AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENROLMENT IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES THROUGH PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

Mmaduabuchukwu Chidiebere Kanu[1], Joshua Henry Gangkwi[2]

[1]Department of Technology and Vocational Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
[2]Department of Industrial Technology Education, University of Uyo, Uyo
mc.kanu@unizik.edu.ng; busajoe55@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study sought to determine the strategies for improving students' enrolment in technical education programmes through public relations activities in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 60 final year technical education students and 50 technology education lecturers in the two tertiary institutions that offer technical education programmes in Anambra State. There was no sampling for the study because the size of the population was manageable. A structured questionnaire of 28-items in a four-point rating scale was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Method. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the t-test was the statistical tools used for testing the null hypotheses formulated for the study. The findings of this study revealed among others, that the following strategies were identified for improving students' enrolment in technical education programmes through effective supervision of students on industrial training and teaching practice, introducing public relations as a course into the school curriculum, students' involvement in public relations activities within the school, sponsoring and participating in programmes organized by students. Consequently, it was recommended among others, that the institutions should establish and fund public relation unit, school public relation officers should ensure that they carry their technical education students along during public relation activities.

Keywords: Strategies, Students' Enrolment, Technical Education, Programme, Public relations

Introduction

Technical education is post-secondary vocational training programmes whose major purpose is the production of technicians (Okoro, 2006). It is also a special grade of vocational education which can be distinguished from other vocational education programmes because more mathematics and science are required in the training programme. According to Okwelle & Okeke (2018), technical education implies life-long learning and preparation for responsible citizenship. This form of education is perceived as one of the crucial elements in enhancing economic productivity (Abudulahi, 2016). It is regarded as an integral part of education that provides a means of preparing individuals for occupational fields and for effective

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

participation in the world of work (Okwelle, 2010).

In this new economic environment as observed in most developed countries in the world today, technical education is expected to produce and supply intermediate craftsmen, technicians, semi-skilled and skilled manpower that will be capable to function very well in all sectors in the industry critical to national development (Okeke as cited by Okwelle, 2010). However, Okolocha (2006) noted that since the introduction of technical education programme in Nigeria education system some years ago, enrolment of students has remained low. This development according to Agwi & Puyate (2017) is more disturbing on students' participation in technical education programme in Nigeria. They also stated that this development has posed inherent danger to economy and national development. In line with this view, Uzougwu as cited by Okwelle & Agwi (2018) reported that the total enrolment figure into technical education programme in Nigeria as at date was less than five percent. He noted that this figure, in comparison with countries seeking to have rapid socio-economic development is negligible and needs public relations to improve students' enrolment.

Public relations in the contest of educational process are defined as a planned and systematic management function to help improve the programmes and services of an education system (Okwelle, 2010). In the same vein, Greg (2012) described school public relations as a management function that establishes and maintains two-way mutual relationships and communication between the school and the community. A careful look at the above definitions shows that school public relations relies on a comprehensive two-way communication process involving both internal publics (students and staff) and external public (parents, government and general public) with a common goal of stimulating a better understanding of the roles, objectives, accomplishments and needs of the school. The purpose of a school public relations programme according to Gorton as cited by Ibeneme & Okwelle (2008) includes:

a. Selling the educational programme to the people of the community so that they will take pride in and support the schools.
b. Interpreting to the people of the community the educational programme that is in operation so that the people will have a better understanding of what the school are doing and will support the school programme.
c. Encourage the community interest and participation in the school programme

Elaborating further, students by virtue of their role as the most direct beneficiaries in educational process are considered as good public relations agents. They are the most significant and important force in the public evaluation of the technical education school programme. It provides the students with adequate knowledge, skills and attitude required for many job opportunities after graduation. Students after graduation entering the labour market model public attitudes towards the school by their dressing, manner of speech, general conduct and job performance (Uzougwu, 2014). The resultant effect to the community as stressed by Abdulahi (2016) is greater public awareness, acceptance and colour the

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

school's reputation as well as increase in enrolments of students into technical education programmes.

More so, (Agwi, 2016, Okwelle & Ibeneme, 2008, Okwori, 2011), have identified some sustainable strategies of enhancing students' enrolment in technical education programmes. Some of these strategies according to these authors are organizing regular excursion for technical education students, recognizing/rewarding outstanding student achievement through awards, commendation and introducing public relations activities into the school curriculum. It is therefore, against this background that the study sought to determine the strategies for improving students' enrolment in technical education programmes through public relations activities in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The current reform of technical education programme in Nigeria seems to have not fully addressed the impediments to technical education development in the country till date. There is misconception of technical education programmes by the society (Nwachukwu, 2006). He said that technical education programmes are seemed as programme for lazy and unintelligent people. Therefore, there is the need to further intensity efforts geared towards repositioning technical education programmes with a view to making them attractive to prospective students. Past studies of (Durojaye, Ajie & Aiyegbusi, 2014, Blosor, 2013) also confirm the assertion of Nwachukwu (2006). Some of the identified factors responsible for poor enrolment of students in technical education programmes according to these authors includes, low societal estimation of technical education as education for lowest class people, education for the last resort for people of low intelligent-quotient, low achievers and lack of awareness. The effect of this poor enrolment of students could be misconception of the technical education programmes as programme for lazy and unintelligent people, no proper organized public relations programme or awareness, and family background or beliefs. The problem of this study therefore was that students seem not to be involved in school public relation activities.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the strategies for improving students' enrolment in technical education programmes through public relations activities in Anambra State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the roles expected of students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State.
2. Find out whether appropriate steps have been taken to involve students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State.
3. Determine appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the roles expected of students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

technical education programmes in Anambra State?
2. What are the appropriate steps taken to involve students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State?
3. What are the appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the opinions of technical education final year students and technology education lecturers on the appropriate steps taken to involve students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State
2. There is no significant difference between the opinions of technical education final year students and technology education lecturers on appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State

Method

This study adopted descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to representative of the entire group using questionnaire or interview (Nworgu, 2015). The study was conducted in Anambra State Nigeria. Anambra State is located in the south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study was carried out in two tertiary institutions which offer technical education programmes in Anambra State namely Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze. The population of the study comprised 60 final year technical education students' and 50 technology education lecturers. The entire population was used because the size was manageable. A structured questionnaire with 28 items altogether in three clusters was used for data collection. The instrument was on four (4) point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It was administered to 10 respondents who were not part of the population of the study in Enugu State University of Technology, Enugu. The scores obtained were subjected to internal consistency reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha method. The reliability yielded 0.75 which was considered adequate for the study. A total of 110 copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of three research assistants who were briefed on the purpose of the study. The total number of copies retrieved was 110 copies representing 100 percent return. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Real limit of number of 3.50-4.00 (Strongly Agree), 2.50-3.49 (Agree), 1.50-2.49 (Disagree), 0.50-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) were used. Standard deviation values were used to determine the level of homogeneity among the respondents. T-test was used to test the

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not rejected where calculated t value was less than the table value but was rejected where calculated t value was greater than or equal to the table value.

Result: The results of the study were presented below:

Research Question 1: What are the roles expected of students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of the respondents on roles expected of students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State. N=110

S/N	Items	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Supporting fund raising for technical education development programmes	2.83	0.90	Agree
2	Participating in activities that will correct the poor image of technical education programmes to the public	2.51	0.88	Agree
3	Creating of awareness within and outside the school environment regarding the importance of technical education in national development	2.87	0.89	Agree
4	Taking part in technical education exhibition programme	2.90	0.90	Agree
5	Engaging in sensitization of the public about the activities of technical education programmes	3.11	0.91	Agree
6	Showing good character in and outside the school environment	2.69	0.89	Agree
7	Assisting the school management to advertise technical education programmes to the public	2.66	0.85	Agree
8	Granting audience to the press on technical education programmes	2.53	0.83	Agree
	Cluster Mean	2.76	0.88	Agree

The results in Table 1 show that all the respondents agreed with all the items as roles expected of students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State. Furthermore, the standard deviation which ranged from 0.83 to 0.91 indicates closeness in the opinions of respondents.

Research Questions 2: What are the appropriate steps taken to involve students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State?

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

Table 2: Mean ratings of the respondents on appropriate steps taken to involve students' in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State. N=110

S/N	Items	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
9	Organizing orientation programmes for technical education students on public relations activities	2.24	0.84	Disagree
10	Sponsoring students programmes (e.g technical education week, exhibition)	2.36	0.85	Disagree
11	Training students on public relations activities programmes	2.81	0.88	Agree
12	Sponsoring technical education students' visit to media houses for press conference	2.26	0.84	Disagree
13	Rewarding outstanding technical education students achievement through awards	2.76	0.86	Agree
14	Rendering financial support to students to carry out projects for exhibition	2.13	0.82	Disagree
15	Supporting students to carry out sensitization programme to the public on issues concerning technical education programmes	2.03	0.74	Disagree
16	Organizing effective technical education programme instruction to the students	2.30	0.79	Disagree
17	Integrating public relations activities in the school curriculum	2.77	0.86	Agree
	Cluster Mean	2.41	0.83	Disagree

The results in Table 2 indicate that the respondents agreed with items 11, 13 and 17, while they disagreed with items 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16. This means that the appropriate steps have not been taken to involve students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State. The standard deviation which ranged from 0.74 to 0.88 indicates closeness in the opinions of respondents.

Research Questions 3: What are the appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean ratings of the respondents on appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State. N=110

S/N	Items	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
18	Effective supervision of students on industrial training and teaching practice exercise	2.80	0.88	Agree
19	Provision of standard facilities and materials for effective teaching of practical skills	2.66	0.85	Agree
20	Right placement of students to industries for industrial attachment programme	2.81	0.87	Agree
21	Supporting and encouraging the establishment of students technical education club	2.59	0.86	Agree
22	Organizing regular excursion for technical education students	2.82	0.87	Agree

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

23	Effective technical education programme instruction	2.90	0.90	Agree
24	Recognizing/rewarding outstanding student achievement through awards, commendation etc	2.57	0.84	Agree
25	Engaging public relations activities into the school curriculum	2.86	0.87	Agree
26	Allowing students to work at the public relation unit of the school	2.68	0.87	Agree
27	Sponsoring and participating in students' organization and programmes (e.g., technical education week, career talks, exhibitions)	2.91	0.90	Agree
28	Motivating students to show interest in public relations activities	2.78	0.87	Agree
	Cluster Mean	2.76	0.87	Agree

The results in Table 3 indicate that the respondents agreed with all the items as appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State. The standard deviation which ranged from 0.84 to 0.90 indicates closeness in the opinions of both educators and students.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the opinions of technical education final year students and technology education lecturers on the appropriate steps taken to involve students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of technical education final year students and technology education lecturers on the appropriate steps taken to involve students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State

Variable	**N**	$\overline{\mathbf{X}}$	**SD**	**A**	**Df**	**t-cal**	**t-crit**	**Decision**
Technical education final year students	60	3.81	2.30	0.05	108	0.40	1.96	Not significant
Technology education lecturers	50	3.64	1.29					
Total	**110**	**7.45**	**3.59**					

Table 4 shows the degree of freedom of 108 at 0.05 level of significance with t-cal of 0.40. Since the t-cal of 0.40 was less than t-critical 1.96, the null hypothesis was therefore upheld. This means that there is no significant difference between the opinions of technical education final year students and technology education lecturers on the appropriate steps taken to involve students in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the opinions of technical education final year students and technology education lecturers on appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis of technical education final year students and technology education lecturers on the appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	A	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Technical education final year students	60	3.92	2.36	0.05	108	0.50	1.96	Not significant
Technology education lecturers	50	3.76	2.28					
Total	**110**	**7.68**	**3.59**					

Table 5 shows the degree of freedom of 108 at 0.05 level of significance with t-cal of 0.50. Since the t-cal of 0.50 was less than t-critical 1.96, the null hypothesis was therefore upheld. This means that there is no significant difference between the opinions of technical education final year students and technology education lecturers on the appropriate strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State

Discussions

The results in Table 1 revealed that students' have major roles to play in school public relations activities in order to attract other students to enroll in technical education programmes. This is in line with the view of Calhoun and Finch as cited by Okwelle, 2011 that students by virtue of their roles as the direct beneficiaries of technical education are the most significant and important in the public evaluation of a school programme. They are the focal point of education process. The students accept responsibilities for his own life, make decision and take actions that will affect his wellbeing favourably. All these activities are essential for students to realize that they play a part in improving students' enrolment to technical education programme through their public relations activities.

The results in Table 2 showed that appropriate steps have not been taken to involve students in school public relations activities in Anambra State. These findings contradict the report of Greg (2012) that school public relations is a management function that establishes and maintain two-way mutual relationships: communication between the school and the community that houses both internal publics (students and staff) and external public (parents and government). The result of these findings was worrisome as no meaningful progress will be made to improve enrolment of students in technical education programmes if students are not involved in school public relations activities. The primary source of information from which technical education goals can be inferred is the student vis-à-vis

his needs, and interests. To achieve this goal, the students must be actively involved in education process.

The results in Table 3 indicated that all the items listed as appropriate strategies to be adopted has a part to play in school public relations activities for improving enrolment in students in technical education programmes. These findings are consistent with those of Agwi (2016), Okwelle & Ibeneme (2008), Okwori (2011) who identified some sustainable strategies of enhancing students' enrolment in technical education programmes to include organizing regular excursion for technical education students, recognizing/rewarding outstanding student achievement through awards, commendation and introducing public relation activities into the school curriculum.

Furthermore, findings of the study indicated that the two null hypotheses were accepted. These showed that technology education lecturers and final year students do not differ in their opinions on the appropriate steps and identified strategies to be adopted in students' school public relations activities for improving students' enrolment in technical education programmes in Anambra State. This result is in line with the findings of Okwelle & Agwi (2018) that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of educators and students on the steps and strategies taken to involve female students in school public relations in Rivers State.

Conclusion

The school public relations activities in technical education programmes have been observed to be effective in order to communicate the missions, goals, accomplishment, challenges and accountability to the public. This is important to correct the poor societal attitude concerning technical education programmes and improve its student's enrolment in Anambra State. The involvement of students in the programme to reach out to the public is a welcome strategy that should be considered. The researchers strongly believe that the application of strategies determined by the study is a potential force in improving students' enrolment in technical education programmes.

Recommendations

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

1. Tertiary institutions with technical education programmes should as a matter of urgency have a well-coordinated public relations unit for students' accessibility.
2. Public relation officers should ensure that they carry students' along during public relations activities/programmes of the school.
3. Effective supervision of students on industrial training and teaching practice should be encouraged.
4. School public relations activities should be included in the school curriculum.
5. Recognizing/rewarding outstanding students' achievement through awards and commendation should be given urgent attention by Tertiary institutions.
6. Tertiary institutions should include the use of information and communication technology in their school curriculum especially for technical education students.

7. Government and school management should provide adequate funds to public relations unit for proper execution of its functions in the school.

REFERENCES

Abudulahi, E. N. (2016). Technical vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria: Issues and suggestions for productivity and sustainable national development. *International Journal of Research in Education, 10(1), 30-49.*

Agwi, V. I. A. (2016). Technical and Vocational education (VTE) programme in Nigeria: A useful means of acquiring better skills for self employment. *Journal of Advancement in Education, 10(1), 34-45.*

Agwi, V. I. A. & Puyate, S. T. (2017). Strategies for improving female students enrolment in technical vocational education and training (TVET) programmes in Rivers and Bayelsa States. *Journal of Education in Development Areas, 25(1), 65-80.*

Bloser, P. E. (2013). The role of women in science and technology education. *Journal of National Association of Teachers of Technology, 12(1), 34-52.*

Durojaye, M. O, Ajie, I. O. & Aiyegbusi, S. M. (2014). Improving the participation and performance of female students in science and technical education. *International Journal of Research in Education, 3(20), 313-316.*

Greg, N. S. (2012). *What is public relations?* Retrieved May 27, 2017-DOI:http://www.prsa.org/resources /profession/index.asp.

Ibeneme, O. T. & Okwelle, P. C. (2008). Increasing tertiary institution students in school public relations for enhancing technical and vocational education (TVE) development in Nigeria. *Orient Journal of Education, 4(2), 67-75.*

Nwachukwu, C. E. (2006). *Design Appropriate Methodology in Vocational and Technical Education for Nigeria.* Nsukka: University Trust publishers.

Nworgu, B. G. (2015). *Educational research. Basic issues and methodology.* Nsukka: University Trust publishers.

Okolocha, C. C. (2006). Vocational technical education in Nigeria: Challenges and the way forward. *Unizik Orient Journal of Education, 2(1), 180-119.*

Okoro, O. M. (2006). *Principles and Methods in Vocational and Technical Education.* Enugu: University Trust Publishers

Okwelle, P. C. (2010). Strategies for improving enrolment into technical teacher education programmes through students' involvement in public relations activities. *Niger Delta Journal of Education, 2(1), 57-63.*

Okwelle, P. C. (2011). Effective students involvement in public relations: A strategy for improving enrolment into technical teachers education programme. *Journal of National Association of Teachers of Technology, 7(3), 13-28.*

Okwelle, P. C & Agwi, V. I. A (2018). Strategies for improving female students' enrolment in technical and vocational education programmes through public relations activities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research/ Arts, Humanities and Education, 4(1), 1-13.*

Okwelle, P. C & Ibeneme, O. T. (2008). Sustainable school public relations activities an imperative for improving enrolment into technical colleges in Nigeria. *Trends in education studies (TRES), 3(1), 17-33.*

Okwelle, P. C & Okeke, B. C. (2018). An overview of the role of technical vocational education and training (TVET) in nation development. *African Journal of Historical Sciences in Education, 12(1), 16-32.*

Okwori, R. O. (2011). Sustainable technical and vocational education through private agencies participation: A study of secondary schools in Okpokwu Local Government Area Benue State. *Journal of Association of Teachers of Technology, 7(3), 48-52.*

Uzougwu, C. B. (2014). Technical vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria: The way forward. *Journal of Academic Excellence, 15(1), 41-59.*