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IMPROVING SCIENCE CLASSROOM TEACHING PERFORMANCE THROUGH MODEL OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING. AbdulRahaman Ishola Ibrahim and Fatima Muhammad Joda	99-106
AND LEARNING OF safe and Moses	1-5
ON EDUCATION	6-1
THE CONTEXT OF HODI/SOLO LOCAL sther Titilope, Ajayi	13-2
ARY SCHOOL TE. Sagaya Abiodun	24-3
EMIC PERFORMANCE T AREA, ZAMFARA	35-43
SANDWICH DEGREE s Bello and Abdulrafiq	44-5
RMANCE IN ILORIN TE. Sulyman Kamaldeen and Aloba Fatimah	51-4
Mustapha Adam, Alhaji	63
ENTS' ACADEMIC LORIN METROPOLITAN dejobi Janet	74
ONAL COMMITMENT sisi	81-4
ESS IN UNIVERSITIES and Abubakar	89-4
TEACHERS' USE OF ICT IN THE TEACHING OF ECONOMICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OYUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT, KWARA STATE. Johnson Moronfola Adegoke, Oluwafemi Toyin Akano and Yemi Tolulope Owolabi	107-113
VALUE RE-ORIENTATION: A STRATEGY FOR COMBATING MORAL DECADENCE AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA. Ibrahim Barakat B. Ph.D.	114-120
EVALUATION OF THE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ZARIA AND KIVA EDUCATION ZONES, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA. Fati Isa Waziri, and Abubakar	121-127
IDENTIFYING APPROACH TOWARDS VIOLENCE CONTROL IN SCHOOL SPORT. Oluyemi Adelekan	128-137
ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN NIGERIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. Oyeyemi Jumoke	137-146

ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN NIGERIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

BY

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Abstract

The paper compared the location of Technical and Vocational Education at the secondary school level in Nigeria and the United Kingdom to fulfil its role making education realise its objective of national development. In order for TVE to play its part effectively in the changing national context, there is an urgent need to critically examine its location at this level of provision. The study employed a descriptive survey type of the adapted field study method and integrated with other methods which include the historical, scientific and comparative approaches. The population comprised all technical, vocational education stakeholders in the two countries. The target population comprised educational administrators from the Federal Ministry of Education in Abuja, Nigeria and Department of Education in the UK, as well as secondary school teachers in Nigeria and the UK. Out of 179 Technical Colleges in both countries, 16 Technical Colleges were purposively sampled and a total of 106 education stakeholders. Two instruments were used in the study, a questionnaire and a Structured Open-ended Interview Schedule (SOIS) with psychometric properties of content value of 0.72 reliability. The result of the study revealed that the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and the UK promotes technological and vocational attitude and development, although this is more promoted in the UK than in Nigeria (80.45 and 59.4% respectively). The study concluded that education stakeholders in Nigeria and the UK believe that TVE contributed to technological development and its location is suitable at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and Key Stage 4 level in the UK. The study recommended that Nigerian government should allocate sufficient fund to upgrade TVE in order to promote technological development more in Nigeria as it is practised in the UK.

Keywords: Structure, Technical, Vocational education

Introduction

Education is the process through which an individual acquires the intellectual, vocational and moral requirements needed to live a useful and responsible life in the society. It entails training and acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed by individuals to be responsible and contribute their quotas to the development of the society. Ravi (2015) asserts that education is the process through which the innate potentials of the individual is tapped and used for the benefit of the individual and the society. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in the National Policy on Education indicates that Nigerian philosophy of education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen among others (FRN, 2013).

TVE is recognised as an effective mechanism for the development of trained manpower required for socio-economic development of a country. It is a common knowledge that secondary education must cultivate in learners usable technical knowledge and vocational skills that will help combat high dropouts in the society. Based on this, both developed and developing countries of the world have established educational institutions with varying policies and practices that would help prepare and equip future leaders with appropriate knowledge, attitude and skills to enhance productivity and therefore promote a self-reliant nation (Arfo, 2015).

The rising youth unemployment and social insecurity; coupled with inadequate number of skilled workers, high dropout rates among secondary school students have placed the issue of location of TVE at the secondary school level high on the education reform agenda of many nations. (Singh, 2014). The goal of TVE is to equip individuals with relevant knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes that would integrate them into the labour market and develop individuals socially and economically (UNESCO, 2010; FRN, 2013). Furthermore, FRN (2013) indicates that TVE aims at developing individuals intellectually, technically, morally and socially in order to prepare them for productive engagement and equip them for employment. TVE is embedded into the Nigerian and British education systems. From basic, post basic and tertiary level the emphasis is on skill acquisition, development and attitude needed for self-reliance and national development. In the basic education level that span from primary school to junior secondary school in Nigeria, there are pre-vocational subjects offered by students to create an awareness (Nwosu and Micah, 2017).

At the post basic level such as the senior secondary school level, it is vocational in nature and students are to select subjects based on their interest, attitude and performance. In the UK on the other hand, from basic, post basic and tertiary level in the UK the emphasis is on skill development and attitude as well. In the basic education level that span from Key Stage 1-3 (Year 1-3) equivalent to primary 1 to 3 in Nigeria; Key Stage 2 (Year 4-6) equivalent to primary 4 to 6 in Nigeria; Key Stage 3 (Year 7 to 9) equivalent to junior secondary school 1-3 in Nigeria, TVE is prevocational in nature. Stage 4 (Year 10-11) equivalent to senior secondary school 1-3 is vocational in nature and its two-year in duration (Department of Education, 2014).

Vocational Education is offered at the senior secondary school level in comprehensive and technical colleges in Nigeria. However, students reaching this level in comprehensive secondary schools aspire to go into higher institution rather than going into the world of work because of poor quality training (Nzorkurum and Obi, 2015). The objectives of TVE in the UK are: (a) to stimulate the technical growth of students in order to make them productive members of the society; (b) to produce craftsmen, technicians and other skilled workforce to meet the demands of industry, commerce and the general labour (Wolf, 2011).

In the United Kingdom, high school level TVE played a crucial role in shifting their economy from labour-intensive to more advanced technology during the early phase of industrialisation (Wu, 2003). One of the goals of TVE in Nigeria is to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business, particularly at the craft, advanced craft and technical levels to operate, maintain and sustain the Nigerian economic activities for rapid socio-economic development among others (FRN, 2013). In Nigeria on the other hand, Technical Colleges are at the level of the senior secondary school. For instance, there are 19 Federal, 137 State and 3 Local

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Government owned Technical Colleges coordinated by the National Board for Technical Education (Oloko, 2017).

Furthermore, Technical College graduates have three options: to secure employment either at the end of the whole course or after completing one or more modules of employable skills; set up their own businesses and become self-employed, and be able to employ others and pursue further education in advance craft/technical programmes and in post secondary (tertiary) technical institutions such as Polytechnics or Colleges of Education (technical) and Universities (FRN, 2013).

However, Arfo (2015) observes that many Nigerian school graduates lack basic practical skills necessary for self-reliance evident in their inability to demonstrate some basic practical skills expected of them. The quality of TVE offered at the high school level in developed countries such as the UK, makes an individual become self-reliant because education is mandatory to the end of secondary education (Strong, 1990). This practice is quite different in developing countries such as Nigeria where the formal statement on compulsory education terminates at the end of Junior Secondary School (FRN, 2013).

Objectives of the Research

1. To know the similarities in the structure of Technical and Vocational Education at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom
2. To identify the differences in the structure of Technical and Vocational Education at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What are the similarities in the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom?
2. What are the differences in the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom?

Methodology

A descriptive survey type of the adapted field study method and integrated with other methods which include the historical, scientific and comparative approaches was used for the study. The population for the study comprised all TVE stakeholders in both countries, while the target population comprised the Director(s), Deputy Director(s) and Inspector(s) of Technical and Vocational Education as well as Policy Makers in Nigeria and United Kingdom were part of the target population. Not only that, a total of 120 educational administrators and teachers of Technical Colleges purposively sampled from Nigeria and United Kingdom. 60 educational administrators and teachers of Technical Colleges were sampled from Nigeria (20 educational administrators and 40 teachers); while 60 educational administrators and teachers of Technical Colleges were also sampled from the UK (20 educational administrators and 40 teachers). Sixteen Technical Colleges were purposively sampled from the North, South, West and East regional zones of Nigeria and United Kingdom (8 from Nigeria; 8 from United Kingdom). Finally, quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were used to analyse the data gathered. The quantitative data gathered for the study were analysed using the percentage, while

the qualitative data gathered for the study were analysed using thematic and content analyses. The data collected for the study were analysed using the percentage, thematic and content analyses.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the similarities in the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and the United Kingdom?

The structure of Nigerian education system was British oriented during the pre-independence period and post-independence period before 1982. Table 1 and figure 1 below present the details on the analysis of respondents' opinions on the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom (UK) to show the similarity and differences in both countries.

Table 1: Respondents' Opinions on Items on Structure

Code	Variables	Country	To a large extent (%)	To a fairly large extent (%)	To a little extent (%)	Not at all (%)	Total (%)
B1	TVE structure at the high school promotes development of technical and vocational attitude	Nigeria	16(29.1)	18(32.7)	16(29.1)	5(9.1)	55(51.9)
		United Kingdom	20(39.2)	21(41.2)	8(15.7)	2(3.9)	51(48.1)
B2	TVE structure (i.e. levels of technical and vocational education) promotes technological and vocational development.	Nigeria	15(27.3)	16(29.1)	15(27.3)	9(16.4)	55(51.9)
		United Kingdom	23(45.1)	21(41.2)	7(13.7)	0(0.0)	51(48.1)
B3	TVE structure promotes development of social life	Nigeria	13(23.6)	20(36.4)	16(29.1)	6(10.9)	55(51.9)
		United Kingdom	16(31.4)	22(43.1)	13(25.5)	0(0.0)	51(48.1)

Source: Author's computation from survey, 2018

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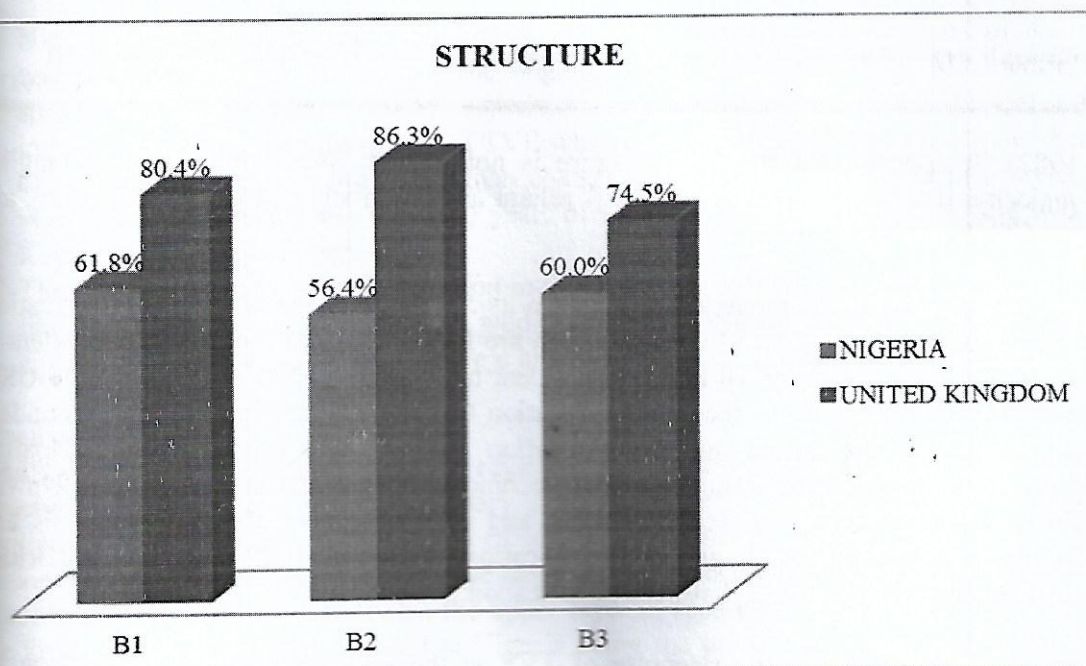


Figure 1: Respondents' Opinions on the Structure of TVE in Nigeria and United Kingdom
Table 1 shows the analysis of opinions on items on structure of TVE in Nigeria and United Kingdom while Figure 1 shows opinions on the items. From the chart, it could be seen that 61.8% of respondents in Nigeria agreed that TVE structure (i.e. levels of technical and vocational education) promotes technological and vocational development while 80.4% of respondents in the UK attested to this. On the question whether TVE structure promotes development of technical and vocational attitude, 56.4% of respondents in Nigeria responded positively while 86.3% of respondents in the UK affirmed it. In the same vein, 60.0% of respondents in Nigeria asserted that TVE structure promotes development of social life while 74.5% of respondents in the UK said the same.

Also through critical examination of the literature reviewed, it was discovered from the study that Nigeria has six years of secondary education which is divided into two tiers known as three years of junior secondary education and three years of senior secondary education respectively. The first three is pre-vocational while the last three is vocational in nature. In the UK on the other hand, secondary education is five years in duration and it is divided into two tiers. The first three years is known as Key Stage 3 while the last two years is known as Key Stage 4 which are equivalent to the Nigerian junior and senior secondary school respectively. The first three is pre-vocational while the last two years is vocational in nature in the UK (British Council, 2015). Secondary education right from inception in Nigeria was five years in duration. Secondary education was greatly diversified and the Nigerian government recognised the tripartite secondary institutions which were grammar school, technical colleges and modern school (Fafunwa, 1974). In 1982, Nigeria migrated from the five years of secondary education to six years of secondary education (Fafunwa, 2002). It appears Nigeria changed her system of education without changing the mind-set of the people towards Technical and Vocational Education. The Nigerian leaders felt that the 5 year structure was faulty and adopted the 3-3 structure of secondary education borrowed from the Japanese education system (Fafunwa and

Aisiku, 1982). It appears that the 3-3 structure is not actually producing anything tangible because majority of school leavers are not self-reliant as it is anticipated in the philosophy and objectives of TVE in Nigeria (FRN, 2013).

The UK on the other hand has remained focused on its 5 year structure of secondary education, although the 5 years is divided into two tiers which are Key Stage 3 (Year 7 to 9) equivalent to JS 1 to 3 and Key Stage 4 (Year 10 to 11) equivalent to SS1 to 2. SS 3 is absent in the UK's education system thereby making secondary education to be five years in duration. Secondary education was greatly diversified and the Education Act of 1944 recognised the tripartite secondary institutions which are grammar school, technical colleges and modern school (Unwin, 2004). The tripartite system was later abolished and comprehensive secondary schools and technical colleges now cater for the general and vocational needs of students in the UK (British Council, 2015). The UK has 6-5-2-3 system of education.

On the issue of similarities in the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and the United Kingdom, findings from the literature reviewed reveal that TVE is pre-vocational at the junior secondary school level in Nigeria equivalent to Key Stage 3 in UK and vocational at the senior secondary school level including technical colleges in Nigeria equivalent to Key Stage 4 including technical colleges in the UK.

Research Question 2: What are the differences in the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom?

On this question the researcher seeks to find out the differences in the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom. Based on the analysis of respondents' opinions presented on Table 1 and Figure 1 above, the following are the differences in the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom based on respondents' opinions.

- a. In practice, TVE structure promotes technological and vocational development more in the UK than in Nigeria.
- b. The structure promotes the development of technical and vocational attitude in both countries though to a larger extent in the UK than in Nigeria.
- c. TVE structure promotes social life development more in the UK than in Nigeria.

Also through critical examination of the literature reviewed in the study, it was discovered that the UK education structure provides that education should be universal, free and compulsory from Year 1 to year 11 which is the end of compulsory education (Weedon, Ahlgren, McCluskey and Riddell, 2010). In Nigeria on the other hand, education is compulsory from Primary one to the end of Junior Secondary School (JSS 3). Although, before 1982 Nigeria operated the 6-5-2-3 structure inherited from her colonial master but later borrowed the 6-3-3-4 system of education from Japan (Fafunwa, 2002). The 3-3 structure of secondary education made secondary education to be of 6 years duration in Nigeria but Britain did not change its secondary education structure but retained its 5 years of secondary education.

On the issue of differences in the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and the United Kingdom, findings from the literature reviewed revealed that:

Nigeria changed the 5 year structure of secondary education to six years of 3-3 structure without changing the attitude of the Nigerian people towards TVE. Meanwhile, the 3-3 structure has not really yielded anything tangible to the nation due to lack of proper implementation of the philosophy of TVE whereas the UK has always maintained her 5 years of secondary education and rather than changing system, the UK decided to break the five years into two tiers namely the three years of Key Stage 3 (JSS in Nigeria) and two years of Key Stage 4 (SSS in Nigeria).

The UK adapt the system of education in the USA by breaking secondary education into two like the USA whereas Nigeria adopt wholesale the 3-3 system of Japan without looking at the contexts (historical, political, economic and cultural factors) that will make it work.

Conclusion

Findings of this study from literature reviewed have shown that there are similarities in the nature of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom. The similarities can be traced to the nature of secondary school in Nigeria and the UK; while the senior secondary school in Nigeria is the upper layer of secondary school, the senior secondary school equivalence in the UK is also the upper layer of secondary school known as Key Stage 4; the lower layer of secondary school in Nigeria being the junior secondary school and the lower layer of secondary school in the UK being Key Stage 3 (FRN, 2013; DfE, 2014). Similarly, the senior secondary school in Nigeria is equivalence of Technical Colleges in terms of Technical and Vocational Education and the senior secondary school in the UK is equivalence of Technical Colleges in terms of Technical and Vocational Education. The senior secondary schools that are equivalence of Technical Colleges in both countries feature vocational subjects: 34 trades/entrepreneurial subjects in Nigeria and 20 trades/entrepreneurial subjects in the UK (FRN, 2013; DfE, 2014). Moreover, the products of the secondary schools in both countries have the prospect to be self-employed or work in industries in the two countries (Okwelle and Deebom, 2015; O'Brien, 2015).

The structure of TVE (i.e. levels of technical and vocational education) promotes vocational and technological attitude more in the UK than in Nigeria. It likewise promotes technological and personal development more in the UK than in Nigeria. Moreover, it promotes social life development more in the UK than in Nigeria. Moreover, the structure of TVE at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria and United Kingdom has some differences in terms of implementation of the structure requirements more than in terms of the structure itself. The findings from literature reviewed under similarities above show essential areas of similarities in nature. However, the pursuit of the implementation of the essential areas of similarities in nature constitutes major differences in TVE in both countries. Here are some indications. The senior secondary schools in Nigeria and Key Stage 4 in the United Kingdom have workshops, equipment, teachers and teach trades/entrepreneurial subjects, these subjects are largely more in theory in Nigeria than in the UK (FRN, 2013; British Council, 2015). It implies that TVE at the senior secondary school has more realistic government attention in the UK than in Nigeria (Osam, 2013 and Statistica, 2017). Thus, in spite of the fact that the products of the secondary schools in both countries have the prospect to be self-employed or work in industries based on the structure, the products could pursue these prospects more realistically in the UK than in Nigeria (Osam, 2013; FRN, 2013; British Council, 2015; Statistica, 2017).

Lessons for Nigeria

The structure of TVE promotes vocational and technological attitude, although good policy formulation without corresponding conscientious implementation has proved wasteful and ineffective in Nigeria. In essence, the education system of a country should be sensitive to the political and cultural environment because education cannot be divorced from politics and it is important for countries to employ strategies that would help overcome challenges such as inadequate funding and poor supervision in order to realise the goals of TVE.

Conclusion

TVE at the senior secondary school level is better planned and implemented in the United Kingdom than in Nigeria. Although, common national aspirations to provide knowledge, attitudes and skills, job creation and self-reliance contributed to making TVE structure look similar in Nigeria and the UK; but the reality is that there are many weaknesses in the Nigerian technical and vocational system at the secondary school level most especially in the area of funding to make mid-level vocational education system effective. Unfortunately, the cut-down in white-collar jobs has led to a rapid increase in unemployment among school graduates. Unemployment is largely concentrated among youths with intermediate and university certificates in Nigeria. The Nigerian government is focusing on building capacity and providing fund for the successful implementation of TVE but there are some institutional problems hindering the education sector. Although, there is need for improvement in the implementation of TVE in both countries. However, TVE needs more attention in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusion, the paper recommended that:

1. Nigerian government should shift emphasis from higher education to mid-level technical and vocational education in order to improve the effectiveness of the technical and vocational education system.
2. The government should also promote sustainable reform leading to capacity building at the secondary school level by providing sufficient fund.
3. Education system in Nigeria needs to be restructured to accommodate Further Education Colleges which are post-secondary education non tertiary institutions where secondary school leavers can attend to acquire more knowledge and skills needed to become self-employed and self-reliant in the society as it is practised in the United Kingdom.
4. Nigerian and British governments should allocate sufficient funds to improve effectiveness of TVE at the secondary school level.

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