



## **Involvement of Rural Secondary School Students in Vocational Activities in Ondo State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Involvement of rural secondary school students in vocational activities in Ondo State, Nigeria was examined. Specifically, the study described respondents' personal characteristics on gender basis, identified types of vocational activities involved, determined their level of involvement and identified constraints faced. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 152 respondents for the study. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaire and summarized using frequency counts, percentages and means while t-test was used to draw inferences. The results showed that the mean age of male and female respondents were  $16.7 \pm 2.4$  and  $16.6 \pm 2.1$  years. Computer service (14.7 %) and fashion designing (13.7%) were the major vocational activities common among the male while the female engaged in fashion designing (50%) and hair dressing (26.3%). About 56.6% of female and 53.9% of male had high level of involvement in vocational activities. Also, 84% and 80.5 % of male and female respondents indicated that personal interest was the main reason for their involvement. In addition, about 37.93% of male and 36.6% of female indicated that hazards of vocational activities were the major constraints associated with their involvement. Results of t- test showed that there is no significant difference in the involvement of male and female ( $t = - 0.264$ ;  $P \geq 0.05$ ) in vocational activities. The study concluded that both gender had similar level of involvement in vocational activities in the study area.

**Keyword:** Vocational activities, gender, involvement, secondary school students

## **INTRODUCTON**

Academic-based school seems to be thriving in most educational institutions in most developing countries of the world. However, necessary career skills required in the job are not taught to students. Nevertheless, the emphasis is gradually moving away from the academic-based education that relies on the mere gaining of credentials to skill-based (vocational) training that recognizes the need to apply vital skills in the labour markets. This stresses the need for vocational training. Vocational education, in a broad sense, is a form of education that teaches the trainees procedural knowledge required for expertise in a particular group of techniques or technologies. In facts, it is the engine for economic growth in any country. It is a form of education which prepares people for useful employment in any occupation (David, 2010). It includes technical education which requires the use of tools and machineries to teach practical instructions to trainees (Ekong, 2010).

Vocational education is planned to assist students to acquire relevant occupational and technical skills, required for the future employment opportunities in order to make successful transitions from schools to larger society (Abdullahi, 1993). It prepares the trainees for employment opportunities that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic, and totally related to specific trades, occupations or vocations (David, 2010). It develops middle cadre technicians to overcome the distressed economies of the third world. Also, provision of vocational education reduces desperation for white collar jobs to the barest minimum. Any graduate with the taste of this form of education could get engage in trades while seeking for their desired jobs.

Many scholars had observed that secondary school students in rural communities were

involved in vocational activities because their schools paid more attention to developing their cognitive domain, with little heed to develop their psychomotor and affective domain (Ekong, 2010; Preretomode, 1991; Pillia, 2005; Victor, 2009 and Whawo, 1993). Furthermore, studies have shown that apprenticeship by craft systems provided the students with the platform to develop the missing psychomotor and affective domain (Olabode, 2009, Ojo, 2009). Apparently, this leads to their involvement in informal vocational training outside the school after school hours, to complement the acquisition of knowledge skills and aptitude being received from schools. However, there is dearth of information on gender involvement of male and female secondary school students' vocational activities in Ondo State, Nigeria, hence, the need for this study. The study specifically described socio-economic characteristics of respondents on gender basis; identified types of vocational activities and reasons for involvement; determined respondents' level of involvement in vocational activities and identified constraints to their involvement.

### **Hypothesis of the study**

There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students' involvement in vocational activities.

### **Conceptual framework on Concept of gender inequality**

In any egalitarian society, people, culture and belief still hold opinions on male and female roles and expectations. The gender differential expressed in terms of superior of one over another is dictated most times by the society. If it is lopsidedness on either males or females, it causes disparity in their developmental opportunities, resourcefulness and also reduces economic

growth of a nation (Idowu, 2015). It would appear that gender disparity seems to be very obvious in vocational activities as a result of unconscious influences of the society, family/parental opinion, cultural and social norms. The dichotomous nature existing between male and female role in occupations has led to inequality that has manifested in numerous dimensions in our daily lives. These differences are very much evidenced in our private and public lives, choices of occupation, career ambitions, vocational activities, aspirations which have great effect on societal development (Akpotohwo and Ehimen 2014). There is the societal feeling that some vocational activities are only suitable for the male, hence the female counterparts are discriminated against and discouraged from such type of activities. The basic idea behind this is that it is culturally believed that such activities are difficult for the females. Both boys and girls have vital roles to play towards the growth and development of the society. However, in Nigeria, women constitute the majority of the unskillful adults (Simipri, 2015). As a result, women do not have equal opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. In both rural and urban areas, many women perform unskilled and menial jobs, some occupy the lowest cadre in the job hierarchy; earn little wages after overworking themselves (Ameachi, 2014). For gender equality, it is therefore pertinent that there should be equal access of male and female to opportunities, in order to make them contribute to nation's building (Deji, 2015). Therefore, any one irrespective of his or her sex could now have access to developmental opportunities.

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in Ondo State Nigeria. Ondo State has 18 Local

Government Areas (LAGs). Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents for this study. At the first stage, 20 percent of Local Government Area in the State were purposively selected based on their level of rurality, making 4 LGAs. They were Irele, Ese odo, Akure north and Akoko south LGAs. At the second stage, three rural schools were purposively selected in each of the chosen LGAs making 12 rural schools. At the final stage, 152 students (equal male and female) involved in vocational activities were proportionately selected from chosen schools. They were Akotogbo high school (7 males and 7 females), Ijosu grammar school (6 males and 6 females) and Jowiri high school (6 males and 6 females) from Irele; Igbobini secondary school (6 males and 6 females), Apoi igbootu high school (6 males and 6 females) and Ojuala high school (6 males and 6 females) from Ese odo; Ijuitagbolu grammar school (6 males and 6 females), Obaile grammar school (6 males and 6 females) and Community comprehensive high school, Ayede ogbese (7 males and 7 females) from Akure north; while Etiro grammar school (7 males and 7 females), Ayegunle high school (7 males and 7 females) and Orioke high school (6 males and 6 females) from Akoko south west LGA. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaire and summarized using frequency counts, percentages and means while t-test was used to draw inferences on the hypothesis. Dependent variable for this study was involvement in vocational activities which was conceptualized as number of hours in which students were engaged in vocational activities outside their schools. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of hours they were involved in vocational activities and were recorded as given. The total number of hours the respondents indicated were added together to get the involvement score.

Respondents with involvement score below the mean score were categorized as low while those with score higher than the mean score were categorized as high.

## Results and Discussion

### Respondents' socio-economic characteristics

Result in Table I shows that about 46.1 percent and 53.9 percent of male and female respondents were Christians and Muslims, respectively. The study shows that Christianity and Islam are the dominant religion in the study area. This corroborates the findings of Olabode (2009) and Ojo (2009) that religion was not a barrier to the involvement in vocational activities. In addition, majority (98.68% and 98.68%) of male and female respondents were single. This implies that the respondents are still in their youthful ages. About 53.95 percent and 69.74 percent of male and female respondents, respectively were within the age bracket of 15-17 years with a mean age of 16.7 years and 16.6 years, respectively, indicating that they are young, energetic, dynamic, eager to learn, with boundless spirits, optimistic for the future, receptive to ideas and searching for avenues to direct their energies (Ayinde, 2011 and Irvin *et al.*, 2010). This result is similar to the finding of Olabode (2009) that reported the mean age of the students who were involved in vocational activities as 17 years. Majority (90.7% and 93.4%) of male and female respondents, respectively had spent up to three years in learning vocational activities, with the mean length of training of 2.27 and 2.1 for male and female respectively. It implies that male respondents had spent more time in vocational training than female.

In addition about 63 percent and 66 percent of male and female respondents indicated that their parents major occupation was farming; 16.9 percent and 9.7 percent of

them showed that their parents were artisans while about 20 percent and 24 percent of male and female respondents showed that their parents were traders. This shows that the prevalent occupation in the study areas was farming and trading. This corroborates Ojo (2009) and Olabode and (2009) which established that the major occupation areas among the respondents' parents is farming. This implies that male and female respondents' involvement in vocational activities may not influenced by their parents but rather based on their personal interest. This contradicts the findings of Alao *et al.*, (2018) which established that parent occupational background influenced their children's career choice.

### Respondents' vocational activities

Results in Table 2 shows that the major vocational activity of the male respondents was fashion designing (50%) while others were barbing (10%), fashion designing (13.7%), computer service (14.7%) while the female mostly involved in hair dressing (26.3%) and computer service (2.6%)

, . This shows that male and female respondents learnt vocational activities besides vocational subjects in secondary schools to develop themselves. Respondents mainly involved in fashion designing, hair dressing, barbing and computer service. This implies that the aforementioned vocational activities were gender responsive, vocational activities which if offered in secondary schools could attract and facilitate skill acquisition.

Furthermore, results in Table 3 reveals that majority of the male and female respondents (84.0% and 80.5%) indicated that that it was because of their personal interest in vocational activities that attracted their involvement. This implies that majority of the respondents were involved because of their personal interests in

vocational activities. This finding corroborates Eremie (2014) and Magnus (2012) which established that students' career choices were influenced by their vocational characteristics but contradict the findings of Alao *et al*, (2018).

### **Level of involvement in vocational activities**

Result in Table 4 reveals that the mean hours of involvement of male and female respondents in learning vocational activities per day were 4.03 hours and 4.09 hours, respectively. Also, 50.0 percent and 39.5 percent of male and female respondents spent between 21 and 30 hours per week in vocational activities and 23.7 percent each of male and female respondents spent between 31 and 40 per week for learning vocational activities. This implies that both male and female respondents had interest and committed to learn vocational activities despite their their academic engagement. This corroborates the submissions of Jibowo (2003) and Torimiro & Olubode (2006) that reported the involvement of male and female farmers' children in various vocational activities apart from farming. Further results in Fig.1 shows that more than half (56.6%) of female and (53.9%) of male respondents were highly involved in vocational activities. Based on this result, government should be able to leverage on these young people vocational interest and provide quality vocational training coupled with their various vocational subjects in secondary schools so as to build their capacity for career development.

### **The constraints associated with respondents' involvement in vocational activities**

Results in Table 5 shows that the major constraints associated with respondents' involvement in vocational activities were hazard associated with the job during

training. This was indicated by 37.93% of male and 36.36% of female, , 27.58% of male and 15.90% of female indicated that financial constraint to purchase tools/machines to learn in certain skills like computing, fashion designing and barbing while 17.24% of male and 18.18% of female indicated that infrastructure related problem like irregular supply of electricity was a major constraint. This implies that hazard associated with the job training, infrastructural problems and financial constraint to afford tools to learn in certain skills were the major constraints associated with respondents' involvement in vocational activities.

### **Hypothesis testing**

Results in Table 6 show that there is no statistical significant difference between male and female respondents' involvement ( $t = -0.264$ ;  $p \geq 0.05$ ) in vocational activities. This is because male and female students almost the same number of hours for training in vocational activities.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the results of this study, the respondents were still in their youthful age with majority unmarried. The common vocational activities among males were fashion designing and apprenticeship in computer services while female respondents were engaged in fashion designing and hair dressing. In addition, hazard associated with job during training and infrastructural problems were the major constraints associated with respondents' involvement in vocational activities. The study concluded that both male and female had the same level of involvement in learning vocational activities in the study area. It is therefore recommended that government should incorporate vocational training into the secondary school curriculum with a view to promoting skill acquisition among youth. This will make

them to be self reliance and employer of labour.

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**Table 1: Distribution of respondents' involved in vocational activities by Socio- economic Characteristics** Male n = 76 Female n = 76

Variable	Male Frequency	Percentage	Female Frequency	Percentage
Religion				
Christianity	35	46.1	40	52.6
Islam	41	53.9	36	47.4
Marital status				
Single	75	98.7	75	98.7
Married	1	1.3	1	1.3
Ages (years)				
≤ 10 – 14	8	10.5	3	3.9
15 – 17	41	53.9	53	69.7
≥ 18	27	35.6	20	26.3
Educational level				
S S S 1	30	39.5	27	35.3
S S S 2	35	46.1	40	52.6
S S S 3	11	14.5	9	11.8
Actual length of time (years)				
≤ 3	69	90.7	71	92.3
≥ 1	7	9.1	5	6.5
Parents' occupations				
Farming	48	63	50	66
Artisan	13	16.9	7	9.1
Trading	15	20	18	24

Source: Field survey, 2018

**Table 2: Distribution of the involved respondents by Vocational activities and their reasons for involvement**

Variable	Male Frequency	Percentage	Female Frequency	Percentage
Generator repair	1	0.9	1	0.9
Hair dressing	11	10	11	10
Barbing	11	10	11	10
Nursing assistantship	1	0.9	1	0.9
Pig rearing	1	0.9	1	0.9
Phone repair	1	0.9	1	0.9
Selling of medical drugs	1	0.9	1	0.9
Shoe making	1	0.9	3	3.9
Wiring	1	0.9	1	0.9
Aluminium work	2	1.8	53	69.7
Bakery	3	2.7	20	26.3
Carpentry	3	2.7	3	3.9
Photographing	3	2.7	27	35.3
Bricklaying	4	3.7	40	52.6
Mechanical work	4	3.7	9	11.8
Computing	16	14.7	16	14.7
Welding	12	10.9	12	10.9
Fashion design	15	13.7	15	13.7
Knitting	0	0	0	0

Source: Field survey, 2018

**Table 3: Reasons for involvement in vocational activities**

Variables	Male Freq	Percentage
Personal interest	66	84
Social interest	2	2.7
Assist in Parents'	24	2.7

occupations		
	2	2.7
Peer influence	1	1.3
Gender role	3	4
Economic interest	4	5.3

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents by Hours spent per week in vocational activities and level of involvement**

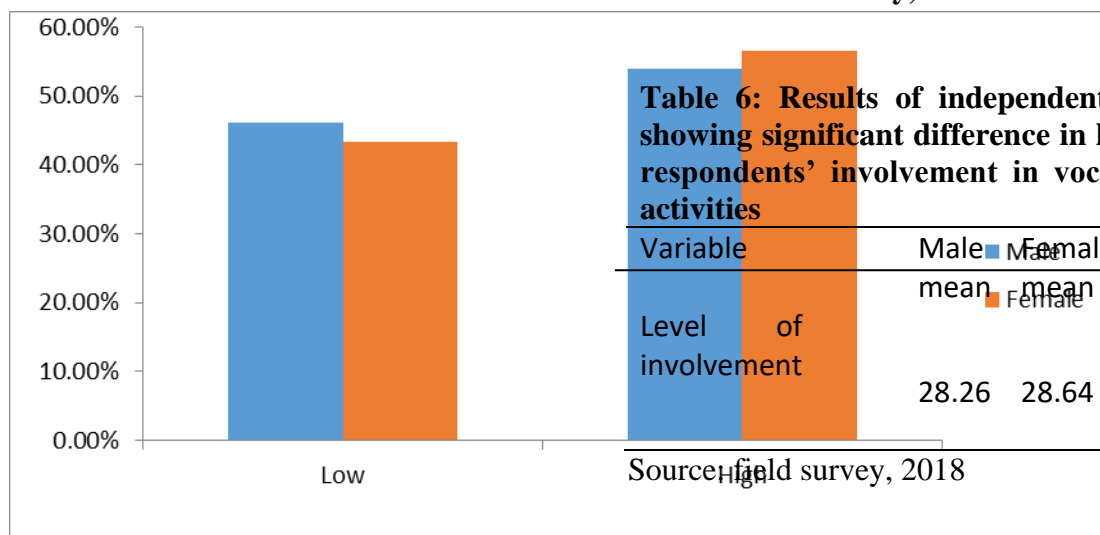
Variable	Male	Female
	Frequency	Percentage
Number in vocational activities ≤ 10	2	2.6
11 – 20	11	14.5
21 – 30	38	50.00
31 – 40	18	23.7
≥ 41	7	9.2
Mean	28.26	28.64

Source: Field survey, 2018

**Table 5: Distribution of respondents by constraints associated with their involvement in vocational activities**

Constraints	Male	Female
	Frequency	Percentage
Hazard associated with job in the training	29	37.93
Infrastructural problems	2	2.8
Being stigmatized	13	17.24
Wrong cultural views for gender vocations	8	10.34
Some operations being gender unfriendly	5	6.89
Financial constraint to purchase tools to learn in certain skills	0	0
Associational	0	1.7

Source: Field survey, 2018



**Figure 1: Level of involvement in vocational activities**

$\bar{x} = 28.2628.64$

**Table 6: Results of independent t-test showing significant difference in level of respondents' involvement in vocational activities**

Variable	Male mean	Female mean	T	P-value
Level of involvement	28.26	28.64	-	0.792

Source: Field survey, 2018