
**GENDER DIFFERENTIALS IN STUDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN
NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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Abstract

Quality vocational education fosters entrepreneurial mindsets, attitudes and skills as well as covering a range of aspects such idea generation, start-up grow and innovation. Therefore, there are certain competencies/skills required by teachers of vocational subjects for the development of entrepreneurial skills in secondary school students. This study examined the gender differentials in students' perceptions of the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools. A descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. The study samples consisted of 150 senior secondary school students randomly selected from ten schools in two Local Government Areas of Lagos State; Ikorodu and Epe. Students' Vocational Education Implementation Questionnaire (SVEIQ, $r=0.83$) was the main source of data collection. The data were analysed used t-test to determine the significant differences in the variables presented. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results indicated that there was no

significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of vocational skills in students. ($t(147) = .902, p = .072, p > 0.05$), and in the perception of male and female students on the vocational skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education according to gender ($t(147) = .945, p > 0.05$). Based on these findings, the study recommended that government, school administrators and all stakeholders should ensure the reformation and strengthening of vocational education and trainings for the students.

Keywords: Vocational education, Vocational skills, Vocational methods, Gender, Implementation of vocational education.

Introduction

The need for vocational education in the developmental effort of any nation cannot be underestimated. The development of education sector is a sine-quo-non for the development of all other sectors. According to Hoppe and Namdar (2023), vocational education seeks to provide student (especially those in tertiary schools) with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of setting. The commission emphasizes that different aspects of vocational education are offered at all levels of schooling.

In a similar vein, Ogunmola and Samuel (2021) maintained that it is a lifelong learning process, starting from elementary level to other levels of education and spanning to adult education. Muhammad (2018) also holds the view that vocational education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for the pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes in widely different context. According to Danladi, Adamu, Usman and Doma (2020), vocational education refers to all activities aimed at fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, attitudes and skills as well as covering a range of aspects such idea generation, start-up grow and innovation.

Walmsey and Wraae (2022) sees vocational education as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude to enable the learner apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realize new trends and opportunities for meeting those challenges in all aspects of human life. According to Odanga, Omuterema and Oteki (2021), the acquisition of the requisite skills is a means of increasing the productive power of any nation. Consequently, they added that the Nigerian society should recognize the fact that every citizen should be equipped to contribute effectively to the welfare of the country. The acquisition of such practical skills is important because when efficient and skilful hands are employed in any fields of human endeavours, high productivity is usually achieved. Economically, maximum skills acquisition by VBE students and others will help to enrich the Nigerian society and in this way, tend to make possible sustainable development.

Koly, Martin-Herz, Islam, Sharmin, Blencowe and Naheed (2021) opined that a rich nation is one that is capable of meeting the economic, social, moral and political needs of the citizenry. Nigeria as a nation will enjoy sustainable development if VBE students in particular and all other students in general acquire maximum skills acquisition and competencies in their specialties. Furthermore, politically, practical skills acquisition tend to promote personal and national greatness. Ukoh-Aviomoh (2018) pointed out that the behaviour of an individual in a society or the behaviour of a nation in a community of nations may be influenced by the skills and competencies possessed by that individual or nation.

Socially, the acquisition of maximum skills helps a person to provide amusement, happiness, love, affection and enjoyment to other individuals as well as the entire nation at large (Berglund & Verduijn, 2018). It also helps to reduce criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, and other social vices among the youths. To VBE students, maximum skills acquisition help them to be engaged in productive work either for themselves or for employers of labour. This enables VBE students to qualify for and hold productive employment as well as increases their productivity and earns more remuneration.

Other importance of acquiring maximum skills and competencies includes the following, it reduces the drop-out rates among the Nigerian youths, it helps to make youths intelligent users of the products of technology as well as the most reliable vehicle for economic prosperity and diplomatic supremacy of the Nigerian nation (Rusok, Kumar & Rahman, 2017). These benefits of maximum skills acquisition are still there if VBE students have a rethink and change their negative attitudes towards it and turn to develop themselves sufficiently in the skills and competencies inherent in VBE programmes of their institutions. In fact when VBE students fail to acquire maximum skills from the programme, this in turn affects sustainable development negatively.

An important factor in skill acquisition process is exposure to practical situations where these skills are displayed. In such case, the individual might face challenges. Challenges concretize the efforts to acquire theoretical and practical skills. Challenges bring about rapid development. The Students Industrial Training Programme is a programme where they are exposed to practical steps in the right direction, (Hassan, Mohammed & Wakili, 2019).

Rapid development should be based on purposeful plans rather than chance. Only the plans, which lead to rapid acquisition of relevant skills, bring about rapid development (Clements & Joswick, 2018). Societies posed with challenges develop rapidly because it clears the way for the learning eyes and hands with the desire and urge to success, to perform beyond the obvious limits which the assistance they receive dictates. So, once an economy has developed basic modern skills, the wheel would have been set rolling to achieve a minimum standard of living. It is important to be mindful of the general level of different skills in an economy so as to achieve a balanced development and high productivity in skill acquisition (Odukoya, Bowale & Okunlola, 2018).

There are certain competencies/skills required by teachers of vocational subjects for the development of entrepreneurial skills in secondary school students. These skills when possessed by teachers will develop the entrepreneurial intention in the students. The first competence/skill required by vocational studies teacher is being

creative. Creativity is the spark that drives the development of new products or services or ways to do business. It is the push for innovation and improvement (Ebodili & Izogie, 2013). It is continuous learning, questioning, and thinking outside of prescribed formulas. When a teacher is creative, such would drive entrepreneurship development of the students to a higher height.

The second skills required to be possessed by teachers of vocational studies is dedication. Teachers must be dedicated to the subject by attending classes as at when due and ensure that practicals are conducted on every topic taught. Dedication is what motivates the teacher to work hard, 12 hours a day or more, even seven days a week, especially in the beginning, to get the endeavor off the ground (Fix, Ritzen, Pieters & Kuiper, 2019). Planning and ideas must be joined by hard work to succeed. Teachers' dedication makes it happen.

The third skill required by teachers for the development of entrepreneurial skills in students is determination. This is the extremely strong desire to achieve success. It includes persistence and the ability to bounce back after rough times (Floris & Pillitu, 2019). It persuades the entrepreneur to put extra effort. For the true entrepreneur, money is not the motivation. Success is the motivator; money is the reward.

The fourth skill required by teachers is flexibility. Flexibility is the ability to adopt quickly in response to changing market needs. It is being true to a dream while also being mindful of market realities (Powell, 2013). A story is told about an entrepreneur who set-up a provision store, but customers wanted a barbing saloon as well. Rather than risking the loss of these customers, the entrepreneur modified his vision to accommodate these needs. Therefore a good vocational studies teacher must be flexible to bring the desire entrepreneurial skills development in the students.

Related to the foregoing therefore is competence required of vocational studies teacher which is leadership. Leadership is the ability to create rules and to set goals. It is the capacity to follow through to see that rules are followed and goals are accomplished (Niittylahti, Annala & Mäkinen, 2019). A good vocational studies

teacher must possess good qualities of a leader, if they must bring the desired result in students through entrepreneurship.

Also, teachers of vocational studies must have passion for the subject they teach. Passion is what gets teachers started and keeps them there. It gives vocational studies teachers the ability to convince students to believe in their vision (Hynes, 1996). It cannot substitute for planning, but it will help them to stay focused and to get others to look at their plans. Self-confidence is another competence which must be possessed by students. This comes from thorough planning, which reduces uncertainty and the level of risk (Leitch & Harrison, 1999). It also comes from expertise. Self-confidence gives the entrepreneur the ability to listen without being easily swayed or intimidated. In view of the aforementioned, this study examined the gender differentials in students' perceptions of the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

To achieve skill acquisition, there is need to monitor all areas to ensure that effective linkages exist between attempts to develop theory and practical skills at various levels. This could be made to enrich academic curriculum and as such utilizes the great potential in academic institutions. It would also create an avenue for interaction among the various sectors in economy, such as the artisans, manufacturers, academicians, government and industries in a way to enhance rapid skill acquisition and technological development in the country. In view of these, this study examined the gender differentials in students' perceptions of the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the gender differentials in students' perceptions of the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools. The study sought to establish:

- i. The difference between male and female students' perception on the competence/skills needed by teachers for

- the development of vocational skills in students;
- ii. The difference between male and female students' perception on vocational skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education;
 - iii. The difference between male and female students' perception on methods that can be used to develop vocational skills in students through vocational and skills education; and
 - iv. The difference between male and female students' perception on the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

H₀1: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of vocational skills in students.

H₀2: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on vocational skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education.

H₀3: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on methods that can be used to develop vocational skills in students through vocational and skills education.

H₀4: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

Methods

A descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. The study samples consisted of 150 senior secondary school students randomly selected from ten schools in two Local Government Areas of Lagos State; Ikorodu and Epe. Students' Vocational Education Implementation Questionnaire (SVEIQ, $r=0.83$) was the main source of data collection. The data were analysed using t-test to

determine the significant differences in the variables presented. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

H₀1: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of vocational skills in students.

Table 1: T-test result of difference in students' perception on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of vocational skills in students according to gender.

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t	p-value
Male	68	95.21	8.321	147	.902	.072
Female	81	117.35	5.311			

Table 1 showed the perceptions of the male and female students on the competencies/skills needed by teachers for the development of vocational skills in students. The male students had a mean score of 95.21 with a standard deviation of 8.321 while the female students had a mean score of 117.35 with a standard deviation of 5.311. The computed t-value at $t(147) = 0.902$ was not significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of vocational skills in students. ($t(147) = .902, p = .072, p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, it was concluded that there was insignificant difference in the perception of male and female students on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of vocational skills in students.

H₀2: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on vocational skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education.

Table 2: T-test result of the difference in students' perception on vocational skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education according to gender

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t	p-value
Male	68	101.43	3.935	147	9.454	.606
Female	81	120.59	2.048			

Table 2 showed the perceptions of the male and female students on the vocational skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education according to gender. The male had a mean score of 101.43 with a standard deviation of 3.935 while the female had a mean score of 120.59 with a standard deviation of 2.048. The computed t-value at $t(147) = 9.454$ was significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the vocational skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education according to gender ($t(147) = .945$, $p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the vocational skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education according to gender.

H₀3: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on methods that can be used to develop vocational skills in students through vocational and skills education.

Table 3: T-test result on the difference in students' perception on methods that can be used to develop vocational skills in students through vocational skills education according to gender

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t	p-value
Male	69	101.77	7.98	147	7.079	0.051
Female	81	122.50	10.79			

Table 3 depicted the perceptions of the male and female students on the methods that can be used to develop vocational skills in students through vocational skills education. The male students had a mean score of 101.77 with a standard deviation of 7.98 while the female students had a mean score of 122.50 with a standard deviation of 10.79. The computed t-value at $t(147) = 7.079$ was insignificant at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the methods that can be used to develop vocational skills in students through vocational skills education ($t(147) = 7.079, p > 0.05$). This showed the null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in students' perception on the methods that can be used to develop vocational skills in students through vocational skills education according to gender.

H₀4: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

Table 4: T-test result of the students' perception on the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t	p-value
Male	68	105.76	8.41	147	6.532	0.711
Female	81	136.92	11.89			

Table 4 showed the perceptions of male and female students' perception on the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools. The male students had a mean score of 105.76 with a standard deviation of 8.41 while the female students had a mean score of 136.92 with a standard deviation of 11.89. The computed t-value at $t(147) = 6.532$ was significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the perception

of male and female students on the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools ($t(147) = 6.532, p > 0.05$). This showed that null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the perception of students on the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools according to gender.

H₀5: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on the solutions to the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

Table 5: T-test result of the students' perception on the solution to the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t	p-value
Male	68	98.05	5.30	147	3.091	0.001
Female	81	101.65	6.27			

Table 5 showed the perceptions of male and female students' perception on the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools. The male students had a mean score of 98.05 with a standard deviation of 5.30 while the female students had a mean score of 101.65 with a standard deviation of 6.27. The computed t-value at $t(147) = 3.091$ was significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicated that there was significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the solutions to the challenges facing the implementation of vocational education programme in Nigerian secondary schools ($t(147) = 3.091, p < 0.05$). This showed that the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, it was concluded that there was significant difference in the perception of students on the solutions to challenges facing the implementation of vocational

education programme in Nigerian secondary schools according to gender.

Discussions

Result showed that there is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of entrepreneurial skills in students. This result supported the finding of Danladi, Adamu, Usman and Doma (2020) who found insignificant difference in male and female perception on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of entrepreneurial skills in students. However, this result disagreed with the findings of Walmsey and Wraae (2022) who found significant difference in students' perception on the competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of entrepreneurial skills in students based on their gender.

Result revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on entrepreneurial skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education. This result confirmed the submission of Odanga, Omuterema, and Oteki (2021) who reported insignificant difference in students' perception on the entrepreneurial skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education according to their gender. Meanwhile this finding refuted the claim of Hoppe and Namdar (2023) who reported significant difference in the perception of students on the entrepreneurial skills needed by secondary school students through vocational and skills education on the basis of their gender.

Result revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students' perception on the methods that can be used to develop entrepreneurial skills in students through vocational and skills education. This result is in accordance with the finding of Rusok, Kumar and Rahman (2017) who reported insignificant difference in the perception on students the methods that can be used to develop entrepreneurial skills in students through vocational and skills education according to gender. But, this result disagrees with the submission of Ukoh-Aviomoh (2018) who reported

significant difference in students' perception on the methods that can be used to develop entrepreneurial skills in students through vocational and skills education on the basis of their gender.

Result revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students' perception on the challenges facing the implementation of entrepreneurial education programme in Nigerian secondary schools. This result is in agreement with the findings of Oboreh and Nnebe (2019) who reported insignificant difference in the perception of students on the challenges facing the implementation of entrepreneurial education in Nigerian secondary schools. This result however disagrees with the finding of Hassan, Mohammed and Wakili (2019) who reported significant difference in students' perception on the challenges facing the implementation of entrepreneurial education programme in Nigeria secondary schools.

Result indicated that there was significant difference between male and female students' perception on the solutions to the challenges facing the implementation of entrepreneurial education programme in Nigerian secondary schools. This result is in line with the findings of Koly, Martin-Herz, Islam, Sharmin, Blencowe and Naheed (2021) who finds that there is significant difference in the perception of students on the solutions to the challenges facing the implementation of entrepreneurial education programme in Nigerian secondary schools. However, this result disagrees with the conclusion of Ogunmola and Samuel (2021) who reported insignificant difference in students' perception on the solution to the challenges facing the implementation of entrepreneurial education programme in Nigerian secondary schools according to gender.

Conclusion

Consequent upon the finding of this study, this study concludes that male and female students did not differ on their perception of competence/skills needed by teachers for the development of entrepreneurial skills in students. Male and female students are not different in their perceptions of entrepreneurial skills needed by

secondary school students through vocational and skills education methods that can be used to develop entrepreneurial skills in students through vocational and skills education. There are also numerous challenges facing the implementation of entrepreneurial education programme in Nigerian secondary schools.

Recommendations

From the backdrop of the findings, this study recommended that government, school administrators and all stakeholders should ensure the reformation and strengthening of vocational education and trainings for the students. Also, clear policy for facilitating capacity expansion through private sector participation must be ensured. Government and other stakeholders should make investment in vocational training institutes, and promote industry and academia interaction to narrow the existing gap between the demand and supply of the skilled.

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