

GENDER AND LOCATION DYNAMICS IN IDPS' ATTITUDES TOWARD VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

Numerous Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) confront the loss of their livelihoods due to forced displacement. As a response, both state and non-state actors provide vocational training to empower IDPs, fostering self-reliance and independence. Specifically, the study: (i) finds out the attitudes of the IDPs towards the vocational skills training programmes in South-South Nigeria (ii) determines if there is any difference in the attitudes of IDPs towards vocational skill training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria based on location (iii) determines if there is any difference in the attitudes of male and female IDPs towards vocational skills training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria. The representativeness of the 398 IDP sample may be limited, self-report bias could affect accuracy, findings may lack generalisability to other regions, and unaccounted external factors might influence attitudes. The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 398 IDPs from South-South Nigeria. A researcher-designed questionnaire and a checklist validated by 3 experts from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin, Nigeria, were used for the data collection. A reliability coefficient (r) of 0.73 was obtained through test-retest method. Data collection was conducted by the researcher and three trained research assistants. Descriptive statistics of frequency count, mean and percentage were used to answer the research questions raised, while inferential statistics of t -test was used to analyse the postulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The findings showed that: (i) IDPs have positive attitude towards the vocational skills training programmes. (ii) There is no significant difference in the attitude of IDPs towards vocational skills training programmes in IDP camps in South-South Nigeria based on location. (iii) There is significant difference in the attitude of male and female IDPs towards vocational skills training programmes in IDP camps in South-South Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that Government agencies overseeing IDPs should ensure sustained positive attitudes of IDPs by implementing measures like incentives and start-up packs. They should also remove barriers hindering participation in skill programmes and allow free choice of vocational training regardless of gender of IDPs.

Keywords: Attitude, Gender, Location, Human Survivability, Vocational Training

Introduction

The phenomenon of displacement remains arguably one of the most significant humanitarian challenges currently facing the world. It is caused by several factors such as natural disasters like flood, fire outbreak and erosion. Others are inter and intra ethnic conflicts, and even government neglect. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2023), put the number of displaced persons in Nigeria at 3.6 million as of December 2022. Globally, there were 71.1 million internally displaced people, 62.5 million of which are due to conflict and violence, and 8.7 million due to disasters as of December 2022. The centre had reported in late 2011 that there were some 370,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria, including some 74,000 in camps (IDMC, 2011).

The South-South is a geopolitical zone with various ecological zones that mainly cut across the states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Cross River and Edo. The region encompasses about 60 percent of Africa's largest mangrove forests and stretches over 20,000 Km² swamp of the littoral fringes of Nigeria (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009). Omojeje and Adesote (2011) revealed that there were major violent incidents in the south-south part of Nigeria upon the return to civil rule in 1999. In Odi crisis in Bayelsa State, the authors put the figure of displaced persons at about 60,000. The crises were said to have been spurred by the need to address long years of neglect and deprivation, coupled with the insensitivity of successive governments and lack of corporate social responsibility from trans-national oil companies operating in the region.

According to Omojeje and Adesote (2011), both government and oil companies in South-South Nigeria have failed in their responsibility to enhance the development of these communities. This has resulted in the emergence of several militant groups who have resorted to the use of sophisticated arms such as machine guns, rifles, dynamites, rocket propelled grenade launchers and gun boats to draw the attention of the multinational oil companies and the Nigerian state to their collective travails (Ogege, 2011; Nwankpa & Onyekosor, 2015).

There were series of clashes in the south-south between the militants and the security forces before amnesty was declared for the militants in August 2009. The clashes led to displacement of people. For example, in May 2009, thousands of people were displaced because of a fight between government forces and militants of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), a creation of the merger of different armed groups in 2005. The Joint Task Force (JTF) launched land and air strikes around the city of Warri in Delta State, and later extended its offensive to neighbouring Rivers State. The figure of displaced persons due to this clash alone was put between the range of 1,000-10,000. People sheltered in schools and hospitals in Ogbe-Ijoh Local Government Area in Delta State and those believed to have fled to the forest were unable to return home (Integrated Regional Information Network-IRIN, 2010).

Kalu (2019) reveals that there were 27,000 displaced persons in Adagom and Okende communities as well as Calabar, all in Cross River State, which is one of the states in the geopolitical zone. This confirms earlier report that most of the IDPs live with families in host communities who are themselves poor, thus severely straining already scarce resources as well as aggravating poverty levels of the host communities (OCHA, 2015). According to Alemma, (2018), there are more than

3,500 displaced persons in Benin IDP camp while 90% of the population are mainly children. National Commission for Refuge, Migrant and Internally Displaced Persons reported that it registered about 7,500 persons in various IDP camps in 2017.

The major focus on the issues around the management of the IDPs has been how best to rehabilitate them. In relentless pursuit of this, the skill acquisition training programme was set up to help the IDPs acquire skills to become self-reliant and contribute to the development of the society; derive maximum social, economic, and cultural benefits needed for discharging of obligations in the society (Edet, Adamu, & Babawuro, 2021). The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) established in March 1986 has been grappling with the nagging issue of employment creation through its various programmes such as vocational skills acquisition training and entrepreneurial training, among others (Ekong & Ekong, 2016).

Vocational education is a comprehensive term used in the educational process in addition to general education. It refers to 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 (FGN, 2013). Momoh (2012), defines vocational education as a form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation. It is also seen as post-secondary vocational training programme which the major purpose is the production of technicians.

The FRN in the NPE (FRN, 2004) states that the goals of Technical and Vocational Education shall be to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft (equivalent of high schools), advanced craft and technical levels; provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; to give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically. At all levels and in all learning situations, instructional facilities or teaching and learning materials are an indispensable factor in the attainment of the goals.

Vocational skills are categorised as hard, soft, technical and living skills (Nwakanma & Anigbogu, 2019). They explained that the hard skills are applied abilities that complement other jobs. They can be acquired through learning in a classroom, through study on the internet, through books and other materials. Example of hard skill for a secretary is computer skill. The soft skills are abilities of an individual not precisely related to specific jobs but apply to all jobs. These skills are communication skill, management skills, and so on. Technical skills are the abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks. They are practical, and often relate to mechanical, information technology, mathematical, or scientific tasks. Some examples include knowledge of programming languages, mechanical equipment which includes carpentry, joinery, building, plumbing, electrical/electronic. Living skills refers to vocational living skills or life skills which help persons with disabilities make the transition to independent living. Living skills help individuals develop the skills needed to gain employment and earn a paycheck. Individuals also learn the soft skills necessary to interact and communicate with coworkers and customers. Living skills include tailoring, cake baking, bricklaying, barbing, hair dressing, jewellery making, mat weaving amongst others.

There is always the need to assess vocational training programmes to determine whether they are offering training as required. Industrial Training Fund (2014) observed the need to assess skills acquisition programmes in Nigeria to enable stakeholders establish the exact situation of the programmes, with a view to identify appropriate course of action to chart the way forward. This assessment is not just on the supply side (as with the programme implementation), but also the demand, uptake and attitude to it. For instance, Achieng (2012) reported negative attitude of many IDPs towards vocational training as a major obstacle to the successful implementation of vocational training in IDP camps. Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili, (2014) also identified poor public impression and apathy to vocational skill training as a challenge facing vocational education in achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. In similar vein, Mshelia and Abdulrahman (2018) reported that majority of the IDPs in Borno State Nigeria have negative perception about vocational skills.

Studies such as Gopi (2012) have identified location and gender among the factors that determine whether trainees have positive or negative attitude towards vocational education and training. Other factors highlighted include maturation, physical factors, home influences, social environment, government, media, the instructors and the curriculum. Female IDPs tend to choose vocational skills that are feminine in nature such as soap and cosmetics making, dress making, baking and cooking, bead making and several other factors such as tradition and culture, (Ayonmike, 2015; Ezaem & Akiti, 2009). Nwakanma and Anigbogu (2019) reported that the gender disparity in the choice vocational training was skewed towards the males, which means that there are more male participants in vocational programmes than females.

Statement of the Problem

The condition of the IDPs in South-South Nigeria is very pathetic. Having been displaced from their homes, leaving their lands, property and source of livelihood behind, these IDPs are faced with a sense of hopelessness. They are not sure of the next meal and depend on the NGOs, voluntary and charity organisation as well as well-meaning Nigerians for food and other necessities of life. The provision of vocational development programme for the IDPs was accentuated by the desire to rehabilitate the IDPs and make them more useful to themselves and the society in general. The IDPs are expected to acquire skills and competences that will help them become self-reliant and self-dependent. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is a dearth of information regarding the depth of the vocational skills level acquired by the IDPs in the country in general and South-South in particular.

In addition, there is seemingly a lot of questions to be answered in relation to the vocational skills provided for the IDPs. Some of these questions borders on the issues of the predominant vocational skills available, whether the programme is adequately equipped, whether the facilities required are available, the level of the functionality of the programme, the level of involvement of the IDPs as well as their attitude towards the programme among others.

Preliminary investigation reveals that not sufficient evidence has been provided on these issues. There is, therefore, the need to obtain empirical evidence on these issues as a means of

ascertaining the true situation of things hence, this study is directed at assessing vocational skill training programme provided for the IDPs in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

What are the attitudes of the IDPs towards the vocational skills training programmes?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of IDPs to vocational skills training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria based on location.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female IDPs towards vocational skills training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria.

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 398 IDPs from a population of 75,763 IDPs in South-South Nigeria. In stage one, one accessible IDP camp each from Edo and Cross River States was purposively chosen. In stage two, Taro Yamane's formula determined the sample size, resulting in 317 IDPs from Odukpani/Bakassi camp and 81 from Uhogua camp.

A researcher-designed questionnaire and a checklist developed using National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB) Benchmark for vocational training institutions were used for the data collection. The instruments were validated by 3 experts from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin, Nigeria. A reliability coefficient (r) of 0.73 was obtained through test-retest method. Data collections were conducted by the researcher and three trained research assistants. Descriptive statistics of mean was used to answer the research question raised, while inferential statistics of t-test was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The study prioritised ethical considerations. Participants provided informed consent, and measures were in place to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, upholding their rights throughout the research.

Results

Research Question One: What are the attitudes of the IDPs towards the vocational skills training programmes?

Table 1: Mean responses on the attitude of the IDPs towards the vocational skills training programmes.

S/N	Items	Weighted Response	Mean (X)	Remark
1.	Vocational skills trainees in IDP camp are consistent in attendance at training sessions.	1055	2.65	Agreed
2.	Trainees are keen to learn from their instructors.	1091	2.74	Agreed
3.	Trainees happily try their hands on training materials and equipment provided.	700	1.76	Not Agreed
4.	Trainees ask questions and participate during training sessions.	1067	2.68	Agreed
5.	Trainees respond to guidance during training sessions.	1047	2.63	Agreed
6.	A major drive for taking vocational skills training is that it helps individuals generate income.	1055	2.65	Agreed
7.	Vocational skills training prepares trainees to hold high quality jobs and positions.	704	1.77	Not Agreed
8.	The equipment and tools sometimes provided trainees at the end of the training is a motivation for them.	1055	2.65	Agreed

Criterion Mean: 2.50

Data in Table 1 reveals that items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 met the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating agreement, while items 3 and 7 did not meet the criterion mean. This implies that trainees are consistent in attendance at training session, trainees are willing to learn from their instructors, trainees ask questions and participate during training sessions, trainees respond to guidance during training sessions, that a major drive for taking vocational skills training is that it helps individuals generate income and the equipment and tools provided trainees at the end of the training is a motivation for them. This means that IDPs have positive attitude towards the vocational skills training programmes.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the attitude of IDPs to vocational skills training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria based on location.

Table 2: t-test of difference in the attitude of trainees to vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria based on location.

	Mean difference	df	t value	P value	Decision
Attitude of trainees towards vocational training programmes in IDP camps based on location	.074	396	1.063	0.289	Accepted

From the data in Table 2, t-test of difference in the attitude of trainees to vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria based on location had a p value of 0.289 which is higher than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of trainees to vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria based on location is retained. This means that the attitude of trainees to vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria is the same or similar regardless of their location.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female trainees towards vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test of difference in the attitude of male and female trainees towards vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria.

	Mean difference	df	t value	P value	Decision
Attitude of trainees towards vocational training programmes in IDP camps by gender	.080	396	2.128	.034	Rejected

Data in Table 3 shows the t-test of difference in attitude of male and female trainees towards vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria. The Table above shows a p value of 0.034 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female trainees towards vocational

training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria is rejected. This means that the attitudes of male trainees to vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-South Nigeria differ significantly from their female counterparts.

Discussions

Findings show that IDPs have positive attitude towards the vocational skills training programmes. This can be attributed to the valuable benefits these programmes offer. One significant factor is the acquisition of marketable skills, which, in turn, enhances their opportunities for employment or entrepreneurship. This skill development not only contributes to their self-reliance but also facilitates a quicker integration into the community. Negating this finding, Achieng (2012) identified the negative attitude of many IDPs towards vocational training as a major obstacle to the successful implementation of vocational training in IDP camps. Oguejiofor, and Ezeabasili, (2014) also identified poor public impression and apathy to vocational skill training as a challenge facing vocational education in achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. In addition, Anna Gana and Abdulrahman (2018) studied the entrepreneurial skills training needs in business education for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) in Borno state and reported that majority of the IDPs in the area have negative perception about vocational skills and that they lacked vocational skills which made them rely absolutely on government and donors for their needs.

Findings also revealed that the attitude of trainees to vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria is the same or similar regardless of their location. This could be because of programme uniformity, shared goals, common challenges, relevance to local needs and cultural sensitivity. On this issue, Gopi (2012), identified eight factors namely maturation, physical factors, home influences, social environment, government, media, the instructors and the curriculum. These factors greatly determine whether trainees have positive or negative attitude towards vocational education and training. In a study of IDPs in IDP camps in Bornu State, Gopi (2012) observed that factors such as interest, shortage of instructors, gender and shortage of guidance counsellors influence the attitude of IDP trainees towards vocational skill training.

Finally, findings from the study indicated that the attitude of male trainees to vocational training programmes in IDP camps in South-south Nigeria differ significantly from their female counterparts. This disparity is explained by the fact that the female IDPs tend to choose vocational skills that are feminine in nature such as soap and cosmetics making, dress making, baking and cooking, bead making and several other factors such as tradition and culture, (Ayonmike, 2015; Ezaem & Akiti, 2009). In addition, similarly, Haruna (2018) reported that of 11,300 IDPs that the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) gave vocational skills training in the northeast, 70 per cent were women who were trained in the making of pomade, soap, jelly, perfumes, tie and dye and hairdressing, among others. Their male counterparts were trained in carpentry, block-moulding, auto-mechanic and GSM repairs. Following the training, beneficiaries were given a cash token and starter packs in the form of tools. However, some external constraints such as illness or family obligations prevented women from continuing or completing vocational training.

In the same vein, Nwakanma and Anigbogu (2019) reported that the gender disparity in the choice vocational training was skewed towards the males, which means that there are more male participants in vocational programmes than females. Similarly, Okwelle, Dighobo, and Patrick (2018) revealed that gender participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Technical Colleges in Rivers State is affected by societal belief in early marriage, parental preference and priority to each child, as well as teacher's disposition to student's sex.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reveals encouragingly positive attitudes among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) towards vocational skills training programmes. It further indicates that location does not significantly impact trainees' attitudes, but gender differences exist, emphasising the need for gender-sensitive approaches in IDP camp vocational training initiatives. While these insights contribute significantly to our understanding, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations. The study's focus on the South-South region of Nigeria may limit the generalisability of its findings to other geographical areas. Additionally, the research primarily relied on self-reported attitudes, which may introduce bias. Further investigations could delve deeper into the nuanced dynamics of vocational training attitudes, considering additional contextual factors and employing a longitudinal approach for a more comprehensive understanding. Exploring the long-term impact of vocational training on the livelihoods of IDPs could also be a valuable avenue for future research.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that:

1. IDP camp management and vocational skill providers should sustain positive attitudes through incentives or start-up packs after training.
2. Vocational skill providers should allow IDPs to train under the vocational skill of their choice regardless of their gender, societal or cultural perception of such vocation.
3. Government at all levels should ensure diverse skills training availability across locations to enhance IDPs' willingness to participate in skill acquisition programmes.

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