

**INFLUENCE OF VOCATIONAL SKILL ACQUISITION PROGRAMMES ON
THE SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTHS IN THE IKA
NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE**

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SEPTEMBER, 2025

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS
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CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned, hereby certify that this research work was carried out by **Peace Udo STEPHEN** with Matriculation Number: **EDU2209370** of the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin, Benin City in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of Bachelor of Science Degree (Ed) in Business Education.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty, the Alpha and Omega.

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First and foremost, I return all glory, honor, and adoration to Almighty God, whose divine grace, wisdom, and strength have guided me through the successful completion of this project. Without His continuous guidance, protection, and provision, this work would not have been possible.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of vocational skill acquisition programmes on the socioeconomic development of youths in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Anchored on the Human Capital Theory, the research examines the availability of vocational programmes, their impact on unemployment, crime involvement, living standards, and the challenges hindering youth participation. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting a population of 57,659 youths, with a sample size of 100 respondents selected via simple random sampling using Yamane's formula. Data were collected through a validated 20-item questionnaire (IVSAPSDYSQ) on a 4-point Likert scale and analyzed using mean scores and standard deviations. Findings reveal that programmes like tailoring, welding, ICT, and agriculture are widely available (Mean = 3.16, SD = 0.84) and significantly reduce unemployment (Mean = 2.84, SD = 0.96) and crime involvement (Mean = 2.76, SD = 0.93) while improving living standards (Mean = 3.05, SD = 0.88). However, challenges such as lack of awareness, inadequate facilities, financial constraints, and societal stigma (Mean = 3.16, SD = 0.89) impede participation. The study recommends enhanced programme accessibility, awareness campaigns, financial subsidies, and attitudinal change initiatives to maximize the socioeconomic benefits of vocational training for youths.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Formal education and appropriate vocational and skill acquisition for the young populace is a panacea for the socio-economic and political advancement of any country worldwide. No nation can grow beyond its level of education (Osman, Emole & Onu, 2023). In this view, formal education and entrepreneurial skills are powerful tools for positive change in all facets of society (Ladan, 2023). In the 1960s and 70s, when there were manufacturing companies, prospects for employment proliferated for Nigerian graduates of tertiary education, but shortly after the country attained independence up till the late 1970s, the story began to change, and unemployment became widespread. Before the mid-1980s, at least two positions were available for each fresh graduate to pick from; thus, the transition from school to workplace was essentially automatic (Kappel, 2021). Companies and government organisations were looking for fresh graduates to hire, and they travelled to colleges and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) orientation camps to find applicants, but today, unemployment, poverty, and crime are pervasive.

Unemployment refers to being without a paid job, despite being willing and able to work, and actively seeking employment. It is often measured as the percentage of the labour force that is jobless but seeking work (Blanchard, 2021). Poverty is a condition characterised by insufficient income or resources to meet basic needs, such as food, shelter,

and healthcare. It can be absolute (lacking essentials for survival) or relative (falling below a societal standard of living) (Smeeding, 2019). Crime is an act or omission that violates a law and is punishable by the state. It encompasses a range of behaviours, from minor offences to serious felonies, and is often studied about social, economic, and environmental factors (Siegel, 2020).

Unemployment and poverty reduction are key critical global challenges, more so with developing and underdeveloped economies. Curbing unemployment and dealing with the accompanying challenges has been of interest to governments, international donors, businesses, and researchers, especially as youth unemployment remains a critical global issue, particularly in regions with burgeoning young populations like the Ika local government area of Delta State, Nigeria. Addressing this challenge necessitates innovative and practical approaches, among which vocational skills training stands out as a significant intervention. The impact of youth unemployment, especially in challenged economies with high youth' population ratios is huge with many negative consequences, some of which include security concerns, urban areas' population density, migration, depression, and mental health, among others (Onyeaghala & Okorie, 2018; Yahaya, et.al 2021).

According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, NBS (2023), in Q3, Nigeria's unemployment rate stood at 5.0%, underemployment at 12.3%, youth employment at 8.6%, and youth under-employment at 18.0%. The high unemployment rate is currently a key concern among the numerous socio-economic challenges facing Nigeria, comprised of a

majorly youthful working population (Yahaya, et.al 2021). Despite the high unemployment rate in Nigeria, employers' needs and demands for skilled labour are also on the rise. This suggests that a cursory look into skills mismatch, and the demand and supply sides of labour are required (Ik, 2016). The general problem is that some employers find it challenging to fill available jobs because of a gap in the labour market's supply of the required skills. Also, some aspiring entrepreneurs struggle with starting and running a business due to a lack of enabling skills (Brunello et al., 2021).

According to Ogundele (2023), skill is the ability which enables someone to do something well, usually gained through training. The act of getting this skill and knowledge could be described as acquisition. These skills can be acquired either through teaching, training, retraining, practical experience and on-the-job training (Uzoka & Bayode, 2020). Hence, Ochogba and Amaechi (2018) have argued that through teaching and training, several skills are acquired, such as technical, vocational, managerial, entrepreneurial, communication, accounting, information and communication technology and many more. Okwelle and Amaechi (2017), found that the acquisition of technical skills, such as; furniture making/carpentry, pipe fitting, fashion design/tailoring, phone repairs, masonry, barbing, electrical installation, boat building, automobile, scaffolding, welding and electronics, among others will help in empowering youths and would lead to a reduction in unemployment. This is consistent with the views of Ochogba and Amaechi (2018), who

observed that there are several ways by which skills acquisition can empower youths, such as encouraging self-employment and providing diverse job opportunities, among others.

Furthermore, Ogide, Uka and Ogide (2019) pointed out that through skill acquisition, an individual could be empowered to develop capabilities and values for the benefit of the individual and that of society. Skills development functions as a platform for supporting employability skills development, job creation, and driving national and economic development; and government at different levels can play critical roles in achieving the desired outcome of fostering a competent and skilled workforce that meets the demands of the labour market, reducing unemployment and underemployment rates, and promoting sustainable economic growth. (Pepple & Enuoh, 2020). The number of unemployed graduates who become homeless after completing their National Youth Service is a social injustice to the entire country. The thrust of university education in the world is to serve as one of the main instruments for socio-economic development and nation-building.

Therefore, the government established Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and other skill acquisition programmes, aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and skills from the world of work, and to serve as a tool for a prosperous life for the downtrodden Nigerian (Oluwale, et. al, 2023). Despite this, it is not quite certain whether the programme has adequately promoted the skills desired by Nigerian youths. There are indications and evidence based on the outcome/results of a preliminary study of

the researcher that the problem of appropriate vocational skills acquisition by the Nigerian populace, particularly the youths, has remained intractable, and despite being made available to people, especially the youth, not much has been recorded regarding its influence on their socio-economic development. Skill training and development require facilities and resources, which must be made available in the appropriate quality and quantity to ensure success. It is, therefore, imperative to investigate the influence of vocational skill acquisition programmes on the socioeconomic development of youths in Nigeria, specifically in Ika North East Local Government of the area of Delta state.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria, in general, and Delta State in particular, especially in recent times, has become a source of worry. The situation has led to poverty and the increasing spate of all forms of social vices and their attendant consequences. It has become obvious that owing to the changes in the socio-political and economic environments, the government can no longer employ the increasing youth graduates. The lack of employable skills among youth graduates from various tertiary institutions and skill training centres, as well as the wrong approach to youth empowerment by the government, have, indeed, worsened the situation. Consequently, there is now increased agitation from different strata of society for skills acquisition and empowerment among Nigerian youth in general and the youth of Delta State, in particular, to not only make the youth self-employed but also create jobs for others.

However, the insensitivity on the part of the youth who have failed to understand that unless empowered by skill acquisition, there can be no reduction of unemployment is also worrisome. Over the years, skills acquisition for empowerment among youth has been characterised by many challenges, which have undermined the ability of the youth to attain self-reliance; thereby worsening the spate of youth unemployment and its attendant social vices in Nigeria, in general, and Delta State, in particular. Some of these challenges are, the government's insensitivity, deceptive attitude and lack of political will, the ill attitude of the youth towards skill acquisition, decaying societal values, the overbearing influence of party politics on the youth, lack of reward system, continuous falling standard in education, giving of political appointments to only members of family and group.

Thus, the rising rate of insecurity, youth restiveness and violent crimes in society today has been blamed on a lack of skills, unemployment and poverty among youth. There is also a lack of adequate proactive curriculum in our educational system to inculcate entrepreneurship, compulsory skills acquisition through mentorship, apprenticeship and professional tutelage. Consequently, lack of skill for youth empowerment has led to dreaded unemployment, poverty and violent societal crimes, which, as a matter of urgency, now call for attention to avert the impending damage to the nation and the Delta State, particularly Ika North East Local Government.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of Vocational skill acquisition programmes on the socioeconomic development of the youths in the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To identify the vocational skills acquisition programmes available to youths in Ika North East Local Government Area.
- ii. To find out how vocational skills acquisition programmes have influenced youth unemployment in Ika North East Local Government Area
- iii. To investigate how vocational skills acquisition programmes have influenced youth involvement in crime in Ika North East Local Government Area.
- iv. To determine how vocational skills acquisition programmes have influence the living standard of youths in Ika North East Local Government Area.
- v. To find out the challenges hindering the youths from participating in the vocational skills acquisition programmes in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions are raised.

1. What are the vocational skills acquisition programmes available to youths in Ika North East Local Government?
2. To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence youth unemployment in Ika North East Local Government?

3. To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence youth involvement in crime in Ika North East Local Government?
4. To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence improvement in the living standard of youths in Ika North East Local Government?
5. What are the challenges hindering the youths from participating in the vocational skills acquisition programmes in Ika North East Local Government Area?

Significance of the Study

This study, if completed, will be of great significance to individuals, policymakers, government and researchers.

To Individuals, the findings of this study will empower youths with vocational skills, enhancing their employability and socioeconomic status. Also, provide valuable insights for individuals seeking to acquire vocational skills and improve their career prospects.

To Policymakers, the study's findings will allow policymakers to design targeted interventions that address youth unemployment and align training with local labour market needs. Policymakers can use findings to justify increased funding and support for vocational education, ensuring resources are directed toward programs that yield measurable socioeconomic benefits, such as job creation and poverty reduction. Insights from the study can guide policies to tackle youth unemployment and promote economic

growth, particularly in regions like Ika North East, where rural and economic challenges may limit opportunities.

To the Government, the study can help the government develop targeted interventions to support youth development and socioeconomic empowerment. The government benefits from reduced youth unemployment, which mitigates social challenges like crime and unrest. Programs like the Rural Youths Skill Acquisition (RYSA) and Girls Entrepreneurship and Skills Training (GEST) in Delta State demonstrate the government's commitment to empowering youth and fostering sustainable development.

To Researchers, the study can contribute to the existing body of knowledge on vocational skill acquisition and youth socioeconomic development. The study will benefit prospective researchers as it will serve as a source of reference point for them. Future researchers will use the results of this study to add to existing knowledge. The study will help to open new avenues of research, allowing researchers to delve deeper into the topic under discussion.

Scope / Delimitation of the Study

The study seeks to investigate the influence of Vocational skills acquisition programmes on youth socioeconomic development in the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. The content scope includes unemployment, crime reduction, improvement in the standard of living, and challenges hindering youth participation. The geographical scope is the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature will be viewed under the following subheads:

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Skills Acquisition
- Dimension of Skill Acquisition
- Challenges Hindering Acquisition of Skills
- Review of Related Empirical Studies

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory (HCT)

The Human Capital Theory (HCT) is a theoretical framework that suggests using education, training, and skill acquisition to increase production, worker efficiency, and general socioeconomic growth. Gary Becker (1964) propounded the human capital theory and asserted that investing in education and training increases the potential for employment and economic production. This theory applies to understanding how training in vocational skills affects youths' employability and the creation of jobs in the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. According to the human capital theory, individuals can contribute to economic advancement by developing skills and knowledge that enhance their productivity and earnings potential. Vocational skills training programmes have become vital for providing youths in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State,

with a large youth population, with the skills necessary to enter the job market and support economic development.

Vocational skill acquisition initiatives seek to enhance participants' potential through the enhancement of specific skills associated with specific vocations or industry sectors. Human capital theory suggests that youth's potential for employment and employability ought to improve as a result of skills development investments. According to the theory, developing vocational skills aids individuals to be better equipped for permanent employment by enabling them to rapidly adapt to the demands of advancements in technology and the changing job market.

Concept of Skill Acquisition

A person's skill is their capacity to learn in new situations while drawing from their past knowledge and experiences. A skill is developed over time and eventually becomes instinctive in terms of practice. According to Okolocha et al. (2019), a skill is deemed gained when a person can carry out the activity without considering the technique or breaking the procedure down into conventional steps. Skill is the ability to acquire practical knowledge in new conditions and based on the abilities and experiences a person has previously. It is an activity which is developed by a person over time and becomes automatic in terms of performing the required skill (Nneoma, 2017). According to Oke (2019) certain skill can be considered acquired when a person can perform it without thinking about the technique of performing this action or dividing a process into

conventional parts. Skill acquisition is the process of mastering skills, characterised by applying them in particular situations. It is the possibility to learn (Kalu, 2015). Skill acquisition is a significant factor for building a successful career. Acquiring skills can happen in different ways – by personal experiments in a certain field, by creative search and constant practising, by repeating some actions automatically without implying any thinking processes (Urieto, 2019).

According to Odoko (2024), skill acquisition in Nigeria is even more important, taking into account the levels of unemployment. Let's try to figure out more about different types of skills acquisition and come up with an approximate list of skills that will help you get a job and build a career in Nigeria. The entire life is based on skill acquisition, which is a constant process. We are getting involved in the skill acquisition processes from the time we learn how to walk as toddlers. With time, the set of skills just gets more complex. Every person will find personal reasons for skill acquisition. Nevertheless, there are obvious benefits of the skill acquisition process and results. To acquire skills means to become an expert in a chosen field. To become an expert means to deliver high-quality work and become a sought-after specialist. Skill acquisition is not an expense, it is an investment.

According to Johnson, (2019) some of the benefits of skill acquisition include the fact that; it helps you to adjust to the realities of the employment market, you acquire skills that meet immediate requirements, you acquire the basis for adjusting for the future needs,

the possible is flexible and teaches you to be flexible too, experts acquire knowledge, and then they acquire power, other people trust experts, and they will trust you, experts earn more and have broader career prospects etc.

Dimensions of Skill Acquisition

There are several dimensions of skill acquisition. Among them are;

Technical skill

Technical abilities are those that are required to generate the product or service of the company. These capabilities span industry-specific operations, design, communications, and environmental observation. And research and development. Hysong (2018) claims that technical skills can be used to develop expertise in carrying out manual or digital jobs. Technical abilities are traditionally used by those in mathematics, computer science, mechanics, and information technology. However, a more significant number of sectors increasingly require technological knowledge from their personnel. The usage of point-of-sale (POS) software, for instance, is frequently required of employees in the retail and food service industries. Technical writing, programming languages, software expertise, data analysis, widely used operating systems, project management, and other such things are some specific examples of technical abilities. Sector and job type variations based on technical skill sets are notable. For computer programmers, mastering many coding languages is a specialised ability (Pepple & Enuoh, 2020). Customer care employees may require technical expertise in telephone and customer management.

Technical abilities are crucial as many employments depend on several tools, processes, and programmes. If you have widespread abilities and in-demand technological know-how, you'll be a more marketable candidate, claims Olaoye et al. (2019). For instance, listings of both "necessary" and "desired" technical abilities are frequently included in job postings by businesses. Having "required" skills is frequently seen as a requirement for starting a job successfully. For instance, if you're applying to be a chef, you might need to know the fundamentals of cooking.

Innovative skill

The ability to capitalise on fresh concepts to advance society or the economy is called innovation skills. The capacity to think creatively, problem-solve effectively, and have functional and/or technical skills are all components of innovation capabilities (Graham-Leviss, 2016). Generally speaking, the capacity to apply a combination of information, abilities, and traits in a particular setting constitutes one's innovation talents. A person with innovative abilities typically stands out for his or her capacity to think creatively in the face of obstacles and to mould the ideas of others reliably and independently. An organisation must consistently innovate to succeed and realise its full potential. Unfortunately, this essential capability is lacking in many firms. The real kicker is that every employee can learn how to become a powerful force for innovation. Typically, innovative skills are nurtured to provide support to leaders and individual contributors in thinking creatively and applying their expertise to make significant strides in the

organisation. Baba (2013) suggests that the program aids participants in acquiring the abilities necessary to: innovate more quickly and effectively; continually seek out fresh concepts and original solutions; contribute to a culture of experimentation, innovation and creativity; question the status quo and maintain an open mind; communicate and propose innovative ideas; position, promote, and garner support for innovative proposals and ideas.

Managerial skill

Managerial skills are essential to the day-to-day management and administration of a business undertaking, which are: Planning, Organising, Directing and Controlling of the activities of a business to realise set objectives (Kutzhanova, 2019). To be successful in planning, organising, leading, and controlling, managers must use a wide variety of skills.

A skill is the ability to do something proficiently. According to Reynolds (2020), managerial skills fall into three basic categories: technical, human relations and conceptual skills. Technical skills are those skills necessary to produce the business's products or services, which are operations specific to the industry. Technical skills vary widely between industries and job types. For computer programmers, knowledge of various coding languages is considered a technical skill (Nwachukwu, 2020). Customer service representatives may need technical skills relating to customer management and telephone systems. Teachers might need technical skills related to instructional technologies and software applications, ranging from student behaviour monitoring to grading. Technical skills are important because nearly every job relies on different tools, programs and

processes (Anyanwu, 2015). Human relation skill is the ability to work with other people with understanding and sympathy; the willingness to listen to staff problems; the ability to inspire cooperation, confidence and loyalty, while conceptual skill is the cognitive ability to see the enterprise as a whole and the relationship among its parts (Cole, 2020). It involves the entrepreneur's thinking, information processing and planning abilities. Conceptual skills are needed by entrepreneurs to strategically plan for their enterprise (Ofoegbu, 2016). Strong analytical skills are crucial when it comes to breaking complex issues into smaller components to see how they're interconnected and to draw conclusions. The degree to which each type of skill is used depends upon the level of the manager's position. Additionally, in an increasingly global marketplace, it pays for managers to develop a special set of skills to deal with global management issues (Nwachukwu 2020).

Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes Available to Youths

The acquisition of vocational and entrepreneurial skills by Nigerian youths will spur them to set up various types of business enterprises, aimed at alleviating the problem of poverty. Such business enterprises according to Adeyanju (2024), include dry cleaning or laundering services, manufacturing of soap and cream, interior and exterior decorations, catering and restaurant business, snack business and nourishing drinks, tie and dye or batik, bread baking, soft furnishing such as, headrest, arm rest, throw pillows, bead making, bags, flower vase, necklace and ear-ring, bead curtains, tailoring and fashion designs. Other

vocations or business enterprises that Nigerian youths who have acquired vocational and entrepreneurial skills could embrace include food processing, chalk-making, soap and detergents making, carpentry, upholstery and wood work, welding, fish farming, rabbitry, snailery keeping, poultry keeping, cassava processing and small-stock. Others include cloth weaving, textile works, crown, hat and bead making, hair dressing, block laying and concreting.

How Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes Have Influenced Youth

Unemployment

In recent years, unemployment among the youth has been discovered to be one of the most challenging phenomena. This is because, year out, thousands of students graduate from secondary schools and higher institutions of learning, with more than 70% of them in search of greener pastures. Not only are there no white-cola jobs anywhere to absorb them, but a greater percentage of them have no requisite skills commensurate with the present digital economy. Obviously, in the midst of all these, skill acquisition becomes one of the important pillars that help many in actualising their dreams and aid those who are not privileged to work with public or private organisations with academic certificates to have livelihoods (Garba, 2023). The essence of skill acquisition is the relevance of blood and water to the human body; lack of regular sources of income has been blamed as a major cause of bribery and corruption, and youth restiveness in any society. Skills increase employment opportunities, youth's active involvement in economic productivity and crime

reduction in societies. Skills help people to have better resources and financial management, improved strategic planning and curtailing crises in organisations due to experiences garnered.

To reduce the rate of unemployment and total reliance on government, in 1987, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established; the directorate was mandated to deal with the rising trend of unemployment through the training of people in various skills. Recently, also, various other programmes and policies have been rolled out to fight the same mayhem of unemployment. But whether these programmes and policies of government have been able to address the problem of unemployment is better imagined than explained, as the rate of unemployment has continued to increase geometrically. It is therefore expected that students' enrollment in skills while undergoing their studies would reduce the problem of unemployment and the burdens which parents bear on the course of the children's sponsorship and further sponsorship even after graduation. Nowadays, if one wants to succeed, one must find alternative income sources, no matter how little he/she might be getting. The labour market is congested with many applications and few vacancies.

How Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes Have Influenced Youth Involvement in Crime

Vocational skills acquisition is a vital tool in preventing crime, especially in communities with high youth unemployment and limited opportunities. Skills acquisition

programs address the root causes of crime by addressing social exclusion, lack of opportunities, and marginalisation. When youth are empowered with skills, education, and employment opportunities, they are less likely to engage in criminal activities as a means of survival or expression of frustration.

As Akinwale (2017) points out, providing young people with skills and meaningful alternatives to crime leads to a reduction in criminal behaviour and helps establish a sense of purpose and belonging. Obi (2015) also argues that empowering youth socially and economically reduces their vulnerability to criminal elements and gangs, thereby promoting peace and stability in society.

Economic empowerment is one of the most effective ways to reduce youth involvement in crime. By providing youth with opportunities to improve their economic situation, such as through skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and employment, youth empowerment programs address one of the primary drivers of criminal behaviour: economic hardship.

- *Vocational Training and Skill Development:* Programs that teach practical skills, such as tailoring, carpentry, electrical work, or ICT skills, give young people the ability to earn an income through legal means. When youth are trained in various trades, they can secure employment or start their businesses, which reduces the temptation to engage in criminal activities out of financial necessity.
- *Entrepreneurship Programs:* Youth empowerment programs that focus on entrepreneurship teach young people how to create businesses and manage

finances, providing them with a sustainable source of income. In Bauchi State, programs that help youth start small businesses in agriculture, retail, or services can significantly reduce the likelihood of engaging in criminal activity due to financial pressure. Ibrahim (2019) highlights that youth who are self-employed are less likely to resort to crime because they have a sense of purpose and financial independence.

- *Access to Microfinance and Credit:* Providing youth with access to credit and loans for starting small businesses is another critical component of youth empowerment. These financial resources allow young people to pursue entrepreneurship without relying on illicit activities to fund their ventures. This reduces the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities like fraud, drug trafficking, or theft.

Nigerian youths who have been taking solace in criminal activities and all forms of social vices, as a result of poverty and joblessness, would jettison these nefarious activities after acquiring vocational and entrepreneurial skills that would make them gainfully employed. When Nigerian youths who have acquired vocational and entrepreneurial skills are gainfully employed, all forms of criminalities and social vices such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping of people for ransoms or rituals, insecurity, prostitution, political thuggery, assassination, cultism, bunkering and other vices will be curtailed. This will pave the way for a conducive atmosphere for massive investment and further enhance employment generation for other youths in Nigeria.

How Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes Have Influenced the Living

Standard of Youths

Vocational skills acquisition programs positively influence youth's living standards by improving income, employability, social mobility, and overall well-being.

Increased Income and Economic Stability: By providing skills like carpentry, welding, or IT, TVET programs enhance employability, leading to higher and more stable incomes. For instance, a study in Nigeria found that TVET graduates earned 30% more than untrained peers (Oviawe & Ekhovbiye, 2017).

Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment: Programs teaching business skills enable youth to start micro-enterprises, improving financial independence. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) notes that entrepreneurship training in sub-Saharan Africa has lifted many youth out of poverty (ILO, 2020).

Improved Social Mobility: Vocational training provides pathways to better jobs, enabling youth to afford better housing, healthcare, and education. UNESCO reports that TVET programs in developing countries have improved social inclusion for marginalised youth (UNESCO, 2018).

Enhanced Well-Being: Skills acquisition fosters self-esteem and community engagement, contributing to better mental health and social networks. The World Bank highlights that vocational programs in rural areas improve the quality of life by reducing economic vulnerability (World Bank, 2021).

Challenges Hindering the Youths from Participating in Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes

Lack of Infrastructure and Finance

Thriving entrepreneurship in Nigeria faces formidable challenges arising from a confluence of factors, notably the lack of essential infrastructure, financial constraints, and limited access to capital and financial services.

Enabling infrastructure is pivotal for entrepreneurial success, serving as the bedrock for exercising entrepreneurial knowledge and fostering innovation within a country. Access to reliable infrastructure significantly enhances productivity, efficiency, and market access, contributing to sustainable growth (European Journal of Business Management, 2014).

Burdensome Regulatory Compliance and Licensing Barriers

Navigating Nigeria's business regulatory system and licensing requirements is extraordinarily burdensome for entrepreneurs without political connections or the capacity to bribe officials. Administrative inefficiencies abound during company incorporation, operational permitting, land acquisition and annual filings. Delays spanning 6-8 months are typical, while out-of-pocket expenses for bureaucratic paperwork and follow-ups remain prohibitive relative to average income levels. Such rigidities incentivise avoidance of formalisation altogether. Those seeking to establish lawful enterprises face steep registration fees, unfavourable tax regimes, convoluted compliance procedures and opaque administrative directives that foster an environment rife with exploitation.

Gaps and Inadequate Enforcement in Vocational Education Quality Assurance

While Nigeria possesses a strong cultural tradition of informal apprenticeships across trades like tailoring, carpentry, and motor mechanics, standardised curricula and credentialing systems for vocational skills acquisition remain lacking. Monitoring training quality also proves minimal, especially in Nigeria's expansive artisanal enterprise sector. The prevalence of rudimentary vocational preparation channels, combined with limited continuing professional development pathways for working technicians, contributes to skill gaps that undermine productivity and quality control capabilities. These deficiencies bar young trainees from imbibing the well-rounded technical, entrepreneurial, and business management competencies essential for establishing formal microenterprises upon trade mastery.

Political Instability

Political instability significantly disrupts the business environment, making it challenging for businesses to thrive. In a politically unstable environment, the flow of power and governance patterns becomes unpredictable, impacting businesses in various ways. This instability contributes to a fluctuating and uncertain economy, hindering businesses' ability to make accurate predictions and forecasts about the future. Local businesses, particularly those in their early stages, are more susceptible to failure during times of political instability. The lack of a stable political environment makes it challenging for these businesses to establish a solid foundation for growth. Moreover, political unrest repels

foreign investors who seek stability and security for their investments. The fear of chaos and social unrest discourages foreign businesses from entering or expanding their operations in the affected country. Protests, strikes, and social unrest disrupt day-to-day business operations, leading to a decline in profits and potential damage to business premises.

Corruption and Exploitation

Corruption and exploitation have become pervasive issues in various sectors of the Nigerian economy, particularly in the realms of new business creation and academia. These unethical practices pose significant challenges to entrepreneurs, students, and individuals seeking skill acquisition (Oladotun & Shakir, 2021). In the process of developing a startup, entrepreneurs often encounter corruption at different stages, starting from business registration to obtaining necessary licenses and procuring facilities. Government officials frequently demand bribes and kickbacks, creating a corrupt system that hampers the establishment of new businesses. The financial burden imposed by these corrupt practices is then transferred to potential clients and customers, resulting in inflation and increased costs for goods and services.

Poor Attitudes Towards Entrepreneurship in Nigeria

Nigeria faces an urgent need to diversify its economy and create new employment opportunities, especially for its rapidly growing youth population. However, negative

perceptions and attitudes towards entrepreneurship, vocational education, and self-employment present major obstacles to unlocking the potential of these domains.

Research shows that many Nigerians view entrepreneurship as an undesirable last-resort career and associate it with high failure rates and poverty (Begho & Begho, 2023). White-collar office jobs remain the strongly preferred option, even when prospects are limited.

This inhibits entrepreneurial drive and business startups.

Insecurity

Rampant insecurity across Nigeria has emerged as a significant deterrent to business and economic development (Yusuf & Mohd, 2023). Rising incidents of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence create an environment un conducive to entrepreneurship, vocational skills building and self-employment (Okpalaojiego, 2021).

Many prospective entrepreneurs and small business owners face constant fear of attack, extortion and looting, which stifles productivity and growth (Ekoja, 2022). Vocational training centres and apprenticeships are also disrupted by violence and instability.

Empirical Review

Advocating AI Skills Acquisition as a Solution for Youth Unemployment in Nigeria's South-South Region, Faithpraise, et. al (2023) investigates the feasibility of incorporating AI skills education to address youth unemployment. The study aims to explore youth awareness, interest, and willingness to engage in AI skill acquisition. A mixed-methods approach was used, including surveys featuring AI mentor circles and

micro-credential programs. The findings revealed a strong interest in AI education, particularly through micro-credential courses and AI mentorship networks, offering promising opportunities for increasing employment and promoting entrepreneurship. The study underscores the need to align policies and educational initiatives to leverage AI for reducing youth unemployment and fostering long-term economic growth in Nigeria's South-South region.

In a systematic review carried out by Shi and Bangpan (2022), qualitative data from 31 unpublished and published studies from 2000 to 2019 were examined to understand the learning processes of young people and the effects of technical and vocational education training (TVET) involvement in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Employing the use of a framework thematic synthesising method, the study found that TVET engagement had a multifaceted impact on youths' health and desires, in addition to economic ones. These effects had multiple dimensions and included social capital (social relationships linkage, bridging, and bonding) and cultural capital (socio-emotional competencies, knowledge and skills, and credentials). Numerous factors, such as the features of the intervention, quality, instructors, curriculum, management, administration, peer relationships, social norms, individual characteristics, and the learning environment, all had an impact on the experiences of the participants. The study findings revealed that involvement in TVET was significantly beneficial to underprivileged youth, underlining TVET's potential for enhancing equity and access to education. The study offered a

framework for future research and practice in establishing, implementing, and assessing TVET programmes to improve youth's overall wellness.

Bojadjieva et.al (2022) conducted a study focusing on the school-to-work transitions in several Southeastern European (SEE) countries, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. Despite their shared developmental roots, these countries have implemented varied educational reforms due to their unique transition and integration processes within the European Union. The study aimed to assess the impact of different educational levels on youth employability and changes in the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) population rates for those aged 15–24 over the period from 2009 to 2019. Using panel data and multiple linear regression models, the researchers estimated the effects of education on youth employability across these countries. The findings indicated that the impact of education levels on youth employment rates is ambiguous. However, there is a statistically significant and negative relationship between educational attainment and changes in NEET rates in most of the selected countries. The study recommended that tailored educational reforms be considered to enhance youth employability and reduce NEET rates effectively in these regions.

Habiyaremye et. al (2022) examined the effectiveness of South Africa's upskilling programme aimed at improving job readiness and enterprise development among rural youth. Using Outcome Mapping and probit estimation on self-reported skills

improvements, the study found that non-technical skills significantly enhance employability and entrepreneurial success compared to technical skills. Despite the programme's mixed results and slow uptake among alumni, the findings highlight the crucial role of soft skills in overcoming the labour market mismatch. The study recommends emphasising soft skills training, such as communication and problem-solving, in upskilling initiatives to better address youth unemployment.

A study to assess the effect of skill acquisition programmes on youth employability in Nigeria was carried out by Okolocha et.al (2020). The study focused on undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate individuals in Anambra State, utilising a structured questionnaire as the main research instrument. A total of 100 respondents were randomly selected from various local governments within the state. The findings indicated several challenges in skill acquisition for employment, including an overemphasis on academic excellence, a lack of quality skilled trainers, a severe shortage of facilities, inconsistent government follow-up, and poor funding. Based on these findings, the study recommended that teachers should develop professional skills and gain competence through years of experience, understand the subject matter thoroughly, and effectively involve students in instructional delivery.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methods that were used in conducting this research were done along the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analyses

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design involves observing and collecting data on a given topic without manipulating variables. This design is considered suitable for this study as it helped to collect data on the influence of Vocational skill acquisition programmes on the socioeconomic development of the youths in the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is the total number of objects, subjects, or individuals that conform to a set of specifications about the research area (Omoera & Nwaoboli, 2023). In this research, the population of this study consisted of Ika North East local government area of Delta State. Available data from the National Population Commission of Nigeria (web), National Bureau of Statistics (web) 2022, projected the population of youths in Ika North East Local Government Area to be 57,659 (citypopulation.com)

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was made up of participants which were drawn from residents of the Ika North East local government area of Delta State. Simple random sampling is a technique used in research where every member of a population has an equal chance of being selected. This method involves randomly choosing participants without any bias, often using tools like random number generators or drawing lots.

The sample size of the study was derived from the population study using the Yamani (1967) formula:

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

Where; n = Sample size

N= Population size

1 = Constant

$(e)^2$ = Margin Error

Note: this study allowed ten (10) percent margin of error in calculating the optimal sample size (i.e. 0.1). Noting that the population size (n) in this case is 55,673, the estimated sample size is calculated as:

Then we have;

$$n = \frac{57,659}{1 + 57,659(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{57659}{57,660(0.01)}$$

$$n = \frac{57659}{576}$$

$$n \approx 100$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study is 100

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire titled Influence of Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes on the Socioeconomic Development of the Youths in the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State Questionnaire (IVSAPSDYSQ). Section A discusses the demographics of the respondents, while the questions in Section B were drawn from the study question. It is a 20-item questionnaire; The adapted items integrate these tools to provide a holistic view of the influence of vocational skill acquisition programmes on the socioeconomic development of the youths. The questionnaire consisted of a 4-point Likert scale response of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity of Instrument

The questionnaire designed by the researcher was presented to the project supervisor and other two experts in the Department of Business Education to cross-check for content validity. Their opinion and observations were incorporated into the instrument before it was administered to the respondents.

Reliability of Instrument

The Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered to a group of 20 respondents who were not part of the study but within the population of study. The reliability coefficient of 0.749 and 0.820 was obtained. This was considered high enough to establish the reliability of the instrument.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher to the respondents. The researcher offers information to the respondents on how they filled their questionnaires and also wait to collected the filled questionnaires from the respondents after they have answered the questions.

Method of Data Analyses

The researcher made use of mean score and standard deviation as the method of data analyses. The scores above the mean of 2.50 was considered HIGH, while scores below the mean of 2.50 was considered LOW.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Section A: Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the vocational skills acquisition programmes available to youths in Ika North East Local Government?

Table 1: Distribution of responses on the vocational skills acquisition programmes available to youths

S/N	Items	N=96		Remarks
		Mean	SD	
1	Vocational training programs, such as tailoring, welding, or catering, are widely available for youths in Ika North East Local Government.	3.22	0.87	High
2	I am aware of government-supported vocational skills acquisition centres in Ika North East Local Government that offer training to youths.	3.18	0.84	High
3	Vocational skills programs in Ika North East Local Government provide practical and hands-on training that prepares youths for self-employment.	3.07	0.87	High
4	There are sufficient opportunities for youths to access vocational training in areas like computer studies, fashion design, or agriculture in Ika North East Local Government.	3.17	0.77	High
Grand Mean		3.16	0.84	

Data presented in Table 1 revealed that the respondents agreed on all the items presented at a mean score of 3.22, 3.18, 3.07 and 3.17, respectively. The overall mean of

3.16 (**HIGH**) with SD 0.84 indicates strong agreement on the availability of vocational skills like tailoring, welding, catering, computer studies, fashion design, and agriculture. Item-level means range from 3.07 to 3.22, all **HIGH**, suggesting youths perceive these as accessible and practical for self-employment.

Research Question 2: To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence youth unemployment in Ika North East Local Government?

Table 2: Distribution of responses extent do skills acquisition programmes influence youth unemployment

S/N	ITEMS	N=96		Remarks
		Mean	SD	
1	Skills acquisition programs, such as vocational training in trades like tailoring or ICT, effectively reduce youth involvement in criminal activities in Ika North East Local Government.	2.71	1.03	High
2	Youths who participate in skills acquisition programs in Ika North East are less likely to engage in crimes such as theft or vandalism due to increased employability	2.67	0.94	High
3	The availability of skills acquisition programs in Ika North East provides youths with viable alternatives to crime by fostering entrepreneurship and self-reliance.	3.28	0.84	High
4	Inadequate access to skills acquisition programs in Ika North East contributes to higher rates of youth involvement in crime due to unemployment and poverty.	2.77	0.89	High
Grand Mean		2.84	0.96	

Data presented in Table 2 revealed that respondents agreed on all the items presented at a mean score of 2.71, 2.67, 3.38 and 2.77, respectively. With an overall mean of 2.84 (HIGH) and SD 0.96, respondents agree that programmes reduce unemployment by offering alternatives like trades and entrepreneurship. Items' level shows means from 2.67 to 3.28, all **HIGH**, emphasising reduced criminal links via employability.

Research Question 3: To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence youth involvement in crime in Ika North East Local Government?

Table 3: Distribution of responses on the extent to which skills acquisition programmes influence youth involvement in crime

S/N	ITEMS	N=96		Remarks
		Mean	SD	
1	Skills acquisition programs in Ika North East, such as training in agriculture or welding, significantly reduce youth participation in criminal activities by providing productive engagement.	2.82	0.89	High
2	Youths who complete skills acquisition programs in Ika North East are less likely to engage in crimes like robbery or cultism due to improved economic opportunities.	3.05	0.95	High
3	Vocational training programs in Ika North East offer youths alternatives to crime by equipping them with skills for self-employment in fields like fashion design or carpentry.	2.65	0.91	High
4	The lack of sufficient skills acquisition programs in Ika North East increases youth involvement in crime due to limited access to training and job opportunities.	2.50	0.82	Neutral
Grand Mean		2.76	0.93	

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that respondents agreed on all the items presented at a mean score of 2.82, 3.05, and 2.65, with 2.50 neutral/borderline. The overall mean of 2.76 (HIGH) with SD 0.93 shows moderate agreement that programmes deter crimes like theft, vandalism, robbery, and cultism via productive skills. Means range from 2.50 to 3.05, mostly **HIGH**, but Item 4 is neutral.

Research Question 4: To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence improvement in the living standard of youths in Ika North East Local Government?

Table 4: Distribution of responses on **the** extent to which skills acquisition programmes influence improvement in the living standard of youths

S/N	ITEMS	N=96		Remarks
		Mean	SD	
1	Skills acquisition programs in Ika North East, such as training in agriculture or tailoring, significantly improve the living standards of youths by providing sustainable income sources.	2.97	0.82	High
2	Youths who participate in skills acquisition programs in Ika North East experience better financial stability due to enhanced employability in trades like ICT or carpentry.	3.16	0.83	High
3	Vocational training programs in Ika North East enable youths to start small businesses, leading to improved access to basic needs like food, housing, and healthcare.	3.15	0.94	High
4	The availability of skills acquisition programs in Ika North East contributes to reducing poverty among youths by equipping them with skills for self-reliance.	2.95	0.77	High
Grand Mean		3.05	0.88	

Data presented in Table 4 revealed that respondents agreed on all the items presented at a mean score of 2.91, 3.16, 3.15 and 2.95, respectively. An overall mean of 3.05 (HIGH) and SD 0.88 reflect a strong perception of improved living via income, stability, and poverty reduction. All items have **HIGH** means (2.95-3.16), highlighting benefits in basic needs and self-employment.

Research Question 5: What are the challenges hindering the youths from participating in the vocational skills acquisition programmes in Ika North East Local Government Area?

Table 5: Distribution of responses on the challenges hindering the youths from participating in the vocational skills acquisition programmes

S/N	ITEMS	N=96		Remarks
		Mean	SD	
1	Lack of awareness about available vocational skills acquisition programs in Ika North East prevents youths from participating.	3.16	0.85	High
2	Insufficient vocational training centres or facilities in Ika North East make it difficult for youths to access skills acquisition programs.	3.14	0.96	High
3	Financial constraints, such as training fees or transportation costs, hinder youths from participating in vocational skills programs in Ika North East.	3.34	0.85	High
4	Societal stigma or low perception of vocational training as a viable career path discourages youths in Ika North East from enrolling in skills acquisition programs.	3.00	0.84	High
Grand Mean		3.16	0.89	

Data presented in Table 5 revealed that respondents agreed on all the items presented at a mean score of 3.16, 3.14, 3.34 and 3.00, respectively. The highest overall mean (3.16, HIGH) with SD 0.89 confirms significant barriers like awareness, facilities, finances, and stigma. All items are **HIGH** (3.00-3.34), with Item 3 (financial constraints) strongest.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study revealed that vocational training programs, such as tailoring, welding, or catering, are widely available for youth, as government-supported centres and the sufficient opportunities for youths to access vocational training in areas like computer studies, fashion design, and agriculture. The findings align with recent literature emphasising the growing availability of vocational training programs in developing regions. Adebayo and Adeyemi (2021) noted that government-supported vocational centres in Nigeria have expanded access to skills like tailoring and ICT, fostering youth employability. This consonance suggests that Ika North East benefits from similar initiatives, likely driven by local or state government efforts to promote skill acquisition. The high mean scores for practical, hands-on training (Item 3, Mean = 3.07) resonate with Okoye and Eze (2022), who found that experiential learning in vocational programs enhances self-employment readiness among Nigerian youths. However, dissonance exists regarding the sufficiency of opportunities. While respondents rated access to diverse fields like agriculture and computer studies highly (Item 4, Mean = 3.17), Chukwu and Okafor (2023) argue that rural areas, including local governments like Ika North East, often face uneven distribution of training facilities, limiting access for some youths. This suggests that while programs are perceived as available, geographic or infrastructural barriers may still restrict universal access, a nuance not fully captured by the high mean scores.

Findings from the study revealed the extent to which skills acquisition programmes influence youth unemployment. Programs, such as vocational training in trades like tailoring or ICT, effectively reduce youth involvement in criminal activities. Youths who participated in who skills acquisition program are not involved in crimes such as theft or vandalism. Skills acquisition provides youths alternative to crime. The findings are consonant with contemporary research on vocational training's role in mitigating unemployment. According to Ibrahim and Musa (2020), skills acquisition programs in Nigeria, particularly in trades like ICT and tailoring, significantly reduce unemployment by equipping youths with marketable skills. The high rating for entrepreneurship (Item 3) aligns with Adewale et al. (2022), who found that vocational training fosters self-employment, reducing dependency on scarce formal jobs. This is particularly relevant in Ika North East, where programs appear to provide viable pathways to economic independence.

However, dissonance arises with the relatively lower mean for reduced criminal activity through employability (Item 2, Mean = 2.67). Okonkwo and Nwankwo (2024) argue that while vocational training reduces unemployment, its impact on crime reduction is less direct, as socioeconomic factors like poverty and peer influence play significant roles. This suggests that while respondents perceive a link between skills acquisition and reduced unemployment, the connection to crime reduction may be less pronounced, as reflected in the slightly lower mean scores.

Findings from the study also reveal the extent to which skills acquisition programmes influence youth involvement in crime. Skills acquisition programs, such as training in agriculture or welding, significantly reduce youth participation in criminal activities and such as robbery or cultism, by providing productive engagement. The findings partially align with the literature on vocational training's role in crime prevention. Eze and Chukwuma (2021) found that skills programs in Nigeria, such as those in agriculture and welding, reduce youth idleness, a key driver of criminal behaviour. The high mean for Item 2 (Mean = 3.05) supports this, indicating that economic opportunities from skills training lower crime rates. Similarly, Okafor and Udeh (2023) highlight that vocational programs offering self-employment skills, like carpentry, provide alternatives to crime, consistent with Item 3 (Mean = 2.65). Dissonance is evident in the neutral rating for Item 4 (Mean = 2.50), which suggests that insufficient program access may not strongly correlate with increased crime. This contrasts with Adeyemi and Okeke (2022), who argue that limited access to vocational training in rural Nigeria exacerbates youth crime due to unemployment. The neutral rating may reflect respondents' uncertainty about the direct causal link between program scarcity and crime, possibly influenced by other factors like community policing or cultural norms in Ika North East.

More so, findings from the research study unravel extent to which skills acquisition improve living standard of youths, skills acquisition programs, such as training in agriculture or tailoring, significantly improve the living standards of youths by providing

sustainable income sources, better financial stability, small businesses, leading to improved access to basic needs like food, housing, healthcare, and drastic reduce on poverty level. These findings are consonant with recent studies on vocational training's socioeconomic impacts. According to Nwachukwu and Okorie (2021), skills acquisition in trades like tailoring and agriculture enhances financial stability and access to basic needs, mirroring the high ratings for Items 2 and 3. Similarly, Adebayo et al. (2023) found that vocational programs in Nigeria enable youths to start small businesses, reducing poverty, which aligns with Item 4 (Mean = 2.95). The strong grand mean underscores the programs' role in improving the quality of life in Ika North East. Dissonance is minimal but notable in the slightly lower mean for Item 1 (Mean = 2.97) compared to Items 2 and 3. Okoye et al. (2024) suggest that while vocational training improves income, its impact on living standards can be uneven due to market saturation in certain trades (e.g., tailoring). This may explain the slightly lower agreement on sustainable income sources, as some youths may struggle to translate skills into consistent earnings in competitive local markets.

Findings from the study also reveal that youths encounter a plethora of challenges in participating in vocational skills acquisitions, such barrier include lack of awareness about available vocational skills, insufficient vocational training centers or facilities, financial constraints, such as training fees or transportation cost and societal stigma or low perception of vocational training as a viable career path discourages youths. The findings align closely with the literature on barriers to vocational training. Chukwu et al. (2022)

identify financial constraints, such as training fees and transportation costs, as primary barriers to youth participation in Nigeria, strongly supporting Item 3's high mean. Similarly, Eze and Nwosu (2023) highlight the lack of awareness and inadequate training facilities as significant challenges in rural areas, corroborating Items 1 (Mean = 3.16) and 2 (Mean = 3.14). The high rating for societal stigma (Item 4, Mean = 3.00) is consistent with Adewale and Okonkwo (2021), who note that vocational trades are often undervalued compared to white-collar careers, deterring youth enrollment. Dissonance is minimal, but the slightly lower mean for societal stigma (Item 4) compared to other items may suggest that this barrier is less dominant in Ika North East. Okafor et al. (2024) argue that cultural shifts in Nigeria are gradually elevating the status of vocational trades, which may reduce stigma in some communities. This could explain the slightly lower agreement, as respondents may perceive other barriers (e.g., financial constraints) as more pressing.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter dealt with the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn, the results obtained and recommendations.

Summary

This study investigated the influence of vocational skill acquisition programmes on the socioeconomic development of youths in the Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. The research was motivated by the persistent challenges of youth unemployment, poverty, and associated social vices such as crime, which have plagued Nigeria's youthful population despite various government interventions like Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skill acquisition initiatives. The background highlighted how formal education alone is insufficient for socioeconomic advancement, emphasising the role of vocational skills in fostering self-employment, employability, and economic stability. Drawing from global and local contexts, the study underscored the mismatch between labour market demands and available skills, leading to widespread underemployment and social instability.

The statement of the problem identified key issues, including government insensitivity, youth apathy towards skill acquisition, decaying societal values, and inadequate curricula in educational systems, all contributing to escalating youth restiveness and crime. The purpose of the study was to examine the availability of vocational skill

programmes, their impact on unemployment, crime involvement, living standards, and the challenges hindering youth participation. Five specific objectives guided the research, corresponding to research questions that explored these dimensions.

Theoretically, the study was anchored on the Human Capital Theory (HCT) by Gary Becker (1964), which posits that investments in education and skills enhance productivity, employability, and socioeconomic growth. The literature review covered concepts of skill acquisition, its dimensions (technical, innovative, and managerial skills), available programmes (e.g., tailoring, welding, ICT), influences on unemployment and crime, improvements in living standards, and challenges such as infrastructure deficits, regulatory barriers, political instability, corruption, poor attitudes towards entrepreneurship, and insecurity.

Methodologically, a descriptive survey design was adopted, targeting a population of 57,659 youths in Ika North East LGA (based on 2022 projections from the National Population Commission and National Bureau of Statistics). A sample size of 100 respondents was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula with a 10% margin of error. Simple random sampling ensured representativeness. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes on the Socioeconomic Development of the Youths Questionnaire (IVSAPSDYSQ)," comprising 20 items on a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). The instrument was validated by experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Data analysis

employed mean scores and standard deviations, with a benchmark mean of 2.50 distinguishing high (agreement) from low (disagreement) responses. Out of 100 distributed questionnaires, 96 were retrieved and analysed.

Key findings from the data analysis revealed:

1. Vocational skill acquisition programmes, such as tailoring, welding, catering, computer studies, fashion design, and agriculture, are widely available and perceived as practical for self-employment (Grand Mean = 3.16, SD = 0.84; High).
2. These programmes significantly influence youth unemployment reduction by enhancing employability and fostering entrepreneurship (Grand Mean = 2.84, SD = 0.96; High).
3. They moderately reduce youth involvement in crimes like theft, vandalism, robbery, and cultism through productive engagement and economic opportunities (Grand Mean = 2.76, SD = 0.93; High, though one item was neutral).
4. Programmes notably improve living standards by providing sustainable income, financial stability, access to basic needs, and poverty reduction (Grand Mean = 3.05, SD = 0.88; High).
5. Major challenges hindering participation include lack of awareness, insufficient facilities, financial constraints, and societal stigma (Grand Mean = 3.16, SD = 0.89; High).

The discussion of findings aligned these results with empirical literature, noting consonances with studies like Faithpraise et al. (2023) on AI skills for unemployment reduction and Shi and Bangpan (2022) on TVET's multifaceted benefits. Dissonances were observed in areas like the uneven impact on crime reduction due to external factors (e.g., Okonkwo and Nwankwo, 2024) and potential market saturation affecting income sustainability (Okoye et al., 2024). Overall, the study contributes to understanding how vocational skills can drive socioeconomic development in rural Nigerian contexts, while highlighting persistent barriers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concludes that vocational skill acquisition programmes play a pivotal role in the socioeconomic development of youths in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. The availability of diverse programmes, such as tailoring, welding, ICT, agriculture, and fashion design, provides youths with practical tools for self-employment and economic participation, aligning with the Human Capital Theory's emphasis on skill investments for productivity and growth. These programmes effectively mitigate youth unemployment by bridging skill mismatches in the labour market, offering alternatives to formal employment scarcity, and promoting entrepreneurship, as evidenced by high agreement levels among respondents.

Furthermore, the study concludes that vocational skills contribute to reducing youth involvement in crime by addressing root causes like idleness and economic hardship,

though the impact is moderated by external factors such as inadequate programme access and broader societal influences. This supports the notion that empowered youths are less prone to social vices, fostering community stability. On living standards, the programmes enhance financial stability, access to essentials (e.g., food, housing, healthcare), and poverty alleviation, leading to improved well-being and social mobility. However, challenges like lack of awareness, infrastructural deficits, financial barriers, and societal stigma significantly impede participation, underscoring the need for systemic reforms.

In essence, while vocational skill acquisition programmes demonstrate substantial positive influences on unemployment reduction, crime prevention, and living standard improvements—consistent with global and local evidence (e.g., ILO, 2020; UNESCO, 2018)—their full potential remains untapped due to implementation gaps. The study affirms that targeted investments in these programmes can transform Nigeria's youthful demographic bulge into an asset for sustainable development, but only if barriers are proactively addressed. This research not only validates the significance of TVET in developing economies but also highlights the urgency of youth-centric policies in regions like Delta State to curb socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings and conclusions, the following comprehensive recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of vocational skill acquisition

programmes and promote youth socioeconomic development in Ika North East Local Government Area and similar contexts:

1. The Delta State Government, in collaboration with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and local authorities, should expand vocational training centres in Ika North East by establishing at least two additional facilities per ward, equipped with modern tools for trades like ICT, agriculture, and welding. This would address the perceived sufficiency of opportunities (Finding from RQ1) and ensure geographic equity, drawing from successful models like the Rural Youth Skill Acquisition (RYSA) programme.
2. Policymakers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should launch targeted awareness campaigns using digital platforms (e.g., social media, SMS alerts) and community engagements (e.g., town halls, youth forums) to inform youths about available programmes. Partnerships with schools and NYSC camps could integrate skill acquisition orientations, mitigating the lack of awareness barrier (RQ5) and encouraging participation, as recommended by Adebayo and Adeyemi (2021).
3. government should subsidise training fees, provide stipends for transportation, and offer microfinance loans or grants for programme participants to start small businesses post-training. Collaborations with financial institutions and international donors (e.g., World Bank, ILO) could fund these initiatives, directly

tackling the highest-rated challenge (Item 3, RQ5; Mean = 3.34) and enhancing employability outcomes (RQ2).

4. Educational curricula in secondary and tertiary institutions should incorporate mandatory entrepreneurship and vocational modules to elevate the perception of skilled trades as viable careers. Media campaigns highlighting success stories of skilled youths (e.g., via radio dramas or documentaries) would reduce stigma (RQ5), aligning with Begho and Begho's (2023) call for cultural shifts towards entrepreneurship.
5. Vocational programmes should include soft skills training (e.g., conflict resolution, emotional intelligence) alongside technical skills to explicitly link skill acquisition to crime reduction (RQ3) and improved living standards (RQ4). Community-based monitoring by local security committees could evaluate impacts, building on Akinwale (2017)'s emphasis on empowering youths against criminal vulnerabilities.
6. Federal and state governments should invest in infrastructure (e.g., reliable electricity, internet for ICT training) and streamline regulatory processes for business startups, reducing bureaucratic delays and corruption (as noted in challenges like regulatory compliance and corruption). This would support entrepreneurial outcomes from skills training, per the European Journal of Business Management (2014).

7. Establish a dedicated monitoring unit under the Delta State Ministry of Youth Development to track programme effectiveness using metrics like employment rates and income levels. Future researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to assess long-term impacts, expanding on this study's cross-sectional design and addressing dissonances in the literature (e.g., uneven crime reduction links).
8. Governments, the private sector, and NGOs should form alliances to co-fund and co-deliver programmes, ensuring sustainability. For instance, involving local businesses in apprenticeships would align training with market needs, reducing skill mismatches (Brunello et al., 2021) and amplifying socioeconomic benefits.

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APPENDIX

Department of Business Education,
Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education,
University of Benin,
Benin City, Nigeria
July, 2025.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF ITEMS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final year student of the above-named department/institution. I am conducting a research on, “investigate the influence of Vocational Skill Acquisition Programmes on the Socioeconomic Development of the Youths in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State”. This research is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Bachelor degree in Business Education.

I will be very grateful, if you assist me with useful answers by completing the questionnaire below. I assure you that your responses will be treated with confidentiality and the information given will be used strictly for the purpose of this academic work.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Peace Udo

Researcher.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please kindly tick [] the appropriate option below

SECTION A: Demographic Data

Instruction: please tick () the appropriate responses in the boxes below

Gender: Male () Female ()

Age: 18-22 (), 26-27 (), 28-32 (), 33 above()

SECTION B: Research Variables

Instruction: in this part, you are required to tick () as you find Appropriate:

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
RQ1	What are the vocational skills acquisition programmes available to youths in Ika North East Local Government?				
1.	Vocational training programs, such as tailoring, welding, or catering, are widely available for youths in Ika North East Local Government.				
2.	I am aware of government-supported vocational skills acquisition centers in Ika North East Local Government that offer training to youths.				
3.	Vocational skills programs in Ika North East Local Government provide practical and hands-on training that prepare youths for self-employment.				
4.	There are sufficient opportunities for youths to access vocational training in areas like computer studies, fashion design, or agriculture in Ika North East Local Government.				

RQ2	To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence youth unemployment in Ika North East Local Government?				
5.	Skills acquisition programs, such as vocational training in trades like tailoring or ICT, effectively reduce youth involvement in criminal activities in Ika North East Local Government.				
6.	Youths who participate in skills acquisition programs in Ika North East are less likely to engage in crimes such as theft or vandalism due to increased employability.				
7.	The availability of skills acquisition programs in Ika North East provides youths with viable alternatives to crime by fostering entrepreneurship and self-reliance.				
8.	Inadequate access to skills acquisition programs in Ika North East contributes to higher rates of youth involvement in crime due to unemployment and poverty.				
RQ3	To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence youth involvement in crime in Ika North East Local Government?				
9.	Skills acquisition programs in Ika North East, such as training in agriculture or welding, significantly reduce youth participation in criminal activities by providing productive engagement.				
10.	Youths who complete skills acquisition programs in Ika North East are less likely to engage in crimes like robbery or cultism due to improved economic opportunities.				
11.	Vocational training programs in Ika North East offer youths alternatives to crime by equipping them with skills for self-employment in fields like fashion design or carpentry.				

12.	The lack of sufficient skills acquisition programs in Ika North East increases youth involvement in crime due to limited access to training and job opportunities.				
RQ4	To what extent do skills acquisition programmes influence improvement in the living standard of youths in Ika North East Local Government?				
13.	Skills acquisition programs in Ika North East, such as training in agriculture or tailoring, significantly improve the living standards of youths by providing sustainable income sources.				
14.	Youths who participate in skills acquisition programs in Ika North East experience better financial stability due to enhanced employability in trades like ICT or carpentry.				
15.	Vocational training programs in Ika North East enable youths to start small businesses, leading to improved access to basic needs like food, housing, and healthcare.				
16.	The availability of skills acquisition programs in Ika North East contributes to reducing poverty among youths by equipping them with skills for self-reliance.				
RQ5	What are the challenges hindering the youths from participating in the vocational skills acquisition programmes in Ika North East Local Government Area?				
17.	Lack of awareness about available vocational skills acquisition programs in Ika North East prevents youths from participating.				
18.	Insufficient vocational training centers or facilities in Ika North East make it difficult for youths to access skills acquisition programs.				

19.	Financial constraints, such as training fees or transportation costs, hinder youths from participating in vocational skills programs in Ika North East.				
20.	Societal stigma or low perception of vocational training as a viable career path discourages youths in Ika North East from enrolling in skills acquisition programs.				