

Teachers' Perception of the Trade/Entrepreneurship of the New Senior Secondary Education Curricula

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Abstract

The paper studied teachers' perception of the trade/entrepreneurship subjects that form a central part of the new senior secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. It used a 35/7 matrix questionnaire to identify and rank teachers' perception of the 34 trades/entrepreneurship subjects. A total of 53 teachers drawn from the four distinct fields of study (Science & mathematics, Technology, Humanities, and Business Studies) participated in the study. Simple statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients were used for data analysis. Result showed different ratings of the trade subjects and two prominent determinants of choice of trade subjects. The study recommended some considerations for staging trade subjects in school.

Keywords: Trade/entrepreneurship, curriculum, teacher perception

Introduction

The Nigerian education system had recently been restructured to meet pertinent national aspirations and global goals, such as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and Millennium Development Goals. The ideals of NEEDS and MDGs form the bedrocks upon which the new school curriculum was built. Indeed, the curriculum is regarded as the instrument for delivery of educational goals and aspirations; and national educational goals and aspirations determine the structure and content of the curriculum (Gbamanja, 1997; Orji, 2006).

In 2005, the Nigerian Government highlighted the need for a new invigorated functional curriculum for all school levels; thus, the National Council of Education (NCE), the highest policy making body in Nigeria education sector, mandated the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) to restructure and enrich the instant primary, junior and senior secondary school curricula. Therefore, the NERDC developed a functional, skill-oriented and values-enriched curriculum for Basic and Senior Secondary Education. NERDC (2008) captures the philosophy of the new senior secondary education curriculum (SSEC):

Every senior secondary education graduate should have been well prepared for higher education as well as acquired relevant functional trade/entrepreneurship skills needed for poverty eradication, job creation and wealth generation; and in the process strengthened further the foundations for ethical, moral and civic values acquired at the basic education level.

In explaining the philosophy, Orji (2011) noted that the new SSEC builds on gains of the Basic Education Curriculum and targets all-round development of *every* individual student. That is, it involves preparation for higher education; functional trade/entrepreneurship skills; and strengthening of ethical, moral and civic values. According to him, trade/entrepreneurship is major component of the new senior secondary education curriculum; and is designed to address the dearth of technical skills amidst growing demand for the services of the skills in Nigeria.

Researchers and educators have been concerned with conceptualizing and defining trade and entrepreneurship education (Omolayo, 2006; Orji, 2011; Watson, 2010). Omolayo (2006) defined entrepreneurship as the act of starting a company, arranging business deals and taking risks in order to make a profit through the education skills acquired; while Watson (2010) defined it as 'a process through which individuals identify opportunities, allocate resources, and create value'. Using the context of Nigeria education, Orji (2011) referred to entrepreneurship as: "the training in any of the 35 trade/entrepreneurship Curricula; and this includes the ability/skill to put together all the factors of production to start and sustain a business". He also referred to entrepreneurship as a specific mindset (e.g. self-reliance) resulting in entrepreneurial initiatives.

Orji (2011) highlighted some advantages of trade/entrepreneurship in the senior secondary schools. According to him, trade/entrepreneurship education/training seeks to provide students with the requisite knowledge, skills and motivation to successfully start and sustain a profitable business. Thus, trade/entrepreneurship will:

- ❖ impart on the new breeds of school leavers the spirit of enterprise and industry
- ❖ prepare students for self-employment (for wealth generation and poverty alleviation)
- ❖ promote occupational aspirations and job readiness
- ❖ Promote hand-on & work-based experiences, to meet demands of the new global work-place
- ❖ Enhance acquisition of functional organizational skills (e.g. planning, time management, leadership and interpersonal skills)
- ❖ Enhance development of financial literacy, and money management skills
- ❖ Build responsible and enterprising individuals, capable of independent work
- ❖ Develop students' problem-solving and decision-making abilities
- ❖ Foster school engagement and academic performance
- ❖ Enhances social psychological development(e.g. Self-esteem, ego development & self-efficacy)

According to NERDC (2008), trade/entrepreneurship is now a compulsory core cross cutting subject at the senior school level (alongside English, Mathematics, Computer/ICT and Civic Education). This implies that each and every students in Nigeria senior secondary school, irrespective of their fields of study, must compulsorily offer at least one trade/entrepreneurship subject selected from the list of 35 trade/entrepreneurship subjects (see Appendix A); and the student must register for (be assessed in) at least one T/E Subject in the public examinations (NECO, WAEC or NABTEB).

It is expected that school choose at least one trade subject to stage in their school. To this end, Orji (2011) suggested some considerations in choosing trade subjects: teaching staff, school infrastructures, community interest and support, availability of local resources, socio-cultural inclinations, and student attributes (ability, career interest, age, peers/family influences). This will ensure its effective implementation.

Implementation of the new SSE curriculum and its T/E component was scheduled to commence in September, 2011 at SS1 level (NERDC, 2008). Therefore, researchers and educators have started to raise questions and conduct studies regarding the effective implementation of the curricula. On the part of NERDC (the body with the legal mandate for curriculum development) and other critical stakeholders in education, sensitization and advocacy on the need curricula as well as provision of strategic curriculum support/resources have been the occupying activities. The target has been to support and build the capacity of teachers for effective curriculum delivery. Teachers are seen as the vital grassroot implementers of the curriculum.

The concern of this study, therefore, was to ascertain the disposition of teachers towards the successful implementation of trade/entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. In specific terms, the study sort to obtain information on teachers' perception of the 35 trade/entrepreneurship subjects of the new senior secondary education curricula. And for the purpose of this study, teachers' perception refers to what teachers think of the trade/entrepreneurship subjects as represented in their responses to the multiple dichotomy questions/statements of the study.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the trade subject(s) that most teachers think:
 - a. should be staged in their school?
 - b. the students will like?
 - c. their students are capable of doing well?
 - d. their school has facility for?
 - e. their school has trained teachers?
 - f. is/are available within the school community?
 - g. will help students start a profit business?
2. What similarities exist among teachers' perceptions of the trade/entrepreneurship subjects?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. All the 35 trade subjects are equally preferred by teachers

2. There are no similarities among teachers' perception of the trade/entrepreneurship subjects.

Method

The study is descriptive. Survey method was used. It sought to discover teachers' preference/choice or perception of the 35 trade/entrepreneurship subjects.

53 teachers drawn from two senior secondary schools (one each of girls and mixed schools) participated in the study. The schools were randomly selected from schools in the north east zone whose teachers had had training by NERDC on the structure, content and effective implementation of the New SSS curricula. The teachers were selected from Science & Mathematics, Technology, Humanities and Business field of studies (36, 17, 42 & 6 percents respectively). Their qualifications ranged from NCE to M.Sc./M.Ed.

Instrument and data collection

Questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaires comprised 7/35 item multiple dichotomy statements. That is, 7 statements against 35 trade subjects to which participants responded by indicating whether the statements apply or do not apply. Face validation of the questionnaire was done by experts in curriculum development. Pearson correlation coefficient of .61 was obtained with two equivalent versions of the instruments completed by 20 non-participant teachers.

The questionnaires were administered to the participants at the end of a 2-day sensitization and advocacy workshop for teachers on the structure, content and mode of implementation of the trade/entrepreneurship curriculum. This ensured that participants were well instructed and informed on the new curriculum. The permission of the workshop organizers was obtained; and participation of the teachers was entirely voluntary. The participants were assured of 'data privacy'. Of the 60 questionnaires administered, 53 were completed and returned. The questionnaires took less than 25min to complete. Simple descriptive statistics (Min., max. & percentage) and a similarity matrix (correlation) were used to analyze the collected data.

Result and discussion

The results of the descriptive statistics of the seven variables/statements across the 35 trade/entrepreneurship subjects are presented in tables 1, 2&3; while table 4 is the proximity/similarity matrix for the 7 statements (details of the codes used for the study variables are presented in Appendixes A & B).

The research question 1: Seeks to ascertain the trade subject(s) most teachers think: should be staged in their school; the students will like; their students are capable of doing well; their school has facility for; their school has trained teachers; and is/are available within the school community. Tables 1, 2&3 provide answer to this question.

Table 1 shows the number and percent of teachers along all the 35 trades; while table 2 contains summary of the responses showing trade subjects selected by the least and most number of teachers. Table 3 shows 10 top rank trades (ranking based on the number or percent of teachers). Therefore, from tables 1,2 &3, the following conclusion can be made:

- i. Most teachers (69.8%) think their school should stage 'Textile trade' (T18)
- ii. Most teachers (58.5%) think SSS students in their school will like 'Painting and decoration' (T10)
- iii. Most teachers (49.1%) think SSS students in their school can do well in 'Catering and craft practice' (T16)
- iv. Most teachers (39.6%) think their school has facility for 'Catering and craft practice' (T16)
- v. Most teachers (37.7%) think their school has trained teachers for 'Catering and craft practice' (T16)
- vi. Most teachers (32.1%) think that 'Catering and craft practice' (T16) is available within the school community
- vii. Most teachers (47.2%) think that 'Fisheries' (T33) will help the students start a profit business

Table 1: Responses to 7 statements on the trade/entrepreneurship subjects

Trade	Statement 1		Statement 2		Statement 3		Statement 4		Statement 5		Statement 6		Statement 7	
	Total Yes	%	Total Yes	%	Total Yes	%	Total Yes	%	Total Yes	%	Total Yes	%	Total Yes	%
T1	16	30.2	13	24.5	10	18.9	1	1.9	3	5.7	6	11.3	17	32.1
T2	23	43.4	19	35.8	22	41.5	7	13.2	9	17.0	10	18.9	17	32.1
T3	22	41.5	19	35.8	19	35.8	6	11.3	8	15.1	8	15.1	17	32.1
T4	16	30.2	15	28.3	12	22.6	1	1.9	3	5.7	6	11.3	15	28.3
T5	20	37.7	16	30.2	10	18.9	3	5.7	2	3.8	7	13.2	13	24.5
T6	20	37.7	14	26.4	14	26.4	3	5.7	4	7.5	10	18.9	16	30.2
T7	21	39.6	17	32.1	16	30.2	5	9.4	5	9.4	10	18.9	15	28.3
T8	20	37.7	15	28.3	19	35.8	6	11.3	3	5.7	9	17.0	14	26.4
T9	17	32.1	14	26.4	14	26.4	4	7.5	5	9.4	8	15.1	12	22.6
T10	29	54.7	31	58.5	22	41.5	10	18.9	9	17.0	11	20.8	22	41.5
T11	13	24.5	10	18.9	9	17.0	3	5.7	2	3.8	6	11.3	12	22.6
T12	15	28.3	14	26.4	14	26.4	9	17.0	10	18.9	10	18.9	17	32.1
T13	17	32.1	18	34.0	14	26.4	13	24.5	12	22.6	11	20.8	16	30.2
T14	21	39.6	20	37.7	16	30.2	15	28.3	14	26.4	11	20.8	17	32.1
T15	11	20.8	14	26.4	9	17.0	10	18.9	6	11.3	9	17.0	12	22.6
T16	32	60.4	25	47.2	26	49.1	21	39.6	20	37.7	17	32.1	24	45.3
T17	30	56.6	20	37.7	24	45.3	10	18.9	9	17.0	9	17.0	21	39.6
T18	37	69.8	19	35.8	21	39.6	11	20.8	5	9.4	8	15.1	18	34.0
T19	30	56.6	24	45.3	25	47.2	20	37.7	14	26.4	15	28.3	22	41.5
T20	18	34.0	18	34.0	15	28.3	8	15.1	7	13.2	7	13.2	15	28.3
T21	20	37.7	15	28.3	18	34.0	5	9.4	3	5.7	1	1.9	14	26.4
T22	18	34.0	12	22.6	11	20.8	5	9.4	5	9.4	7	13.2	15	28.3
T23	17	32.1	17	32.1	14	26.4	7	13.2	4	7.5	4	7.5	13	24.5
T24	17	32.1	13	24.5	14	26.4	11	20.8	13	24.5	11	20.8	13	24.5
T25	26	49.1	23	43.4	20	37.7	19	35.8	13	24.5	10	18.9	15	28.3
T26	18	34.0	20	37.7	14	26.4	12	22.6	7	13.2	8	15.1	17	32.1
T27	16	30.2	20	37.7	17	32.1	11	20.8	9	17.0	9	17.0	17	32.1
T28	18	34.0	20	37.7	16	30.2	5	9.4	1	1.9	7	13.2	16	30.2
T29	21	39.6	18	34.0	16	30.2	6	11.3	4	7.5	8	15.1	17	32.1
T30	13	24.5	14	26.4	12	22.6	3	5.7	2	3.8	5	9.4	11	20.8
T31	9	17.0	10	18.9	11	20.8	3	5.7	2	3.8	5	9.4	13	24.5
T32	21	39.6	21	39.6	18	34.0	11	20.8	12	22.6	10	18.9	22	41.5
T33	20	37.7	22	41.5	16	30.2	9	17.0	8	15.1	11	20.8	25	47.2
T34	17	32.1	20	37.7	19	35.8	10	18.9	9	17.0	9	17.0	17	32.1
T35	17	32.1	16	30.2	18	34.0	10	18.9	9	17.0	11	20.8	16	30.2

These conclusions agree with Orji (2011) suggestion that nature and location of school is a factor to selection of trade/entrepreneurship subjects. The type of school ('boarding' and with 'girls') may have influenced teachers' bias for 'catering and craft'.

Hypothesis 1: States that all the 35 trade subjects are equally preferred by teachers.

Table 1, however, shows that there are different numbers and percentage of teachers for the different trade subject. The numbers ranged from 9 (T31) to 37 (T18) (see Table 2). This implies that the trade subjects are not equally preferred by teacher. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: Summary of responses showing trade subjects selected by the least and most number of teachers

Statistics (No. of Yes)	I think my school should stage this trade subject	I think SSS students in my school will like this trade subject	I think the SSS students in my school can do well in this trade subject	I think my school has the facility for this trade	My school has trained teachers for this subject	This trade is available within the school community	This trade will help the students start a profit business
Minimum	9 (T31)	10 (T11,T31)	9 (T11, T15)	1 (T1,T4)	1 (T28)	1 (T21)	11 (T30)
Maximum	37 (T18)	31 (T10)	26 (T16)	21 (T16)	20 (T16)	17 (T16)	25 (T33)

Table 3: Top 10 most selected Trade subjects

Rank Top 10 Statement 1		Rank Top 10 Statement 2		Rank Top 10 Statement 3		Rank Top 10 Statement 4		Rank Top 10 Statement 5		Rank Top 10 Statement 6		Rank Top 10 Statement 7	
Trade	%Yes	Trade	%Yes	Trade	%Yes	Trade	%Yes	Trade	%Yes	Trade	%Yes	Trade	%Yes
T18	69.8	T10	58.5	T16	49.1	T16	39.6	T16	37.7	T16	32.1	T33	47.2
T16	60.4	T16	47.2	T19	47.2	T19	37.7	T19	26.4	T19	28.3	T16	45.3
T17	56.6	T19	45.3	T17	45.3	T25	35.8	T14	26.4	T10	20.8	T19	41.5
T19	56.6	T25	43.4	T10	41.5	T14	28.3	T25	24.5	T14	20.8	T10	41.5
T10	54.7	T33	41.5	T2	41.5	T13	24.5	T24	24.5	T33	20.8	T32	41.5
T25	49.1	T32	39.6	T18	39.6	T26	22.6	T32	22.6	T13	20.8	T17	39.6
T2	43.4	T17	37.7	T25	37.7	T18	20.8	T13	22.6	T24	20.8	T18	34.0
T3	41.5	T14	37.7	T3	35.8	T32	20.8	T12	18.9	T35	20.8	T2	32.1
T7	39.6	T26	37.7	T8	35.8	T24	20.8	T17	17.0	T25	18.9	T3	32.1
T14	39.6	T28	37.7	T34	35.8	T27	20.8	T10	17.0	T2	18.9	T14	32.1

Research Question 2: What similarities exist among teachers' perceptions of the trade/entrepreneurship subjects? Table 6 presents a similarity matrix for the 7 statements. The similarity indices are all positive ranging from .457 to .889. The strongest similarity (.889) existed between those who think their school has trained teachers for the trade subjects and those who think their school has facilities for them. The implication is that having trained teachers and facilities for trades were strongest determinants of trade subject preference.

Hypothesis 2: There are no similarities among teachers' perception of the trade/entrepreneurship subjects. Again, table 4 shows result of the correlation between the 7 variables (Statements 1- 7).

Table 4: Proximity Matrix for 7 Variables /Statement1 Statement2 Statement3 Statement4 Statement5 Statement6 Statement7//View= Variable/ /Measure= Correction/

	Correlation between Vectors of Values						
	I think my school should stage this trade subject	I think sss students in my school will like this trade subject	I think the sss students in my school can do well in this trade subject	I think my school has the facility for this trade subject	My school has trained teachers for this subject	This trade is available within the community	This trade will help the students start a profit business
I think my school should stage this trade subject	1.000	.697	.823	.547	.457	.488	.645
I think sss students in my school will like this trade subject	.697	1.000	.757	.663	.584	.564	.756
I think the sss students in my school can do well in this trade subject	.823	.757	1.000	.643	.604	.564	.681
I think my school has the facility for this trade subject	.547	.663	.643	1.000	.889	.741	.538
My school has trained teachers for this subject	.457	.584	.604	.889	1.000	.817	.588
This trade is available within the community	.488	.564	.564	.741	.817	1.000	.634
This trade will help the students start a profit business	.645	.756	.681	.538	.588	.634	1.000

This is a similarity matrix

Table 4 reveals an overall positive and significant (> .5) correlation between the 7 variables. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study described trade/entrepreneurship education in the light of what teachers think; considering that the successful implementation of the new curricula is hinged upon teachers' actions and disposition. Insights from the result indicate that not all the 35 trade subjects are considered by teachers as relevant, feasible, learnable, of interest to students, and having community support. Also indicated is that there is a pertinent concern for trained teachers and facility for the trade subjects.

The following recommendation, are therefore made:

1. The concerns of teachers on the trade/entrepreneurship education school be addressed
2. Schools heads and teachers should come to consensus on what trade subject(s) to stage in the school having considered their staff strengths, school facilities and funding; students' ability, career interest and believes; and community interest and support for the trade subjects.

3. There should be more grassroots (school-level) sensitization and advocacy on the new trade/entrepreneurship curriculum to promote their appreciation and acceptance by all teachers and students.
4. Further studies should be carried out (e.g. large scale feasibility study on the trade subjects) to identify for school appropriate trade subjects (and prerequisite resources) considering: school type (whether girls, boys or mixed; day or boarding school; technical, commercial or comprehensive schools), training and retraining of teachers (staffing); school community; et cetera.

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Appendix A: list of 35 trade/entrepreneurship subjects and their codes

Trade code	Trade subjects	Trade code	Trade subjects
T1	Auto Body repair and spray painting	T19	Dyeing and bleaching
T2	Auto Electrical work	T20	Printing craft practice
T3	Auto Mechanical work	T21	Cosmetology
T4	Auto Parts merchandising	T22	Leather goods manufacturing and repair
T5	Air Conditioning Refrigerator	T23	Keyboarding
T6	Welding and fabrication engineering craft practice	T24	Short hand
T7	Electrical Installation and Maintenance Work	T25	Data processing
T8	Radio, TV & electrical work	T26	Store keeping
T9	Block laying, Brick Laying & Concrete Work	T27	Book keeping
T10	Painting and Decoration	T28	GSM maintenance
T11	Plumbing and pipe fitting	T29	Photography
T12	Machine woodworking	T30	Tourism
T13	Carpentry and Joinery	T31	Mining
T14	Furniture making	T32	Animal Husbandry
T15	Upholstery	T33	Fisheries
T16	Catering and craft practice	T34	Marketing
T17	Garment making	T35	Salesmanship
T18	Textile trade		

Appendix B: Codes and labels for the 7 research statements

Code	Statement label
Statement 1	I think my school should stage this trade subject
Statement 2	I think SSS students in my school will like this trade subject
Statement 3	I think the SSS students in my school can do well in this trade subject
Statement 4	I think my school has the facility for this trade
Statement 5	My school has trained teachers for this subject
Statement 6	This trade is available within the school community
Statement 7	This trade will help the students start a profit business