

Roles of Mass Media in Enhancing Students' Enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

¹Nnodim, A.U & ²Normakoh B.J

Department of Vocational and Technical Education
Rivers State University

ABSTRACT

This study examined the roles of mass media in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training programmes in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The study was guided by three objectives from which three research questions were posed. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 250 educators and students of Government owned Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt metropolis. The entire population was taken as census without sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Roles of Mass Media in Enhancing Students' Enrolment in Vocational and Technical Education Programmes Questionnaire". A test of internal consistency was carried out using Cronbach Alpha statistics to establish the reliability of the instrument. Reliability coefficients of 0.71, 0.85 and 0.82 were obtained for the three clusters of the instrument respectively. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed among others that using radio for regular advertisement for admission into TVET colleges, broadcasting news of major technical achievements of a technical school, organizing weekly programmes on the importance of TVET and giving testimonies of successful alumni of TVET colleges would create the needed awareness to enhance enrolment of students into TVET colleges. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that Administrators of Vocational and Technical Education and Training programmes should use various radio houses as avenues for sensitization the public on their programmes and correcting misconceptions had about these programmes.

Keywords: Mass Media, Enrolment, Vocational and Technical Education Programmes

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupants in various sectors of economic and social life" (UNESCO & ILO, 2001). In addition to technical knowledge and aptitude, increasing emphasis is on "softer" skills – communication, negotiation and teamwork. TVET is dispensed in public and private educational establishments, or other forms of formal or informal instruction aimed at granting all segments of the society access to life-long learning resources.

Unfortunately, in Nigeria as in other parts of the world there is a misconception of what TVET seeks to do. It is considered a secondary choice for young people and TVET institution as a sort of poor man's college. Even governments have treated TVET as such. A lot of focus is accorded to general education, producing turns of graduates who can't fix light bulbs. The idea that you are a lowly poor individual if you go to a TVET institution is very much prevalent among youths and their parents. They would want to go to academic colleges, although they know finding a job with a college degree in general subjects has become incredibly difficult. But that is the trend. They think you go to a TVET institute and you lose your social standing.

Supporting this, UNESCO (2020) observed that compared with other education sectors, in many countries the image of TVET is often quite low. This is the case in countries with advanced industrial economies as well as those that might be described as having developing economies. The consequences of TVET having a low image can be profound. They include how governments, industry, enterprises and communities view, support, fund and engage with TVET programmes. A key and growing concern is that in an era of growing aspiration, this image has negative impacts on young people and their parents' interest and participation in TVET.

There is a growing concern across countries with both developing and advanced industrial economies that young people and their parents increasingly prefer higher education over TVET as an educational pathway. This has resulted in low enrolment in these programmes. This preference extends even to those university programmes that have no direct employment outcomes and, potentially, quite limited prospects of employment upon graduation. Yet, these programmes are preferred to participation in TVET, which is often viewed as a second choice or last resort, as mentioned by the virtual conference participants (UNESCO, 2018)

Furthermore, there is a growing concern on the need for a robust awareness creation effort from relevant bodies on the usefulness of TVET programmes to youths and the society at large. This awareness could be created through various mass media platforms or channels. Mass media according to Longjohn (2019) refers to channels that involve transmitting information some way, shape or form to large numbers. Mass media also refers to print, radio, television and other communication technologies. This kind of media is referred to as mass because of their ability to reach a large number of people at the same time and their easy accessibility. These media include radios, television, print media and most recently the internet enabled social media platforms. Since these media have the capacity to reach large number of people, it is hoped that they can play very vital role in awareness creation and the education of people towards correcting the misconceptions about TVET and increase enrolment rate. This will ultimately impact on the socio-economic development of Rivers State and the country at large.

TVET is a compound term that encompasses vocational and technical education. Okoye (2012) presents the definition of TVET in two contextual frames; i. as a corporate entity (term) and ii. as a function. As a corporate entity or term, the component variables are examined and integrated. While technology is the scientific study and use of sciences, technical is the attributes of applied and industrial sciences, and vocational refers to the preparations specifically needed for a particular job (Gale, Encyclopedia of Education, 2013). Thus, technical education is a formal training that enables application of techniques of applied sciences and mathematical principles for the services of human kind, While vocational education is the educational preparations and training provided to enable them become specifically qualified for a particular vocation.

While technical education has bias for nurturing skills and practical development of an individual, vocational education is imbued with strict adherence to guiding principles for effective professional performance in an occupational field. In line with the corporate entity perspective of TVET. FRN (2004) defined TVET as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

TVET programmes are organized in formal and non-formal settings. Formal TVET programmes are those organized in public and privately owned technical colleges and schools. While non formal TVET programmes are those skills and vocational training programmes organize in centres outside formal schools. This study, however, focuses on the formal TVET programmes carried out in schools and colleges.

Furthermore, mass media is nothing but a system by which one can communicate or supply information in order to reflect the true picture or event of the society. Media is the plural form of the word "Medium" and can take a plural or singular verb, depending on the sense intended. Media includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet. According to Amirize (2004), mass media refer to the various means of imparting information and influencing the ideas of a wide and large audience, collectively or individually. In professional or technical usage, mass media refer to the total fields of mass communications, especially, newspapers, journals, radio and television, for the purpose of informing, educating, entertaining and shaping opinion and awareness of a wider public.

Similarly, Yusuf (2013) defined mass communication as any form of communication transmitted through a medium (channel) that simultaneously reaches a large number of people. Mass media are the channels that carry mass communication, explosive changes at the global level from the last century, either of an economic nature or at the information level have created the proper field for mass-media to develop. The emergence of internet and implicitly the massive changes at the level of the society or the individual. The complexity of the changes, the attitude and compartmental changes of the individuals, the change of the values and even of the current

practices, hamper the development of the society. In this the responsibility for education and formation does not prove itself sufficient not even for the part that comes from the family or that part that comes from the school. It is completed by the influences out of the school medium, the individual information and his social integration being ultimately made in the educogone medium, the psychosocial factors being the essential condition for the unitary completion of this process.

Mass media in its various forms are used as tools for information dissemination and awareness creation to wide audience. Ibeneme and Okwelle (2008) asserted that technical colleges can use media of all types; radio and television, press releases, newsletters, magazines, paid advertisements and internet to target both internal and external publics for the purpose of increasing students' enrolment. They noted that radio and television coverage offer an effective means of communicating with the public. News of major technical achievements about a technical school can be broadcast. Also, schools can organize discussion programmes in both radio and television to enlighten the public of what they are doing. Technical colleges can place advertisements in both electronic and print media about their school programmes, which will in turn encourage enrolment. Colleges can equally use websites to reach parents, teachers, potential employees and businesses, anyone who might be interested in the college. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the roles of mass media in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

Statement of the Problem

It is no longer news that unemployment is one of the major development challenges Nigeria as a nation has been grappling with. The situation is no different in Rivers State as there is observed rush and mass application to any available job vacancies in the state. This problem is further compounded by the fact that more youths are beginning to access university education as the way out to securing white-collar jobs for better livelihood. These jobs are hardly there as there has been too much emphasis on university education instead of vocational skills training which have direct impact on job creation.

Unfortunately, there has been observed steady decline in the number of people attending Vocational and Technical Education Colleges in Port Harcourt. This is not unconnected with the misconception people hold for this type of education as one for those who could not cope with the rigors of conventional formal schools.

There is a dire need to correct this misconception if the government and other relevant stakeholders are sincere about dealing with the issue of unemployment and other associated developmental challenges. The question now is do mass media platforms play any role in enhancing students enrolment in TVET colleges? Providing answer to this question, is the problem of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the roles of mass media in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Find out the roles of radio in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. Determine the roles of television in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. Ascertain the roles of social media platform in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Questions

1. What are the roles of radio in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis.?
2. What are the roles of television in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. What are the roles of social media platforms in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 250 educators and students of Government owned Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt metropolis. This includes Government Technical College Port Harcourt (135 students and educators) and Government Craft Development College (115 students and educators). The entire population was taken as census without sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Roles of Mass Media in Enhancing Students' Enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programmes Questionnaire" (RMMIESETVETPQ). The instrument was divided into three clusters representing the three research questions in the study. Responses to the items were structured on a four-point summated rating scale of Strongly Agree =4, Agree=3, Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree =1. A test of internal consistency was carried out using Cronbach Alpha statistics to determine the reliability of the instrument. Reliability coefficients of 0.71, 0.85 and 0.82 were obtained for the three clusters of the instrument respectively. Copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researchers with the support of some instructors in the colleges who were given guidelines on how to administer the instrument to the respondents. A total of 282 copies of the questionnaire were successfully retrieved and used for the analysis. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to determine if respondents agreed or disagreed with an item in the analyses table. Mean scores of 2.50 and above were regarded as "Agree" while those below 2.50 were regarded as "Disagree".

Results

Research Question 1: What are the roles of radio in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis.?

Table 1: Mean Responses on the Roles of Radio in Enhancing Students' Enrolment in TVET Colleges

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Regular advertisement for admission into TVET colleges would create a strong awareness among intending students.	3.02	0.90	Agree
2	Broadcasting news of major technical achievements of a technical school on the radio will increase the interest of prospective students in TVET programmes.	2.89	0.81	Agree
3	Organizing weekly radio programmes on the importance of TVET in increasing students' chances of being employed would create awareness among intending students.	2.88	0.92	Agree
4	Testimonies of successful alumni of TVET colleges given on radio programmes would increase students interest and enrolment in the programmes.	2.78	0.88	Agree
5	Organizing regular discussions on the radio on activities of TVET colleges would correct the misconceptions of TVET to increase enrolment in such programmes.	3.00	0.67	Agree
Grand Mean		2.9	0.84	Agree

The data analyses in Table 1 revealed that majority of the respondents agreed with all the items in the table. This is seen in the mean scores of all the items which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. With grand mean scores of 2.9, the answer to research question one is that using radio for regular advertisement for admission into TVET colleges, broadcasting news of major technical achievements of a technical school, organizing weekly programmes on the importance of TVET and giving testimonies of successful alumni of TVET colleges would create the needed awareness to enhance enrolment of students into TVET colleges.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of television in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis.?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the Roles of Television in Enhancing Students' Enrolment in TVET Colleges

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Creating short local movies on activities and benefits of TVET colleges on TV will increase enrolment in such colleges.	2.99	0.65	Agree
2	Regular TV advertisement for admission into TVET colleges would create awareness and increase enrolment of students into these colleges.	3.00	0.62	Agree
3	Presenting videos of celebrities endorsing and encouraging enrolment into TVET colleges will increase enrolment in such institutions.	3.12	0.78	Agree
4	Showing videos of technical achievement by technical schools on TV would create awareness and encourage more persons to enroll in these colleges.	2.78	0.66	Agree
5	Organizing discussion sections with experts in TVET on TV would attract prospective students' interest in enrolling in these schools.	2.86	0.71	Agree
6.	TV interviews with alumni of TVET colleges who are successful in their craft would encourage intending students to enroll in such colleges.	3.04	0.81	Agree
	Grand Mean	2.97		Agree

The analysed data in Table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents agreed with all the items in the table. This is seen in the mean responses that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. With a grand mean score of 2.97, therefore, the answer to research question two is that the use of television to create short local movies on activities and benefits of TVET colleges, advertise admission into TVET colleges, present videos of celebrities endorsing and encouraging enrolment into TVET colleges, organize discussion sections with experts in TVET and having interviews with alumni of TVET colleges who are successful in their craft have the potential of increasing enrolment in TVET programmes.

Research Question 3: What are the roles of social media in enhancing students' enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 3: Mean Responses on the Roles of Social Media Platforms in Enhancing Students' Enrolment in TVET Programmes

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Regular advertising of admission process of technical colleges on social media platforms will create awareness to prospective students to enroll in TVET colleges.	3.02	0.67	Agree
2	Sharing remarkable technical achievements of students in technical colleges on Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram would encourage enrolment in such colleges.	2.89	0.71	Agree
3	Regular posting of activities of technical colleges would increase potential students' interest in enrolling these colleges.	2.77	0.66	Agree
4	Periodically advertising the businesses and success stories of Alumni of technical colleges on Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media platforms will increase public interest in TVET colleges.	3.00	0.69	Agree

5	Creating websites for TVET colleges and advertising the website on every social media platform will provide information for prospective students who may enroll in these colleges.	2.78	0.56	Agree
Grand Mean		2.89		Agree

The analyzed data in table 3 revealed that all majority of the respondents agreed with all the items in the tables. This is because these items have mean scores that are above 2.50 which is the criterion mean. With a grand mean score of 2.89, therefore, the answer to research question three is that the use of social media platforms for regular advertising of admission process of technical colleges, sharing remarkable technical achievements of students in technical colleges, regular posting of activities of technical colleges, periodically advertising the businesses and success stories of Alumni of technical colleges and creating websites for TVET colleges would enhance students enrolment in TVET colleges.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study for research question one revealed that using radio for regular advertisement for admission into TVET colleges, broadcasting news of major technical achievements of a technical school, organizing weekly programmes on the importance of TVET and giving testimonies of successful alumni of TVET colleges would create the needed awareness to enhance enrolment of students into TVET colleges. This finding was corroborated by the findings of Yusuf (2012) which revealed that the use of community radio is cost effective, generally providing three types of information: generic (on health, education, government programs, local news, and forthcoming events); dynamic (on market prices, school examination results, and weather forecasts), and timely (favorable conditions for planting or harvesting, along with impending disaster warnings).

The findings of the study for research question two revealed that the use of television to create short local movies on activities and benefits of TVET colleges, advertise admission into TVET colleges, present videos of celebrities endorsing and encouraging enrolment into TVET colleges, organize discussion sections with experts in TVET and having interviews with alumni of TVET colleges who are successful in their craft have the potential of increasing enrolment in TVET programmes. This finding is in line with the findings of Faruk (2011) which revealed that television is acknowledged as the most important medium for communicating the rural populations of developing countries.

Furthermore, the findings of the study for research question three revealed the use of social media platforms for regular advertising of admission process of technical colleges, sharing remarkable technical achievements of students in technical colleges, regular posting of activities of technical colleges, periodically advertising the businesses and success stories of Alumni of technical colleges and creating websites for TVET colleges would enhance students enrolment in TVET colleges. This finding is in line with the findings of Meyer (2019) which revealed that the main benefits of social media are the potential increase in prospective students' interest in STEM and TVET education using an effective social media marketing strategy. Secondly, the potential increase in interest may increase the number of students enrolled in STEM and TVET courses in higher education institutions.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that enrolment into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres can be increased through mass media platforms such as radio, television and social media. Through the platforms adverts on admission could be made, news of major technical achievements of a technical school could be broadcast, interviews with successful alumni would be organized and websites for TVET colleges could be advertised. These will ultimately increase enrolment into these programmes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Administrators of Technical and Vocational Education and Training programmes should use various radio houses as avenues for sensitization the public on their programmes and correcting misconceptions had about these programmes.
2. The government and other private bodies should support government owned TVET centres to engage the public on the activities of TVET centre through various TV programmes as this will go a long way in creating awareness on these programmes and improve on the enrolment level.

3. Organizers and administrators of TVET programmes should take advantage of various social media platforms such as facebook, twitter, Instagram, whatsapp etc to show case their programmes and interact with the public to create the needed awareness that will increase enrolment into such programmes.

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