
Encouragement of Women to Embrace Technical Education as a Measure to Improve Human Resources Development

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Abstract

This study examined methods of encouraging women to embrace technical education for improving human resources development. The design was survey. 80 technical teachers teaching in two accredited Technical Colleges in Onitsha Educational Zone of Anambra State made up the sample. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the teachers and the colleges. A - 27 item questionnaire duly validated whose reliability index stood at 0.96 was the instrument for data collection. Data were analyzed using Mean and t-test statistics. Mean score responses of the respondents were used to answer the research questions while the two null hypotheses were tested using t-test. The result showed that organizing career talks for girls/women on the prospects in technical education by Counsellors using successful women in technical occupations as resource persons and giving adequate incentives to women in technical education and colleges among others, will encourage women more to embrace technical education. There will be many women engineers, technicians, technologists in various jobs and occupations to boost the number of male engineers and technologists that are already there. Based on the findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations were made; among which is that professional Counsellors should be posted to all Government Technical Colleges irrespective of where they are sited.

The most vital democratic model in Nigerian National Policy on Education is Egalitarianism. Egalitarianism in this direction refers to the measure of the educational rights, privileges and opportunities for all citizens. This implies that education and

equal opportunity for all are inescapable rights of every Nigerian; irrespective of one's gender, religious affiliation or disability. It also means that nothing should be an obstacle to a citizen's right, access to quality education and contribution to human resources development.

Development is an increase in skills and ability as a result of the increased complexity of the body structures and formations. Practically, human resources development relates to the establishment, improvement and maintenance of different aspects of internal traits and external exposure in man (Akinola, 2001). These include the development of motor skills, speech processes, emotional control, cognitive manipulations, social interactions, moral Judgment, issues of accountability and in fact all the traits that form one's personality. It is a process of growing up and developing people's capacities in positive ways. Azikiwe (2003) identified human resources development as a thing that is concerned with developing a resilient population, people who have the ability to weather adverse conditions and conjure up images of strength and durability. All these components of human resources development are achievable through education.

Universal Basic Education (UBE) has strengthened government desire to provide educational opportunities for all, women not excepted through making the first nine years of Basic education not only free but also compulsory. In this way, every citizen has been given unfettered equal opportunity to all forms of education including technical education. Technical Education is one of the veritable instruments in human resources development. It is also a strong tool in economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, job creation and in engendering small scale and medium scale industries. Technical education is the vital foundation for technological advancement; and women have the capacity to excel in it.

Evidences abound that inspite of all the efforts being made to make technical education free for all, it is yet to be the domain of both male and female students. In other words, it is still an exclusive thing of the males. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Education through data presented in 2004, indicated reasonable disparity between male (144,953 - 83.5%) and female (28,651 = 16.5%) students' enrolment between 1995 and 1998. In the same manner, in 2005/2006 and 2008/2009 academic session, data by gender equally showed low female students enrolment because the male enrolment into the 138 accredited technical colleges was 82% while the female enrolment was 18%. UNESCO (1997) and the Senate Committee in Education (2008) reported such imbalance too in favour of males.

Women are hardly seen in technology based courses such as Auto Mechanics, production technology, Carpentry, RTV services, plumbing and fitting and others (Nwabuisi (2004). Generally, female students' representation in technical education and science has been low compared to the male students representation in these areas.

In Anambra Stale, the observation of low female students' enrolment in technical colleges is not hidden. Out of the eleven (11) (Government Technical Colleges, none is for girls only. It was only about few years ago that these colleges

started admitting female students, thus making the technical colleges mixed schools. The female students' population appears high at the JSS level while at the NTC level where they are expected to acquire the saleable technical skills, just very few are found. The female students either transfer to other secondary schools after their JSSCE or join their mothers to trade. This could be among the reasons why the International Labour Organization (2002) declared that the economic strengths of Anambra women have not been converted into opportunities for the improvement of human resources development.

Scholars (Azikiwe, 1993, Ekpenyong and Nwabisi 2004, Longbap and Nok 2007) identified social and cultural barriers as factors-that make women shy away from technical education. These factors have given rise to occupational discrimination against women as well as classification of trades along masculine and feminine lines. Ukoha in Salisu and Ndah (2010) further asserted that male students go for metal work, carpentry, Auto mobile and building technology while female students are in secretarial studies, hotel and catering technology. Thus, limiting both men and women from contributing to human resources development in all spheres of life venture. Other reasons could be explained as low perceived self concept on the part of women, which points to the extent women believe in their ability to excel in hard core technology based courses; dominance of male teachers in technical colleges that shows vividly the masculine nature of technical education (Ikwuka, 2012), lock of many female role models to motivate females to enroll in technical education and colleges and lack of adequate career guidance services in technical colleges as posited by Ekpeyong and Nwabisi 2004).

Considering the above assertions, it is obvious that there is gender inequalities in technical education generally and it has negative implications for the development of human resources in the state. This is because the low female enrolment in technical education is an indication that women who take part in technical education are few. This means that few women are vocationally trained for the world of work. It also means that majority of our women can neither be properly self employed nor shall become employers of labour. There is shortage of female technologists, technicians, engineers and that poor representation in technical institutions and occupations will continue inspite of the giant strides being made by Nigeria to meet up with the technological advancement in the Global World. It also entails that women somehow are restricted to only few jobs and careers. Enrolment statistics has made it clear to the state government that more boys than girls enroll in technical colleges and that even when technical college authorities were mandated to admit girls, the gap in enrolment widens as they ascend the education ladder. This awareness coupled with the noted negative effect of low participation of Women in technical education on human resources development has recently raised an unendurable concern on the part of the authorities of government technical colleges and the researcher to find out methods that could be used to encourage women to enhance technical education/colleges.

Suggestions have been proffered on how to motivate women to embrace technical education Ekpoyang and Nwabisi (2009) are of the opinion that it is a matter that requires effective guidance and counselling services in school in which the counsellors help the girls to develop positive self efficacy and self concept. These refer to counselling the girls to believe in themselves and their ability to excel in technology based subjects and courses. These scholars equally suggested that heads of technical colleges can undertake counselling trips to Junior Secondary Schools in different communities. Related to this is the idea that technical exhibition carried out frequently by technical colleges can perform the needed magic of attracting female students to technical colleges (Ikwuka, 2012).

Some other scholars suggested giving incentives to girls who enroll in technical colleges, organizing programme of visit to schools by women in technical occupations, (Longbap and Nok, 2007), lowering admission scores for female entrants into technical colleges, (Nwafor 2000), giving scholarship, higher pay, free books, equipment, promotions and other incentives to women in technical education programmes,. (Adeyoye, 1991, and Ekwereeme 2006). Nkpa (2008) argued that some of these measures will lower the standard in technical colleges. Whether the above mentioned measures will encourage women to embrace technical education/colleges that will in future increase our work force in the right direction is yet to be ascertained in this study.

In view of the above therefore, the researcher is interested in finding out specific methods that can be used to encourage women to embrace technical education.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to identify methods of encouraging women to embrace technical education as a measure to improve human resources development.

Specifically, the study sought to

1. find out methods that could be used to encourage women to embrace technical education.
2. examine how women with technical education could help to improve human resources development.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the methods that could be used to encourage women to embrace technical education?
2. How can women in technical education help in improving human resources development?

Hypothesis.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of technical teachers teaching in two Government Technical Colleges in Onitsha educational zone on the methods that could encourage women to embrace technical education ($P < 0.05$).

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the Mean Scores of the technical teachers in the two Government Technical Colleges, on how women in technical education could help to improve human resources development ($P < 0.05$).

Methods

The design of the study was survey. The study was carried out in Government Technical Colleges in Anambra State. Out of the eleven (11) Colleges, only two (Government Technical College, Onitsha and Government Technical College Nkpor) were used for the study. They were chosen because they are the only Government Technical Colleges that present National Technical Certificate (NTC) students for National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTHEB) Exams yearly. All the eighty technical teachers in the two Government Technical Colleges made up the sample. Thus purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting both the colleges and the technical teachers.

A researcher -designed 27 item questionnaire titled Technical Education Women Encouragement for Improved Human Resources Development Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The items were constructed on a 4-point Scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with weights as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The face/content validity of the instrument was determined by 3 experts from the departments of Technical Education, Measurement and Evaluation and Psychology, NAU Akwa. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using test re-test and cronback Alpha procedures. After computation, internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.69 and 0.96 were obtained respectively. Thus the instrument was considered reliable for the study.

The questionnaire was administered and collected using research assistants. Eighty copies were administered and forty-eight were returned after administration. It was these forty-eight copies of the completed questionnaire that were used for the study.

Calculated Mean Scores of the teachers' responses on each item were used to answer the research questions. Weighted scores of 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned to the responses scale accordingly and the Mean for each item was calculated. A calculated mean score of 2.50 and above was interpreted as a method to be used to encourage women to embrace technical education. The same criteria were applied in interpreting the mean scores of the items as measures of improving human resources development. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics.

Results

The results based on data analysis are presented in tables below.

Table 1: Summary of Mean Score Responses of Technical Education Teachers on the Methods that could be Used to Encourage Women to Embrace Technical Education.

| S/ N | Methods (items) | N | SDN | X | Interpretation |
|---------|---|-----|------|------|----------------|
| 1. | Counsellors organizing career talks for girls In primary and secondary schools. | 48 | 1.37 | 2.53 | To be used |
| 2. | Counselors talking to parents during P.T.A. meetings and open days to encourage their female children to enroll in technical | 48 | 1.33 | 2.68 | “ |
| 3. | Principals of technical colleges organizing technical exhibition in host communities on termly basis | 48 | 1.55 | 2.97 | “ |
| 4. | Principals laising with school counselors to counsel female students on the job technical education | 48 | 1.52 | 2.82 | “ |
| 5. | Education Board/Commission (ASUBEB & PPSSC) mandating counsellors to direct group and individual counseling on development of positive attitude towards technical education | 18 | 1.41 | 2.50 | “ |
| 6. | Using successful career women in technical occupations as resource persons during convention for female students. | 48. | 1.56 | 2.68 | “ |
| 7. | Organizing workshop for women to enlighten them on the importance of technical education | 48 | 1.57 | 2.96 | “ |
| 8. | Lowering admission scores for women who want to enroll in technical colleges. | 48 | 1.53 | 2.06 | Not to be used |
| 9. | Promoting female students in technical colleges irrespective of their performances | 48 | 1.50 | 2.17 | “ |

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|---|----|------|------|-------------|
| 10. Approving free text books and equipment for female students in technical colleges | 48 | 1.42 | 2.6 | To be Used |
| 11. Giving scholarship to female students who enroll in NTC after JSSCE | 48 | 1.47 | 2.68 | “ |
| 12. Giving female students who passed NABETEB Exams automatic admission Into university | 48 | 1.54 | 2.62 | “ |
| 13. Giving automatic employment to female graduates of Technical Colleges | 48 | 1.58 | 2.58 | “ |
| 14. Paying higher salary to women with technical education certificate | 48 | 1.45 | 2.58 | “ |
| 15. Giving special allowances to female students in technical colleges | 48 | 1.46 | 2.53 | “ |
| 16. Awarding scholarship for higher studies abroad to all women in technical education Programmes | 48 | 1.22 | 1.37 | Not be Used |

Data in Table 1 showed that thirteen methods (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) could be used to encourage women to embrace technical education in the zone.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the Mean Responses of Technical teachers teaching in Two Government Technical Colleges on the methods to be used to encourage women to embrace technical education ($P < 0.05$).

Table 2. Differences in the Mean Score Responses of Technical Teachers on the methods of Encouraging Women to Embrace Technical Education.

| G.T.C. ONITSHA | | | | G.T.C. NKPOR | | | | t-value |
|----------------|----|-------|------|--------------|------|-------|----|---------|
| Method | Nn | SD | X | N | SD | X | DP | |
| 1 | 34 | 1.24 | 2.82 | 14 | 1.41 | 2.93 | 42 | -0.02 |
| 2 | 34 | 1.41. | 2.79 | 14 | 1.63 | 2.56 | 43 | -0.37 |
| 3 | 33 | 1.61 | 2.81 | 14 | L34 | 21.93 | 42 | -0.27 |
| 4 | 34 | 1.20 | 2.62 | 14 | 1.62 | 2.56 | 44 | -0.24 |
| 5 | 34 | 1.42 | 2.70 | 14 | 1.48 | 2.62 | 43 | -0.26 |
| 6 | 32 | 0.90 | 2.81 | 14 | 1.36 | 2.83 | 42 | 0.03 |
| 7 | 34 | 1.24 | 2.54 | 14 | 1.42 | 2.53 | 44 | -.28 |
| 8 | 34 | 1.45 | 2.23 | 14 | 1.39 | 2.27 | 44 | -.08 |
| 9 | 34 | 1.54 | 2.18 | 14 | 1.50 | 2.19 | 44 | -1.29 |
| 10 | 34 | 1.38 | 2.60 | 14 | 1.39 | 2.58 | 44 | -.048 |
| 11 | 34 | 11.42 | 2.59 | 14 | 1.37 | 2.52 | 44 | -.015 |
| 12 | 34 | 1.36 | 2.68 | 14 | 1.46 | 2.59 | 44 | -0.82 |
| 13 | 34 | 1.27 | 2.54 | 14 | 1.38 | 2.55 | 44 | -0.90 |
| 14 | 34 | 1.54 | 2.64 | 14 | 1.49 | 2.61 | 44 | -0.21 |
| 15 | 34 | 1.31 | 2.76 | 14 | 1.30 | 2.72 | 44 | -0.63 |
| 16 | 34 | 1.55 | 2.02 | 14 | 1.52 | 2.14 | 44 | -0.17 |

Table t= 1.585 = Significant at 0.05

The null hypothesis is accepted on all the methods, except methods 8, 9 and 16.

Table 3: Summary of Mean Score Responses of Technical Teachers on how Encouraging Women to Embrace Technical Education would help to Improve Human Resources Development.

| S/N | Measures of Improvement | N | SD | X | Interpretation |
|-----|---|----|------|------|----------------|
| 17 | The number of technicians in the host communities will increase (Onitsha and Nkpor) | 47 | 1.15 | 2.51 | Applied |
| 18 | Women mechanics will emerge. | 46 | 1.56 | 2.52 | Applied |
| 19. | There will be both men and women electricians in homes and offices in the zone | 48 | 1.55 | 2.26 | Applied |
| 20. | Bricklayers, shoe menders, carpenters, plumbers | | | | |

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|-----|--|----|------|------|-------------|
| | etc. will be all over the streets. | 48 | 1.50 | 2.64 | Applied |
| 21. | It will bridge the gender gap in hard core technology based employment areas such as Auto mobile engineering, RTV, plumbing and fitting. | 48 | 1.55 | 2.26 | Not Applied |
| 22. | Technology departments in tertiary institutions and colleges in the state will no longer lack qualified teachers. | 48 | 1.38 | 2.79 | Applied |
| 23. | Private motor mechanics, carpenters, plumbers in Onitsha will begin to have adequate number of apprentices as the number of-Technical education' students on LT. will increase. | 48 | 1.00 | 2.80 | “ |
| 24. | Many women will become self employed and or employers of labour. | 48 | 1.30 | 2.63 | “ |
| 25. | Small and middle scale industries will boom as women acquire technical skills. | 48 | 1.60 | 2.59 | “ |
| 26. | In Families, both husband and wife will become income earners. | 48 | 1.33 | 2.54 | “ |
| 27. | Women personnel with technical expertise will boost the number of men offering technical services for computers, laptops, printer and scanners that are .all over the Main Markets in the state. | 48 | 1.29 | 2.94 | “ |

Table 3 showed that all the items with exception of item 21 are measures of improvement on human resources development in the zone.

Table 4: Differences in the Mean Score Responses of Technical Teachers Teaching in the Two Government Technical Colleges on the Measures of Improvement in Human Resources Development.

| | G.T.C. ONITSHA | | | | G.T.C. NKPOR | | | |
|-----|----------------|------|------|----|--------------|--------|----|---------|
| | N | SD | X | N | SD | X | DF | t-value |
| 17 | 34 | 1.55 | 2.50 | 14 | 1.62 | 2.56 | 44 | -1.15 |
| 18. | 33 | 1.64 | 2.78 | 14 | 1.59 | 2.70 | 42 | -0.16 |
| 19. | 34 | 1.47 | 2.79 | 14 | 1.39 | 2.67 | 44 | -0.37 |
| 20. | 33 | 0.90 | 2.82 | 14 | 1.24 | 2.92 | 42 | -0.27 |
| 21. | 34 | 1.62 | 2.10 | 14 | 1.54 | 2.34 | 44 | -2.24 |
| 22 | 34 | 1.24 | 2.52 | 14 | 1.41 | 2.54 | 44 | -0.02 |
| 23 | 34 | 1.44 | 2.60 | 14 | 1.46 | 2.59 | 44 | -0.36 |
| 24 | 34 | 1.38 | 2.51 | 14 | 1 | 2.50 | 42 | -0.47 |
| 25 | 34 | 1.41 | 2.65 | 14 | 1.38 | -2.72. | 43 | -0.32 |
| 26 | 31 | 1.42 | 2.56 | 14 | 1.40 | 2.57 | 44 | -0.01 |
| 27 | 32 | 1.26 | 2.74 | 14 | 1.67 | 2.86 | 44 | 0.23 |

Significant at 0.05

The null hypothesis is accepted *on* the measures except measure (item) 21.

Discussion.

It is obvious from this study that the women have not been properly encouraged to embrace technical education. This is the root cause of the low emolument of women in technical colleges. It is equally the major cause of their inappreciable representation in technological courses in universities, colleges and technical education. It has limited them from contributing towards all efforts to improve human resources development. In view of this therefore, the women in Onitsha zone need to be motivated.

Data in table 1 showed that the policy that mandated women to be encouraged to take up technical education has not been fully implemented, of the sixteen (16) methods identified as ways of encouraging women in the zone to embrace technical education, only 3 recorded negative responses from the teachers teaching in the two government technical colleges. The teachers were unanimous in their responses. Table 2 which showed no significant differences except on methods (items) 8, 9 and 16 confirmed the unanimity in their responses. This is an indication that none of these methods have been used to encourage women to embrace technical education. The negative responses of the technical teachers to methods 8, 9 and 16 could be that those methods have been tried before without success or that they saw them as methods that would bring down the standard of technical education. This is in line with Addela (1991) who had earlier expressed the fear that lowering the admission criteria for female students who want to enroll in technical colleges would lead to low standard in technical education.

Data 1 also showed that the policy to bridge the imbalance in enrolment of males and females in technical colleges has not also been implemented. If at all the authorities have applied these methods prior to date they are not all embracing. The findings are indicating the importance of using career women in technical occupations as resource persons and school counselors to organize career conventions and special talks for female students and parents respectively. These methods according to Long bap and Nok (2007), Nzewi (2008) and Ukohe (2010) can motivate women to choose technical education and or encourage their female children to choose technical education. The women professionals will serve as role models to students. Deep seated cultural, social and occupational stereotype and bias against women in the society will be reversed. In .such conventions, women will be exposed to the importance of technical education and career prospects in the area. Workshops/seminars could be used to achieve all these as seen in method 7 on table 1.

The use of special/incentives (free textbooks, equipment, scholarship, allowances, payment of higher salaries etc) and school authorities laising with counselors to motivate girls towards technical education/colleges will help to make women appreciate prospects in technical education and to develop positive attitude towards it. This explains the assertion by Ekpeyong and Nwabisi (2004) when they posited that lack of career guidance in technical colleges and negative attitude of women towards technical subjects are the root causes of low enrolment of female students in technical colleges. Adopting all the methods listed in table I, items 8, 9 and 16 excluded, by government and colleges will usher in a new era of increased enrollment of female students in the technical colleges in the state. And few years after, human resources development will be improved greatly as there will be many women (female) technologists, engineers and industrialists working in tertiary institutions, technology hard core based occupations among others. These female engineers and

technologists will boost the number of male technologist and engineers already in different fields in the state. Private sector will equally experience the effect of improved human resources development because, private motor mechanics, plumbers, carpenters and others will experience boom in the number of apprentices attached to them as I.T. students.

Technicians in the host communities will increase in number. Shoe menders, bricklayers, motor cycle repairers and others will be easily accessible. Shoe mending will no longer be the domain of few Abokis (Hausa men) in Onitsha streets and markets.

Women will begin to play their roles in poverty alleviation as those with technical skills will become income earners either as paid workers or entrepreneurs. This is in line with Adeyeye (2010) who opined that human resources development is concerned with developing a resilient population, people who have the ability to weather adverse conditions and conjure up images of strength and durability. The idea of encouraging women to embrace technical education for human resources development was reinforced by Onuckwe (2011) who posited that allowing women to acquire technical education provides opportunities that promote human development - cognitive, social, emotional, physical and moral domains of human development.

The unanimous responses of the technical teachers to the thirteen methods of encouraging women was further confirmed by the no significant differences in their responses shown in table 4.

Counselling Implications of the Finding

Six (6) out of the methods that should be used to encourage women to embrace technical education involve counseling services. This implies that the major roles of helping women get over the social, cultural and occupational biases and stereotypes that limit women from taking up technical occupations are in the hands of school counselors. It calls for collaborative counseling strategy in which counselors, parents and women in technical careers will reason together. In such collaborative counseling, value re-orientation should be emphasized. Rational Emotive strategies could be used to help girls replace their negative thoughts towards technical education with more favourable thoughts and beliefs. Modelling techniques should be incorporated in counseling to expose the girls to the prospects in technical education.

Conclusion.

Improvement in human resources development comes through having both adequate qualified number of men and women in various jobs and occupations. Technical education has always been a key to creation of wealth, employment generation, poverty alleviation and increase in the number of qualified personnel in all spheres of life. Through technical education, women acquire saleable occupational

skills they need to enter and progress in technical occupations either as paid civil servants or entrepreneurs. This will in turn lead to quantum leap into the needed improvement in our human resources development.

Recommendations.

1. Professional counselors should be posted to technical colleges.
2. Principals of technical colleges should give adequate support to counselors in their roles towards encouraging girls to embrace technical subjects.
3. The Technical Education Boards should liaise well with the government to apply the methods identified in this study in various schools and technical colleges.

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