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Research

Curriculum Implementation and Youth Empowerment in Adamawa State: A Critical Appraisal of the Secondary School System

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Abstract: This research evaluates the execution of the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria and its effectiveness in fostering youth empowerment within Adamawa State. Based on Tyler's Objective Model and Stenhouse's Process Model, the study employs a descriptive survey approach that includes 374 students and 60 teachers selected from twelve public and private secondary schools across the state's three senatorial districts. Information was gathered using assessment questionnaires for students and teachers, alongside focus group discussions, and analysed using descriptive statistics. The results indicate that although the curriculum aligns well with its goals and content, its application tends to be predominantly theoretical, with minimal practical involvement. Instruction in skill-based subjects is inconsistently provided, and many schools lack adequate infrastructural facilities and specialised teachers, resulting in a low level of students' attainment of self-employable entrepreneurial skills. In order to improve youth empowerment outcomes, the study proposes strengthening teacher training, improving infrastructure, and placing more focus on practical, context-sensitive learning. It concludes that poor implementation undercuts the curriculum's empowerment objectives.

Keywords: Curriculum, Secondary school, Adamawa, Empowerment, Youth

1. Introduction

Curriculum implementation represents the practical phase of the educational process where planned learning experiences are translated into real classroom activities (Tyler, 1949; Stenhouse, 1975). The stage determines whether the goals of curriculum design are effectively realised in learners' experiences and outcomes. In Nigeria, the secondary school curriculum is structured to prepare young people for higher education, vocational pursuits,

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and national development (Sangoleye, Adedapo, & Olaojo, 2022). Its objectives go beyond academic performance to include the promotion of functional skills, creativity, critical thinking, and self-reliance-qualities essential for youth empowerment and socio-economic advancement (Mohammed & Pitan, 2022; Ugwu, 2023). The realisation of these objectives, however, depends largely on how effectively the curriculum is implemented within schools (Adio & Umeodinka, 2024).

Over the years, Nigeria has undertaken several curriculum reforms aimed at aligning education with national development needs, such as integrating entrepreneurship and technical education into the curriculum (Ojo & Agbi, 2024). These reforms seek to enhance employability and promote self-reliance among young people. Despite these initiatives, persistent challenges, including inadequate teacher preparation, lack of instructional materials, inconsistent policy enforcement, and limited stakeholder participation, have hindered effective curriculum delivery (Umoh, 2024; Olibie, 2023). As a result, many secondary school graduates are ill-equipped with the skills required to thrive in the labour market or pursue entrepreneurial ventures (Ofoha, 2022). The gap between curriculum intent and learning outcomes raises questions about the extent to which curriculum implementation in Nigeria promotes youth empowerment (Ogu & Godspower-Chike, 2025).

Curriculum implementation is a complex process influenced by institutional capacity, policy directives, teacher agency, and community contexts (Kelly, 2009). Nigeria's National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) sets out comprehensive curricular frameworks intended to foster civic competence, vocational skills, and creativity. However, studies indicate that weak implementation fidelity, caused by poor teacher training, limited funding and inadequate monitoring, undermines these ambitions (Ogunode, 2021; Igbokwe, 2015). Thus, while the curriculum design may be well structured on paper, its realisation at the classroom level remains inconsistent across different regions and schools (Adio & Umeodinka, 2024).

To make schooling more relevant to the nation's economic goals, Nigerian education reforms have increasingly emphasised entrepreneurship education, STEM integration, and 21st-century competencies (Odu, 2017; Okoye & Okwelle, 2020). Between 2020 and 2024, policies have sought to include more practical and vocational elements in secondary education (Ojo & Agbi, 2024). However, classroom implementation remains uneven due to limited teacher expertise, inadequate resources, and weak collaboration

between schools and industries (Anyanwu, Govender, & Ngwenya, 2022; Umoh, 2024). Consequently, while reform policies exist in principle, their practical enactment often fails to meet expected standards of effectiveness and relevance (Sangoleye, Adedapo, & Olaojo, 2022).

Empirical studies in Nigeria have demonstrated that effective curriculum implementation can significantly contribute to youth empowerment, especially through entrepreneurship and skills training (Ofoha, 2011; Mohammed & Pitan, 2022). Schools that combine theoretical learning with practical training, mentorship, and real-life projects tend to record better employability outcomes among students (Ogu & Godspower-Chike, 2025). Nonetheless, these successes are not uniform, as regional disparities, unequal access to resources, and weak community or industry linkages continue to limit widespread empowerment outcomes (Eze, 2019; Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013). These findings show that curriculum content alone is insufficient; the process of implementation and contextual adaptation is what ultimately determines its effectiveness.

Teachers occupy a central position in the implementation process. Their pedagogical skills, professional beliefs, and capacity for innovation determine how curriculum intentions are realised in classrooms (Stenhouse, 1975; Kelly, 2009). Unfortunately, many Nigerian teachers lack the necessary training to teach new curriculum components such as entrepreneurship and STEM-related subjects effectively (Umoh, 2024). Teacher-training institutions often rely on outdated pedagogical approaches that fail to prepare educators for experiential and competency-based instruction (Adebayo, 2020). This gap between teacher preparation and curriculum demands contributes to weak curriculum enactment in Nigerian secondary schools (Ogunode, 2021; Sangoleye et al., 2022).

Moreover, the absence of consistent professional development opportunities, low salaries, and poor working conditions further weaken teacher morale and instructional quality (Igbokwe, 2015; Ogu & Godspower-Chike, 2025). In contrast, evidence from schools that provide targeted in-service training and mentoring shows improvements in teacher confidence and creativity (Ojo & Agbi, 2024). These teachers are more likely to adopt learner-centred and skill-oriented methods that promote entrepreneurship and problem solving. The contrast highlights the importance of ongoing teacher support in bridging the gap between policy expectations and classroom realities (Odu, 2017; Mohammed & Pitan, 2022).

The success of practical and entrepreneurship-oriented subjects also depends on the availability of teaching materials, workshops, and laboratories (Oviawe, 2016; Okoye & Okwelle, 2020). However, shortages of these essential inputs, especially in rural and low-funded schools, limit hands-on learning experiences (Sangoleye, Adedapo, & Olaojo, 2022). The lack of instructional infrastructure not only weakens skill acquisition but also restricts teachers' ability to apply innovative pedagogies (Adebayo, 2020). This situation results in theoretical instruction that fails to build the competencies needed for entrepreneurship and employability (Umoh, 2024).

Despite policy reforms, youth unemployment and underemployment remain high in Nigeria, reflecting the limited impact of curriculum implementation on employability (Nwoko, 2019). Many graduates lack entrepreneurial, problem-solving, and technological skills (Eze, 2019). This mismatch between education and labour market demands points to deeper issues in how the curriculum is enacted and supported (Akinyemi & Abiddin, 2013; Ogunode, 2021). To bridge this gap, curriculum implementation must become more practical, context-sensitive, and supported by systemic investment in teacher training and learning resources (Oviawe, 2016; Adebayo, 2020).

Theoretically, this analysis is grounded in Tyler's (1949) Objective Model and Stenhouse's (1975) Process Model. Tyler emphasises the alignment between objectives, learning activities, and evaluation, while Stenhouse views curriculum as a flexible guide shaped by teacher agency and context (Kelly, 2009). Together, these frameworks explain why curriculum implementation in Nigeria often diverges from policy intentions, because real-world conditions and teacher discretion play major roles. Integrating both perspectives reveals that curriculum implementation is neither a fixed process nor an unstructured one but an interactive activity shaped by institutional, pedagogical, and contextual factors. Strengthening these elements is vital to transforming the Nigerian secondary school curriculum into a more effective tool for youth empowerment and national development

The main objective of this study is to critically appraise the implementation of the Nigerian secondary school curriculum with respect to its effectiveness in promoting youth empowerment in Adamawa state. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

i. What types of structural, institutional, and pedagogical factors influence curriculum implementation in Adamawa state secondary schools?

ii. How do current implementation practices contribute to or hinder youth empowerment through life skills acquisition among secondary school students in Adamawa state?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Context and Participants

Adamawa State is comprised of three senatorial districts: Adamawa North, Adamawa Central, and Adamawa South. These districts consist of five, seven, and nine Local Government Areas (LGAs) respectively. To ensure adequate coverage of the state, four secondary schools were selected from each senatorial district - one from each of four purposively selected LGAs. Specifically, the selected LGAs were Michika, Madagali, Mubi-North, and Maiha in the Northern zone; Song, Girei, Fufore, and Yola-South in the Central zone; and Demsa, Ganye, Shelleng, and Mayo-Belwa in the Southern zone. In total, twelve secondary schools, comprising both public and private institutions, were selected across the three senatorial districts. This sample size was considered adequate to provide sufficient representation for tentative generalization of the findings.

2.2 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design. This design was considered appropriate because it enables the collection of extensive, cross-sectional data for describing and interpreting existing conditions related to curriculum implementation and skill acquisition in the selected schools. The independent variables in the study include gender, school type (public or private), and school location (Adamawa North, Adamawa Central, and Adamawa South). The dependent variables include the number of skill-based subjects offered in secondary schools, entrepreneurial skills acquired by students, and their entrepreneurial capability.

2.3 Population

The target population for this study will include all students in public and private secondary schools in Adamawa State.

2.4 Sample and sampling technique

The study adopted a multi-stage random sampling procedure. Local government areas and secondary schools used for the study were selected randomly from the three (3) senatorial zones of Adamawa State: Adamawa North, Adamawa Central, and Adamawa South. The composition of student-sample by senatorial zone, school type, class and gender are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of students' composition

School Types		Adamawa North				Adamawa Central				Adamawa South				
		FGS	SGS	RPS	PPS	FGS	SGS	RPS	PPS	FGS	SGS	RPS	PPS	Total
No. of schools		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
JSS	Male	6	8	6	8	5	6	5	8	7	7	6	10	82
	Female	3	9	7	7	12	9	8	8	9	12	9	1	94
SSS	Male	5	14	12	8	7	7	8	8	7	5	7	6	94
	Female	5	18	5	6	6	12	7	8	8	10	11	8	104
Total		19	49	30	29	30	34	28	32	31	34	33	25	374

Source: Survey (2025)

KEY: FGS = Federal Government School, SGS = State Government School, RPS = Religious Private Schools, PPS = Personal Private Schools

For teacher-sample, 60 were drawn from the twelve selected secondary schools and derived from variety of disciplines including humanities, sciences, commercial, technical and vocational. The composition of the sample is summarised as follows: 28 (46.67%) constituted male while 19 (31.67%) were female, while 13 (21.66%) did not indicate their sex. Those within age range of 20-25 constituted 6 (10%) of the population, which 15 (25%) were those within the age of 26-30 years. Furthermore, 20 (33.3%) were those within the age range of 31-35 years, 10 (16.7%) 36-40 years, and lastly, 9 (15%) were above 41 years. Regarding the teachers' educational backgrounds, majority of them 25 (41.7%) had their first degree, followed by those that hold Diploma (OND/HND) constituting 14(23.3%), while those with NCE constitute (15) 25%, only 6(10%) respondent had Masters. Majority of the teachers have serviced for 47 Years while the least were those that serviced for 1-5 years.

2.5 Research Instruments

This study utilised quantitative technique. The instruments used in the data collection were the Students' Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) and Teachers' Assessment Questionnaire (TAQ) as well as focus group discussion.

2.6 Procedure for Data Collection

The SAQ was aimed at assessing the mode of curriculum implementation from students' perspective and the TAQ was aimed at measuring how the curriculum was implemented in secondary schools were administered from the teachers' perspective. Data for the study were collected during the regular school hours.

2.7 Data Analysis

Data collected were subjected to the appropriate quantitative analysis using basic descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages for easy interpretation.

3. RESULTS

The results obtained, sequel to the analysis of data collected in the course of this study are presented using the research questions as guideline.

3.1: The appropriateness of current curriculum taught in secondary schools in Adamawa state

In considering the appropriateness of current Nigerian secondary school curriculum, quantitative data obtained quantitative survey revealed that the Nigerian secondary school curriculum was appropriate in terms of goals and content. However, it was found weak in its method of implementation, that is, the type of teaching method used in implementing the curriculum by the teachers (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Teachers use more theory than practical demonstration

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	119	31.82	31.82	31.82
Yes	255	68.18	68.18	100.0
Total	374	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2025)

Table 3: Teachers use mainly practical demonstration when teaching

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	217	58.02	58.02	58.02
Yes	157	41.98	41.98	100.0
Total	374	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2025)

Tables 2 shows that majority of the sampled teachers (68.18%) perceived the teaching methods used in the implementation of the Nigerian secondary school curriculum during the period of this study as theoretical. Table 3 indicates that majority of the teachers sampled (58.02%) are of the opinion that majority of their teaching are not practical. Therefore, the results from the two tables concur that their teaching is more of theory than practical. The respondents reported that real practical work was not done in the secondary schools in majority of the secondary schools in Adamawa state.

3.3: Skill-based subjects taught in the secondary schools in Adamawa state

The study also surveyed the skill-based subjects that are taught in the secondary schools in Adamawa state, cutting across the secondary schools in the three senatorial districts. The results are in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Skill-based (vocational /technical) subjects offered in secondary schools

S/N	Subjects	Frequency of Selection	%
1	Home Economics	287	75.5
2	Agricultural Science	286	75.3
3	Introductory Technology	284	74.7
4	Music	268	70.5
5	Fine Art	236	62.1
6	Food & Nutrition	224	54.5
7	Technical Drawing	215	56.6
8	Computer Science	207	54.5
9	Typing & Shorthand	163	42.9
10	Art & Craft	140	36.8

11	Clothing & Textile	101	26.6
12	Metal work	74	19.5
13	Building	69	18.2
14	Woodwork	62	16.3
15	Applied Electricity	37	9.7
16	Electronics	36	9.5
17	Auto-Mechanic	11	2.9

Source: Survey (2025)

Using 40% as the cut-off mark, it is apparent from Table 4 above that Home Economics, Agricultural Science, Introductory Technology, Music, Fine Art, Food and Nutrition, Technical Drawing, Computer Science and Typing/Shorthand were the core skill-based vocational and technical subjects that received priority attention in across secondary schools to date in Adamawa state. On the contrary, Art & Craft, Clothing & Textiles, Metal Work, Building, Woodwork, Applied Electricity, Electronics and Auto Mechanic appeared to be poorly handled in the secondary schools across the state. It should be noted that, in Adamawa South that only 4 to 5 skill based vocational subjects were regularly taught in the sampled schools. In Adamawa North, the respondents from SGS and PPS reported that only one skill based vocational subject was taught in their schools. Respondents from Adamawa Central reported that SGS that they had only one skilled-based vocational subject taught.

3.4: Available infrastructures in secondary schools

The availability of infrastructures in secondary schools also contribute greatly to the on-hand learning especially as it regards learning with practical as against theoretical learning. The statistical responses of the respondents are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Infrastructural facilities available in secondary schools in Adamawa state

S/N	Facility	Frequent	%
1.	Computer Science Room	60	50.0
2.	Home Economics Laboratory	59	49.2
3.	Agriculture Science Farmland	46	38.3
4.	Introductory Technology Workshop	45	37.5
5.	Music room	41	34.2
6.	Typing Room	28	23.3
7.	Technical Drawing Room	24	20.0
8.	Art & Craft Workshop	24	20.0
9.	Woodwork Workshop	21	17.5
10.	Carpentry Workshop	21	17.5

11.	Metal workshop	17	14.2
12.	Auto-Mechanic Workshop	15	12.5
13.	Electronic Workshop	14	11.7

Source: Survey (2025)

Using the 40% cut off point, it is apparent from Table 4 that only Computer Science laboratory and Home Economics laboratory were fairly equipped with basic facilities in Nigerian Secondary schools. From the focus group discussion held in Adamawa South, Adamawa Central and Adamawa North state, respondents from state and Personal Private Schools were of the opinion that the infrastructural facilities in their schools were not sufficient. However, 80% of the respondents from the Religious Private Schools reported they had sufficient infrastructural facilities. In Adamawa South, Adamawa North and Adamawa Central state, respondents from the federal government schools reported they had sufficient infrastructural facilities.

Observations made by the researchers during field work in Adamawa South state high class private schools revealed that well maintained infrastructural facilities were only available for Computer Science laboratory, Agricultural Science farmland and Technical Drawing room. Though the state government schools had facilities in the Introductory Technology workshop and Agricultural farmland, they were in very bad condition. The science laboratory sighted in some of the Personal Private Schools was also in bad condition.

In Adamawa North Senatorial district, the federal government schools and Religious Private Schools sampled had the following infrastructural facilities Introductory Technology workshop, Agriculture Science farmland, Computer Science room, Technical Drawing room, Home Economics laboratory, Metal Work workshop, Art and Craft workshop, Music room, Electronics workshop and Typing /Shorthand room and they were in good condition. No facility was observed in the sampled Personal Private Schools while the few facilities observed in the state government schools were in bad state.

Observation of the sampled schools in Adamawa Central Senatorial district revealed the state has more infrastructural facilities in all school categories except state government schools. Only the facilities in the Personal Private Schools were in bad condition.

Table 5: Proportion of specialist teachers available in Adamawa state secondary schools

S/N	Subject	Frequency	%
1.	Agriculture Science	90	75.0
2.	Home Economics	84	70.0

3.	Introductory Technology	83	69.2
4.	Food and Nutrition	76	63.3
5.	Fine Art	61	50.8
6.	Music	58	48.3
7.	Computer Science	47	39.2
8.	Technical Drawing	45	37.5
9.	Metal work	35	29.2
10.	Typing & Shorthand	28	23.3
11.	Clothing & Textile	28	23.3
12.	Art & Craft	27	22.5
13.	Home Management	27	22.5
14.	Woodwork	22	18.3
15.	Building Construction	16	13.3
16.	Applied Electricity	16	13.3
17.	Auto Mechanic	11	9.2

Source: Survey (2025)

Using 40% as cut off point, Table 5 indicates that the subjects that predominantly enjoyed the service of specialist teachers in Adamawa state secondary schools were Agricultural Science, Home Economics, Fine Art, Introductory Technology, Food and Nutrition, Fine Art and Music. On the contrary, the following subjects appeared to lack enough specialist teachers: Computer Science, Technical Drawing, Typing & Shorthand, Art & Craft, Clothing & Textiles, Metalwork, Home Management, Woodwork, Applied Electricity, Building Construction, and Auto Mechanic.

From the focus group discussion held in Adamawa South, Adamawa Central and Adamawa North senatorial zones, virtually all the respondents from state and Religious Private Schools were of the opinion that the number of specialist teachers in their schools was not sufficient. *However, 70% to 100% of the respondents from the Federal Government Schools and Personal Private Schools from Adamawa North and Adamawa Central senatorial zones reported they had sufficient specialist teachers.

Table 6: Entrepreneurial skills students have learnt in school

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skill	FGC	%	SGS	%	RPS	%	PPS	%	Total	%
1.	Drawing (Fine Art)	55	55	35	35	25.5	25.5	27	27	214	214
2.	Sewing (Home Economics)	56	56	29	7.6	60	15.8	47	47	192	50.5
3.	Farming (Agric Science)	41	10.8	34	8.9	58	15.3	45	11.8	178	46.8
4.	Cookery (Food & Nutrition)	57	15.0	45	11.8	45	11.8	22	5.8	169	44.5
5.	Electrical work (Introductory Tech)	46	5.0	37	9.7	44	11.6	29	7.6	156	41.1
6.	Singing (Music)	36	9.5	27	7.1	63	16.6	26	6.8	152	40.0

Source: Survey (2025)

Keys: FGS (Federal Govt. School); SGS (State Government Schools); RPS (Religious Private Schools); PPS (Personal Private Schools)

Still going by the cut-off point of 40%, and going by school type, Table 6 indicates that only in Fine Art (Drawing), Home Economics (Sewing), Agricultural Science (Farming), Food & Nutrition (Cookery), Introductory Technology (Electrical Works) and Music (singing) did the sampled students signify having acquired significant self-employable entrepreneurial skill. The proportion of students' indication in other vocational areas was rather low Except in Cookery, which was led by Federal Government Schools; Religious Private Schools consistently led with high margin in all the areas listed above. Vocational areas where sampled students indicated low entrepreneurial skill acquisition include: painting(Art & Craft), typing & shorthand (typing), interior decoration (Home Economics), tie & dye (Clothing & Textile), composing songs (Music), data processing (Computer Science), computer services (Computer Science), catering (Home Economics), weaving (Art & Craft), poultry (Agricultural Science), sculpture (Fine Art), carving (Fine Art), dress making (Clothing & Textile), fishery (Agricultural Science), electrical work (Applied Electricity) (Introductory Technology), furniture making (Wood Work), gardening (Home Management), mechanical work, welding (Metal Work), bricklaying (Building Construction), draughtsmanship (Building Construction), flower arrangement (Home Management), TV and radio work, carpentry (Wood Work), auto

mechanic (Metal Work), calligraphy/sign writing (Fine Art). From the focus group discussion held in Adamawa South, Adamawa Central and Adamawa North states, 100% of the respondents from state government and Personal Private Schools consented that the practical skill that students were taught was not sufficient to allow for their self-employment. However, 40% of the sampled teachers from the Religious Private Schools and 80% of the sampled teachers from the Federal Government School located in Adamawa North senatorial zone reported that the practical skill taught could earn their students self-employment. 70% of the sampled teachers from the Federal Government Schools and 40%of the sampled teachers from Religious Private Schools in Adamawa Central senatorial zone reported that the practical skills taught could earn their students self-employment.

Table 7: Students who felt they have acquired basic entrepreneurial skill in Adamawa state secondary schools

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skill	Adamawa North		Adamawa Central		Adamawa South		Total	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Drawing (Fine/Art)	77	20.3	97	25.5	40	10.5	214	56.3
2.	Sewing (Home Economics)	70	18.4	77	20.3	45	11.8	192	50.5
3.	Farming (Agric Science.)	61	16.1	51	13.4	66	17.4	178	46.8
4.	Cookery (Food & Nutrition)	68	17.9	70	18.4	31	8.2	169	44.5
5.	Electrical work (Introductory Tech)	50	13.2	70	18.4	36	9.5	156	41.1
6.	Singing (Music)	57	15.0	63	16.6	32	8.4	152	40.0

Source: Survey (2025)

With the cut-off point of 40%, and going by senatorial zones, Table 7 further confirms that only in Fine Art (Drawing), Home Economics (Sewing), Agricultural Science (Farming), Food & Nutrition (Cookery), Introductory Technology (Electrical Works) and Music (singing) did students signify having acquired significant self-employable entrepreneurial skill. The proportion of students' indication in other vocational areas was rather low (i.e. painting, typing & shorthand, interior decoration, tie & dye, composing songs, data processing, computer services, catering, weaving, poultry, sculpture, carving, dress making, fishery, electrical work, furniture making, gardening, mechanical work, welding, bricklaying, draughtsmanship, flower arrangement, TV and radio work, carpentry, auto mechanic, calligraphy/sign writing). Except in farming which was led by Adamawa South senatorial zone, Adamawa Central senatorial zone consistently led with high margin in all the areas listed above.

Table 8: Students who felt they have acquired basic entrepreneurial skill by class

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skill	JSS						SSS						Total	
		1		2		3		1		2		3			
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1.	Drawing (Fine Art)	5	1.3	31	8.2	63	16.6	8	2.1	42	11.1	65	17.1	214	56.3
2.	Sewing (Home Economics)	6	1.6	37	9.7	54	14.2	8	2.1	26	6.8	61	16.1	192	50.5
3.	Farming (Agriculture Science)	4	1.1	16	4.2	57	15.0	0	0.0	38	10.0	63	16.6	178	46.8
4.	Cookery (Food & Nutrition)	5	1.3	16	4.2	27	7.1	4	1.1	32	8.4	85	22.4	169	44.5
5.	Electrical work (Introductory Tech)	2	0.5	21	5.5	52	13.7	6	1.6	29	7.6	46	12.1	156	41.1
6.	Singing (Music)	8	2.1	20	5.3	45	11.8	7	1.8	17	4.5	55	14.5	152	40.0

Source: Survey (2025)

With the cut-off point of 40%, and going by class in school, Table 8 indicates that only in Fine Art (Drawing), Home Economics (Sewing), Agricultural Science (Farming), Food & Nutrition (Cookery), Introductory Technology (Electrical Works) and Music (singing) did students signify having acquired significant self-employable entrepreneurial skill. The proportion of students' proposition in other vocational areas was rather low (i.e. painting, typing & shorthand, interior decoration, tie & dye, composing songs, data processing, computer services, catering, weaving, poultry, sculpture, carving, dress making, fishery, electrical work, furniture making, gardening, mechanical work, welding, bricklaying, draughtsmanship, flower arrangement, TV and radio work, carpentry, auto mechanic, calligraphy/sign writing). Except in Introductory Technology (Electrical work), which was led by JSS 3; while SSS 3 consistently led in all the other subject areas listed above. The Practical/Performance Test administered by the researchers showed that the sampled teachers and students from Federal Government Schools and Religious Private Schools in Adamawa Central senatorial zone consistently demonstrated high degree of practical skill as opposed to teachers and students from Personal Private Schools and State Government Schools. It was the same pattern in Adamawa North senatorial zone. In Adamawa South senatorial zone, State Government Schools sampled teachers displayed high degree of practical skill while their students were poor in practical skill.

Table 9: Products and services successfully produced/marketed by students

S/N	Product/Service	FGS		SGS		RPS		PPS		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Cake Production	30	8.0	29	7.8	35	9.4	20	5.3	114	30.5
2.	Farm Produce	31	8.3	20	5.3	18	4.8	9	2.4	78	20.9
3.	Acting	71	1.9	10	2.7	36	9.6	17	4.5	70	18.7
4.	Art Work	10	2.7	19	5.1	34	9.1	5	1.3	68	18.2
5.	Cookery	12	3.2	22	5.9	16	4.3	17	4.5	67	17.9
6.	Tie & dye	19	5.1	9	2.4	20	5.3	17	4.5	65	17.4
7.	Typing	23	6.1	6	1.6	28	7.5	5	1.3	62	16.6
8.	Dress Making	19	5.1	12	3.2	13	3.5	6	1.6	50	13.4
9.	Song Composition	4	1.1	8	2.1	15	4.0	8	2.1	35	9.4
10.	Weaving	9	2.4	5	1.3	9	2.4	10	2.7	33	8.8
11.	Computer Services	4	1.1	3	0.8	13	3.5	10	2.7	30	8.0
12.	Calligraphy	8	2.1	4	1.1	0	0.0	6	1.6	18	4.8
13.	Woodwork	2	0.5	0	0.0	11	2.9	4	1.1	17	4.5
14.	Mechanical	0	0.0	9	2.4	5	1.3	1	0.3	15	4.0
15.	Throw Pillow	5	1.3	3	0.8	2	0.5	4	1.1	14	3.7
16.	Electrical repairs	0	0.0	1	0.3	4	1.1	8	2.1	13	3.5
17.	Bricklaying	4	1.1	2	0.5	0	0.0	6	1.6	12	3.2
18.	Carving	0	0.0	1	0.3	5	1.3	5	1.3	11	2.9
19.	Sculpture	1	0.3	1	0.3	2	0.5	4	1.1	8	2.1
20.	TV Repairs	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3	7	1.9	8	2.1
21.	Radio Repairs	0	0.0	2	0.5	1	0.3	4	1.1	7	1.9
22.	Welding	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.1	4	1.1
23.	Furniture	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.5	0	0.0	2	0.5

Source: Survey (2025)

With the same cut-off point of 40%, it is apparent from Table 9 that there is no significant production of marketable goods and services by secondary students in Adamawa state within this period of study. Nevertheless, Cake production (30.5%), Farm produce (20.9%), Acting (18.7%), Art work (18.2%), Cookery (17.9%), Tie & Dye (17.4%) and Typing (16.6%) topped the list of goods and services some students have been able to successfully produce.

Observation made by the researchers showed that except in Fine Art, Computer Studies, Music and Technical Drawing, teachers and students had no product or service to show for their practical knowledge in Adamawa South and Adamawa North senatorial zones, in all the school categories sampled. Adamawa Central senatorial zone also furnished more students' and teachers' products and services than the other senatorial zones sampled.

4. Discussion

Findings revealed that, although the curriculum is appropriate in terms of stated goals and content, its implementation remains significantly weak. This view was consistently expressed by teachers across the three sampled senatorial zones of Adamawa state. The result is not unexpected, as it reinforces long-standing concerns that the Nigerian education system, despite its well-articulated intentions, continues to struggle with effective curriculum delivery. The findings further indicated that the system has not provided sufficient opportunities for skill acquisition and practical learning necessary for self-reliance and self-employment among the growing population of unemployed youth. This aligns with earlier observations by Ajala (2002) and Babafemi (2007), who described the secondary education curriculum as conceptually laudable but poorly implemented. Similarly, Igwe (2007) argued that the curriculum largely prepares students for university admission as the dominant, if not the only, intended pathway. Fabunmi (2009) also maintained that the secondary school curriculum is inadequately structured to promote employability skills upon graduation.

It is important to emphasize that the goals and objectives of secondary education in Nigeria, as outlined in the *National Policy on Education* (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013), are anchored on the national philosophy of producing functional citizens capable of contributing to national development. As Offorma (2005) asserts, these goals are achievable if implemented with fidelity and supported with adequate resources and teacher capacity. More recent scholarship also confirms that implementation gaps, rather than policy

intentions, remain the most significant barrier to achieving functional secondary education outcomes in Nigeria (Ejiogu & Olatunde, 2020; Odu, 2022).

Findings further revealed that instructional practices in the sampled secondary schools remain predominantly theoretical, except in FGS and RPS, where teachers demonstrated a more balanced mix of theory and practical activities. This contrasts with earlier studies (Kiboss, 2002; Offorma, 2005: Ajibola, 2008), which identified theoretical instruction as the dominant pedagogical mode. This is attributed to the reliance on theoretical teaching due to the shortage of instructional materials, inadequate workshop facilities, and lack of functional laboratories. Teachers also reported frequent use of improvisation to compensate for unavailable resources.

Vocational and technical subjects, by design, require an integration of theoretical knowledge and practical engagement to enhance skill mastery and learner participation (Aina, 2009). Contemporary research reinforces this requirement, emphasizing that practical exposure improves learner motivation, competence, and skill transfer (Akinola & Daramola, 2021; Okoye et al., 2023). While teachers are expected to blend theory with practice, it is unrealistic to expect effective teaching when basic tools, materials, and facilities are unavailable.

The teachers further revealed that negative societal attitudes toward vocational and technical education contributed to its low prioritisation. Many parents perceive vocational subjects as less prestigious and more suitable for low-achieving students or school dropouts - a perception widely documented in recent TVET literature in Nigeria (Amadi & Eze, 2019; Okoye et al., 2023). This perception has led some schools to downplay the importance of vocational and technical subjects, despite curriculum requirements that emphasize a balance of academic knowledge and practical skills. Obanya (2007) metaphorically referred to this balance as the “three Hs”—the head, the heart, and the hand—all essential for the holistic development of the learner.

The study explored the availability of infrastructural facilities for skill-based teaching. Findings showed that SGS and PPS lacked sufficient facilities needed for effective practical instruction, with only computer laboratories and home economics laboratories available, and even these were only modestly equipped. On the other hand, FGS and most RPS possessed relatively well-equipped and well-maintained workshops and laboratories. This disparity is attributed to stronger funding and federal government support for federal schools, which are

expected to serve as model institutions demonstrating the ideals of the national secondary education system (Adeyemi & Alabi, 2016; Olatunji & Adediran, 2021).

Similarly, RPS schools are owned by private investors who recognize that they operate within a competitive market where students' enrolment and school profitability depend on the quality of service delivery. Consequently, they often invest more in facilities to meet parents' expectations and maintain their customer base (Asiyai, 2020). State-owned secondary schools, on the other hand, rely heavily on state government funding and are generally less resourced than federal government schools. Regardless of ownership type, all schools should recognize that students can only acquire skills when they have regular workshop practice supported by adequate equipment and instructional materials. Adequate facilities enhance learning retention, promote practical mastery, and improve overall learning outcomes (Olatunji & Adediran, 2021; Okoye et al., 2023).

It remains concerning that funding has always be inadequate to secondary schools despite decades of substantial oil revenue. Chronic underfunding has contributed to declining educational quality and insufficient training facilities. Without significant investment in school infrastructure and without motivating teachers to deliver high-quality instruction, there will be a continued stagnation in social, political, and economic development (Aina & Akintunde, 2020; Odu, 2022). To achieve the goals of secondary education, schools should maximize available human and material resources and ensure a conducive learning environment that supports students' holistic development (Asiyai, 2020; Odu, 2022)

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