

Community-Based Education Skills Acquisition Programmes and Unemployment Reduction among Youths in Cross River State, Nigeria

Ekpenyong David Oboqua, Ph.D

*Department of Adult and Continuing Education
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu
ekpenyongoboqua@yahoo.com*

Bella Olabisi Charles

*Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies
University of Calabar, Calabar
Cross River State, Nigeria*

Abstract

This study focused on community-based education skills acquisition programmes and unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested. The research design used was ex-post facto. The population of the study comprised 3,413 adult youths selected from nine local government areas of Cross River State. The sample for the study was 512 adult youths. A 26-item questionnaire titled Community-Based Education Skills Acquisition Programmes and Unemployment Reduction Questionnaire (CESAPURQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated and the reliability estimates ranged from 0.78 to 0.98, using split half reliability estimate method. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data of the study. The result showed that building and electrical/electronics installation skills acquisition programmes had a positive significant influence on unemployment reduction among youths in the study area. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made, among others, that government at all levels should embark on massive youths development programmes with entrepreneurial skills acquisition programmes.

Keywords: Community-based, skills, acquisition, programmes, unemployment, youths

Introduction

Community-based education is an organizations' programme aimed at promoting learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods. A common defining feature is that programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants. The purpose for community education is to develop the capacity of individuals and groups of all ages through their actions and the capacity of communities to improve their quality of life. Community-based education is a process

of communal education towards empowerment, both at individual and collective levels. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2008) maintained that community-based education seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing the skills needed to effect change in communities. These skills are often created through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda. Shaw (2008) agrees that community-based education is a set of values and practices which plays a special role in overcoming poverty and disadvantage, knitting society together at the grassroots and deepening democracy. It is the type of education needed to ensure self-confidence, self-respect and personal independence as well as safeguard human rights and achieve social equality. Community-based education is a programme which needs to combat illiteracy so as to enhance community development, agricultural skills or extension, vocational training, small scale industries and human resource management. Community-based education manifests in the development of related skills and attitude of people that can enable them to satisfy their basic needs and to be self-reliant; it is also a primary tool for salvaging people from poverty.

The percentage of unemployed youths keeps increasing every year. For instance, Nigeria's struggle to create jobs is getting worse. National Bureau of Statistics (2018) reported the unemployment rate to be 14.2% in the last quarter of 2016, up from 13.9% in the preceding quarter. Presently in 2019, the Nigeria's unemployment rate rises to 39%. According to report (NBS, 2018), the 86.9 million Nigerians now living in extreme poverty represents nearly 50% of its estimated 150 million population. Nigeria has the highest rate of extreme poverty globally.

The Cross River State Government (CRSG, 2017) reported that the unemployment rate in the state has risen to about 38.2%. This situation has been on the increase and this has resulted in increase in social vices in the study area. Available records show that between 1960's and 1970's, unemployment and its attendant consequence poverty, were not of national concern as they are today and immediately after Nigerian independence most people in the rural areas acquired skills that made them to be self-employed or self-reliant. Such skills include basket making, wood carving, blacksmithing, gold-smithing, hair barbing, cloth dying, fishing, farming, carpentry, mat weaving etc. All these activities embarked upon by youths in the society were to help them earn a living and also contribute to the development of their various community projects or programmes.

The governments of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Cross River State in particular have in the recent past carried out giant steps towards reducing the problem of unemployment among youths. Thus, the government at different levels have through its agencies, such as green revolution, operation feed the nation, people empowerment programme initiative, enterprise Nigeria initiative, National open apprenticeship

scheme, subsidy reinvestment and employment programmes (SURE-P), youth enterprise with innovation in Nigeria (Youwin), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), National Agency for Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Community Based Poverty Reduction Programme (CBPRP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), make deliberate efforts at tackling unemployment. These programmes were meant to reduce unemployment among youths to the barest minimum. Despite all the effort made, it seems not to have yielded positive result. The continuous high unemployment rate among youths in the study area is worrisome considering the various level of government programmes in addressing the situation. This situation has resulted in armed robbery, kidnapping, child abduction, poverty, militancy, prostitution, crime, drug abuse, violence, human trafficking and hijacking. This situation could be attributed to the inability to engage the youths in meaningful community-based education programmes with practical skills in building and electrical installation.

Building is very important to any nation's economic development. Housing is a major part of building. Amadi and Abdullah (2012) see housing as a key input in economic, social and civic development; many housing related activities contribute directly to achieving broader socio-economic development goals. It is a major driver of economic growth and especially in low-income countries; housing construction creates job opportunities. Ekong and Ekong (2016) observed that housing as a major factor matters to economic development and improve the standard of the citizens of any nations. Skill is the ability to do something well, usually gained through training and experience.

The population of youths in Nigeria is 80 million, representing 60% of the country's total population with 55 million of them unemployed while 1.6 million are employed (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). To address this menace, various regimes in Nigeria have initiated development programmes geared toward self-dependence among the youths. Agencies and institutions have been established with the mandate of combating unemployment and poverty facing youths. One of these institutions is the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) established in 1986. One of the major causes of unemployment among the youths is lack of skills for employment or to become self-employed; the NDE designed vocational skills acquisition training to train youths in a wide-range of vocational skills with the view of making them self-employed and economically self-reliant (Emefor, 2012). The skill acquisition programmes have been identified as solution for the high youth unemployment, poverty and hunger in Nigeria, as statistics have shown that 70% of the unemployed population of the country is unskilled (Ola, 2013).

Vocational skills development programmes equip youths with the human capital that help them to avoid poverty and have a more fulfilling life. The training involves the

use of informal sector operators such as master craftsman/women as training centres, where youths spend a period long enough for them to acquire the needed skills. According to Isike (2008), the NDE coordinator explained that the training would empower the beneficiaries to become self-reliant; arguing that the youths could not continue to walk the streets in search for non-existent jobs and that the training would lead to the creation of a new generation of self-employed youths who on their own would become labour employers. Youth's unemployment increased by a total 4.2 percent, but from 2008 to 2009 it increased by 5.3% or 4.5 million persons, in a single year.

According to Ekong and Ekong (2016), employment skills play an important role in equipping young and adults for work and social integration. International Labour Organizations (2017) opines that global trends for youth unemployment rate has risen from 11.8 to 12.7 percent between 2008 and 2009, the largest one-year increase on record. The building industry growth needs the stock of competent skilled construction workers which has dwindled.

Vocational training is an educational training which encompasses knowledge, skill competencies, structural activities, ability, capacities and all other structural experiences acquired through formal, on-the-job or off-the-job training, which is capable of enhancing recipients' opportunity for securing jobs in various sectors of the economy or even enabling the person to be self-dependent by being a job creator. Uloko and Ejinkonye (2010) opined that vocational training is an aspect of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relative to occupations in the building sector.

Ola (2013) advocated that vocational training comprises all, more or less, organized or structured activities that aim at providing people with the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to perform a job or a set of jobs, whether or not they lead to a formal qualification. These definitions show that the relationship between vocational training and skill development towards a sustainable building industry in Nigeria is imperative for the youths to curb unemployment. Common indicators of skills issues are poor workmanship and building failure. Nigerian cities, with the exception of the enclave of the rich and powerful, are characterized by poor quality structures, poor layout and streets access, lack of essential utility services, inadequate security and social services (Uloko & Ejinkonye, 2010). Apparently, deficiencies exist between the skills of vocational workers and those required to meet the needs and expectations of employers in the building sector which prompt the researchers to examine the role of vocational training in bridging the skill gap that exists in building industry in Nigeria.

Electrical skill is a skill learned as a result of repairs, maintenance and installation of electrical appliances. This can be learned both formally and informally in a community, which is brilliantly needed for effective and proficient community-based education. Community-based education is an organization's programmes to promote learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their community using a range of formal and informal programmes which encompasses all those occupations and approaches that are concerned with running education and development programmes within local communities, rather than within educational institution such as schools, college and university (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012). More so, entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of setting and transforms them to profitable activities. Entrepreneurship can be detailed as innovative ideas and creativity bringing process and coupling with management and organizational skills, in order to combine people, resources and money to create wealth and meet their needs.

According to Anerua and Obiaze (2009), an entrepreneur is a person(s) who possesses the ability to recognize and evaluate business opportunities, assemble the necessary reasons to take advantage of them and take appropriate action to ensure success. Entrepreneurs are people who constantly discover new markets and try to figure out how to supply those markets efficiently and make a profit. Entrepreneurship skills are not just about teaching someone to run a business opportunity, rather it is about teaching someone to run a business. It is all about encouraging creative thinking and promoting a strong sense of self worth and accountability. According to Isike (2008), entrepreneurship is the ability to envision and chart a course for a new business venture by combing information from the functional discipline and from the external environment in the context of the extra-ordinary uncertainty and ambiguity which faces a new business venture. According to Paul (2005), the following are the objectives of entrepreneurship education:

1. To offer functional education for the youths that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
2. To provide the young graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
3. To serve as catalyst for economic growth and development and offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management to make certain bearing feasible.
4. To reduce high rate of poverty, create employment generation and reduction in rural-urban migration.
5. To provide the young graduates with enough training and support that enable them to establish a career in information and knowledge management.

Electrical skills, as a useful skill gotten from the proficient practices of electrical repairs, maintenance and installation, is essential to human because electricity is the eye of the world as it stands. Ekwue (2009) states that technical teachers should present skills, call for every Nigerian to strive towards self-reliance and self-dependence through productive skills development. The training of the students to be self-reliant needs well-bred teachers that would be capable of impacting the right skills effectively. The teachers must therefore possess relevant skills for teaching electrical installation to enable college students receive proper saleable skills training for proper adaptation to the world of work. It is therefore clear that every society needs proficient and well trained work force. A well trained electrical and electronic installation worker will be capable of designing, installing and repairing or maintaining electrical work.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent in which community based education skills acquisition programmes influence unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically it sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which building skills acquisition programmes influence unemployment reduction among youths.
2. Examine the extent to which electrical installation skill acquisition programmes influence unemployment reduction among youths.

Hypotheses

Ho1: Building skill acquisition programmes do not significantly influence unemployment reduction among youths.

Ho2: Electrical installation skill acquisition programmes do not significantly influence unemployment reduction among youths.

Methodology

Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study with the use of a structured questionnaire. The population comprised 3,413 unemployed youths (Cross River State Government, 2017). From this target population, a sample of 512 unemployed youths was drawn from forty communities from 28 wards of Cross River State. Stratified and accidental sampling techniques were adopted for this study. Stratified random sampling was adopted to select 50% of the local government areas, 9 LGAs were selected out of 18 LGAs. Stratified random method was also used to select wards in each of the selected LGAs, 30% of the wards (28) was selected for the study. At the community level, accidental sampling was used to select 512 respondents to participate in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Community Education Skills Acquisition Programmes and Unemployment Reduction Questionnaire (CESAPURQ) designed by the researchers. The instrument had two sections, A and B. Section A had demographic information while section B was a 26-

item questionnaire, in the form of modified four point Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 was designed to elicit responses from the respondents. The instrument was duly validated and its reliability estimate established at 0.78 to 0.98 using split-half reliability method. This reliability coefficient was considered high enough to justify the used of the instrument for the study.

The copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researchers with nine research assistants trained for the purpose. At the end of the exercise, all the copies of the questionnaire were collected back by the researchers and the research assistants. For ease of data preparation, codes were assigned to each item and a coding schedule was prepared by developing a key for each of the constructs of the instrument. The data collected for the study were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Presentation of results

Ho1: Building skills acquisition programme does not significantly influence unemployment reduction among youths.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is building skills acquisition programmes (classified into high skills, average skills, and low skills) while the dependent variables is unemployment reduction among youths. The classification of the independent variables was based on the respondents mean scores from the questionnaire. Scores above the mean were classified as being high skills acquisition while scores below the mean were classified as being low skills acquisition, and scores about the mean were classified as average skills acquisition. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical technique was employed in testing the hypothesis. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of one-way ANOVA for the influence of building skill acquisition programmes on unemployment reduction among youths

Level of skills	N	X	SD		
Low level	74	24.24	11.70		
Averagely	343	19.11	5.54		
Level highly	95	17.19	6.39		
Total	512	19.50	7.23		
Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Between group	222.3.221	2	1111.611	23.120	.000
Within groups	24472.777	509	48.080		
Total	26695.998	511			

*p1.05, critical f-ratio=3.00

Results of analysis in Table 1 showed that the calculated f-ratio for the influence of building skills acquisition (23.120) is greater than the critical f-ratio of 3.00 at .05 level of significance, at 2 and 509 degrees of freedom. This means that building skills acquisition influence unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State. Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate upheld. A post hoc comparison test was carried out using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) method to discover the pair-wise group means difference responsible for the significant influence. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Fisher's LSD for the influence of building skills acquisition on unemployment reduction among youths

Level of skills	Lower (n=74)	Average level (n=343)	High level (n=95)
Low level	24.24	5.13	7.05
Average level	5.76*	19.11	1.92
High level	6.53*	2.40*	17.19

(MSW=48.080)

*P<.05

- (a) Group means are along principal
- (b) Difference among group means are above the principal diagonals
- (c) t-values are below the principal diagonals.

Results of analysis in Table 2 showed that there were significant pair-wise group differences as follows: Low skills versus average skills acquisition ($t=5.76, p<.05$) and low skills versus high skills ($t=5.3, p<.05$) and average skills acquisition versus high skills ($t=2.40, p<.05$). If the results are considered using the groups means, there is an indication that it was unemployed youths who are lowly benefitted from building skills

acquisition ($x=23.24$) that were involved in unemployment reduction among youths than their counterparts who are averagely benefitted from skills acquisition ($x=19.11$), and highly benefitted from building skills acquisition ($x=17.19$). That is, the higher the level of building skills acquisition, the lower the level of unemployment among youths in Cross River State.

Ho2: Electrical installation and maintenance skills acquisition programme does not significantly influence unemployment reduction among youths.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is electrical installation and maintenance skill acquisition programmes (classified into high skills, average skills and low skills) while the dependent variable is unemployment reduction among youths. The classification of the independent variable was based on the respondents' mean scores from the questionnaire. Scores above the mean were classified as being high skills acquisition, while scores below the mean were classified as being low skill acquisition and scores about the mean were classified as being average skills acquisition. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical technique was employed in testing the hypothesis. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of one-way ANOVA on the influence of electrical installation and maintenance skill acquisition programmes on unemployment reduction among youths

Level of skills	N	X	SD		
Low level	86	22.31	11.53		
Averagely	292	19.27	5.65		
Level highly	134	18.19	6.24		
Total	512	19.50	7.23		
Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Between group	927.512	2	463.756	9.160	.000
Within groups	25768.486	509	50.626		
Total	26695.998	511			

* $p < 0.05$, critical f-ratio=3.00

Results of analysis in Table 3 showed that the calculated f-ratio for the influence of electrical installation and maintenance skills acquisition (9.160) is greater than the critical f-ratio of 3.00 at .05 level of significance, with 2 and 509 degrees of freedom. This means that electrical installation and maintenance skills acquisition influence unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State. Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected. A post hoc comparison test was carried out using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) methods to discover the pair-wise group means difference responsible for the significant influence. Results of the analyses are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of fisher’s LSD for the influence of electrical installation and maintenance skill acquisition programmes on unemployment reduction among youths

Level of skills	Lower (n=81)	Average level (n=296)	High level (n=135)
Low level	22.31	2.04	4.12
Average level	2.34*	19.27	1.08
High level	4.20*	1.49	18.19

(MSW=50.626)

*P<.05

- (a) Group means are along principal
- (b) Difference among group means are above the principal diagonals
- (c) t-values are below the principal diagonals.

Result of analysis in Table 4 shows that there were significant pair-wise group differences as follows: Low skills versus average skill acquisition ($t=2.34, P<.05$) and low skills versus high skills ($t=4.20, p<.05$) and average skills acquisition versus high skills ($t=1.49, p<.05$). If the results are considered using the groups means, there is an indication that it was unemployed youths who are lowly benefitted from electrical installation and maintenance skill acquisition ($x=22.31$) that were involved in unemployment reduction among youths than their counterparts who are averagely benefitted ($x=19.27$), and high benefitted ($x=18.19$). That is, the higher the level of electrical installation and maintenance skills acquisition programmes, the lower the level of unemployment among youths in Cross River State.

Discussion of findings

Building is very important to any nation’s economic development. Housing is a major part of building. The findings of this study indicated that building skills acquisition influences unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State. This finding is in agreement with Amadi and Abdullah (2012) who see housing as a key input in economic, social and civic development. The findings of this study is also in consonance with Ola (2013).The skill acquisition programmes have been identified as solution to the high youth unemployment, poverty and hunger in Nigeria, which statistics have shown that 70% of the unemployment population of the country is unskilled.

Another finding of the study indicates that electrical installation and maintenance skills acquisition influences unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State. Electrical skill is a skill learned as a result of repairs, maintenance and installation of electrical appliances. This can be learned both formally and informally in a

community, which is brilliantly needed for effective and proficient community-based education. The result of hypothesis two is in agreement with the view of Amadi and Abdullah (2012) who state that entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of setting and transforms them to profitable activities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that building and electrical installation skills acquisition programmes significantly influence unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State. Every Nigerian youth stands the chance to be self-employed and should be encouraged to take entrepreneurial skills acquisition programmes seriously. Nigerian youths should also endeavour to build in themselves the entrepreneurial traits and characteristics such as passion, perseverance, persistence and willingness to work hard which will give an individual what it takes to operate a successful going concern.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Government at all levels should embark on massive youths development programmes with entrepreneurial skills acquisition programmes.
2. More skills acquisition centers should be located in all the political wards and local government headquarters in the state.

References

- Amadi, O. B. & Abdullah, H. (2012). Perception of capacity building among youths involved in vocational skills development. *Journal of Social and Development Sciences*, 3(2), 214 – 221.
- Anerua, F. A. & Obiazi, A. E. (2009). Entrepreneurship education in home economics, problems and prospects. *Journal of Qualitative Education*, 7(2), 1 – 7.
- Awogbenle, A. C. & Iwuamadi, K. C. (2010). Youth unemployment entrepreneurship development programme as an intervention mechanism. *International Journal of Business Management*, 4(6), 231 – 236.
- Cross River State Government (CRSG) (2017). *Ministry of youths and sports annual reports*. Calabar, Nigeria: Clear lines Publications.
- Ekong, U. M. & Ekong, C. U (2016). Skill acquisition and unemployment reduction in Nigeria. A case study of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Akwa Ibom State. *International Journal of Economics and Management Science*, 3(7), 104 – 109.

- Ekwue, C. (2009). Students entrepreneurial skill acquisition through SIWES in Nigeria. An analytic approach. *International Journal of Independent Research and Studies*, 1(1), 97 – 103.
- Emefor, C. (2012). *The role of national directorate of employment*. Aba, Nigeria: Ker Expert Books.
- International Labour Organizations (2017). *Annual quarterly report*, Abuja.
- Isike, O. R. (2008). Entrepreneurship education: Strategy for national development. *Delta Business Education Journal*, 1(2), 113 – 116.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2018). *Labour force survey*, Abuja.
- Ola, A. O. (2013). Determination of skills acquisition and professional knowledge acquired by Nigerian graduates through the current curriculum. *American Journal of Business and Management Sciences*, 2(2), 245 – 255.
- Paul, E. O. (2005). Skills acquisition programmes as a panacea for poverty reduction among youths in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *Journal of Management Sciences*, 4(1), 241 – 246.
- Shaw, M. (2008). Community development. *The Politics of Community Development Journal*, 4(1), 24 – 38.
- Uloko, M. E. & Ejinkonye, U. B. (2010). Entrepreneurial education and training for job creation. *Journal of Teacher Perspective*, 4(1), 308 – 314.
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2008). *Wisconsin's component of community education*. Madison W. I. USA.