
FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS IN SELECTED VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Vocational education is a broad term used to describe the educational process that includes, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences as well as the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge related to occupations in different sectors of economic and social life. The study sought to identify factors influencing students' perception of Vocational Education effectiveness in the second vocational institutions. A descriptive survey design was used to collect data from respondents. Selected vocational institutions formed the study population. The target population consisted of 200 respondents. The population was divided into homogenous subgroups, and a simple random sampling technique was taken from each segment. A questionnaire was made and distributed to collect data for the study. Data from the study were analysed using means, means percentages, and frequencies. The study found that Infrastructure, instructional quality, student attitudes, extracurricular activities, research and development, teachers' pay, teaching experiences, and professional qualifications are some of the factors hindering the effectiveness of vocational education Ghana. The study recommends that the Government of Ghana should develop strategies to enhance the efficacy of vocational education.

Keywords: Vocational education, infrastructure, professional teachers, staff motivation, students' perception

Introduction

It is impossible to overstate the value of vocational education and training in the development of a nation. Vocational training

is undoubtedly a key factor in both the industrial and social advancement of any nation. National progress would essentially come to a halt without the competent

technical manpower generated by the technical institutions and vocational institutes for industry, commerce, and agriculture (Budu-Smith, 2005). In Ghana, there is an overwhelming justification for education, particularly vocational education and training, both in terms of ensuring human security and as a financial investment with excellent returns. "There has never really been a debate over the relationship between education and development," claims Nsiah-Gyabaah (2009), "since education helps to strengthen national ability to apply science and technology to social and economic problems."

A fundamental human right, education is important for the socio-economic advancement of society. It serves as a vehicle for a person's fulfillment as well as the transmission of values from one generation to the next. A key component of growth is vocational education and training because it enables people and society to realize their potential, broaden their perspectives, and change with the times (Nsiah Gyabaah, 2009). Vocational education's goal is to give young people the technical and professional skills necessary for the nation's socioeconomic development. Vocational education dates all the way back to Ghana's independence, according to Amoah & Elliot (2013). In order to prepare Ghana's youth for occupations that would arise from the new industrial revolution, this educational system has a variety of repercussions on economic, social, and political aspects (Swanson, 2015). For the majority of the 20th century, Ghana had a

boom in vocational education. However, it was reported that there was a state crisis in declining enrolment for vocational education plans in secondary and higher schools as early as 1990 (Gray, 2010). According to Rauf and Patience (2017), this declining nationwide trend in the admission of students to vocational training programs has persisted over the past 10 years and is currently at 4.4 percent. This situation, along with a rising dropout rate at the national level and a general decline in graduation rates, has serious implications for the nation's educational authorities and the students who have not received any credential (Pamford, Ali & Nobert, 2015). According to Cardon and Christensen (2008), the dropout rate alone could have a significant economic impact on our economy.

The majority of students at the basic level of education have not been able to change despite numerous interventions to make sure that vocational institutions are outfitted with the necessary resources for training students in the fundamentals of vocational education and training for the country's technological advancement. According to Adam (2011), because graduates from this educational sector are unable to find jobs in their specific fields of specialisation, vocational training has not attracted the majority of young people in Ghana due to inadequate Infrastructure materials (Winston-Churchill, 2016; Poplin (1992), Teaching effectiveness (Omoifo 2012), Poor quality of specialised and professional instructors (Cambell, McCloy, Oppler & Sager, 2013), Students' attitude (Vroom, 2014), Teacher

compensation (Sackett, Zedeck & Fogli, 2011), Acute shortage and poor quality teaching (Ijaiya, 1998). Because of the aforementioned deficiencies, it is thought that vocational education graduates nowadays are not motivated by the practical component; as a result, they lack the practical experience necessary to incorporate the practical portion of the programme into their teachings. This study's major goal was to evaluate the variables affecting students' perceptions of the efficiency of vocational education in second-cycle institutions.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design used in this study allowed researchers to get thorough data from participants (Creswell, 2012). Greater Kumasi, the capital of Ghana's Ashanti Region, is where the study was carried out. Six vocational training facilities made up the study's target population; two of them were privately owned and the other four were run by the government. Additionally, the study focused on 40 male and 160 female students from these institutions. The target population consisted of 200 respondents. The population was divided into homogenous subgroups, and a simple random sample was taken from each segment. This method is frequently referred to as proportionate or quota random sampling (Opton, 2009). A questionnaire was created and distributed to collect data for the study. Researchers personally collected the completed questionnaires for analysis. There were closed-ended Likert scale questions on the survey.

Before the final questionnaires were sent to the respondents, several of the surveys were pilot tested in a similar vocational education in the Greater Kumasi and it was excluded from the main study. Data from the study was analysed using means, means percentages, and frequencies. A 5-point Likert scale with the following response options was used for the closed-ended responses: 5-strongly agree, 4-agree 3 unsure, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree. On the other hand, depending on their similarities, the open-ended responses were categorised and examined. To analyse and interpret the data, the researchers utilised SPSS version 20.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Results and discussion

Table 1 presents demography of respondents. Out of the two hundred respondents who answered the questionnaire, one hundred and sixty (160) of them were female students while forty (40) male students. It can be said that majority of the respondents were female, implying that female students' enroll in the vocational education more than the male counterparts in Ghana. Regarding the year of education, fifty (50%) respondents were in year 1 and fifty-five (55%) respondents each was in year 2 and year 3 respectively. The majority of the respondents were from year 2 and year 3 because it was assumed that they had been on campus for quite long and that have the knowledge about the subject matter.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics students

Variables	Male Percentage (N=160)	Female Percentage (40)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	160	0
Female	0	40
Total	100	100
<i>Year of education</i>		
Year1	50	10
Year 2	55	15
Year 3	55	15
Total	100	100

Factors that Affect the Effectiveness of Vocational Education in the second cycle institutions

Table 2 lists the students' replies to questions about what influences the institution's vocational education and how well it works. All of the respondents agreed, as shown in the Table, that factors such as infrastructure (4.78, 4.65), teaching effectiveness (Mean=4.89, 4.70), teacher quality (Mean=4.57, 4.50), students' attitudes (Mean=4.75, 4.55), extracurricular activities (Mean=4.58, 4.63), research and development (Mean=4.56, 4.73), teachers' salaries (Mean=4.64, 4.65), teaching experience of teachers (Mean=4.66, Teaching effectiveness ((Mean=4.59, 4.40) and the professional qualifications of teachers ((Mean=4.59, 4.40) was viewed as the major factors that significantly affect the effectiveness of vocational educational delivery in the institution.

This result is consistent with Omoifo's (2012) hypothesis that effective teaching is characterized by high-quality instruction. The author claims that effective education

happens when pupils learn and fulfill a variety of objectives as opposed to only being able to repeat technical knowledge. Omoifo (2012) suggested that during effective learning, students learn how to study and build conceptual knowledge and cognitive skills, which aids in changing their intuitiveness. The results corroborate Okafor's (2007) assertion that the key to effective teaching is the teacher's ability to translate textual material into pedagogically sound forms that are also sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of the pupils. In accordance with Cambell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager's (2013) opinion that a teacher's academic credentials and subject-matter knowledge, competencies and skills, and the commitment of teachers have a great impact on the teaching-learning process, the respondents also concur that teacher quality is a factor that affected the effectiveness of teaching in the institution.

The results support Okureme's (2013) assertion that an effective teacher should possess a thorough understanding of his field, be well-versed in instructional

strategies, and be able to connect theoretical ideas to practical application. Such teachers, according to Abd-El-phallic and Boulaoude (2016), are knowledgeable about the intricate interactions between technology and society as well as the concepts, principles, theories, and processes of technical and vocational education. More importantly, these educators become knowledgeable about the nature of technical and vocational education. This is crucial because students' perceptions of technical and vocational education are shaped by what teachers choose to teach them and how they deliver the curriculum (Omoifo, 2012). According to Borman and Motowidlo (2011), teachers' knowledge bases are crucial for effective teaching since they must aid students in fully comprehending the subject matter and guiding principles of technical and vocational education. This has been emphasized for a long time, and more recently, there has been a focus on teacher training programs that will result in competent and productive literate instructors (Borman & Motowidlo, 2011).

The respondents also concurred that one element impeding the efficiency of vocational education in the institution is students' attitudes. This result was in line with Vroom's (2014) assertion that students are the input to the entire system. The author claims that the environment in which the pupils are placed as well as their own will to learn and succeed have a significant impact on how successfully the process of transmitting knowledge is accomplished. According to Vroom (2014), a student's ability to learn is mostly determined by their

awareness, interest, and aptitude for it, as well as by their sincerity, reliability, and honesty.

The respondents also concurred that extracurricular activities had an impact on the effectiveness of vocational education in the institution. This conclusion was in accordance with that of Jackson, Law, and Boat (2009) who claimed that successful education in its whole must include the full development of the student and must not be limited to instruction in a certain topic. The authors assert that educational institutions are required to set up a variety of extracurricular activities, such as hosting group discussions, debates, tests, extempore, guest lectures, seminars, sports, games, and cultural and co-curricular activities. The pupils' innate strengths and skills are enhanced and improved by these extracurricular activities (Jackson, Law & Boat, 2009). It was also recognized that research and development affected how well the institution's vocational education functioned. This result supported Sven's (2013) hypothesis that research and development activities are crucial to thriving in this cutthroat environment. In order to conduct research and development activities, the author claims that a facility needs to have the appropriate infrastructure. The pupils must have access to contemporary libraries and scientific journals. There must be faculty that is qualified, experienced, motivated, and interested in conducting research. To conduct research operations, adequate financial resources must be available (Sven, 2013).

The respondents also agreed that a significant element influencing the efficiency of vocational education in the institution was teachers' salaries. This outcome was consistent with Sackett, Zedeck, and Fogli's (2011) opinion that teacher income is a key indicator of kids' academic progress since it can improve other characteristics of a teacher's quality. The authors contend that if a teacher receives a salary that is adequate to meet basic living expenses, he or she may be able to live comfortably and be more productive since he or she will be inspired to use their talents, competencies, and abilities. Sackett, Zedeck, and Fogli (2011) also noted that low pay deters teachers from becoming committed and competent teachers by lowering their morale. The respondents also mentioned how the efficiency of vocational education in the institution was influenced

by the teaching experience of the professors. This result was consistent with Dalal and Hulin's (2011) hypothesis that teaching experience is the length of time a teacher has spent practicing their trade. The writers emphasized that teachers gain proficiency in their subject areas and the skill of teaching over time through experience. In other words, teaching experience enhances teachers' methods and teaching techniques (Dalal & Hulin, 2011).

Finally, the respondents acknowledged that a significant factor influencing the success of vocational education in the institution was the professional credentials of the professors. This result corroborated that of Schmidt, Frank, and Hunter (2016), who agreed that a teacher's professional certification helps them improve the fundamental competencies and skills required for the teaching-learning process.

Table 2: Factors that Affect the Effectiveness of Vocational Education

	Mean of Males (N=160)	Mean of Females (N=40)	Difference
i. Infrastructure has a significant impact on vocational education in this institution.	4.78	4.65	0.13
ii. Teaching effectiveness significantly affect the effectiveness of vocational educational delivery in this institution.	4.89	4.70	0.19
iii. Quality of teachers has a vital influence on the effectiveness of vocational education in this institution.	4.57	4.50	0.07
iv. Students' attitude significantly impacts the	4.75	4.55	0.2

	effectiveness of vocational education in this institution.			
v.	Extra-curricular activities have a vital effect on the effectiveness of vocational education in this institution.	4.58	4.63	0.05
vi.	Research and development has a significant influence on the effectiveness of vocational education in this institution.	4.56	4.73	0.17
vii.	Teachers' salary significantly affects the effectiveness of vocational education in this institution.	4.64	4.65	0.1
viii.	The teaching experience of teachers has a material influence on the effectiveness of vocational education in this institution.	4.66	4.60	0.06
ix.	The professional qualifications of teachers have a vital influence on the effectiveness of vocational education in this institution.	4.59	4.40	0.19

Conclusion

The focus of vocational education is on developing skills for self-employment. The efficiency of vocational education in Ghana is, however, being impacted by a number of factors, which have been highlighted. Infrastructure, teaching effectiveness, teacher quality, students' attitudes, extracurricular activities, research and development, teachers' salaries, their teaching experiences, and their professional qualifications all had a significant impact on the institution's ability to provide effective

vocational education. However, it was believed that research and development was the key element that had a substantial impact on how well vocational education was delivered in vocational institutions. It is advised that the Government of Ghana develop strategies to enhance the efficacy of vocational education, including the provision of adequate resources, encouraging teachers, hiring qualified and competent instructors, and allocating funds to finance infrastructural facilities like workshops and classrooms in all the vocational institutions.

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