animals whether birds, ruminants or fish. There is none available for the practical exposition of the students. Home Economics laboratory was required in all Upper Basic Education schools in the local Government Area. There was none available for the use of students.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of the Upper Basic Education leavers on the academic goal achievement in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State?

Table 3 presents the perceptions of respondents on academic goal achievements in Pre-Vocational Studies in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State.

SN	Items of Vocational Expereince	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	I handled farm tools such as cutlass, hoe, shovel etc when I was in junior secondary school	3.3549	.99155	W
2	My class cultivated crops while in JS classes	3.1020	1.21837	W
3	We sold farm produce while in junior school classes	2.7182	1.38576	W
4	Because of what I learnt in Agricultural lessons; I love to plant crops around my house	3.3754	1.03484	W
5	Because of what I learnt in Agricultural lessons, I enjoy working in the garden or on the farm.	3.1831	1.15487	W

6	When I am mature, I will love to own a farm	3.2076	1.13887	W
7	Because of what I learnt in Home Economics; I can fix buttons on my clothes	3.7911	.94206	VW
8	Because of what I learnt in Home Economics; I can cook simple dishes.	3.4334	.99304	W
	Cluster	**3.27**	**0.15**	

AL=Always; OIA = Once in a while; RE= Rarely; VW=Very well; W=Well; AB= A bit; NAA= Not at all; ST = sometimes; A = Agree; D = Disagree

SN	Items of Staffing	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
1	During my studies in the junior secondary classes, we had teachers in all the subjects.	2.3699	1.25736	D
2	During my studies in the junior secondary classes, our teachers marked our assignment notes.	3.1791	1.02098	D
3	During my studies in the junior secondary classes, available teachers were always available to solve our problems.	3.1557	1.04747	A
4	During my studies in the junior secondary classes, available teachers were always regular to class.	2.8946	1.22507	A
5	During my studies in the junior secondary classes, enough teachers and the technicians were always available to assist students with difficulties.	2.4456	1.30191	D
	Cluster	**2.81**	**0.13**	

AL=Always; OIA = Once in a while; RE= Rarely; VW=Very well; W=Well; AB= A bit; NAA= Not at all; ST = sometimes; A = Agree; D = Disagree

Table 3 presents the academic goal achievement in the Upper Basic Education level as perceived by the 298 outgone students of upper basic schools in the LGA. From the table it is found that the students were subjected to the practical component of Agricultural Science in crop farming. They were able to handle simple farm implements. They also perceived their competence in simple tasks performance such as fixing button as being attained from lessons in Home Economics. Of a mean score of 3.27, they attained 0.15 standard deviation. The cluster decision is that their learning attainment could be classified as well. In the second cluster investigated, respondents perceived that teachers were available. It was generally believed that there were no adequate teachers deployed to the schools but those posted made themselves available to teach the students. The graduates of the Upper Basic Education also believed that their teachers were regular to class. However, in response to an item, the respondents disagreed that the required teachers were always available.

Findings of the Study

The study found that teachers of Pre-Vocational Studies in the Upper Basic Education Level of Akoko-Edo Local Government of Edo State is inadequate. Only 21.43% of the teachers were available. From research question 2, it was found that 28 crop farms were required and they were

available as required. The opposite was the case in animal farms. A total of 28 animal farms were expected to be in place for rearing animals whether birds, ruminant or fish. The study also established that no Home Economics laboratory expected to handle the practical component of the subject was available in all Upper Basic Education schools in Akoko-Edo local Government Area of Edo State.

Discussion of Findings

From research question 1, it was established that there were teachers of pre-vocational studies in some schools, but they were not adequate for the benefit of the students. It was found that 21.43% of the required teachers were in post to teach Pre-Vocational Studies in Akoko-Edo LGA. This means 78.57% of the teachers required were not available to the schools. The findings agree with findings of other studies in other LGAs and districts in Edo State (Olubor, Imakpokpomwan & Edeki 2020, Imakpokpomwan, Olubor, and Edeki, 2022). Generally, the inadequate supply of teachers in the state is demand side induced rather than supply side deficit as teacher training institutions in the state and nearby states kept producing qualified and certificated teachers without government; owner of public schools, demanding for their services. The last time a major employment drive was done in Edo State Teaching Service Commission was during the Lucky Igbinedion regime (1999-2007). Ever since, no public recruitment was carried out into the Edo State Teaching Services. An attempt by the Adams Oshiomhole regime (2008-2015) in the state to employ teachers in 2012 flopped due to alleged corruption in the conduct of the exercise (Ebegbulem 2012). The present regime of Godwin Obaseki (2015-2024) has not made any efforts to staff the schools with the required teachers. Some of those employed prior to the 2007 are no longer available because of death, withdrawal of service or retirement. Since no significant employment drive of public knowledge has been done to staff the understaffed schools, most schools are without enough teaching personnel. Hence, the persistence of high unemployment of graduates in the state which is because of the lack of government political will to strengthen the Upper Basic Education system. The learners are at a disadvantage when qualified teachers are not employed and deployed to the schools. The society suffers because highly trained persons are allowed to be idle even though they want to be engaged. On the other hand, the society is the loser

because, its investment in education is not yielding dividends which should have been manifesting as trained teachers are employed and deployed to the schools.

Research question 2 established that outfits for practical exposure of the students are partially provided for in Agricultural science. The school crop farms which enable students to carry out demonstrations in crops cultivation are available in all sampled schools. This is not unexpected because Akoko-Edo Local Government Area is mainly rural and agrarian. Arable land is generally available in rural Edo state. If well harnessed, school farms could be a source for generating income for the management of the school. Animal farm on the other hand is not seen in any of the schools sampled. Responses to question items confirm they are not available. This is not good for the interest of food security for the teaming human population. Animals are a major source of protein for the people. In the past, animal hunting and wildlife used to be a major source for human consumption in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area. In recent time, however, due to climate change and insecurity occasioned by banditry and kidnapping, hunting for wildlife has declined. Schools ought to be teaching students how to rear at least one farm animal so that after school, some of the graduates could set up farms for rearing animals for either the local or international market or both. Home Economics is another component of Pre-vocational studies in the basic education curriculum. From the research, it was found that no Home Economics laboratory for the practical demonstration was established in any school in the local government area. Possibly this could be because until the 2013 curriculum modification, the teaching of Home Economics was not compulsory in any of the levels of education in the country. Hence, only few schools that could afford the materials offered it. But since 2013, about a decade since the curriculum implementation started, efforts should have been made to strengthen the teaching of Home Economics at the upper basic education level. A good understanding of the practical component of home economics could assist in reducing graduate unemployment as well as graduate unemployability. The finding of this research negates the aspiration of the Universal Basic Education Commission (2010) which stated that 'the quality dimension has become imperative in the provision of basic education, hence, the prominence that has been given to this issue in the Commission'. Accordingly, every school must have from inception a well-equipped standard laboratory, workshop for integrated science, agricultural science, Introductory Technology and Home Economics (UBEC 2010). The absence of the requisite farm and/or laboratory is a set-back for the learning of Pre-Vocational Studies in the sampled LGA.

Research question 3 sought to find the perception of the respondents on academic goal achievement in the Upper Basic Education level. The finding established that for the much the students learnt in Pre-Vocational studies, they feel that they could explore what they have learnt especially in crop farming. Some however agreed that they have been motivated enough to explore further the benefits derived from the study of Pre-Vocational Studies as they may set up a farm in the future. Teaching Pre-Vocational Studies at this level of education is bound to wet the students' appetite for further studies. It could encourage them to engage in entrepreneurship in the field of agro-business, tourism, or any other aspect of vocational activities.

The Implications of the Study for Job Creation

As enunciated in the National Policy on Education, a goal geared toward job creation expected of the Upper Basic Education is to provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and educational advancement (FRN 2014). The intent of this policy objective is to raise entrepreneurs out of the graduates of the junior secondary school who are either expected to proceed to higher institutions for further studies or could vie off to the world of work after completing the basic education programme. Pre-vocational studies as designed in the 2013 curriculum modification, was to further strengthen job creation potentials of the upper UBE school leavers. Agricultural science and home economics constitute the components of Pre-Vocational Studies in the curriculum modification (Obioma 2012). They are laden with themes capable of not only creating awareness but also the readiness of the UBE graduates to engage in job creation if the practical components of the curriculum contents are well implemented. The implications of this study for job creation are;

- Findings of the study established that teachers of Pre-Vocational Studies are inadequately supplied. It implies that the implementation of the Pre-Vocational curriculum would be haphazard. In some schools, it is possible that the Pre-Vocational curriculum may have been brushed by those who were not trained in any of the components of the subjects. Thereby handling the subjects theoretically through the alternative to practical approach instead of the practical exposition that could have instilled the confidence in the output of the UBE to become job creators in the society.
- That no animal farm was available in any of the Upper Basic schools is a setback in implementing the job creation components of the Pre-vocational subjects. Food security is

germane for human health. The inability of the schools to prepare the students in at least an animal farm is a failure to prepare them for careers in animal rearing, veterinary medicine and possible further research efforts necessary for providing meat on the menu.

- Introduction of Home Economics as a subject is new in many schools in Edo State. When it was combined with agricultural science to form the fulcrum of the Pre-Vocational Studies, it was an ample opportunity to further strengthen the UBE curriculum toward job creation. This study found no Home Economics laboratory in sampled Upper Basic Education schools in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. The implication is that Home Economics as presently handled is not capable of infusing job creation skills among the output.
- Even though graduates of the upper basic education schools asserted in the research that they would aspire to prepare simple meals, they may be handling such efforts as was handled to them by their parents which were traditional ways of preparing meals. Home economics modernizes the traditional meal preparation as it combines hygiene, balance, neatness, courtesy and modernity in not only preparing simple meals but also with serving customers. All this may be missing in the absence of the practical demonstrations of themes taught in Pre-Vocational Studies. Thus, instead of attracting customers, such endeavour may be repelling those who need quality services thereby further reducing patronage which certainly is anti-entrepreneurship. Home economics emphasis is on best global practice which schools ought to teach the learners.

Conclusion

This article sets out to report on the study of resource assessment and academic goals achievements in Pre-Vocational Studies in a sampled Local government area of Edo state. It was argued that Pre-Vocational Studies curriculum is rich enough to create awareness and readiness for UBE graduates to venture into job creation if the curriculum is well implemented. It was found that teachers of Pre-Vocational Studies were not supplied to the schools as demanded. The practical farms and laboratories were not also adequately supplied apart from the crop farm. The implications for job creation were highlighted. If the pre-vocational studies curriculum is well implemented, it is capable of infusing confidence necessary for job creation in the Upper Basic Education graduates.

Recommendations

Arising from the study, some recommendations are made in order to strengthen the teaching of Pre-Vocational Studies in the Upper Basic Education level in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State.

1. Qualified Pre-vocational Studies teachers should be recruited from Akoko-Edo Local Government Area or nearby LGA and employed for the services of the schools. It is assumed that these categories of professionals trained but unemployed are not difficult to find these days. Local sourcing of teachers could discourage teachers from seeking for transfer after deployment because those sourced from far away would seek for transfer no sooner they received their appointment letters.
2. All Junior Secondary schools should be supported with a school farm for rearing at least a farm animal. A well cultivated animal farm oriented for business is an encouragement to further explore such an avenue for job creation.
3. Home Economics is a practical subject. It cannot be well handled without a laboratory. Though expensive to establish and maintain, its laboratory could be the first contact the rural students have with modern practices in hospitality and tourism. All schools should be supported with the practical components of the home economics curriculum.
4. The Universal Basic Education Commission should be up and doing in correcting anomalies observed in the implementation of the universal basic education curriculum component of the National Policy on Education.

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