

SKILLS ACQUISITION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND GOAL ACHIEVEMENT IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE

BY

Oluwalola Felicia Kikelomo: Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin

Ogbudinkpa Ijeoma Charity: Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin

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Sofoluwe, Abayomi Olumade: Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin; E-mail: ijeomaogbudinkpa@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated Skills Acquisition in Secondary schools and goals achievement in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara state. The objectives of the study were to; (i) ascertain the level of skills acquisition given to secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis; (ii) evaluate the impact of the skills acquired by the students after school; (iii) examine the challenges of skills acquisition of secondary school students in Ilorin; (iv) suggest measures on how the government can solve the challenges of skills acquisition in the state (v) determine the level of educational goal achievement in Ilorin Metropolis. The research design was descriptive survey of the correlational type. The sampling technique used for this study was Random Sampling Technique, the samples were stratified into the three local government areas in Ilorin metropolis where five schools from each local government in Ilorin metropolis (west, south and East) were chosen with the Purposive Sampling Technique. Therefore, 300 respondents were used (150 secondary school students and 150 secondary school graduates). Two set of instruments were used for this study entitled Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (SAQ) and Goal Achievement Questionnaire (GAQ). Four research questions were raised for the study and answered using both descriptive and inferential statistics by using SPSS. The research questions were analyzed using mean ratings and the hypothesis tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed among others that the level of skills acquisition have their mean rating above the benchmark of 2.50, this indicates that the level of skills acquisition is high. This implies that the secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis were given adequate skills. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Ministry of education should ensure that impactful skills are given to the students to help build self- reliant young people.

Keywords: Skills acquisition, Goal achievement, secondary schools and Education curricular

Introduction

This research is motivated by the need to examine and study the reluctance of our secondary schools, to readily accept the change from traditional dichotomy of pursuing Arts and science subjects, despite the overwhelming advantages that trade, and skills acquisition subjects can offer to the student as emphasized in the Basic and Senior Secondary School Education (BASSE) policy. It is highly indisputable that, the ever-escalating level of chronic unemployment among youths in many countries across the globe coupled with high level of social unrest among the youth's accounts for the increased emphasis on acquisition of vocational skills for self-reliance. The former 7-5-2-3 Educational policy which emphasized the dichotomy of Arts and Sciences was mainly concerned with preparing students for further studies, either in Humanities or Natural Sciences, in tertiary institutions. The turnout of secondary school students seeking for admission astronomically outnumbered the available vacancies existing in all tertiary institutions. The number keeps increasing at a higher rate every year, despite both efforts of government and some private sector operators of establishing more universities and colleges. This development has attendant negative socio-economic consequences.

It is becoming clearer for policy makers that there is growing significance of the role skills acquisition can play, in the progress of individuals and the overall national development. It is a well-known fact that, while it is necessary to educate its citizens, any society must be concerned with the socio-economic issues of gainful employment of its people. Education for the sake of it can therefore be fully relevant, if it offers the person, not only the knowledge inherent in it, but also that which can prepare him to be of use to himself and the larger society. That can only be possible if the educational curricular enables the person to stand on his own, and even offer employment opportunities to others, where such for him, from another source does not exist. One of the major Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which Nigeria was set to achieve in 2015 is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger with the target of halving the proportion of people who earn less than a dollar a day through skills acquisition. Skills acquisition has been described by many as the recipe for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by creating avenues for employment, thereby creating an avenue for jobs and wealth creation while instilling self- sufficiency and reliance (Isaac, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

The origin of unemployment in Nigeria can be traced back to the oil boom era of 1970s. During this period, Nigerian government and individuals abandoned skills acquisition and utilization through diversified entrepreneurship practices that have the capability to boost both individual and the country's economic ego. Emphasis shifted from entrepreneurial practices to paper qualification which has resulted in increased unemployment in the country. Although there is abundant evidence of our tremendous effort and achievement, particularly in growth rate. It is sad to note that we are still far from running an educational programme that optimally prepares its citizens for self-reliance, creative empowerment and nation building (Adegoke, 2004). The growing army of unemployment among mostly the secondary school leavers has enormous social and economic consequences and it poses serious threat to the cohesion and the stability of a democratic society. The government and stakeholders will increasingly expect education and training to provide young people with alternatives to unemployment (Adegoke, 2004). The need for skills acquisition in secondary education is underscored by Ezeani (2012) who stated that education could only become the foundation stone of a sustainable society only if it succeeds in imparting necessary life skills. He noted that unfortunately Nigeria's secondary school leavers do not have such skills because of the poor implementation of technical and vocational programmes in the school, which left the students half-baked. Therefore, the present study was set to investigate skill acquisition in secondary schools as it affects goal achievement in Kwara state.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the goal achievement of skills acquisition for secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara state. Specifically, the purposes are:

1. To ascertain the level of skills acquisition given to secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis
2. To evaluate the impact of the skills acquired by the students after school
3. To examine the challenges of skills acquisition of secondary schools in Ilorin
4. To suggest measures on how the government can solve the challenges of skills acquisition in the state

Research Questions

The following research questions will be raised to achieve the objectives of the study.

1. What is the level of skills acquisition given to secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis?
2. To what extent does the skills acquired helpful to the students after school?
3. What are the challenges of skills acquisition in secondary schools in Ilorin?
4. What are the solutions to the challenges of skills acquisition in secondary schools in Ilorin?

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis will be formulated to answer the questions of this study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between skills acquisition in secondary school and goal achievement

Literature Review

Origin and Development of Skill and Vocational Training in Nigeria

Education has always been a vehicle for the development of every nation and society. Education has been recognized as a tool for promotion of national growth, development, and the improvement of the standards of living of an individual and the entire society. Ada (2012) observed that the colonial system of education inherited from Britain was no longer relevant to the needs of independent Nigeria. This type of education neglects the cultural and vocational interest of the nation. This was simply because the system of education then was highly elastic and theoretical in nature and was preparing the Nigerian child for white collar jobs which were no longer available after independence. There was, therefore, the need for complete change in the entire curriculum to meet up with the growing population of Nigeria who were no longer finding jobs in government organizations.

The apprenticeship system was the earliest type of vocational education practiced in Nigeria and it provided employment for youth as they learnt how to use their hands in specific trade (vocation). The first attempt towards technical education was in 1901 when the colonial Government established Railway Training Institute, and the second was the establishment of survey school in 1908 both in Lagos as training schools for its own departments. Later in 1931 Yaba Higher College was established. The report of the advisory committee on technical education and industrial training of 1957 was another effort of government towards Technical Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria in which it was charged with mandate to recommend the viable strategy that would modify and enhance the existing technical schools at the regional areas of the country.

Nigeria's Policy Initiatives on Skills Acquisition in Secondary Education

In the third edition of the national policy on education published in 1998, adequate provisions were equally made for skills acquisition in secondary education. In addition to the provisions made in the 1981 edition, the

third edition stipulates that the purpose of pre-vocational subjects offered at the junior secondary school level were to enable students acquire technical skills; to expose them to career awareness by exploring usable options in the world of work and to enable them to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology. In the fourth edition of the national policy on education published in 2004, skill acquisition in the secondary education system was adequately provided for in the policy. The same policy document introduced the Basic Education programme and the 9-3-4 system of education in Nigeria. Vocationalisation of education at the lower basic education level featured in form of handicraft or local craft, domestic science, and agriculture. At the upper basic education level, skills acquisition took the form of pre-vocational integrated subjects, which includes Basic Technology, Business-studies, Practical Agriculture, Home Economics and Computer Studies. At the senior secondary school level, each of the integrated subjects was split into many distinct subjects such as agricultural science, Woodwork, metalwork, electricity/electronics, technical drawing, auto-mechanics, and building technology. Others are Bookkeeping, financial accounting, commerce, typewriting, shorthand, home management, food and nutrition, clothing and textile.

The greatest provision for skills acquisition in secondary education in Nigeria was made in the fifth edition of the national policy on education published in 2009 which featured the re-structuring of the curriculum of senior secondary education into five fields of studies namely Science studies, Technology studies, Humanities studies, Business studies and compulsory cross-cutting subjects. Adequate provisions were also made in the policy for skill development at the senior secondary education level with the introduction of 32 Trade Subjects which include among others, Auto Body Repair and Spraying, Auto Electrical Work, Auto Mechanical Work, Auto Parts Merchandising, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Data Processing, Store Keeping, Book Keeping and GSM Maintenance.

Skill Acquisition in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

The role of skill acquisition in the overall development of individuals and the nation cannot be undermined. This perhaps, made the government to come up with various policies such as National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) strategies on all aspect of education to make people self-reliant. The preparation of students for acquisition of skills for self-reliance is dependent on the acquisition of basic knowledge about employment opportunities and possession of marketable skills. According to the National Policy on Education, one of the broad aims and objectives of secondary education in Nigeria is preparation for useful living within the society with its specific objectives among others to include: offering a diversified curriculum to cater to differences in talents, opportunities and future roles; providing technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agriculture, industrial, commercial and economic development (FRN, 2013).

This National Policy provides in the curriculum of Secondary School in Nigeria the teaching of pre-vocational practical subjects such as agriculture, home economics, music, business studies, introductory technology and fine arts. The focus was to expose students at that level of education to the world of work through exploration. Such exposure would enable them develop occupational skills that will help them to be productive citizens in the global society. Fafunwa (2002) pointed out that the specific objectives of the Secondary School education are to develop the students manipulative skills, invention, respect for dignity of labour, including a healthy attitude towards technical advancement and use.

Strategies for Implementing Skill Acquisition Curriculum for Sustainable Development.

To bridge the widening gap between the expected and the observed in the present secondary school education, and to also guarantee sustainable development in Nigeria, the following strategies are suggested for adoption.

Teaching for Co-operative Learning: According to Okolodile (2009), Cooperative learning is student-centered approach where students learn in small groups of five with the teachers as a guide. The students co-operate with one another to perform or complete a particular task. This kind of instructional strategy offers the students opportunity for effective interaction with one another, to make decisions and choices in their learning process, and to learn through greater knowledge of one another's needs.

Relating Classroom Activities to Learners' Life Experience: There are a number of home activities that have scientific and technological relevance. Teachers need to explore the students' environment to the advantage of teaching for skills acquisition. The philosophy underlying the strategy is predicated on the need to carry along scientific and technological myths prevalent in our traditional culture. Okeke (2005) believes that learning is enhanced when knowledge input is linked with prior knowledge and that as learners receive information, they organize it around their previously developed cognitive structures (schema). Each learner has unique schema depending on the type of experience he or she has been subjected to, and such experiences tend to influence his/her response to prevalent situations.

Teaching for Transfer of Learning: Transfer to new tasks is better achieved, if in learning, learners discover relationships for themselves. According to Oviawe (2010), all new learning involves transfer based on previous

learning. Therefore, teaching of concepts should be such that it encourages transfer of learning. The similarity between learning experiences and familiar day-to-day experiences encourages transfer of learning.

Training for the Appropriate Skills: It is often common that people are trained for some skills which they later cannot utilize because of the lack of relevance. Teaching should be such that learning activities have direct relevance and applicability to the learners’ daily life. Students are generally not interested in acquiring knowledge just for the sake of it. They would like to see a relationship between what they study in school and the life they would live after formal school.

Using Field Trips as Resources for Teaching: Although the school is the central location for learning, this does not mean that it is the only source or place for learning. It is true that students need a place where they can organize and articulate their educational thoughts and ideas and even practice them, the outdoor equally holds its own as a source that if well utilized, can develop and stimulate students in their learning process. The use of outdoor as instructional resources offers the possibilities for exposing students to real-life variety of experiences that is taught in school.

Internship: Sending students on internship will give them opportunity to practice with a small business organization, with a view to exhibiting the skill they have learned in the school. Students may also be encouraged to apply for a paid holiday internship with local entrepreneurs.

School Seminars and Workshops: Seminars and workshops on entrepreneurship skills and attributes which are needed by entrepreneurs to succeed in business should periodically be organized for students. Here successful entrepreneurs and financial experts could be invited to deliver lectures on entrepreneurship practices. This would help to broaden students’ minds, knowledge and horizon.

Recognizing Individual Differences: Each learner has a pattern and rhythm of growth peculiar to the individual. Notable difference exists between individual in the rate of learning, energy output depth of feelings and emotions, physical and social development. Teachers need to have a good knowledge of his/her students’ abilities and interest.

Methodology

A descriptive survey method was adopted for the conduct of this study. The population of study includes individuals that have graduated from secondary school (both self-employed and unemployed individuals) and secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. There are 185 secondary schools in Ilorin west, 145 in Ilorin south and 79 in Ilorin East. The total estimated population of secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis is 309. The sample of the study was a total of 150 self-employed and unemployed persons that graduated from secondary school and 150 secondary school students in Ilorin. The sampling technique used for this study was Random Technique. The samples were stratified into the three (3) Local Government Areas in Ilorin metropolis. Where 5 schools from each local government in Ilorin metropolis (West, South and East) were chosen with the use of purposive sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was self-designed questionnaire titled Skill Acquisition questionnaire (SAQ) The data collected was subjected to statistical analysis with the use of Statistical Packages of Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0. Descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions generated for the study while inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One: What is the level of skills acquisition given to secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis?

Table 1: The Mean Ratings of the Level of Skills Acquisition Given to Secondary School Student

S/N	Items	Means	SD	Remark
1.	Exposes the students to real life variety of experiences to serve as instructional resources	3.37	0.78	High
2.	Provides lots of feedback and demonstration	3.28	0.82	High
3.	Organizes periodical seminars and workshops on entrepreneurship skills program for the students	2.97	1.06	High
4.	Uses adequate practical and field work to facilitate the skills learning process	2.79	1.00	High
5.	Ensures that skills learned are relevant and applicable to learners’ daily life	2.69	1.04	High
Weighted Mean		3.02		

Benchmark = 2.50

Table 1 showed that all the items under level of skill acquisition have their mean ratings above the benchmark of 2.50. This reveals that the level of skill acquisition is high. This implies that the secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis were given adequate skill.

Research Question Two: To what extent does the skills acquired helpful to the students after school?

Table 2: The mean ratings of how helpful the skills acquired were to the secondary school students

S/N	Items	Means	SD	Remark
1.	Act as catalyst for developing creativities and innovations in youths	3.37	0.78	High
2.	Assist in developing entrepreneurial mindsets in youths	3.33	0.85	High
3.	Contributes greatly in elimination of joblessness	3.41	0.74	High
4.	Help build self-reliant young people	3.37	0.69	High
5.	Help reduce poverty and crime rate	3.54	0.67	High
Weighted Mean		3.40		

Benchmark = 2.50

Table 2 showed that all the items under the impact of skill acquisition have their mean ratings above the benchmark of 2.50. This reveals the skills acquisition were highly helpful. This means that the acquired skills had a high impact on the secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges of skills acquisition in secondary schools in Ilorin?

Table 3: The Mean Ratings of Challenges of Skills Acquisition in Secondary School Students

S/N	Items	Means	SD	Remark
1.	Shortage of adequate number of teachers taking skill-oriented subjects in school affect the teaching and learning process	3.44	0.77	High
2.	Government do not financially support teaching and learning skill-oriented subjects in secondary schools	3.44	0.77	High
3.	Lack of equipment and tools for practical affect the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process	3.51	0.75	High
4.	Teachers lack practical knowledge of subject taken	2.83	1.07	High
5.	Not enough period given to the skill-oriented subject on the time-table	3.21	0.95	High
6.	Fieldwork and excursion are not usually employed in the method of teaching skill-oriented subject	3.00	0.98	High
7.	Students do not think of the subjects as a potential career course	3.19	0.95	High
8.	Lack of parental support for items needed for practical hindered the learning of the students	3.26	0.88	High
Weighted Mean		3.24		

Benchmark = 2.50

Table 3 showed that all the items under the challenges of skill acquisition have their mean ratings above the benchmark of 2.50. This shows that the challenges of skills acquisition were highly. This means that some challenges were encountered during the skills acquisition exercise of the secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Research Question Four: What are the solutions to the challenges of skills acquisition in secondary schools in Ilorin?

Table 4: The Mean Ratings of Solutions to the Challenges of Skills Acquisition in Secondary School Students

S/N	Items	Means	SD	Remark
1.	Teacher's self-improvement on acquisition of skills will help to improve the students' skill	3.54	0.66	High
2.	Teachers should be model to students in skill acquisition	3.46	0.69	High
3.	Effectively select the appropriate method of teaching the students.	3.50	0.70	High
4.	Sufficient periods for lesson and practical (at least double period twice per week)	3.45	0.73	High
5.	Use of discussion, demonstration and project methods of teaching.	3.45	0.68	High
6.	Availability of laboratory, equipment and tools for practical	3.36	0.75	High
7.	Provision of adequate funds for consumables for practical's facilitate the learning of skills	3.45	0.76	High
Weighted Mean		3.46		

Benchmark = 2.50

Table 4 showed that the items under the solutions to the challenges of skill acquisition all have their mean

ratings above the benchmark of 2.50. This reveals the solutions to the challenges were high. By implication, the solutions proffered helped to solve the challenges of skill acquisition in secondary school, Ilorin Metropolis.

Testing of Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between skills acquisition in secondary school and goal achievement

Table 5: Relationship between Skills Acquisition in Secondary School and Goal Achievement

	Mean	Std	r	Sig 2 –tailed	Remark
Skill Acquisition	50.95	5.09	0.906	0.0005	Significant
Goal Achievement	33.93	4.68			

P < 0.05

Table 5 shows that $r = 0.906$ and the $p\text{-value} = 0.0005 < 0.05$. The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient revealed that the relationship between skills acquisition and goal achievement is highly significant. Therefore, skills acquisition positively affected goal achievement.

Discussion of Findings

From the research question one, it was revealed that the level of skill acquisition is high. Which implied that the secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis were given adequate skills. This is in line with Yakubu(2012), who confirmed that entrepreneurial education is best received in school settings. This is evident from his study of the determinants of Skill Acquisition and professional knowledge acquired by Nigerian graduates through the current university curriculum. This fact was buttressed by Akinboye and Olaniyi (2007), whose studies revealed that adequate information/guideline needed to be given to adolescents in secondary schools in order to enable them live a positive life in the society.

From the research question two, it was observed that the skills acquisition were highly helpful and impacted the secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. This corroborates the findings of Ogundele, Oluwolara and Adegbelemi (2011), they asserted that skills acquired by students would aid job creation, youth empowerment and poverty alleviation, which in turn has the capacity to solve various social problems. Also in line with Mbionwu (2008) who opined that students who acquire adequate work-skills have better options to become entrepreneurs after graduation Also, Akpotowoh and Amahi (2006) confirmed that the skills acquired through business related subjects promote training in entrepreneurship as well as equip students with the requisite skills to establish and run small businesses of their own.

Research question three stated that the challenges of skills acquisition were high. Some challenges were encountered while delivering the skills to the secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. This is consistent with the findings of Ada, Omalle and Okedi (2008).who found that there is poor level of skill acquisition implementation in schools due to poor infrastructural facilities. Also corroborating this finding is the study of Okeke (2005) who observed that pre-vocational subjects like introductory technology were poorly implemented with obsolete and nonfunctional equipment. Also in line is Odu (2010) who identified lack of qualified vocational teachers, inadequate facilities and administrators’ misconception of the nature of vocational education as some of the major challenges hindering effective skills acquisition in secondary education in Nigeria.

Research question four revealed that the solutions to the challenges were high. By implication, the solutions proffered helped to solve the challenges of skill acquisition in secondary school, Ilorin Metropolis. This is in support with the assertions of Okolodile (2009), who opined that cooperative learning is student-centered approach where students learn in small groups of five with the teachers as a guide. Also, in support is Yakubu(2012) that believes that learning should be enhanced when knowledge input is linked with prior knowledge and that as learners receive information, they organize it around their previously developed cognitive structures (schema). He also revealed that each learner has unique schema depending on the type of experience he or she has been subjected to, and such experiences tend to influence his/her response to prevalent situations.

From the research hypothesis one, it was confirmed that skills acquisition positively affected goal achievement. This is in line with the findings of Mbionwu (2008) who affirmed that students who acquire adequate work-skills have better options to become entrepreneurs after graduation. Also in support is Kikechi et.al. (2013) who stated that skill acquisition provides a platform for technological excellence in the face of globalization of the world economy. Also, Akpotowoh and Amahi (2006) who confirmed that the skills acquired through business related subjects promote training in entrepreneurship as well as equip students with the requisite skills to establish and run small businesses of their own.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the exposure of secondary school students to skill acquisition is really on the increase in the secondary schools in Kwara state. This is because it has been incorporated into the school curriculum. These skills acquisition have a great impact on the students

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made based on the findings.

1. Ministry of education should ensure that all secondary schools teach their students various skills to get them empowered and self-reliant.
2. Schools should ensure that impactful skills are given to the students to help build self-reliant young people and reduce poverty and crime rate
3. Government should seek to proffer solutions to eradicate the challenges facing skill acquisition in secondary schools.
4. Students should be encouraged to participate in skill acquisition to achieve the goal of elimination of joblessness, as well as developing creativity and innovation in youths

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