
PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SKILL ACQUISITION CENTERS' TOWARDS JOB CREATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION AMONG GRADUATES IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to investigate the perception of skills acquisition centres in job creation and poverty reduction among graduates in Kaduna state. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A sample of 213 graduates was selected using purposive sampling technique. A 4-point rating scale questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used for data analysis. Results indicated that, types of vocational training of skills acquisition centres influences job creation among graduates in Kaduna State. It was also found that, availability of training materials in skills acquisition centres had an influence on job creation among graduates. The study also showed that, government assistance to the graduates of skills acquisition centres influences poverty reduction among graduates. It was concluded that, skills acquisition centres have a significant influence in job creation and poverty reduction among graduates. It was recommended among other things that, vocational training that has direct relevance to the lives of the trainees and need of the society should be offered in skill acquisition centres. Skills acquisition centres should be well-equipped with the materials and equipment needed for effective skills acquisition training.

Keywords: Influence, Skill acquisition centres, Job creation, Poverty reduction, Graduates

INTRODUCTION

Federal Bureau of Statistics and Manpower Board has it that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country; with 64 million of them unemployed, while 1.6 million are underemployed (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010). This is as a result of high rural-urban exodus and lack of employable skills among others. The scourge which has often caused problems for government in industrialized nations elsewhere is now assuming gargantuan dimension in Nigeria. It is a well-known fact that effective training in skills acquisition has immensely

contributed to the technological excellence and economic self-reliance of the industrialized nations. It is for this reason that Ezeji and Okorie (1999), while stressing the importance of skill acquisition in national growth, emphatically contended that Nigeria's socio-economic problems will be drastically reduced if people are given adequate vocational training in skills, raw materials, machineries and equipment. Umunadi (2010), see skills as, abilities and competencies which are done through the exertion of physical and mental energy. Therefore, skills are the abilities gained through practice

and experience, which help people to solve some of their identified problems within and outside their environment.

Skills acquisition on the other hand, involves the development of a new skills, practice or a way of doing things usually gained through training or experience. Ihebereme (2008), observed that, skill acquisition acts as a rehabilitator, re-orientator, motivator and empowerment to the underprivileged. Skills acquisition is the process of acquiring or gaining effective and ready knowledge in developing one's aptitudes and ability in a particular field (Ihebereme, 2010). The development of skills acquisition centres is one among others policies embarked upon by Nigeria government with the sole aim of alleviating poverty, reducing youth restiveness, sophisticated crime, corruption rate, rural-urban drift, unemployment and other societal vices.

Adebisi and Oni (2012), reported that, the possession of employable skills is a major determinant of how readily new job seekers find employment, it is only with skilled men that materials can be harnessed, manipulated and transformed into products. With quality skills acquisition programmes, countries like America Britain, Germany and Japan have rehabilitated drug addicts, school-dropouts and several destitute who eventually contributed meaningfully to the economy and the development of high volume of productivity in their countries. The Nigerian government being aware of this established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) with the sold aim of providing employment to the registered un-employed youths.

"Job Creation" is the notion that jobs are provided in response to some sort of event or situation. It can be seen as when people are engaged in meaningful activities that can help them fend for themselves and their immediate families in a society which can bring about the physical and economic development of a nation.

Poverty is defined as failure of an individual to meet basic requirements of a decent life; these basic

requirements are not restricted to economic circle but extend to society and spiritual circle of life (Ezeji, 2000). Ojo (2010), observed that poverty is as old and widespread as mankind. Sometimes, majority of people suffer intermittent hunger. In an attempt to reduce or minimize the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria, the director-general of the national directorate of employment, Abubakar Mohammed in 2012, disclosed that the federal government had so far established 39 functional skills acquisition training centres in the country. The then, minister of labour and productivity, Emeka Wogu as cited in daily time's newspaper (2012), reiterated the federal government's commitment to creating jobs for youths in the country, saying they will use job creation to confront the challenges of insecurity in the country. It is pertinent to state that because of the contending forces particularly the down-turn of the economy, it is aptly difficult for governments or even parents to be depended upon in the on-going socio-economic scenario. Hence, the youths are called to rise and depend on their skills and knowledge (Achegbulu; 2004).

Gone are the days in Nigeria when fresh graduates are sought by employers of labour for jobs that came with housing and car ownership as incentives. Recently, inadequate employment potential made crime a more attractive option for some university and other higher institution graduates as well as school dropouts. This is because it is common to find graduates roaming the streets, five years and even more after graduating from schools, in search of white collar jobs that may not be available. The search for better jobs has drawn thousands of Nigerian youths some without saleable skills from rural areas to urban cities. Apparently, few of those with requisite education and skills are reluctantly absorbed into government jobs, while those who possess neither sufficient academic nor technical skills live in subsistence level and often out of desperation and frustration constitute a nuisance to the society

(Umunadi, 2013), thereby lending force to crimes in the society.

Consequent upon the prevalence of unemployment and poverty among youths, the Federal Government in 1986, established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) centres across the nation with many skills acquisition programmes to empower the youths with a view to alleviating unemployment by imparting employable skills into the registered unemployed persons through vocational skill development training. In spite of these developments by the government, the rate of crime and poverty are on the increase on daily basis, creating a miasma in our communities where the youths are used by politicians and other bad eggs to perpetuate evil acts. It is against this backdrop that the researcher carried out an investigation on the perception of skills acquisition centres in job creation and poverty reduction among graduates in Kaduna state and also suggested possible solutions to addressing issues of unemployment and poverty among graduates in the study area.

Research Questions:

1. what is the graduates' perception on the influence on the types of vocational training in skills acquisition centres towards job creation?
2. what is graduates' perception of the influence of availability of training materials in skills acquisition centres in job creation among graduates?
3. what is graduates' perception of the influence of government assistance to skills acquisition centres in poverty reduction among graduates?

Hypotheses:

1. Types of vocational training acquired in skill acquisition centres has no significant influence in job creation among graduates.

2. Availability of training materials for skill acquisition in training centres has no significant influence in job creation among graduates.
3. Government assistance to skill acquisition centres has no significant influence in poverty reduction among graduates.

METHODOLOGY

The Research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 450 (2014) graduates of three NDE skills acquisition centres in Kaduna north, south and central senatorial zones. A total sample of 213 graduates were purposively selected, seventy-one (71) each from the three senatorial zones skills acquisition centres. Four-point rating scale structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was pilot tested using 20 respondents. Data collected from the pilot study were subjected to statistical analysis using test-retest. Reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained from the instruments which showed that the instrument was reliable for the study.

The questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents in their respective directions with the help of three research assistants. The respondents were instructed to fill the instrument and returned them immediately. Two hundred and ten (210) copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and subjected to statistical analysis, where the mean score of 2.5 and above was considered as an index for acceptance while regression analysis was used to test the three (3) research hypotheses. All the null hypotheses were tested and rejected at 0.05 level of significant.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research question one: *what is graduates perception of the influence of types of vocational training in skills acquisition centres in job creation?*

Table 1: Influence of types of vocational training in job creation among graduates

Opinion	N	Total score	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision rule	Decision
Agree	129	387	2.6	1.3	2.6 > 2.5	Agreed
Disagree	81	162				
Total	210	549				

Table 1 answered research question one. The table showed that, 129 respondents with a total score of 387 had the opinion that, the types of vocational training offered in skills acquisition centres influences job creation among graduates in the study area. While 81 respondents having a total score of 162 were of the view that, the types of vocational training engaged by the trainees has no influence in job creation among graduates suggesting that, all vocational training provide the same job opportunities among graduates. Question

items 1-13 were used to answer this research question and the mean score was 2.6 which is greater than the 2.5 bench mark for agreement. This therefore indicated that, the respondents were of the view that, the types of vocational training engaged in by trainees influenced their chances of being employed.

Research question two: *what is graduates' perception of the influence of availability of training materials in skill acquisition centres in job creation?*

Table 2: Influence of availability of training materials in job creation among graduates

Opinion	N	Total score	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision rule	Decision
Agree	142	426	2.7	1.2	2.7 > 2.5	Agreed
Disagree	68	136				
Total	210	562				

Table 2 answered research question two on the perception of the influence of availability of training materials in skills acquisition centres in job creation among graduates. The table revealed that, availability of training materials in skills acquisition centres influences job creation among graduates in Kaduna state. This is

because the mean score (2.7) is greater than the 2.5 bench mark for agreement.

Research question three: *what is graduates' perception of the influence of government assistance to skills acquisition centres in poverty reduction?*

Table 3: Influence of government assistance to graduates of skills acquisition centres in poverty reduction.

Opinion	N	Total score	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision rule	Decision
Agree	168	504	2.8	1.1	2.8 > 2.5	Agreed
Disagree	42	84				
Total	210	588				

The result in table 3 answered research question three on the perception of the influence of

government assistance to skills acquisition centres in poverty reduction among graduates. Question items 20-

25 were analysed and the result showed that, 168 respondents with a total score of 504 agreed that, government assistance to skills acquisition centres helps to reduce poverty among graduates. Some 42 respondents with a total score of 84 disagree with the notion that, government assistance to skills acquisition centres helps to reduce poverty among graduates. However, the mean score for this research question was 2.8 which was greater than the 2.5 bench mark for

agreement. This therefore indicated that, respondents agreed that, government assistance influenced poverty reduction among graduates in skills acquisition centres in Kaduna state.

Null hypothesis one: *There is no significant influence of types of vocational training in skills acquisition centres in job creation among youths*

Table 4: Influence of types of vocational training in job creation among graduates

Model	B	Std.Err	t.	R-crit	R-cal	R ²	adjustedR ²	Sig
Type of VT	23.724	.534	6.973	.088	.218	.048	.047	.000
Job creation	.431	.232	1.857					

Table 4 presents regression analysis of the influence of types of vocational training in skills acquisition centres in job creation among graduates. From the table, the computation indicated a calculated r value of 0.218 greater than the critical r value of 0.088 at 0.05 level of significance (p=0.000). The result indicated that, the types of vocational training of skills acquisition centres has significant influence in job creation among graduates in Kaduna state. Therefore,

the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of types of vocational training in skills acquisition centres in job creation among graduates was rejected.

Null hypothesis two: *There is no significant influence of the availability of training materials for skill acquisition centres in job creation among graduates*

Table 5: Influence of availability of training materials in skill acquisition centers in job creation among graduates.

Model	B	Std.Err	t.	R-crit	R-cal	R ²	adjustedR ²	Sig
Avail. of materials	24.024	.730	32.906	.088	.206	.042	.041	.000
Job creation	.521	.612	.851					

Table 5 showed that, availability of training materials in skill acquisition centers has significant influence in job creation among graduates. This is because, the r calculated (0.206) was greater than r critical (0.088) at 0.05 level of significance (p=0.000).

Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant influence was rejected.

Null hypothesis three: *There is no significant influence of government assistance to skills acquisition centres in poverty reduction among graduates.*

Table 6: Influence of government assistance to skill acquisition centres in poverty reduction.

Model	B	Std.Err	t.	R-crit	R-cal	R ²	adjustedR ²	Sig
Govt. assistance	26.103	.922	25.057	.088	.211	.044	.043	.000
Poverty reduction	.622	.510	1.219					

From the table 6, the computation indicated a calculated r value of 0.211 greater than the critical r value of 0.088 at 0.05 level of significance ($p=0.000$). The result indicated that, government assistance to skill acquisition centres greatly reduce poverty in Kaduna state. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of government assistance to graduates of skills acquisition centres in poverty reduction was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study indicated that, the types of vocational training engaged by trainees in skills acquisition centres has an influence in job creation among graduates. This finding as revealed in table 1 indicated that, majority of respondents (129) agreed that, types of vocational training in skills acquisition centres influences job creation among graduates. Since the calculated mean score of the respondents was 2.6 greater than the 2.5 bench mark for agreement, the researcher concluded that, respondents agreed with the notion that, the types of vocational training in skill acquisition centres affects job creation among its graduates. The results on table 4 further revealed that, the influence of the types of vocational training of skills acquisition centres in job creation was statistically significant. Regression analysis indicated that, r -calculated (0.218) was greater than r -critical (0.088) at 0.05 level of significance ($p=0.000$). This finding was in line with Datol and Padung (2000), who opined that, some vocational areas may require longer training period, more sophisticated equipment and may offer greater opportunities. This is further supported by Ebong and Asodike (2011), who conducted a research on Skill Preferences of Participants of Skills Acquisition Programmes (SAPs) in River State where they suggested that, some trainees preferred some vocational areas than others based on the view that, they offer greater employment opportunities and job

creation. Ngige (2012), viewed that, some vocational areas are more productive, highly profitable and require little capital to start up.

The study also found that, availability of training materials in skills acquisition centres influenced job creation among graduates in Kaduna State. This finding was presented in table 2, where it was clearly indicated that, availability of training materials in skill acquisition centers has an influence in job creation among graduate in the study area. Result on the table revealed that, respondents who agreed that, availability of training materials in skills acquisition centres influences job creation among graduates were 142 with 426 total score. Those who disagreed were 68 with a total score of 136. The mean score however was 2.7 greater than 2.5 bench mark for agreement. This therefore suggested that, respondents agreed that, availability of training materials in skills acquisition centres influence job creation among graduates in the study area. Regression analysis in table 5 also revealed that, the influence of availability of training materials in skill acquisition centres in job creation among graduates is statistically significant ($p=0.000$). This is because, r -calculated (0.206) was greater than r -critical (0.088). This finding agreed with the finding of Ngige (2012), who maintained that, among factors affecting skills acquisition training are inadequate resources and physical facilities required for smooth running of the skills acquisition programme. Adebisi and Oni (2012), acknowledged that, insufficient equipment and training facilities is one of the major factors affecting vocational education programmes. This finding was further supported by Omofonmwan and Chukwuedo (2013), who identified inadequacy of facilities as one of the major problems affecting the activities of skills acquisition centres in Nigeria.

The study also revealed that, government assistance to skills acquisition centres helped in poverty reduction. This was presented in table 3, which shows

that, majority of the respondents (168) agreed that, government assistance to skills acquisition centres has an influence in poverty reduction among graduates in Kaduna State. Those on the contrary view were 42 with 84 total score. The total score for both agree and disagree was 588 while the mean score was 2.8 greater than the 2.5 bench mark for agreement suggesting that, respondents agreed with the view that, government assistance to skills acquisition centers helps to reduce poverty among graduates. Table 6 on the other hand indicated that, government assistance to skills acquisition centres has a significant influence in poverty reduction among graduates in Kaduna state. This is because, r -calculated (0.211) was greater than r -critical (0.088) at 0.05 level of significant ($p=0.000$). This agreed with researchers such as Ogundele (2010, 2013) and Akola (2013), who all opined that, government assistance to skills acquisition programme helps graduates to become self-reliant, reduce their level of poverty and improve their standard of living. Igwe and Aragwu (2014), also argued that, government assistance to the graduates of skills acquisition centres will serve as a powerful tool of reducing unemployment and poverty among graduates.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- I. The types of vocational training offered to trainees in skills acquisition centres determines their

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chances of employability and their potentials for self-reliance.

- II. Availability of training materials in skills acquisition centres determines the quality of graduate output, and their ability to be gainfully employed or become self-employed.
- III. Government assistance to trainees before and after graduation, will help them to become self-reliant, reduce their poverty level and improve their standard of living.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made by the researcher.

- I. Vocational training that has direct relevance to the lives of the trainees should be offered in skill acquisition centres so that, they can easily be absorbed into industries or become self-employed.
- II. Skill acquisition centres should be well-equipped with the needed materials and equipment by the government, NGOs and other private organizations for effective skills acquisition training.
- III. Assistance in-terms of soft-loan or equipment (where appropriate) should be given to graduates of skills acquisition centres by the government and commercial banks to encourage them become self-employed.

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