

## **Impact of Women Vocational Education on Community Development Projects in Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated impact of women education on community development projects in Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. One research question and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Literature was reviewed according to the sub-variable under study. Survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 2,020 female adults from the study area. A sample of 202 respondents was drawn for the study. The sampling was done through simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Impact of Women Vocational Education on Community Development Projects Questionnaire” (IWVECDPQ). Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to analyse the data. The hypothesis was subjected to testing at .05 level of significance. The research findings revealed that vocational education relates to community development projects in the study area. It was recommended among others that people should be encouraged to participate in vocational education and those individuals who dare to be involved in vocational training should be encouraged as well.

**Keywords:** *Women, education, community, development, projects*

### **Introduction**

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental instrument for human development and social transformation. It equips individuals with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies necessary for effective participation in socio-economic and political activities within their communities. Omoni (2018) and Ubana et al. (2023) asserted that among the various dimensions of education, women’s education has received increasing global attention because of its significant contributions to family welfare, community advancement, and national development. Educated women are more likely to participate in decision-making processes, contribute to economic productivity, and support development initiatives within their communities. Consequently, the promotion of women’s education has become a key strategy for achieving sustainable community development in many developing countries, including Nigeria (Oranu, 2017; Asor & Bessong, 2022).

Globally, the importance of women education has been emphasized by international development frameworks such as the initiatives of the United Nations, particularly through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children Fund. These organizations have consistently advocated for gender equality in education as a critical pathway to sustainable development. Studies have shown that when women are educated, they are more likely to invest in the health, education, and well-being of their families and communities (Adamu 2019; Bessong, et al., 2025). Women with formal education also tend to participate more actively in community organizations, cooperative societies, and development projects aimed at improving local infrastructure, healthcare services, and economic opportunities (UNESCO, 2021).

Adamu (2019) stated that in Nigerian context, women constitute a substantial proportion of the population and play vital roles in both household and community development activities. However, historically, women in many parts of the country have faced limited access to education due to cultural norms, early marriage, poverty, and gender discrimination (Oboqua, et al., 2017). Although the Nigerian government and various non-governmental organizations have implemented several policies and programs aimed at improving female education such as the Universal Basic Education programme, gender disparities in educational attainment still persist in some rural communities (Federal Ministry of Education, 2020). Despite these challenges, increasing access to education for women has begun to transform their roles within society, enabling them to contribute more effectively to development initiatives at the grassroots level.

Community development projects refer to organized efforts aimed at improving the social, economic, and environmental conditions of a community through collective action and participation of community members. These projects may include the construction of schools, healthcare facilities, rural roads, water supply systems, skill acquisition centers, and other social amenities that enhance the quality of life of residents (Bessong, et al., 2025). The success and sustainability of such projects largely depend on the active participation and cooperation of community members, including women. In many Nigerian communities, women play crucial roles in mobilizing resources, providing labor, and sustaining development initiatives (Agu, 2019; Anipi et al., 2023). In Oron Local Government Area, women have traditionally contributed to community development through activities such as cooperative societies, market associations, church groups, and women's unions. These groups often participate in fundraising, communal labor, and advocacy

for development projects within the community. However, the level of effectiveness and impact of women participation in these activities is often influenced by their level of education (Oboqua, et al., 2018).

Educated women are generally better equipped with organizational, managerial, and leadership skills that enable them to identify community needs, mobilize resources, and collaborate with government and non-governmental organizations to implement development projects. Furthermore, education enhances women awareness of their rights and responsibilities in community governance and development planning. It improves their capacity to engage with development agencies, interpret policies, manage community projects, and ensure accountability in the utilization of resources. In communities where women are educated, there is often greater participation in development committees, improved communication within community groups, and more effective management of development initiatives (Egbo, 2017).

Women constitute a significant segment of the population and are recognized as important agents of development within their communities. Through women associations, cooperative societies, church groups, and market organizations, women often participate in mobilizing resources, organizing communal labour, and supporting initiatives aimed at improving community welfare. However, the effectiveness of women's participation in community development activities is closely linked to their level of education (Acha et al., 2024). Education equips women with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness necessary to identify community needs, participate in decision-making processes, manage development projects, and collaborate effectively with government and non-governmental development agencies.

In particular, there is a need to examine how women educational attainment influences their involvement in community development projects, the types of projects they participate in, and the extent to which their educational background enhances the sustainability of such initiatives (Ibiang et al., 2014; Muller, 2022). This is especially important in local government areas such as Oron, where community-driven development projects play a significant role in complementing government efforts to provide social infrastructure through the instrumentality of women vocational education.

Vocational skills acquisition programme is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare community members for employment in recognized occupations. Skills according to Sanda and Abba (2019), are more commonly used in the context of trades, occupations, and

vocations and are usually aimed at practical purposes. A common opinion of the concept of skills is that it refers to crafts and trades at the lower level of the economic ladder. While the term “vocational skills acquisition programmes” are vocational programmes that involves the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupation. Vocational skills acquisition programmes/ vocational education programmes delivered in communities according to (Erim et al., 2014; Shattima, 2023), involve instruction for a specific trade, occupation, or vocation such as welding, auto repair, building maintenance, and graphic arts. The skills acquired in the community become survival tool for self-employment upon discharge. However, vocational training in community is considered essential for the achievement of the purpose of community development projects and integration.

A study was conducted by Omoni (2018) on the assessment of the vocational education in Delta State, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perception of prison staff and the academic staff of College of Education, Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria on the effect of vocational education as a panacea for their community development projects and society integration. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 310 prison staff and academic staff of College of Education, Agbor in Delta State, using stratified random sampling, a sample of 200 subjects was used- 100 prison staff randomly selected from the five prisons and 100 lecturers from College of Education, Agbor. The instrument for data collection for the study was a structured questionnaire, whereas the analysis of data was done using simple percentages and chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ). The findings of the study revealed among others that there is no significant difference in the opinion between prison staff and lecturers of College of Education, Agbor, on the adequacy of prisoners’ vocational and formal education programmes.

Steutrer and Smith (2022) carried out a study on comparative survey of correctional vocational education participants in three states – Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio community in the United States of America. The main purpose of the study was to compare correctional vocational participants and assess the impact of vocational education on recidivism and post release employment in the three States. A quasi-experimental research design with a release cohort was used for the study. The population of the study was 3170 members from Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio community in United States of America. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The research data was analyzed using 4 points rating scale. The

result of the findings of the study revealed among others that vocational education participants had statistically lower rates of non-participants in adult literacy education.

In another study on perceived contributions of vocational skills acquisition to community members in the society in (Ogunleye, 2019). A simple ballot system was used to select two community out of the five communities in Ogun State of Nigeria. The selected communities are the Ijebu-Ode prison and Ilaro community. A total of 200 participants were randomly selected from these two communities for the study. Three hypotheses were postulated and tested. The instrument adopted for the study was a self-constructed questionnaire (Community Vocational Materials Inventory, CVMI). The instrument was validated using content and construct validity and also the test-re-test reliability. It has 0.70 test-re-test reliability coefficient after a two-week interval. The data collected were analysed using t-test and correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). The findings revealed that community members are exposed to vocational skills acquisition programme, since vocational skills acquisition is connected with knowledge that someone needs to have in order to do a particular job, it was therefore suggested that all community members should be exposed to vocational skills acquisition programmes, because vocational training of community members will increase the choice of their employment after completion of their programmes which will help them contribute their own quota to national development instead of being a nuisance to the society.

Despite the increasing recognition of the role of women vocational education in community development, evidence on its specific impact within many local communities in Nigeria remains limited. Many women in rural communities in Nigeria still experience limited access to formal education due to socio-cultural practices, poverty, early marriage, and gender inequality in educational opportunities. As a result, many women lack the educational exposure and leadership capacity required to actively participate in planning, implementation, and management of community development projects.

In Oron Local Government Area, community development projects are often initiated through joint efforts of community members, local associations, and government interventions. Women in the area are known to participate in several community activities, particularly through women's groups and religious organizations. However, observations indicate that their level of involvement in the planning, coordination, and leadership of development projects remains relatively limited (Ubana, et al., 2023). According to the authors, in many cases, women's

participation is restricted to supportive roles such as fundraising, provision of labour, or attendance at community meetings, while key decisions regarding project identification, planning, and management are largely dominated by men. This situation raises concerns about whether the educational level of women influences the extent and effectiveness of their participation in community development initiatives within the area. It is against this background that this study sought to examine the impact of women vocational education on community development projects in Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of women vocational education on community development projects in Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the relationship between vocational education and community development projects in Oron Local Government Area.

### **Research question**

1. To what extent does vocational education relate to community development projects in Oron Local Government Area?

### **Statement of hypothesis**

1. There is no significant relationship between vocational education and community development projects in Oron Local Government Area.

### **Methodology**

Survey research design is adopted for this study. This design is preferred, because it involves observing two variables in order to establish a statistically corresponding relationship between them. In other words, the design is used in the study since it is intended to investigate and determine the correlation between the variables. The area of study is Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The geography of Oron Local Government Area is characterized by its coastal location in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It is situated between latitude 5° North and longitude 9° East, at the right bank of the lower estuary of the Cross River. The population of this study was made up of 2020 comprising all female adults between 20 years to 50 years in five communities of Oron Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The sample of this study consisted of two hundred and two (202) respondents randomly selected from five (5) communities in the study area using simple random sampling technique. The sampling

technique adopted for this study was the simple random sampling technique. The aim was to give every member of the population, equal and independent opportunity of being selected.

The main purpose of using simple random sampling technique was to compose a sample that will yield research data that can be generalized to large population. The technique employed by the researchers is the hat and draw (balloting) method. Here, the researchers wrote the names of all the communities on pieces of papers, rolled each slip into a paper ball, mixed those paper balls well in a container (hat) and blindly drew the required number of communities. In the same manner, the required sample was randomly drawn for the study. The instrument for data collection was the structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled: "Impact of Women Vocational Education on Community Development Projects Questionnaire" (IWVECDPQ). The questionnaire which was used to collect data had two sections A and B. Section 'A' contained demographic variables while section 'B' contained information on the research sub-variables and was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation in the University of Calabar, this was done to ensure that the items measured what they were expected to measure. 202 questionnaire copies were distributed and retrieved accordingly. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to analyse the data.

## **Results**

Hypothesis one stated that there is no significant relationship between vocational education and community development projects in Oron Local Government Area. The independent variable is Vocational education while the dependent variable is Community development projects. To test this hypothesis Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used and the result as presented in Table 1 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.60 is greater than the critical r-value of .138 at .05 level of significance with 200 degrees of freedom. The result of the analysis is significant since the calculated value is greater than the critical value. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between vocational education and community development projects in the study area.

TABLE 1

Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between vocational education and community development projects (N=202)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Vocational education	2507	7498			78646	0.60
Community development projects	2385	5830				

\* Significant at .05, critical  $r=.138$ ,  $df= 200$ .

## Discussion

The result of hypothesis one indicated that there was a significant relationship between vocational education and community development projects in the study area. The findings of this hypothesis are in line with Glym et al. (2017) who believe that vocational skills acquisition programme, is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare community members for community development projects. The primary goal of vocational skills acquisition programme for the community development programmes is to help community members to develop marketable job skills in the community. Certificates or college credit can be earned for some vocational programmes. Itari et al., (2016); Glym et al. (2017) stated that vocational education programmes are designed and provided for a wide range of job-related skills that are both relevant and essential to employment opportunities that exist within an institution or as well as in the community. The research finding of this study also agrees with the study result of Steutrer and Smith (2022) that community members are exposed to vocational skills acquisition programme, since vocational skills acquisition is connected with knowledge that someone needs to have in order to do a particular job. It was therefore suggested that all community members should be exposed to vocational skills acquisition programmes, because vocational training of community members will increase the choice of their employment after completion of their programmes which will help them contribute their own quota to community development projects instead of being a nuisance to the society.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that vocational education has a significant positive relationship with community development projects in the study area. Furthermore, it was also concluded that community members were exposed to vocational skills acquisition programmes since it relates to knowledge that someone needs to have in order to do a specific job. It was therefore suggested that all community members should be exposed to vocational skills acquisition programmes because vocational training of community members will increase the choice of their employment after completing their programmes which will help them contribute their own quota to community development projects instead of being a nuisance to the society.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Education should include skills acquisition programmes which will make it easy for women to improve their quality of life while remaining in school.
2. Educational programmes for women should incorporate vocational, technical, and entrepreneurial skills that are relevant to local development needs. This will enable educated women to initiate and sustain community-based projects, improve household incomes, and contribute meaningfully to poverty reduction and overall community development in Oron LGA.

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