

Gender separation of entrepreneurship skills acquisition programmes for economic development

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Abstract

Learning entrepreneurial skills has taken on a significance never before seen as a result of their significance to economic growth. In this study, the impact of skill development initiatives on Nigeria's economic development was examined. The study used two objectives: to look into how gender differences in skill acquisition affected economic development and to determine how skill acquisition affected economic development. A quantitative method in the form of a questionnaire was used to sample two hundred (200) unemployed youths. Results revealed that there is a significant gender difference in skill acquisition for economic development and that skill acquisition has a significant influence on economic development. The study concluded that youths perceive skill acquisition programmes to have a positive effect on employment creation. Likewise, gender equality is to be considered in skills acquisition training. In general, the involvement of both genders in skill acquisition programmes will go a long way toward improving the nation's economic development.

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Introduction

In the majority of developing countries, unemployment has grown to be a serious problem (Adanlawo, Owolabi, and Vezi-Magigaba, 2021). For instance, the majority of young people in Nigeria are unemployed. The majority of young people who are unemployed are graduates of universities, according to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity Report (2018). Most young people have turned to criminal activity to survive as a result of unemployment (Onwuka, Ugwu, and Chukwuma, 2020; Ikuteyijo, 2020). Few people have been successful in leaving the nation in search of greener pastures. According to Achor (2021), the country's human capital resources are being depleted as a result of young people leaving the country. Due to the difficulty of finding a white-collar job, alternative forms of self-employment have emerged. For instance, graduates who wanted an alternative career path chose to start small businesses.

Small businesses have long been acknowledged as major forces behind industrialisation and economic growth (Adanlawo, Reddy, and Rugbeer, 2021). Accordingly, there is a wealth of evidence from both developed and developing nations demonstrating how skill development through small and medium-sized businesses contributes to the development of any nation. In addition, encouraging skill acquisition is a desirable tool for job creation and a tactic for reducing poverty in developing African nations where the rate of population growth outpaces employment growth. As a result, several developing nations are paying more attention to the development of the private sector due to the widespread acceptance of the role of skill acquisition as an engine of growth (Nkomo and Adanlawo, 2023).

The importance of skill development in the growth of a nation's economy has never been more prominent. Economically, developing one's skills helps to create small and medium-sized businesses that provide young people and unemployed graduates with alternative employment opportunities (Chaka and Adanlawo, 2023). Learning new skills empowers people on a social level, encourages innovation, and changes attitudes (United Nations, 2010). Chidiebere (2020) asserts that developing skills aids entrepreneurs in becoming flexible to changing conditions by fostering self-reliance, which lessens the issue of unemployment and fosters economic development. It is interesting that more and more Nigerian graduates from tertiary institutions are realising today how difficult it is to find a white-collar job in the current economic climate. According to Adanlawo, Nkomo, and Vezi-Magigaba (2023), stable and permanent career paths are no longer typical. As things stand, training young people, especially recent graduates, to be motivated to learn entrepreneurship skills and start small businesses requires preparing them to become successful, independent employers of labor and, as a result, to make an economic contribution. To acquire skills, the proper knowledge, attitudes, thought patterns, and character traits must be learned. This will allow the acquirers to build the intellectual, emotional, and moral character necessary to position them for a better future.

The aim of the study was to determine how entrepreneurship skill development programmes in Nigeria affect economic expansion. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to determine the influence of gender on skill acquisition for economic development and to find out the influence of skill acquisition on economic development. Two hypotheses were drawn from the objectives:

Gender has no significant influence on skill acquisition for economic development.

Skill acquisition has a significant influence on economic development.

Conceptual issues

Depending on one's orientation, the word "skill" can have a number of different definitions. Adeniyi (2022) defines a skill as an organised series of actions that have been masterfully performed and are typically displayed in a flexible but systematic temporal pattern. Along with knowledge, practical skills, dexterity, and tact are also included. The author further defined skill as the capacity to repeatedly carry out an action with dexterity. An established behavioral pattern is what we refer to as a skill. It involves developing performance capacity. Possessing a skill entails demonstrating the habit of acting, thinking, and acting in a way that, with practice, becomes natural to the person. According to Adanlawo and Chaka (2022), one is considered skilled when a procedure is carried out perfectly, successfully, and with an eye toward results. According to Adeniyi (2022), a skill is the habit of acting, thinking, and behaving in a certain way so frequently or repeatedly that it becomes second nature to the person. Education institutions, particularly higher education institutions, are crucial in this process because skill development is important for making the best use of a nation's natural resources (Adanlawo, Vezi-Magigaba, and Owolabi, 2021).

A skill acquisition programme can be regarded as experience that will enable one to participate in an occupation at different levels and to be well-equipped to produce goods and services (Adanlawo and

Nkomo, 2023; Utete, 2021). Similarly, Magaji (2015) describes skill acquisition programmes as educational training that is capable of enhancing recipients' opportunities to secure jobs in various sectors of the economy or to be self-dependent by being job creators. According to the author, skills acquisition programmes are geared towards providing participants with transformative capabilities that will enable socio-economic development.

Omidiji and Ogwu (2019) categorise skills in any training programme into technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. The authors claim that technical abilities require knowledge of and competence in a particular activity, particularly one that involves methods, processes, procedures, or techniques. Human skills are an individual's capacity to function well in a group setting in order to promote teamwork within the group that he leads. Understanding the interconnection of an organisation's multiple functions is the third one, which is a conceptual skill. Idris and Mbudai (2017) recommend using technical skills in Nigerian schools to empower or prepare young people for the workforce. There is little doubt that learning about entrepreneurship education provides students with the opportunity to develop the information and attitudes necessary to take constructive actions, to create, and to become entrepreneurs. Since it is widely believed that gaining essential skills increases a country's productive potential, Nigerian society is conscious of the need to prepare every citizen to make an effective contribution to the welfare of the nation. Additionally, it has been noted that the greatest welfare is only attained when each person contributes to the fullest extent of their abilities (Zondi, Nkom, and Adanlawo, 2023; Utete, 2023).

According to Kabir and Jazuli (2017) and Chaka and Adanlawo (2023), developing new skills is one of the most reliable ways for graduates (youths) to enter the workforce. Omidiji and Ogwu (2019) assert that skill acquisition will lead to an increase in the industrious power of a nation. This indicates that a nation whose citizens are well equipped will make a meaningful contribution to the welfare of the nation. As stated by Adanlawo and Vezi-Magigaba (2022), the acquisition of knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship is important in today's modern technological society in order to cope with the complexities. Therefore, it is pivotal for an individual who opts for entrepreneurship training to possess qualities that would enable their success. Therefore, we opine that the acquisition of appropriate skills in entrepreneurship is necessary for every young person's sustainable empowerment. Unfortunately, the majority of Nigeria's graduates do not possess skills relevant for self-employment because of the poor implementation of entrepreneurship development programmes in higher education institutions (Ekong and Ekong, 2016). Competencies acquired through entrepreneurial skills will assist an individual in coping with the rapidly changing technological environment. As such, business venture preparation should be viewed as an instrument for changing a country's resources into finished goods and services that will advance a better quality of life (Adanlawo and Vezi-Magigaba, 2021).

Gender contribution to economic development

Olagbaju (2020), Maji (2012), and Levi (2014) aver that women and men have different or comparable roles, responsibilities, and opportunities in a particular culture. The author defines gender as the socially and culturally imposed roles and values that shape how women and men relate to one another in a particular society. It is undoubtedly not about the biological or bodily differences that are typically referred to as "sex." The economic contribution of certain sex groups is important to note. For a nation to develop economically, development policies should focus on gender equality (Adanlawo and Chaka, 2022). The development of the economy is aided by gender equality (Manda and Mwakubo, 2014). We can therefore assert that gender concerns are crucial to economic development policies. Therefore, every nation should endeavor to empower men and women in order to develop economically.

Empowerment

According to Adanlawo and Vezi-Magigaba (2021b), empowerment entails giving people various opportunities to have an impact on changes in their standard of living. The authors argue that giving people the power to create original works of art can inspire citizens. Another way to think about empowerment is as a way to introduce people to the knowledge or training necessary to become productive. The objective of a skill acquisition programme as a measure of empowerment, according to Ukwai, Angioha, and Ojong-Ejoh (2017), is to prepare and equip people with suitable skills that they can use in the future. This indicates that developing the right skills might help youths reorient their values and become creators of wealth and employment rather than consumers. In essence, employment creation will reduce poverty and improve the standard of living (Adanlawo, Nkomo, and Vezi-Magigaba, 2023).

In accordance with the aforementioned viewpoint, Reddy and Adanlawo (2018) assert that by giving young people a strategic focus and direction, wealth creation through empowerment aims to address the structural weaknesses and imbalances in the economy. Similar to this, youth can be empowered by being taught virtues like proper ethics, discipline, values, hard work, honesty, respect, and humility. In order to address the unemployment issue, the government launched a number of skill acquisition initiatives to assist young people in forming acting habits through repetition and practice. Different programmes by succeeding governments were initiated for the survival of the people who were ready to work through self-reliance programmes. The government's initiatives to give youth more power initially emphasised agricultural output, but over time, the idea was expanded to include agricultural, industrial, and handcraft production that could generate. In order to achieve the desired outcome, it is important to note that various training programmes have been established by the federal and state governments in recent years to instill in young people a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. The question "What are the impacts of these programmes on economic development?" should cross one's mind.

Research Methodology

The researcher adopted a quantitative survey design. The purpose of using this research design is to establish the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables and the level of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables. The population of the study is 64,357 unemployed youths in Ondo State, Nigeria, who have undergone skill acquisition training. The Yamane formula is used to determine the sample size for this study. Using the formula, inferences and conclusions from the survey can be applied to the entire population from whom the sample was obtained (Yamane, 2006). This is shown as follows:

$$SS = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where N is population size and e is margin error.

With N = 64357, and e = 0.05, then SS=200

From the above result, the sample size is 200 unemployed youths (200) from the population who have undergone skill acquisition programmes. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the 200 participants from the four local governments of Akure South, Akure North, Ondo East, and Ondo West. 50 participants were randomly selected from each of the four local governments to ensure equal representation. The participants were youths (male and female) who had undergone skills acquisition training. The technique was adopted because it was straightforward and impartial (Trafimow and MacDonald, 2017). Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires to obtain information from the study participants. The collected data were analysed with inferential statistics such as simple regression and ANOVA to test hypotheses 1 and 2, respectively, at a 0.05 level of significance. According

to Trafimow and MacDonald (2017), inferential statistics enable researchers to test a hypothesis or determine whether data is generalizable to a larger population. Using inferential statistics, Born and Breitung (2011) argue that a simple linear regression is more appropriate to estimate the relationship between one independent variable and one dependent variable. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the variances across the means (or average) to determine if there is any difference between the means of different groups (Chen, Li, and Zhong, 2019). Also, descriptive analysis was used to highlight potential correlations between variables and present basic information about the variables (Kemp et al., 2018).

Results

Hypothesis 1: Gender has no significant effect of skill acquisition on economic development

Table 1a: descriptive statistics showing gender has no significant effect of skill acquisition on economic development

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper bound		
Male	100	59.0600	9.18367	.91837	57.2378	60.8822	42.00	79.00
Female	100	57.4000	8.39071	.83907	55.7351	59.0649	36.00	77.00
Total	200	59.0000	8.22347	8.22347	58.0657	59.9343	36.00	79.00

From the table above, gender, male (M = 59.06; SD = 9.18), female (M = 57.40; SD = 8.39), have the same level of skill acquisition.

Table 1b: ANOVA showing gender has no significant effect of skill acquisition on economic development

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Cal	F-Cri	P
Between Groups	493.520	2	246.760	3.715	3.34	<0.05
Within Groups	19726.480	198	66.419			
Total	2022.000	199				

Table 1b indicates that gender has significant effect of skill acquisition on economic development [$f(2, 198) = 3.715$; $p < 0.05$]. This implies that male who have undergone skill acquisition tends to be more effective as compared to their female counterpart. The finding correlates with the study of Maji (2012) and Olagbaju (2020), that male tend to acquire more skills than their female counterpart.

Hypothesis 2: Skill acquisition has significant influence on economic development

Table 1a: Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.715a	.445	.441	5.16692

a. Predictors: (Constant), skill acquisition

Table 2a indicates that $R = 0.715$, which implies that there was a significant influence between the independent and dependent variables. The R square value of .445 indicated 4.45% of the variance of skill acquisition on economic development.

Table 2b: Summary of Regression showing significance influence of technological usage on customer service

Model	Sum Squares	f	Mean Square	F-Cal	F-Cri	Sig.
1 Regression	3372.531	1	3372.531 17.362	194.244	3.27	0.05
Residual	1701.509	198				
Total	5074.040	199				

Predictors: (Constant), skill acquisition

Dependent Variable: economic development

From table 2b, skill acquisition has a significant influence on economic development [F (1, 198) 194.24]. This implies that skill acquisition is a determinant of economic development because the acquired skills would help unemployed youth develop themselves and become self-employed, allowing them to start a business. The result correlates with the findings of Magaji (2015), Omidiji and Ogwu (2019), Brand et al. (2020), Adanlawo, Vezi-Magigaba, and Owolabi (2021) that participants in skill-acquisition programmes gain transformative abilities that will support socioeconomic growth.

Conclusion and recommendations

Skill acquisition programmes for unemployed youths have actually influenced the economic development of Nigeria. Most of the beneficiaries are now self-employed as they practice the different skills, they acquired through the acquisition programme. They are better informed about how to save money from their various vocations, grow their own businesses, and contribute to the nation's economic development. This study concluded that youth need to be familiarized with the skills in an entrepreneurship programme in order to combat unemployment in the nation. The youth who are unemployed should also receive training in other vocational fields so they can develop the skills necessary to work for themselves. The government needs to come up with strategies for dealing with all the factors contributing to the nation's rising unemployment rate. The government should be aware that fulfilling its constitutional obligations should be its top priority because doing so will significantly lower the nation's unemployment rate.

This study recommends equal treatment for both males and females, as they both possess the ability to learn skill and make meaningful contributions to the economy. The government should ensure that skill acquisition centres are well equipped so as to ensure a suitable and conducive learning environment and also assist those who have acquired entrepreneurial skills financially. Likewise, orientation programmes should be organised to discourage youths from engaging in violent behavior in society and to educate them about small-scale business. This study's results confirm previous studies findings that skills acquisition and gender are important variables affecting employment creation and economic development. Citizens perceive skill acquisition programmes to have a positive effect on employment creation. Likewise, we showed that gender equality is to be considered in skills acquisition training. Both men and women possess the potential to make an equal contribution to economic development. In general, the involvement of both genders in skill acquisition programmes will go a long way toward improving the nation's economic development.

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