

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE LOW CANDIDATURE IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL COURSES AT THE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GHANA, 2000 – 2003

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ABSTRACT

The system of education, which operates in any country/society, should aim, primarily, at serving the needs, particularly the manpower and other developmental needs of the country. Ghana, like many other countries, inherited an educational system structured to serve a colonial administration requiring personnel for clerical services. This one-sided direction of education remained unchanged even long after independence. Thus, by the time of the education reforms in 1987, training in the technical, vocational and other skills, which were urgently required as middle level man-power build-up for the implementation of various agricultural and industrial programmes, were virtually neglected at the secondary level and almost completely non-existent at the basic level.

The 1987 reform sought to correct this imbalance by diversifying the school curriculum and put equal emphasis on technical and vocational courses as well. More than a decade and a half after the introduction of the reforms, it has been observed that students still shy away from technical and vocational courses at the SSS. This is the problem that was investigated in this study. A sample of 1570 respondents drawn from twenty-two (22) schools selected (through purposive and stratified random selection techniques) from ten (10) districts in six (6) regions was used. The generated data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

The results confirm the perception that technical and vocational courses at the SSS level persistently had relatively low patronage. Ranking high among the reasons for this low patronage was the lack or inadequacy of teaching and learning materials for the technical and vocational courses. Admission difficulties that confronted technical and vocational students aspiring to enter the universities was another highly ranked cause of poor patronage.

The study recommended, among others, that Government should demonstrate greater commitment to the pronouncements about Ghana becoming a middle level income country by investing appropriately in technical and vocational education since these courses could easily become the engine of growth for the economy.