

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ALMAJIRI SYSTEM OF EDUCATION THROUGH TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING (TVET) IN 21ST CENTURY.**BY****Musa Safiyanu: Division of Science Education, Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria;
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Zaria, E-mail: affiyyah1974@gmail.com****Abstract**

This study examined the relevance of exposing the Almajiri child to Technical and Vocational Education Training in welding and fabrication as well as carpentry and joinery skills that will address the challenges faced by the Almajiri system of Education in Kaduna State. Two (2) research questions guided the conduct of the study. Descriptive survey research design was employed in which a total sample of 100 pupils and 40 teachers (Alarammas) were randomly selected from a population of 2000 for the pupils and 300 for the teachers' respectively. A validated 28 items structured questionnaire (AAOQ) with reliability of 0.82 was developed and used for data collection. Findings revealed that both Al-majiri and Alarammas unanimously agreed with all the 28 items on fabrication/welding, carpentry and joinery skills that will transform Al-majiri system of education challenges in Nigeria. Among recommendations given was that (i) Government at all levels should intensify efforts at improving the condition of Al-majiri through TVET by building training workshops at various Tsangaya and allowances should be paid to the trainers of Al-majiri. (ii) Parents and community should complement government efforts in funding the Al-majiri system of education for effective implementation of TVE training.

Keywords: Almajiri, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Alaramma/s and Tsangaya

Introduction

Education is the basis for scientific and technological breakthrough and also the basis for modernity which has made all nations of the world to accord it immense priority even though the level of priority varies from one country to another. Currently, emphasis is shifting away from the general education that encourages mere acquisition of certificates to skill-based education which centers more on the capability of an individual to apply requisite skill in real work environment. In Nigeria, the rising unemployment has helped to heighten the need for technical and vocational education through curriculum reforms. Technical and vocational education is used as a comprehensive term in the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (FRN, 2004). The terms technical education and vocational education according to Okoye and Onyenwe (2016) are often used interchangeably but, they are separate and distinct terms. Vocational education refers to skill based programmes which are designed for skill acquisition at lower level of education. Vocational education programmes focus on specific vocations for entry into defined workplace. Technical education prepares people for entry into recognized occupation at a higher level but usually lower than the first degree. That is, technical and vocational education is the inclusion of basic technical and scientific knowledge with the skill based vocational programme (Okoye and Onyenwe 2016).

Uwaifo (2009), posited that technical education is the training of technically oriented personnel who are to be the initiators, facilitators and implementers of technologically development of a nation. He opined, that the training of its citizens on the need to be technologically literate would eventually lead to self-reliance and sustainability and also observed that technical education more than any other profession has direct impact on the development of the country. Again, technical education contributes so much ranging from electrical and electronics technology, metal work technology, mechanical/automobile technology, building technology and woodwork technology. Technical education is practical oriented education which makes it unique in its content and approach thereby demanding special attention. Abdulrahman (2013) defined Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) as the form of education that comprises of training in skills necessary for gainful employment as well as acquisition of basic educational foundation in both sciences, applied sciences and humanity, all aimed at developing individuals with the right attitude to work and the competency necessary to compete favorably in a global society.

Technical and Vocational education is not just a Nigerian issue, it has been a long time discourse both in academic and practice. Though the issue in most developing countries like Nigeria has been a question of successful implementation of TVE programme (Okorocho, 2012). In this era of globalization and Information and

Communication Technology (ICT), emphasis is on vocational skills for the production of self-reliant citizens. Abdulrahman (2013) summarized the role of TVE as follows:

- i. Generation of employment/creation of job opportunities: Technical and vocational education helps to reduce the rate of drop outs or unemployment in the society. Technical/vocational education could be used to developed marketable skills in students/youths so that they can become easily employable. It makes an individual to become an asset to him and the nation and also prevent him from being a liability to the society.
- ii. Industrial development: Technical and vocational education helps a nation develop technologically and industrially by producing people competent and capable of developing and utilizing technologies for industrial and economic development. It is a tool that can be used to develop and sustain the manpower needs of any nation.
- iii. Entrepreneurship strategy: Technical and vocational education offers the beneficiary the ability to be self-reliant, to be job creators and employers of labour.
- iv. Poverty alleviation: Many who are fortunate to graduate in a regular school system and excel in various fields of leaning fall back to the skills acquired in technical and vocational institutions in time of employment crisis. This has been proven right in recent time when workers of various categories were retrenched in both public and private sectors due to the deteriorating state of our economy.
- v. Promotion of the Nigerian Economy: It promotes the national economy through foreign exchange by exporting our products. The knowledge of technical and vocational education helps in the conversion of local raw materials, this reduces the importation of foreign goods which lessen our import dependency and encourage exportation of our local products.
- vi. Promotion of Nigerian Culture and Value: Technical and vocational education helps to promote the Nigerian culture and cause us to value what we have.

The development of a nation's economy is contingent on the quality of skilled human capital in the pool. Vocational and technical education provides student with life skills that will make them to be productive entrepreneurs as it engenders creative and innovative ideas; enlarges the economic pie and increases personal freedom. The business environment is changing at a fast rate due to the rapid emergence of technology and globalization. This has added to the increase in demand of valuable human skills necessary to respond to such drastic changes for economic progress. As a channel for entrepreneurial skill acquisition, TVE play the role of improving the economic situation of Nigeria through production and distribution of goods in different areas of specialization. This is achievable through the training of the students in different specialized fields Okolocha and Baba, (2016).

In the long run, this will help the students to establish their own enterprise as seen in China, Turkey, India, and Japan among other countries that have succeeded economically through vocational education. This is in line with the views of Lawal (2014) who opined that "for a country to advance socially, economically and technologically, its citizens must be creative and productive with a majority becoming job creators rather than seekers" of TVE in Nigerian if the country wants to attain great achievement of productivity and sustainable economic environment and natural development. Dambudzo (2015) posited that Sustainable development is an essential direction for the whole world to move towards. However he noted that educating for sustainability was not easy hence all practitioners should make concerted efforts to contribute towards its success. This should also include in and out of school individuals as well as formal and traditional system of education such as the Al-majiri system of education in northern Nigeria.

Al-majiri according to Abdullahi (2011) is derived from the Arabic word "Al-Muhajir" meaning an immigrant. It is a system where an individual learner travels a far distance to acquire Qur'anic Education and usually refers to a person who migrates from the luxury of his home to another place for the sake of knowledge. It is hinged on the Islamic concept that acquisition of knowledge at home is either inconvenient or insufficient. Imam Shafi'i is the greatest proponent of migration for seeking knowledge which also extends to business or trading. It is summarized in two verses. "Migrate from your home in quest of excellence and travel, for in travel there are five benefits; relief from sorrow, learning a means of livelihood, gaining knowledge, good manners and friendship with the furious (Abdullahi, 2011).

Al-majiri system of Education in the pre-colonial era was known as Tsangaya, which was established under the Kenem-Borno Empire being one of the oldest ruling empires in the world-extending from the frontiers of Northern Nigeria across the Chadian region up to the boarder of Libya. It was established as an organized and comprehensive system of education for learning Islamic principles, values, jurisprudence and theology. It was replaced by Islamic learning center in many Muslim countries such as the Madrasah in Pakistan, Malaysia, Egypt and Indonesia

(Danjuma, 2012). The Al-majiri system of Education was founded by the State Zakat funds, and was under the control of the traditional system of government (Emirs) that lasted before the coming of British (Colonial Masters). Charity in Islam is encouraged to a way-farer or to a student of learning and the community is expected to support the students' most of who came from faraway places to enroll in the Tsangaya Schools. In return, the student (Al-majiri) offered services such as laundry, cubing, gardening, weaving and other domestic chores as charity to the community that contributes to their well-being; hence giving the society what the society gave them (Danjuma, 2012).

At the onset of the Tsangaya schools in Northern Nigeria, Al-majiri was held in high esteem and houses in the neighborhood brought varieties of food in every day in return, they helped their teachers on the farm, gather firewood from the bush which they use to read at night, assist the wives of their teachers with domestic chores and no pupil/student was taxed as the teacher got his reward from "Allah". The plight of Al-majiri in today's society is that with no bearing moving everywhere in places such as markets, car parks, restaurants, institutions of learning, looking hungry, malnourished, wounded and rustling with flies in fast left over food just to stay alive. They consume all kind of foods, fresh or stale with "Gajala" (combination of scrabbles from locally made corn flour popularly known as Tuwo and boiled yam kept for days) being the commonest one. They roam about dirty lathered, barefooted, pale with flies packing on their cracked lips and dry faces which are filled with rashes or ringworm. They have become a burden as well as nuisance to the society. They sing, beg and pray, appeal to the mercy and good will of the people. With the predicament they find themselves in, their act of worship is undoubtedly incomplete as prophet Muhammad (PBUH) clearly stated "Purity is half of faith" (Danjuma, 2012).

Abdulkadir, (2012) stated that an Al-majiri who graduates from Qur'anic School automatically becomes an Alaramma (Qur'anic school teacher) without employment and continuously lives on charity and alms. (Zakkat or Sadaka). Al-majiri together with the Alaramma having no financial support resulted to begging and other minor jobs for survival. Abiola (2012) advocated that the Al-majiri is an itinerant Qur'anic child who is always under the supervision of the Alaramma who may be too poor to provide for basic needs leaving the Al-majiri with no option but begging to earn a living. Abubakar (2013) reported that begging starts when parents take their children to another place, be it a hamlet, village, town or city, in some cases for the purpose of achieving Islamic knowledge. The life of such individual is painful especially when it comes to the issue of food and shelter.

In resolving the challenges faced by Al-majiri system of Education, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN, 2012) launched the Al-majiri model school in Sokoto State, which has been replicated in other Northern States. This will enable the Al-majiri to acquire knowledge in a conducive atmosphere, but still without employment, this implies that street begging would continue. Okene, (2013) noted that 30 percent of children in Nigeria who were out of schools engage in street begging. One way of addressing the challenges faced by the Al-majiri system of education is through Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). Abdullahi, (2011) advocated for the establishment of a center with vocational training facilities where an Al-majiri will be accommodated and trained.

Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) is an avenue where by individual acquire skills for self-reliance. TVET provide training or retraining which is designed to prepare an individual into a paid employment in any recognized occupation. The major aim of Technical and Vocational Educational Training is to provide education for self-reliance. According to National Policy on Education FRN (2013) the goals of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) are as follows:

- i. to provide trained manpower in the field of applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft at technical college level
- ii. to provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural industry, commercial and economic development and to give training
- iii. to impact the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically.

These goals will provide many opportunities for the Al-majiri pupil/student to become self-productive and reliant thereby contributing to the growth of the economy. Ejilal (2016) highlighted some opportunities of exposing youths to TVET to include;

- a. Employment and wealth creation;
- b. Increased pace of technological innovations;
- c. Improvement of living standards and
- d. Promotion of political stability.

Unemployment rate in Nigeria today is on the increase causing a setback as well as affecting the development of youths. Luekien and Fabian (2002) observed that unemployment pavers both economic and social problems. They further emphasized that a society that does not have economically vibrant youth force is bound to collapse because employment qualifies an individual as a useful member in the society. Adamu (2005) is of the opinion that parents, the Alaramma and government contribute to the perpetuation of the Al-majiri system of Education. Adetoye (2012) pointed out that the growing population of Almajiri particularly in the north was dangerous to the nation's development. Consequently, Al-majiri System of Education will continue to face numerous challenges, unless an avenue is created to share responsibilities among parents, Alaramma and government for effective Technical and Vocational Education training (TVET) for the Al-majiri transition from school- to-work effective

Objective of the Study

The study has an objective; to explore skills that can transform the Al-majiri system of education through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the following Vocations:

- i. Welding and fabrication.
- ii. Carpentry and joinery.

Research Questions The following questions are raised.

1. How relevant are welding and fabrication skills in transforming the Al-majiri system of education?
2. How relevant are carpentry and joinery skills in transforming the Al-majiri system of Education?

Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey carried out in Kaduna state with a population of 7,768 Qur'anic schools, that is, 933 teachers (Alaramma) and 6,835 pupils (Almajiris). Sample selection was done by Grouping the population of Qur'anic schools into 10 strata based on Local Government and selecting four (4) local government namely; Giwa, Sabon gari, Soba and Zaria respectively using simple random sampling by draw from the hat. Using simple random sampling technique in form of balloting to select a total of 40 (forty) teachers from the schools in all four local government. A total of 100 pupils were also selected from the schools in all four local governments. A structured questionnaire called Alaramma and Almajiri Opinion Questionnaire (AAOPQ) in form of a 5 point likert scale was administered to the respondents to elicit their opinion on the relevancy of welding and fabrication as well as carpentry and joinery skills needed to transform the Almajiri system of education. The AAOPA was validated by the Head of Science and Technical Education Division, Institute of Education and two senior lecturers from the department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Reliability of AAOPQ was established at 0.82. Responses were classified, coded and analyzed descriptively in form of mean and standard deviation.

Results

Results of the study are presented based on questions raised.

Research Question 1:

How relevant are welding and fabrication skills in transforming the Al-majiri system of education?

Table 1: Welding and fabrication skills in transforming the Al-majiri system of education

S/No	Skills on Welding and Fabrication	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Remarks
1	Involving Al-majiri on different skills in pattern development drawing so as to master the necessary skills in pattern production.	4.28	0.98	Agreed
2	Involving Al-majiri on using various snips such as curve snip, bench shears for cutting sheet metal	4.19	0.88	Agreed
3	Allowing Al-majiri to practice how to make different types of seam joints such as lap joint, wined joint to acquire experience.	4.15	0.80	Agreed
4	Training Al-majiri on the use of other fabrication tools such as groove tools, panning hammer, creasing iron to acquire the necessary experience required for school to work transition.	4.11	1.01	Agreed
5	Involving Al-majiri to practice different types of Arc welding such as: manual arc welding, carbon arc welding	4.19	1.21	Agreed

	and tungsten arc welding so as to acquire the experimental skills.			
6	Involving Al-majiri to acquire skills in gas welding which include: oxy-acetylene welding, oxy-butane welding, oxy-hydrogen welding, and oxy-propane welding.	4.24	1.12	Agreed
7	Training the Al-majiri on skills of using different types of electrode such as bared electrode and covered electrode.	4.12	1.24	Agreed
8	Equipping the Al-majiri on safety regulations in arch and gas welding so as to develop safe working habits skills, while welding.	4.23	1.10	Agreed
9	Equipping the Al-majiri with skills of assembling oxy-acetylene. Complete welding outfit which include the two cylinders, the welding pulse oxygen regular acetylene regulator, blow pipe with various tips and use them skillfully to weld effectively.	4.19	1.28	Agreed
10	Train the Al-majiri on skills of using flames such as carbonizing flame, neutral flame and oxidizing flame.	4.07	0.66	Agreed
11	Train the Al-majiri to acquire skills on lightning up procedure of the blow pipes.	4.19	0.90	Agreed
12	Involving Al-majiri to have skills in shutting down procedures.	4.09	1.42	Agreed
13	Training Al-majiri on skills in different welding techniques such as left-ward or forward technique, right-ward or backward technique, vertical welding and lined welding technique.	4.17	1.12	Agreed
14	Involving Al-majiri to learn various welding defects such as pre-setting spatter, under cut, blow holes, porosity etc. and their causes and train them on how to prevent such defects.	4.29	1.30	Agreed
15	Involving Al-majiri to learn skills on how to test different types of welding such test include: magnetic particle test, penetrant test, ultrasonic test and x-ray radiographic test.	4.28	1.3	Agreed

Table 1 shows the mean responses of the respondents (Al-majiri and Alaramma) which ranges between 4.07 & 4.29 greater than the cut-off point of 3.50. This implies that all respondents agreed with the skills involving fabrication and welding that will transform the Al-majiri system of education challenges. The standard deviation range of between 0.66 -1.42 indicate a consensus of opinion by the respondents.

Research Question 2:

How relevant are carpentry and joinery skills in transforming the Al-majiri system of Education?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Carpentry and Joinery Skills

S/No	Skills on Carpentry and Joinery	Mean	Standard Deviation SD	Remarks
16	Provide Al-majiri with knowledge Of cases on various carpentry and Joinery tools.	4.24	1.25	Agreed
17	Provide Al-majiri with skills Of using saw to cut wood along And across the grain.	4.18	0.93	Agreed
18	Provide Al-majiri with skills For planning wood using various Planes	4.10	1.19	Agreed

19	Provide Al-majiri with the skill for Making various joints in wood.	4.22	0.98	Agreed
20	Provide Al-majiri with skills for Upholstery production.	4.12	1.19	Agreed
21	Provide Al-majiri with the skill for Cabinet making.	4.13	1.07	Agreed
22	Provide Al-majiri with the skill for Iron mongers fitting.	4.20	1.08	Agreed
23	Provide Al-majiri with skills for Furniture making	4.16	1.21	Agreed
24	Provide Al-majiri with skills for Making foam work.	4.24	1.19	Agreed
25	Provide Al-majiri with Roofing skills for buildings	4.33	1.17	Agreed
26	Provide Al-majiri with skills for Making ceiling work on roofs.	4.20	1.20	Agreed
27	Provide Al-majiri with skills for Making wood floors.	4.11	1.35	Agreed
28	Provide Al-majiri with skills for Making wood stair cases.	4.06	1.07	Agreed

Table 2 shows the mean scores of respondents ranging between 4.06-4.33 which is greater than the cut-off point of 3.50 and the standard deviation ranges between 0.99-1.35. This means that all respondents believed that skills involving carpentry and joinery will transform the Al-majiri system of education challenges.

Discussion

Technical and vocational education have become imperative in the 21st century considering the significant role it plays to the socio-economic development of every society. TVE as enshrined in the Nigerian national policy on education, is concerned with qualitative technological human resources development directed towards a national pool of skilled and self-reliant craftsmen, technicians and technologists in technical and vocational education fields. In the recent time Federal Government of Nigeria made attempts to integrate western education with Islamic education so as to transcend the Almajiri to functional member of noble society. Merging the two system of education together to curtail the plight of street begging by children and youth pursuing Qur'anic education is a welcome development.

This can be achieved through TVET training for both the Almajiri and Alaramma as observed from the responses provided in both tables (1&2) with mean scores (4.07- 4.29 & 4.06-4.33) greater than the cut-off points (3.50) respectively. This findings indicate that the Almajiri system of education can be successfully transform through TVET programme this finding agrees with that of Isiaka (2015), who found out that infrastructural facilities are adequately provided to facilitate proper implementation of Almajiri educational programme. Similarly, the study is in line with that of Idrisu, Danjuma, Ndagi and Abdullahi (2018) who reported that the curriculum of Almajiri system of education can provides vocational training, which prepares the learner for total development of individual and society.

Conclusion

From the aforementioned findings, the Almajiri system of education can be successfully transformed through TVET programme.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made towards the growth of the Almajiri system of education through TVET

1. Government at all levels should build training workshops for TVE at various stages for Al-majiri as well as their teachers and allowances should also be paid to the trainers for sustainability.
2. Parents and community should complement government efforts in funding the Al-majiri system of education for effective implementation of TVE training.
3. Al-majiri should be encouraged to receive TVET in Business Apprentice Training Centers (BATC) or attached to any Vocational and Technical Education practitioner near Madrasa to acquire vocational skills to discourage street begging by becoming productive and self-reliant.
4. Parents who wish to train their child/ward through Al-majiri system of Education should be mandated to either pay a token fees or contribute to the feeding and TVET of their child/ward.

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