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Okolocha Chizoba B
Department of
Entrepreneurship Studies,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Awka, Nigeria

John-Akamelu Chitom R
Ph.D., Department of
Entrepreneurship Studies,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Awka, Nigeria

Muogbo Uju S
Ph.D., Department of
Entrepreneurship Studies,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu
Ojukwu University Igbaram,
Nigeria

Corresponding Author:
Okolocha Chizoba B
Department of
Entrepreneurship Studies,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Awka, Nigeria

Effect of skill acquisition on youth employability in Nigeria

Okolocha Chizoba B, John-Akamelu Chitom R and Muogbo Uju S

Abstract

This study examined the effect of skill acquisition programme on youth employability in Nigeria. For the purpose of this study, undergraduate, graduates and post graduate individuals of Anambra State were used. The main instrument used was the structured questionnaire. 100 respondents were randomly selected from different local governments in Anambra State. Findings revealed that much emphasis on academic excellence, lack of quality skilled trainers, acute shortage of facilities, inconsistent follow up by government and poor funding are problems facing skills acquisition employment in Nigeria. Based on the premises of the findings it was recommended that teachers require professional skills development abilities, competence, years of experience through understanding of the subject matter and effective involvement of the student in the instructional delivery.

Keywords: Skill acquisition, employability, unemployment, youth empowerment, education and training

Introduction

Skill is noteworthy in everybody's life. Many technicians earn more than some school graduates because they acquire more practical skills than the theories unlike graduates who were sustained with theoretical encounters while in the universities. Skill acquisition is the ability to be prepared on a particular task or work and become expert in it. It is amazingly miserable that there is a huge rate of unemployment in various parts of the world especially in Nigeria. It is one reason for growth in wrongdoing in various places of the world. As of now, numerous graduates in the nation are as yet jobless due to long system of education that is more theoretical than practical learning. It is substantial that Africa has the highest rate of jobless young people. The reason for high rate of unemployment amongst the vibrant youths in our society today is due to lack of skill to add up to what they learnt from their various institutions. In 2015, Nigeria have targeted to achieve one of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) which is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by encouraging people who earn less than a dollar per day to engage in skill acquisition. Skill acquisition is a major tool for extreme poverty eradication and hunger with the aim of creating an avenue for jobs and wealth creation which will bring self-reliance and sufficiency and contributing to the growth and development of the economy in the country (Isaac, 2011). It is also important in the educational sector because it contributes to the improvement of human capital and employment in a nation. One of the goals of education is to gain appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies for the people to live and add to the development of the society. There is a great need for skilled personnel in Nigeria today, who will be self-reliant and enterprising.

Problem statement

There is a disturbing rate of youth joblessness in Nigeria. These young people made up of greater percentage level of Nigeria's economically active populace. College students are seen to be deficient in essential skills which incorporate; business enterprise abilities, interpersonal skills, teamwork skills, personal/executives skills, computer/technical education skills, and administration/management abilities among others. They tend to build up the psychological area to the detriment of psychomotor domain and effective domain. In this manner we have students who are sound in information but lack capacity for making use of practical abilities to take care of issue.

All things considered, students are concerned more in retention of idea, this has made them to be found wanting in performing practical oriental jobs. Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010), discovered that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million representing 60 percent of the overall population of the nation and 64 million of them are jobless, while 1.6 million are underemployed. This shows a lot of energies that would have been used to make livelihoods and improve the economy are being wasted. Since 1980's, the crucial roles of the youths has keep on enduring set back as they can barely engage in themselves in important work. The outcome is frustration expressed through different indecencies that constitute instability in the nation. The vices include extortion, arm robbery, kidnapping for ransom, internet fraud, prostitution and numerous other restiveness. This research will in general bring out various skills acquisition which can save the young people from joblessness and underemployment they found themselves and different government interventions that could help also. Against these backdrops, this study in this manner tried to give answers to some of the issues raised and proffer solutions.

Objectives of the Study

This study tries to investigate the effect of skill acquisition as a strategy for poverty reduction and repositioning Nigerian economy. Specifically the objectives are to:

1. Examine the extent at which skill acquisition assist in youth employability in Nigeria.
2. Determine the degree at which practical training can reduce unemployment rate amongst the youth.

Research Questions

The following research questions are to be addressed by the study.

1. To what extent can skill acquisition assist in youth employability in Nigeria?
2. To what degree can practical training assist in reducing the rate of unemployment amongst the youths?

Research Hypotheses

Below are the formulated research hypotheses

Ho1: Skill acquisition cannot assist in youth employability in Nigeria.

Ho2: Practical training has no effect in reducing the rate of unemployment amongst the youth in Nigeria.

2. Review of related literature

Introduction

This section provides information on conceptual, theoretical and empirical literature of the study.

Skill acquisition

Webster's Dictionary described skill acquisition as developed or obtained ability. Skill acquisition is a significant instrument of empowerment that endeavors to provide the individuals with various skills, vocation and enterprising capacity like bead making, cap making, sewing, fashion designing, shoe making and making workers to have more enthusiasm for their occupations while enhancing their current skills. The idea of skill acquisition is aimed for battling and decreasing poverty level in Nigeria. Different

Government have recurrently attested its assurance to utilize abilities advancement as the main vehicle for helping poor young people to break-out of the poverty trap. The hidden presumption keeps on being that the obtaining of skills bolstered by public financing is the positive response to the issue of joblessness.

Skill acquisition training programme

Skills Acquisition Training is an adult education program which is intended to give different skills on the participants, and address immediate issues, for example, employments, independence and control restiveness among young people (Uranta and Nlerum, 2017). Mike (2014) declares that skill acquirement is the capacity to be prepared on a specific task or capacity. Likewise, Magbagbeola (2004) as referred to in Idoko (2014) posit that skill acquirement requires the gathering of various abilities that enhances task execution through the coordination of both theoretical and practical form of knowledge. He specified the rules for the sustenance of expertise acquirement program to include the followings;

1. Provision of training that gives the trainees the chances to obtain skills that are appropriate for readiness in a field of trade for beneficial business.
2. Provision of distinct skills that relate to each trade that makes one an expert in one field rather than the others.

Types of skill acquisition programs

1. Snail Farming
2. Fish Farming
3. Bead Making
4. Welding and Fabrication
5. Catering Services
6. Fashion Designing
7. Computer Training

Theoretical framework

Skill acquisition theory

The fundamental claim of Skill Acquisition Theory, as per Dekeyser (2007), "is that the learning of a wide variety of skills shows an exceptional similarity in development from introductory representation of knowledge through starting changes in conduct to eventual fluent, unconstrained, to a great extent, and profoundly gifted behaviour, and that this phenomena can be accounted for by a lot of essential principles regular to acquisition of skills". Overall, as referenced by Speelman (2005) ^[15], skill acquisition can be considered as a particular type of learning, where learning has been characterized as "the representation of information in memory concerning some natural or psychological event". Thusly, as indicated by him, skill acquisition is a type of learning where "skilled behaviours can become routinized and even programmed under certain conditions". What's more, as a general theory of learning, it guarantees that adult starts learning something through largely unequivocal procedures, and with subsequent adequate practice and exposure, move into verifiable procedures. Subsequently, the study is hinged on this theory.

Empirical review

Non-government organisation can play a major role in training and skill acquisition as was discovered from the

success story of project YES that the scheme has added to the financial enrichment of the youths by providing them with vocational skill acquisition and counseling services geared towards reorienting their attitudes towards self and societal development (Ohize & Muhammed, 2009) [13].

Acquiring a vocational skill leads to reduction of poverty level among young adults who takes part on skill acquisition programmes (Akpama *et al.* 2011) [3]. Also, greater percentage of youth sampled reported high and moderate levels of their capacity building; implying that the vocational skills acquisition and development was a successful scheme (Amadi and Abdullah, 2012).

An investigation on skill acquisition and training in alleviation of poverty and unemployment in Kogi State Nigeria revealed that lack of entrepreneurship skills among youth is responsible for high rate of poverty/unemployment in Nigeria. The result also discovered that individuals that benefitted from skill training programme can now afford the basic necessity of life and government should introduce a programme to the status of poverty/unemployment reduction in Nigeria (Adofu and Ocheja, 2013) [11].

Ola-Adebayo (2013), discovered that entrepreneurial education is best received in school settings. This is evident from his study of the determinants of Skill Acquisition and professional knowledge acquired by Nigerian graduates through the current university curriculum. The study also opined that learning by doing is seen as the best approach or method to teach entrepreneurial education. The finding also

revealed that gender has nothing to do with observation of the importance of acquiring entrepreneurial skills education within and outside the school system. The research recommends that vocational education training should be mandatory before employment.

3. Methodology

This section discusses the study design, population and sampling technique, the data collection instruments, data analysis and the analytical software used for the study.

Research design, data collection and data analysis

The study adopted a survey research design, the population comprises of 100 youths randomly selected and residents in different local government in Anambra. To collect data, primary source which comprises of a structured questionnaire were used. The questionnaire was a four-point rating scale (Likert) of strongly agree (4), Agree (3), disagreed (2), and strongly disagree (1). Data were analysed using mean score rating method based on the 2.5 acceptance region format to answer the research questions, while to address the research hypothesis, the chi-square was used.

Presentation and analysis of the results

The results of the field study are presented in this section, descriptive information of the respondents, the results of each of the research questions and the test of hypotheses are also shown below.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	25	25.0	25.0	50.0
Single	50	50.0	50.0	75.0
Widowed	15	15.0	15.0	90.0
Separated	5	5.0	5.0	95.0
Divorced	5	5.0	5.0	100
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Filed Survey 2019

Table 1 above shows that 50 percent of the respondents are single, 25 percent are married, and 15 percent amongst them are widowed while 5 percent are either divorced or separated. This indicates that the respondents are mostly young single (youths) of different local government in Anambra State.

Table 2: Age distribution of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Below 20 years	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
21 -30 years	40	40.0	40.0	60.0
31-40 years	30	30.0	30.0	90.0
41years and above	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Filed Survey 2019

The table 2 indicates the age distribution of the respondents, the table shows that 40 percent of the respondents are between the age limit of 21-30 years, 30 percent are at the ages of 31-40 years while 20 percent are at the age limit of 20 years and below. This shows that about 90 percent of the respondents used in this study are between 20-40 years of

age and this indicates they are youths which means that they are current with the happenings in the economy of Nigeria, as well as, the targets for Skill acquisition Programmes.

Table 3: Religion of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Christianity	55	55.0	55.0	55.0
Islam	30	30.0	30.0	85.0
Others	15	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Filed Survey 2019

Table 3 above displays the respondents religion the table indicates that majority of the respondents are Christians (55%), and about 30 percent are Muslim while 15 percent represents other religion. This shows that significant number of people living in the state are Christians.

Analysis of the research questions

Research question one: To what extent can skill acquisition assist in youth employability in Nigeria? Research question one was answered with questionnaire item 4, 5 and 6

Table 4: Responses from the Respondents on the questionnaire items

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Decision
4	Reduces the unemployment rate	100	2.6324	.36440	Accepted
5	Increases the rate of investment in the economy	100	2.6544	.32454	Accepted
6	Reduces the crime rate	100	3.1234	.89893	Accepted
	Valid N (list wise)	100			

Source: filed Survey 2019

Table 4 above shows the response of the respondents on whether skill acquisition assist in youth employability in Nigeria. The respondents were in agreement that skill acquisition reduces unemployment rate; increases the rate of investment in the economy and reduces crime.

Research question two: To what degree can practical training assist in reducing the rate of unemployment amongst the youths?

Research question two was answered with questionnaire item 7, 8, 9

Table 5: Responses from the respondents on the questionnaire items

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Decision
7	The inclusion of entrepreneurship in school curriculum	100	2.5320	.36440	Accepted
8	The creation of the National directorate of employment (NDE)	100	2.6787	.78210	Accepted
9	Organization of seminars and skill acquisition programs in various locations	100	2.5335	1.20605	Accepted
	Valid N (list wise)	100			

Source: Filed Survey 2019

From the responses of the respondents in table 5 above, they were all in agreement that practical training programme reduces unemployment as entrepreneurship training were included in their school curriculum, it brought about the creation of directorate of employment and seminars on skill acquisition are often organize in their area.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one

Ho1: Skill acquisition cannot assist in youth employability in Nigeria.

Decision rule

Reject the null hypothesis if the Asymp level of significant is less than 0.05. Otherwise, accept the null hypothesis.

Table 6: Test of hypothesis table one

Test Statistics	
	skill acquisition cannot assist in youth employability in Nigeria
Chi-Square	23.876 ^a
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.030

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 25.0.

Conclusion

The Asymp Sig level of this test is 0.30 which is far much lower than the 0.05 acceptance region, therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that skill acquisition can assist in youth employability in Nigeria.

unemployment amongst the youth in Nigeria.

Decision rule

Reject the null hypothesis if the Asymp level of significant is less than 0.05. Otherwise, accept the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two

Ho2: Practical training has no effect in reducing the rate of

Table 7: Test Statistics

Practical training has no effect in reducing the rate of unemployment amongst the youth in Nigeria.	
Chi-Square	5.812 ^a
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 25.0.

Conclusion

The Asymp Sig. level of this test is 0.000 which is far much lower than the 0.05 acceptance region hence we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Practical training has a significant effect in reducing the rate of unemployment amongst the youth in Nigeria.

Summary, conclusion and recommendations summary

This study focused on Effect of Skills Acquisition Programs on Youth Employability in Nigeria. The study addressed the following objectives which include;

1. Examine the extent at which skill acquisition assist in youth employability in Nigeria.

- Determine the degree at which practical training can reduce unemployment rate amongst the youth.

From the above stated objectives and the research carried out, the following findings were made

- That skill acquisition programmes reduces the rate of unemployment; increases the rate of investment in the economy and reduces the crime rate in Nigeria.
- There has been inclusion of entrepreneurship in school curriculum; the directorate of employment has introduced practical training amongst unemployed youths and organizes seminars and skills acquisition programs in various locations.
- Skill acquisition has contributed a lot to Nigerian economy.

Conclusion

In this study, skill acquisition programme is seen as a tool for youth employability in Nigeria, it reduces unemployment rate, curbs crime and other social vices and also increases the rate of investment in the economy. It was found out that the rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria is on the increase yearly, more than fifty thousand youths graduates annually without jobs or without acquiring any vocational skill. For this reason, crime has been on the increase therefore the government made it compulsory that there should be an inclusion of practical entrepreneurial training in all schools curriculum to eradicate the rate of joblessness. From this study, there is an indication that if the youths are properly engaged in practical entrepreneurial training or skill acquisition programme there will be an economic growth and development in our nation.

Recommendations

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

- Government should take necessary steps to encourage skill acquisition amongst the youths by providing a vocational training center free of charge for all the youths.
- Seminars, orientation and coaching should be organized in all stipulated locations weekly or monthly to enable all the youths participate duly.
- Non-governmental organisations, charities and churches should provide fund to empower these youths after they must have undergone some trainings.

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