

## IMPACT OF SKILLS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACQUISITION AMONG NIGERIA YOUTHS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

The study examined “impact of Skills and entrepreneurship acquisition among Nigerian youths in national development” Three specific purposes and three research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and was conducted in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. A total population of 125 Nigerian youths who are entrepreneurs were randomly selected and studied. The instrument for data collection was a 23-items structured questionnaire developed by the researchers using the 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Three experts consisting of one from department of measurement and evaluation and two from Department of entrepreneurship education validated the instruments. Data collection was carried out by the researcher and three research assistants. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha coefficient which yielded reliability grand mean of 0.84%. The data was analyzed using the arithmetic mean with the benchmark of 3.0 as the criterion region to either agree or disagree with any questionnaire item. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship skills acquisition programs place a great role in addressing the skills gap, improving employability, and stimulating economic growth. The study concluded that skills and entrepreneurship acquisition among Nigerian youths have had a positive impact on national development. The study recommended that entrepreneurship skills acquisition and training programs should be well facilitated with trained personnel in the area of theoretical and practical to make the skills acquisition realistic as contained in the entrepreneurship curriculum.

**Keywords:** Skills, Entrepreneurship, Acquisition, Youths, National Development

### Introduction

Entrepreneurship is often considered a driver of economic development and growth in developing countries. The ability to start and manage a successful business is an essential skill for any individual, but it is particularly important for youth who are often faced with limited job opportunities. In Nigeria, youth unemployment remains a major challenge, with approximately 33.3% of the population between the ages of 15-24 being unemployed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). To address this challenge, the government and other stakeholders have focused on promoting entrepreneurship and skills acquisition among youth. In response to this challenge, the Nigerian government has prioritized youth entrepreneurship as a means of promoting economic growth and reducing unemployment rates. However, despite efforts to promote youth entrepreneurship, many young Nigerians still lack the necessary skills and knowledge to start and run successful businesses. Entrepreneurship appears to be the only sensible solution, not only to provide financial gains to the individual but to add value to society through an increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with

manifesting evidence on national development. In the market economy, individuals undertake active participation in a competitive manner to allocate scarce resources with minimum intervention from the government. Nigeria as a mixed economy exist to perform the demand and supply, skills and entrepreneurship acquisition becomes imperative in order to add to the resource allocation. Most successful economies of the world today have accepted entrepreneurship as a way of life and many citizens contribute by adding value to society through setting up personal business.

### Statement of the problem

The justification for this study is that white-collar jobs in both developed and developing nation is not tenable and that youth unemployment is on the increase with the growing number of graduates seeking for jobs. It is also evident that Nigeria has a lot of untapped resources which through skills and entrepreneurship acquisition can be harnessed to significantly add value to the society and provide employment for the youths. The research study intends to examines the impact of skills and entrepreneurship

acquisition among Nigerian youth with the view to upskill them for national development. Despite the implementation of various skills acquisition and entrepreneurship programs by institutions of learning and entrepreneurship skills acquisition centers, many Nigerian youths face barriers to accessing quality skills acquisition programs. This hampers their ability to contribute effectively to national development through entrepreneurial activities. The quality and effectiveness of entrepreneurship training programs for Nigerian youth are often inadequate. These programs may lack a comprehensive curriculum, practical learning experiences, and mentorship components, leaving aspiring entrepreneurs ill-prepared to navigate the challenges of starting and managing successful businesses. As a result, the potential impact of entrepreneurship training on job creation, economic growth, and sectoral development remains unrealized. Hence, it is pertinent that a study be carried out to determine the impact of skills and entrepreneurship acquisition among youths in national development.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study was to determine the impact of skills and entrepreneurship acquisition among Nigerian youth in national development. Specifically, the study determined;

- 1) the roles of entrepreneurship training in empowering Nigerian youth.
- 2) the extent skills acquisition programs contributed to the entrepreneurial activities of Nigerian youth.
- 3) the challenges inherent to youth skills acquisition and job creation.
- 4) their socio-economic status, with a focus on identifying the key factors that influence their entrepreneurial success.
- 5) their subsequent impact on job creation and economic growth in the country

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What are the roles of entrepreneurship training in empowering Nigerian youths?
- 2) To what extent have skills acquisition programs contributed to the entrepreneurial activities of Nigerian youth?
- 3) What are the challenges inherent to youth skills acquisition and job creation?
- 4) To what extent have their socio-economic status influenced their entrepreneurial success?
- 5) What are the impact of skills and entrepreneurship acquisition on job creation and economic growth in the country?

#### **Literature Review**

Entrepreneurship is the ability and readiness to develop, organize and run a business enterprise along with its uncertainties in order to make a profit (Audretsch and Lehmann, 2017). Entrepreneurship to them is the art of starting and owning a personal business instead of working for someone else in his business. Entrepreneurship is the process of starting, managing, and growing a new business venture. It is the ability to create something new and valuable from an idea. Entrepreneurs require a unique set of skills that enable them to navigate the challenges of starting and running a business successfully. Egbule (2018) also views entrepreneurship as a human-creative act by which enterprises or organizations come into existence and involves the effort of an individual in identifying viable business opportunities in an environment and managing and exploiting the opportunities. He added that entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision change and value creation, requiring careful planning, application of initiative, and passion in pursuit of opportunities for value creation regardless of the resources at hand.

Arising from the above definitions, entrepreneurship is the interplay of initiative, skills, and acceptance of risk to add value to society with the expectant profit in the long run. By implication the risk incur is a learning process through which goals are achieved. Skills refer to the competencies, knowledge, and abilities that an individual has acquired through formal education, training, or experience that enable them to perform specific tasks effectively. According to the World Economic Forum, skills are "the abilities and competencies that allow individuals to perform tasks effectively in a given context" (WEF, 2020). Skills are the abilities and knowledge that a person possesses, which enable them to perform tasks efficiently and effectively. According to the World Economic Forum, skills can be divided into three categories: cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, and technical skills (World Economic Forum, 2018). Cognitive skills refer to the ability to think critically, solve problems, and make decisions. Interpersonal skills refer to the ability to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and manage relationships. Technical skills refer to the ability to perform specific tasks or use specific tools and technologies. Skills is the ability to carry out a task with determined results often within a given amount of time, energy, or both. Skills can only be innate. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills.

Entrepreneurship acquisition refers to the process of acquiring the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to

start and manage a new business venture. According to the European Commission, entrepreneurship acquisition involves "the development of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes, knowledge about entrepreneurship, and practical experience in setting up and running a business" (European Commission, 2019). Entrepreneurship acquisition can occur through formal education, training programs, mentoring, and hands-on experience. Entrepreneurship acquisition, also known as entrepreneurial education or training, refers to the process of developing entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and attitudes through formal or informal education and training. This process helps individuals to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to start and run a successful business (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). According to some scholars, entrepreneurship acquisition involves three main components: entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial skills, and entrepreneurial knowledge (Gibb, 2002; Lüthje & Franke, 2003). The entrepreneurial mindset refers to the attitudes, beliefs, and values that enable individuals to identify and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Entrepreneurial skills refer to the practical abilities that entrepreneurs need to start and manage a business, such as financial management, marketing, and leadership. Entrepreneurial knowledge refers to the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship and the broader business environment. Entrepreneurship acquisition, therefore, involves developing a broad range of skills and knowledge that are essential for starting and managing a new business venture. This includes skills related to market research, business planning, financial management, marketing, and sales. It also involves developing a range of soft skills, such as communication, leadership, and teamwork. Nigeria, like many developing nations, has a large population of youths who are faced with the challenge of high unemployment rates and lack of skills. The acquisition of skills and entrepreneurship has been identified as a potential solution to this problem. This article seeks to explore the impact of skills and entrepreneurship acquisition among Nigerian youths in national development.

#### ***Impact of Skills and Entrepreneurship Acquisition among Nigerian Youth***

The acquisition of skills and entrepreneurship among Nigerian youth has had a positive impact on national development. Studies have shown that youth who have acquired skills and entrepreneurship training are more likely to start and manage successful businesses, thus contributing to job creation and economic growth (Aina & Akinola, 2019; Ezeamama et al., 2018). Furthermore, the acquisition of new skills has been shown to improve

individuals' employability and increase their earning potential (Okafor, 2018). Skills acquisition programs have been implemented in Nigeria to equip young people with vocational skills that can enable them to be self-employed and contribute to national development. These programs are implemented by various government agencies and NGOs, such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC).

Several studies have shown that skill acquisition programs have a positive impact on the employability and income generation of young people in Nigeria. For example, a study by Daramola and Olaogun (2020) found that skill acquisition programs in Nigeria have contributed to poverty reduction and youth empowerment. The study showed that young people who acquired vocational skills through government or non-governmental programs had a higher chance of being self-employed and earning higher incomes than those without vocational skills.

#### ***Impact of Entrepreneurship on Nigerian Youth***

Entrepreneurship has been identified as one of the key ways to address youth unemployment and promote economic growth in Nigeria. In recent years, the Nigerian government has implemented various programs and policies to promote entrepreneurship among young people, such as YouWin! The program, the N-Power program, and the Bank of Industry Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) program. Furthermore, a study by Ewuga and Ebute (2019) found that entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on the entrepreneurial intentions of Nigerian youth. The study showed that entrepreneurship education increased the likelihood of young people starting their businesses and contributing to economic growth. The acquisition of skills and entrepreneurship among Nigerian youth has gained significant attention due to its potential impact on national development. Skills Acquisition and Youth Empowerment

#### ***Related Empirical Studies***

Several studies have highlighted the positive relationship between skills acquisition and youth empowerment. Aina and Akinola (2019) found that entrepreneurship education and training significantly enhanced the empowerment of Nigerian youth. Skills acquisition programs provide youth with the necessary knowledge and competencies to start and manage their own businesses, thus improving their economic and social status. Skills and entrepreneurship acquisition among Nigerian youth contribute to job creation and economic growth. Ezeamama et al. (2018) emphasized the role of entrepreneurship in job creation and reducing

youth unemployment in Nigeria. They found that youth who received entrepreneurship training were more likely to start their own businesses, thereby creating job opportunities for themselves and others. Similarly, Okafor (2018) highlighted the importance of skills acquisition programs in addressing the skills gap and increasing employability, thus stimulating economic growth.

### Methodology

The researchers adopted a descriptive survey research design for their study. The data were collected using a questionnaire. 125 structured questionnaire items were placed on five points Likert-type rating scale with response options of (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree,

(3) Undecided, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree. It was validated by three experts. Two from the Department of Vocational and entrepreneurship education and one from the department of Measurement and evaluation to determine the internal consistency of the instrument Cronbach's alpha reliability was used to which resulted to .87. Mean was used for the analysis using a mean benchmark of 3.0 for accepting mean. Any mean score less than 3.0 stand disagreed while mean score of 3.0 and above is agreed

### Results

1) What are the roles of entrepreneurship training in empowering Nigerian youths?

S/n	Item statement	Mean	Decision
1	The entrepreneurship training I received has positively Influenced my socioeconomic status.	3.18	Agreed
2	The availability of entrepreneurship training programs plays a crucial role in empowering Nigerian youth.	4.79	Agreed
3	The entrepreneurship training I received has equipped me with the necessary skills and knowledge to start and manage a business successfully	4.26	Agreed
4	Access to mentorship and guidance significantly contributes to the entrepreneurial success of Nigerian youth.	4.75	Disagreed
5	Lack of financial resources is not an obstacle for Nigerian youth to participate in entrepreneurship training programs.	1.82	Agreed
6	Personal motivation and determination are key factors that influence the entrepreneurial success of Nigerian youth.	4.70	Agreed
7	Government support and policies play a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of entrepreneurship training programs for Nigerian youth.	3.17	Agreed
8	Lack of awareness about available entrepreneurship training programs is a barrier for Nigerian youth to access them.	3.00	Agreed
9	Continuous learning and updating of skills are essential for sustaining entrepreneurial success among Nigerian youth.	5.00	Agreed

Table 1 above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 had mean scores above the cut-off point of 3.0 which indicates that entrepreneurship training plays a great role in empowering and enhancing the socioeconomic status of Nigerian youth to succeed in entrepreneurship. Item 5 disagreed with emphasis on

mentorship and guidance as not key to entrepreneurial success.

2) To what extent have skills acquisition programs contributed to the entrepreneurial activities of Nigerian youth?

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	Decision
1	The skills acquisition programs I have participated in have equipped me with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in entrepreneurial activities	4.47	Agreed
2	The entrepreneurial activities I have pursued as a result of skills acquisition programs have contributed to job creation in Nigeria.	5.00	Agreed
3	Skills acquisition programs have had a positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria through the entrepreneurial activities of the youth.	4.61	Agreed
4	The skills I acquired through these programs have helped me overcome challenges commonly faced by young entrepreneurs in Nigeria.	1.38	Disagreed
5	Skills acquisition programs have adequately addressed the specific needs and interests of Nigerian youth in terms of entrepreneurial development.	3.74	Agreed
6	Technical, managerial and soft skills are key to building entrepreneurial abilities of Nigerian youths to succeed in business.	4.85	Agreed

Table 2 has six items to ascertain the extent skills acquisition programs contributed to the entrepreneurial activities of Nigerian youth and their subsequent impact on job creation and economic growth in the country. The responses from items 1,2,3,5 and 6 agreed to this fact that both professional managerial and soft skills can be acquired to enhance

entrepreneurship activities which can prepare youth to contribute to national development through job creation. Item 4 on the other hand shows many Nigeria youths have failed to apply their skills to job creation.

3) What are the challenges inherent to youth skills acquisition and job creation?

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	Decision
1	Lack of access to quality education and vocational training hinders youth skills acquisition and job creation.	4.65	Agreed
2	Inadequate financial support and resources pose significant challenges to youth skills acquisition and job creation.	5.00	Agreed
3	Insufficient mentorship and guidance are significant barriers to the effective utilization of skills acquired by Nigerian youth for job creation.	3.93	Agreed
4	Limited access to market opportunities and networks poses a challenge to the growth and sustainability of youth-led entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria.	4.00	Agreed
5	Absence of supportive policies and infrastructures by government affects youth skills acquisition and job creation	4.86	Agreed
6	Limited access to technology and digital skills presents challenges to youth skills acquisition and job creation.	1.60	Disagreed
7	The mismatch between skills acquired and industry requirements hinders youth in finding suitable employment opportunities.	4.00	Agreed
8	Limited availability of job opportunities and market demand affects youth skills acquisition and job creation.	1.39	Disagreed

Table 3 reveals that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 with mean scores above the acceptance region acknowledged the existence of barriers competing either with skills acquisition or with job creation. Conversely, items 6 and 8 revealed that skills acquisition and job creation are not affected by technology, digital skills, job opportunities and market demand because of existence of other alternatives.

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and market demand because of existence of other alternatives.

### Discussion of the Findings

Finding from research question 1 reveal that, entrepreneurship training with varieties of programmes can change the entrepreneurial capacity of Nigerian youth. It was also discovered that training helps in

preparing and equipping the youth with the requisite skills and knowledge to create job and provide employment and add to the GDP of the nation. Equally, mentorship and guidance as well as self-motivation and determination play good roles in equipping youths with entrepreneurial skills to enhance productivity. The researchers also found out that, financial resource problem should not constrain youth from skills acquisition.

Research study 2 reveals that, those who have acquired the skills through training and education have all it takes to engage in entrepreneurial activities. It was also found out that, job creation is easier with the various entrepreneurship skills acquisition programmes in place. Those who have initiated personal businesses revealed that they have applied the skills in overcoming possible challenges confronting the progress of their business which other people have failed to tackle. Also, the finding reveals the usefulness of technical, managerial and soft skills among others as key to building entrepreneurial abilities to succeed in business enterprises.

The finding from research item 3 shows that both poor access to quality education and training, inadequate financial support and resources, limited access to market opportunities and networks, absence or otherwise constant change in government policies and inadequate infrastructures as well as mismatch between the skills acquired and industry requirements pose great challenge to potential entrepreneurs.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, skills and entrepreneurship acquisition among Nigerian youth have had a positive impact on national development. The acquisition of new skills and knowledge enhances individuals' employability and contributes to economic growth and development. Youth who have acquired skills and entrepreneurship training are more likely to start and manage successful businesses, thus contributing to job creation and economic growth. Therefore, investing in inclusive skills

development programs could promote entrepreneurship acquisition among Nigerian youth, which could contribute to national development.

### Implications and Recommendations

Skills and entrepreneurship acquisition are important foundations through which Nigerian youth can receive training and education that will enable them fit well in the world of work and contribute meaningfully to national development. Hence all stakeholders responsible for any form of entrepreneurship skills acquisition programme should ensure a holistic approach is applied to train the manpower needed in the entrepreneurship sector. The findings will help all bodies responsible for training youths to divulge all the needed resources that should make Nigeria youth to contribute to enterprise development for employment to thrive. The youth should be able to understand their roles in national development of the country. Because being aware of the need to be job creators rather than job seekers they will see challenges as stepping stones to achieving their objectives in line with the entrepreneurial goals of the society.

Based on the findings, the following recommendation were made,

(1) Entrepreneurship skills acquisition and training programmes should be well facilitated with trained personnel in the area of theoretical and practical to make the skills acquisition realistic as contained in the entrepreneurship curriculum.

(2) Youth are the pride of any nation. To this end, they should know that success in every business require self-determination and patience and also harnessing the economic resources can be enhanced when they don't allow challenges and lack of will to mar their chances.

(3) The government and other stakeholders should continue to implement policies and initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and skills acquisition among youth to address the unemployment challenge in Nigeria.

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