

Original Article

VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: A TOOL FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF RURAL WOMEN IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study investigated how vocational skill development of rural women impact on their socio-economic wellbeing in Enugu state, Nigeria. One research question and one null hypothesis guided this study. The design of the study was a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 2,173,124 rural women from 14 out of 17 Local Government Area in Enugu State. The sample size for this study was 3760 respondents using Taro Yamane sampling technique. A structural questionnaire developed by the researcher was used for the study. The instrument was validated by the three research experts.

The reliability co-efficient of 0.77 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha formula. The data collected for this study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the null hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that acquisition of vocational skill is the remedy for development of socio-economic wellbeing of rural women in Enugu State, Nigeria. It was recommended that acquisition of vocational skills enhance rural women socio-economic well-being in Enugu State. The paper concludes by recommending that media and government should sensitize the public on the importance of vocational skills for self-employment, job creation and community development.

Keyword: education, vocational skills, development, socio-economic wellbeing, rural women.

Introduction

Education is no doubt an instrument for nation building and national development. Education is an instrument par excellence which equips and individual with the right skills, knowledge, abilities,

competence, attitudes, behavior and values in order to function effectively in the society (Oneome, 2020). Education is equally a means to an end, which assists citizens of a nation to develop their full potentials and capacity to function effectively in their society as well

as to transforms people's lives. It brings about economic well being, encourages self-reliance and entrepreneurship and helps families build better lives (Oneome, 2020).

However, the acquisition of vocational skills is another educational means through which women can improve their socio-economic well-being. Vocational skills have become a common virtue required for the development of individuals and the society at large. For a society to develop, everyone has to demonstrate their capacity to contribute to fiscal policy (Bakoyubo, 2018). It is certain that vocational skills are potential tools that can be used for attainment of sustainable livelihoods in the society (Oneome, 2020). Ferdinand Williams and Orlu (2019) stated that involvement of women in vocational skills development programmes will enable them to own businesses and contribute to wealth creation employment opportunities and self reliance hence helping the society in poverty reduction and contribute greatly to the national productivity and economic growth that will promote development.

Vocational Skills for Rural Women

Vocational skills typically refer to occupations that one can learn with some basic training. Vocational skills also refer to skills and occupations that one gains toward becoming knowledgeable in a specific trade or profession. Acquiring one or two vocational skills is a vital first step to entrepreneurship. Most successful business owners and entrepreneurs in Nigeria started by acquiring a vocational skill or training that is in high demand in the society (Iroegdu & Dala, 2017). Vocational skills are trade skills that apply to a technical and practical profession. Vocational skills, according to Hills (2014), are practical or firsthand skills that help a person master a trade or a job.

According to Iroegdu and Dala (2017), vocational skills are those skills which allow a person to master a particular subject or procedure that is applicable to

a career. Iroegdu and Dala further stated that vocational skills that are attained in a hands-on-environment that is typically not in a classroom. Loo (2018) postulated that training of these skills could be in one or more of these areas: tailoring, carpentry, weaving (cloths, basket, mats), designing and making of bags, cane chairs, poultry keeping, agriculture, gardening, masonry, cookery and sewing.

There are four types of vocational skills which are:

Hard skills: These are applied abilities that complement other jobs. Hard skills can be acquired through learning in a classroom, through study on the internet, through books and other materials.

Soft skills: Soft skills are abilities of an individual not precisely related to specific jobs but apply to all jobs. These skills are communication skill, management skills, and so on.

Technical skills: Technical skills are the abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks. They are practical, and often relate to mechanical, information technology, mathematical, or scientific tasks. Some examples include knowledge of programming languages, mechanical equipment which includes: carpentry, joinery, building, plumbing, electrical/electronic, etc.

Living skills: Vocational living skills or life skills help persons with disabilities make the transition to independent living. Living skills programmes help individuals develop the skills needed to gain employment and earn a paycheck. Individuals also learn the soft skills necessary to interact and learn the soft skills necessary to interact and communicate with co-workers and customers. Living skills includes: tailoring, cake baking, jewelry making, leather work (Loo, 2018).

Vocational skills have become a common virtue required for the development of individuals and the society at large. For a society to develop, everyone has to demonstrate their capacity to contribute to fiscal policy or gross domestic product. Vocational skills

are potential tool that can be used for attainment of sustainable livelihoods in the society. Oke (2017) supported the view that adult women education programmes provides adequate room for the vocational skills development in the following ways: skills acquisitions and improvement in its training programmes, knowledge acquisition and upgrading in various fields of endeavors, development of competences needed for work, inculcating one with innovations and creativity and improving people's job performances, improves ideas and understanding, bring about changes in perception, attitude, behavior and exposes one to understanding real life issues in order to tackle challenges e.g. poverty, HIV/AIDS issues, etc;

In the same vein, Adegoroye (2017) stated the programme allowed women to involve in the building of vocational skills and ability to harness the available human resources which constitutes a sine-qua-non for human development, facilitated income and wealth generation, participation in the decision making process in the community, eradicated poverty, ignorance, diseases, illiteracy and as well create room for self-improvement that will aid self-employment. For Ogakwu and Isife (2016), involvement of educated women in vocational skills development programmes will enable them to own businesses and contribute to wealth creation, employment opportunities and self reliance hence helping the society in poverty reduction and contribute greatly to the national productivity and economic growth that will promote development. They further stressed that adult literacy education instills in women the capacity to bring peace in their families and the society at large. Peace and stability are very important for economic development of any nation.

Socio-economic wellbeing or status is the position of an individual or group on the socio-economic scale, which is determined by a combination of social and economic factors such as income, amount and kinds

of education, type and prestige of occupation, place of residence and in some societies or parts of society-ethnic origin or religious back. (APA, 2023).

Examination of socio-economic wellbeing often reveals inequalities in access to resources, as well as issues related to privilege, power and control.

Rural women are woman who reside or live in the rural areas. "According to Omodia (2017,), rural woman are active agents of economic and social change and environmental protection who are in many ways and to various degrees, constrained in their roles as farmers, producers, investors, caregivers and consumers.

Rural women play crucial roles in ensuring food and nutrition security, eradicating rural poverty and improving the wellbeing of their families yet continue to face serious challenges as a result of gender-based stereotypes and discrimination that deny them equitable access to opportunities, resources, assets and services (Oyebamji & Adekola, 2015).

It is against the above background that the researcher sought to determine how vocational skill development of rural women impact on their socio-economic well-being in Enugu State.

Statement of Problem

Regrettably, in Enugu State, Nigeria, the socio-economic well-being of rural women which invariably gives women financial capability has been in a state of dilemma. This ugly situation seems to have led to under performance in socio-economic activities. Rural women experience socio-economic problems in the state, ranging from lack o financial empowerment which usually lead to underperformance in socio-economic activities.

Moreso, women are marginalized, harassed and relegated to the background in the areas of social, economic and political participation which usually deprive the women from contributing their quota in the society thereby creating gender inequality. There

is need to encourage these rural women to create impact to their family and society as well and to achieve this, there is need for vocational skill development. Vocational skills development among other things plays vital roles in enhancing the socio-economic well-being of the rural women. Against this background, the problem of this study is therefore, to investigate how vocational skills development of rural women impact their socio-economic well-being in Enugu State?

Purpose of Study

The major purpose of this study was to determine the influence of vocational skills development on socio-economic wellbeing of rural women in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This research question was posed to guide the study. What is the influence of vocational skills development on socio-economic being of rural women in Enugu State Nigeria?

Hypothesis

A null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. It was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of younger women (aged 18-35) and older rural women (aged 36 and above) on the vocational skills development.

Research method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey research, focuses on people, the vital facts of people, their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivation and behaviours (Abuka, 2014). Descriptive survey research design is appropriate for the study because it tried together opinion through questionnaire from rural women on the influence of vocational skill development on socio-economic wellbeing of rural women in Enugu State. The population of the study consists of 2,173,124 rural women from 14 out of 17 Local Government Area in Enugu State. The sample size for the study was 3760 respondent using Taro Yamane

sampling technique. Structured questionnaire developed by researcher was used for the study. The instrument was validated by three research experts, two from Adult and Continuing Education department and one experts, in Measurement and Evaluation unit of the department of Mathematics and Computer Education, all from Faculty of Education, ESUT. A reliability coefficient of 0.77 was realized using cronbach alpha formular. A total of 376 copies out of 4000 copies of the instrument correctly filled and returned were used for the study. The return rate of the instrument distributed was 94 percent. Data collected for the study was analyzed using mean with standard deviation answering the research question and t-test statistics for testing null hypothesis at 0.05 level significance.

The analysis was computer based with the use of the statistical package for social science (SPSS) to analyze the respondent's ratings. The decision rule for the Mean (\bar{x}) was based on the principles of mean, 2.50 gotten by $4+3+3+1 = 2.50$. any item with a score less than 2.50 was considered not required any item mean of 2.50 was considered not required any item mean of 2,50 and above was considered required. The level of acceptance for the research question is 3.59 which indicate that acquisition of vocational skills enhance the rural women socio-economic wellbeing in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Null hypothesis was rejecting when the calculated value is equal to or greater than critical value but if less than the critical value, null hypothesis was not rejected. The relatively low standard deviation shows that the respondents did not differ remarkably in their responses to the items while high standard deviation indicates divergent opinions.

RESULTS

The result of the data analysis was presented in table according to the research question and hypothesis.

Research Question 1

What is the influence of vocational skills development on socio-economic well being of rural women in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean with standard Deviation of the respondents on the influence of vocational skills on socio-economic wellbeing of rural women

S/N	Acquisition of vocational skills has;	X	SD	Remarks
1	Improved my skills in tailoring and sewing	3.53	0.61	Agree
2	Improved my trading skills	3.75	0.48	Agree
3	Enhanced my skills in soap making	3.69	0.57	Agree
4	Enhanced my skills in hair dressing	3.65	0.99	Agree
5	Improved my skills on basics of book keeping	3.80	0.82	Agree
6	Enhanced m cream making skills	3.58	0.85	Agree
7	Improved my skills in weaving	3.63	0.71	Agree
8	Enhanced my skills in beads making	3.16	0.61	Agree
9	Improved my skills in bakery	3.52	0.79	Agree
10	Enhanced my shoe making skills	3.57	0.69	Agree
Cluster mean and standard deviation		3.59	0.71	Agree

Table 1 shows the mean responses of the respondents on the influence on vocational skills on socio economic wellbeing of rural women in Enugu State. The cluster mean of 3.59 indicated that indeed acquisition of vocational skills is the panacea for enhancement of women. The overall standard deviation score of 0.71 indicated that the respondents were consistent in their opinion.

Hypothesis 1

These is no significant difference in the mean ratings of younger women (aged 18-35) and older rural women (aged 36 and above) on the influence of vocational skills development on socio economic well being of rural women.

Table 2: The t-test analysis of mean Ratings of the respondents on the influence of vocational skills development

S/N	Vocational skills	Younger women		Older women		t-cal	p-value	Remks
		\bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}_2	SD			
1	Improved my skills in tailoring and sewing	3.51	0.62	3.55	0.59	-0.75	0.71	NS
2	Improved my trading skills	3.80	0.40	3.70	0.56	0.37	0.57	NS
3	Enhanced my skills in soap making	3.70	0.52	3.67	0.62	0.44	0.63	NS
4	Enhanced my skills in hair dressing	2.67	1.01	3.62	0.96	-0.06	0.87	NS
5	Improved my skills on basics of book keeping	3.80	0.79	3.80	0.85	-1.16	0.77	NS
6	Enhanced m cream making skills	3.65	0.83	3.50	0.87	0.60	0.77	NS
7	Improved my skills in weaving	3.70	0.64	3.55	0.78	-0.35	0.16	NS
8	Enhanced my skills in beads making	3.65	0.55	3.57	0.67	0.77	0.48	NS
9	Improved my skills in bakery	3.64	0.61	3.40	0.96	-2.11	0.14	NS
10	Enhanced my shoe making skills	3.58	0.67	3.55	0.71	0.55	0.64	NS

No. of younger women = 192, No of older women = 184, X_1 = mean for younger women, x_2 = mean for older women; DF = 374, P = 0.05, S = significant, NS = Not significant.

The results in table 2 show that the 10 identified vocational skills had their p-value ranged from 0.14 to 0.87 each greater than 0.05 level of significance at 374 degree of freedom. The implication therefore, is that

the null hypothesis (Ho1) was not rejected. Therefore, the researcher upholds the null hypothesis and concludes that younger women and older rural women had uniform opinions on the influence of vocational

skills on socio economic wellbeing of rural women in Enugu State.

Discussion of the findings

The findings of the study are discussed below, according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Influence of vocational skills development on socio economic wellbeing of Rural Women

The results of the analysis of research question one revealed that the acquisition of vocational skills is the panacea for enhancement of socio economic wellbeing of rural women in Enugu state. The vocational skills development include skills in; tailoring and sewing, trading, soap making, hair dressing, basics of booking, cream making, weaving, beads making and bakery. The finding is interesting considering the importance of vocational skills on socio economic wellbeing of rural women. Vocational skills have become a common virtue required for the development of socio economic wellbeing of women and the society at large. The findings of this study are in line with that of King and Hill (2014) who noted that vocational skills such as trading, hair dressing, shoe making, tailoring and sewing are potential tools that can be used for attainment of sustainable livelihoods of rural women. Similarly, Oneome (2020) stated that involvement of women in vocational skills development programmes will enable them to own businesses and contribute to wealth creation, employment opportunities and self-reliance.

The results of the analysis of hypothesis one revealed that younger and older rural women in Enugu state did not differ significantly in their opinions on the influence of vocational skills on socio economic wellbeing of rural women. This finding agreed with the perception of Ferdinand, William and Orlu (2019) who noted that single and married women had similar view on the influence of vocational skills

development on socio-economic wellbeing of rural women in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the finding made, the following conclusions were drawn. The study clearly shows that rural women in Enugu State, Nigeria need the acquisition of vocational skills to enhance their socioeconomic wellbeing.

The findings of study holds serious educational implication it revealed that the acquisition of vocational skills is a solution for enhancement of socio-wellbeing of rural women in Enugu State, Nigeria. The implication is that involvement of rural women in vocational skill development programmes will enable them to own businesses and contribute to wealth creation, employment opportunities and self-reliance hence helping the society in poverty reduction and contribute greatly to national productivity and economic growth that will promote development.

Recommendations

1. Media and government should sensitise the public on the importance of vocational skills and education in community development.
2. Seminars and workshop should be organized for rural women to enable update, renew their knowledge and skills on vocational skills.

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