

**SKILL ACQUISITION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**



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BENIN CITY.**

NOVEMBER, 2025

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY
OF BENIN, BENIN CITY. IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC) DEGREE IN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

NOVEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I, OGHIA DOMHE MIRACLE FAVOUR declare that,

- i. This study is based on a study undertaken by me in the Department of Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, under the supervision of **DR. MRS. CAROLINE UYOYO EDEVBARO** of the Department of Entrepreneurship, Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.
- ii. This work has not been submitted for the award of degree elsewhere.
- iii. Ideas and views are product of my personal research and where the view of others has been expressed, they have been duly acknowledged.
- iv. Any liability arising from this work is to be wholly borne by me alone

OGHIA DOMHE MIRACLE FAVOUR

DATE

MGS2104902

CERTIFICATION

We, certify that this project work was carried out by **OGHIADOMHE MIRACLE FAVOUR** in the Department of Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. It is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Entrepreneurship.

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Date

(Head of Department)

DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to God Almighty for His abundant grace in my life and for seeing me through my academic pursuit and aspiration. He has been my source and on His wings only I have soared. I also want to dedicate this project to my family and friends for the love and encouragement they have showed toward me during the course of this program, all I can say is thank you and God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development in Nigeria. The primary objective was to determine how skill development and entrepreneurial activities contribute to economic growth, employment generation, and long-term sustainability. The study adopted a quantitative survey design, and data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to 333 respondents, out of which 290 were duly completed and analyzed. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including multiple linear regression analysis, was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that skill acquisition has a significant positive effect on sustainable development, implying that individuals equipped with relevant skills contribute meaningfully to economic productivity and poverty reduction. Similarly, entrepreneurship significantly fosters sustainable development through job creation, innovation, and economic diversification. The study further identified key challenges such as limited funding, poor infrastructure, weak government policies, and inadequate access to markets as major barriers to effective skill acquisition and entrepreneurship. Similarly, the research established that strategies such as government support, public-private partnerships, mentorship programs, and entrepreneurship education significantly enhance the impact of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship on sustainable development. Therefore the government and private sector collaborate to provide adequate infrastructure, financial support, and policy frameworks to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems. The study concludes that skill acquisition and entrepreneurship are critical drivers of sustainable development in Nigeria

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In today's rapidly evolving global economy, skill acquisition and entrepreneurship are increasingly recognized as fundamental drivers of economic growth and sustainable development. Nations that emphasize these areas often experience accelerated economic progress, improved living standards, and a higher quality of life for their citizens (World Bank, 2023). The relationship between skill acquisition and economic growth is clear when individuals acquire specific competencies, such as technical skills, vocational expertise, and entrepreneurial capabilities, they become more employable, thereby contributing to national economic productivity (UNESCO, 2022). Skill acquisition equips people with the necessary tools to improve their livelihoods, reduce poverty, and enhance societal development by fostering a more skilled and productive workforce.

Simultaneously, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in stimulating economic activity and generating employment. Entrepreneurs are key agents of innovation, often pioneering new products, services, and business models that drive economic dynamism. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are particularly significant in this context, as they account for a large portion of employment globally and are instrumental in enhancing the economic resilience of nations (GEM, 2022; OECD, 2023). Through entrepreneurship, individuals can create their own businesses, thus reducing unemployment and generating wealth. This makes entrepreneurship a powerful tool for addressing social inequalities and fostering inclusive growth, especially in developing countries where formal employment opportunities may be limited. Sustainable development, as defined by the United Nations (2023), involves meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving sustainable development requires a holistic approach that integrates economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Entrepreneurship and skill acquisition are integral to this framework, as they help bridge the gap between economic growth and social inclusivity. By creating businesses and opportunities for employment, entrepreneurs contribute to poverty reduction and improved living standards. In parallel, skill acquisition empowers individuals to

participate fully in the workforce, thereby enhancing national productivity, reducing unemployment, and promoting self-reliance in economies (ILO, 2023). In countries like Nigeria, where high unemployment and poverty rates are pervasive, programs focused on skill acquisition and entrepreneurship offer viable solutions to these challenges.

The Nigerian government has made significant strides in addressing these issues through various initiatives, particularly in the areas of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and entrepreneurship development. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), for instance, has integrated entrepreneurship training into its orientation programs to provide young Nigerians with the skills necessary to launch and sustain businesses. In addition, the government has partnered with international organizations and private sector actors to promote programs that aim to reduce unemployment by enhancing vocational training and entrepreneurial capacities (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). While these initiatives have contributed to addressing unemployment and skills deficits, challenges persist. A major hurdle is the mismatch between the skills acquired through training programs and the actual demands of the labor market. There is also limited access to financial resources, as many aspiring entrepreneurs struggle to obtain the capital needed to start or scale their businesses. Furthermore, regulatory and infrastructural barriers often hinder the growth and sustainability of small businesses (World Bank, 2022).

Internationally, other countries have demonstrated success with entrepreneurship-focused policies. For example, Rwanda's YouthConnekt Initiative has significantly reduced youth unemployment by providing young people with the tools, resources, and networks needed to start their own businesses. Through this initiative, the Rwandan government has actively supported entrepreneurial youth by providing access to finance, mentorship, and market linkages (Rwanda National Institute of Statistics, 2023). Similarly, South Africa's emphasis on promoting entrepreneurship in underdeveloped regions has helped mitigate poverty and spurred economic growth. These success stories serve as models for Nigeria, demonstrating that with the right policies, infrastructure, and access to resources, entrepreneurship and skill acquisition can play transformative roles in fostering national development. In the case of Nigeria, the lessons drawn from countries like Rwanda and South Africa can be crucial in designing more effective policies. There is a need for a stronger focus on aligning educational curricula with the practical needs of the labor market, enhancing access to finance for small businesses, and improving the regulatory

environment to facilitate business development. By leveraging these strategies, Nigeria can harness the potential of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship to accelerate its economic growth, create sustainable jobs, and meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 (UNDP, 2022). Moreover, addressing these gaps will help Nigeria achieve a more inclusive economic model, ensuring that development benefits all segments of society, particularly the youth, women, and underdeveloped communities. Thus, it is clear that skill acquisition and entrepreneurship are not isolated factors but are interdependent. When effectively integrated, they create a powerful synergy that drives inclusive, sustainable development. By focusing on both areas, Nigeria can build a more resilient economy capable of meeting the needs of its citizens while contributing to global development goals. The potential of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship is vast, and with the right policies, Nigeria can significantly reduce poverty, enhance employment opportunities, and foster long-term sustainable development.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in driving sustainable development, many nations, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, continue to face significant challenges in this area. Scholars such as Oviawe (2018) argue that while skill acquisition programs exist, they are often insufficiently aligned with the practical needs of the labour market, resulting in disconnect between vocational education and real-world applications, which results in limited economic impact. Similarly, Adebisi and Oni (2020) highlight the challenges entrepreneurs in Nigeria face, including inadequate infrastructure, poor access to finance, and an unfavorable regulatory environment. Their research pointed to systemic issues that prevent entrepreneurship from being a fully effective tool for economic development. Additionally, Ibrahim and Mohammed (2021) explore the role of entrepreneurship education in higher institutions but find that the curriculum often lacks a focus on practical skills needed to foster self-reliance and sustainable business creation.

However, these studies have certain limitations that this research seeks to address. For example, while Oviawe (2018) identifies the mismatch between vocational training and market needs, the study does not provide a comprehensive analysis of how entrepreneurial activities could complement skill acquisition to promote sustainable development. Similarly, Adebisi and Oni's

(2020) work is largely focused on the barriers faced by entrepreneurs but does not explore the potential synergies between government policies and educational reforms in addressing these barriers. Ibrahim and Mohammed (2021) also fail to delve into how entrepreneurship education can be adapted to different socio-economic contexts, especially in underserved regions.

The gap in these studies lies in their limited focus on the integration of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship as a cohesive strategy for sustainable development. While each scholar discusses important elements of the issue, there is a lack of comprehensive research that links the three concepts within a framework designed to address the unique challenges faced by developing countries like Nigeria. This current research aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurship, focusing on how they can be jointly leveraged to drive sustainable development. By doing so, the research will provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and educators on how to enhance the efficacy of skill acquisition programs and entrepreneurship initiatives in achieving long-term socio-economic development.

1.3 Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What is the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurship
2. How do skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship foster sustainable development
3. What challenges are inhibiting the effective use of skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development
4. What strategies can be adopted to drive sustainable development through skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the role of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. Examine the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development.
2. Investigate how skill acquisition on entrepreneurship contributes to sustainable development by creating economic opportunities, jobs, and innovation.
3. Identify the challenges inhibiting the effective use of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in promoting sustainable development.
4. Propose strategies that can be adopted to drive sustainable development through skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

The study will test the following hypotheses:

1. Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development.
2. Ho₂: skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship do not significantly foster sustainable development.
3. Ho₃: There are no significant challenges inhibiting the effective use of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in promoting sustainable development.
4. Ho₄: There are no effective strategies that can be adopted to drive sustainable development through skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the role of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in promoting sustainable development among a specific population within Benin City, Edo State. The target population comprises beneficiaries of skill acquisition programs and entrepreneurship initiatives, including local entrepreneurs and small business owners operating within the city. Using a structured questionnaire, the study will explore their experiences, challenges, and perceptions. Furthermore, it will examine how skill acquisition and entrepreneurship contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8, which emphasizes decent work and

economic growth. The geographical scope is therefore confined exclusively to Benin City to ensure a focused and representative analysis.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several ways. First, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the intersection of skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. By identifying the key challenges and opportunities in this domain, the study will provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and entrepreneurs. The findings of this research could inform the design of more effective policies and programs aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and vocational training as critical components of national development strategies.

Secondly, the study will benefit young entrepreneurs and individuals seeking to acquire relevant skills by highlighting the pathways to entrepreneurial success and self-reliance. The study also serves as a resource for academic researchers and students interested in understanding how skill acquisition and entrepreneurship can be leveraged for sustainable development.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study may be limited by the willingness and availability of respondents in Benin City to provide accurate and complete information through the questionnaire. Some participants may provide incomplete or biased responses, which could affect the reliability of the findings. Additionally, the study is confined to beneficiaries of skill acquisition programs and local entrepreneurs within Benin City, limiting the generalizability of the results to other regions or populations. Access to detailed records of certain entrepreneurship initiatives or skill acquisition programs may also be restricted, posing challenges in obtaining comprehensive data.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of existing literature on the interconnections between skill comprehensive understandings of these concepts and examine prior research on the challenges and opportunities they present, especially in the context of developing nations like Nigeria. The review addresses the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurship, the impact of entrepreneurship on economic development, and the role of sustainable development in shaping educational and entrepreneurial policies.

2.2. Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Concept of Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition refers to the process through which individuals acquire the necessary competencies, abilities, or knowledge to effectively perform specific tasks or functions. This process can take various forms, including formal education, vocational training, apprenticeships, and self-directed learning. According to UNESCO (2022), skill acquisition is a critical factor in the advancement of economies, particularly in developing countries, where it plays a vital role in poverty alleviation and the enhancement of employability. In this context, acquiring skills is seen as a pathway to economic independence and social mobility, enabling individuals to transition from low-income positions to more sustainable livelihoods.

Skill acquisition can be categorized into two broad types: hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills refer to technical competencies specific to a particular occupation, such as programming for software developers, carpentry for construction workers, or financial management for accountants. These skills are typically learned through formal education or on-the-job training and are essential for the efficient execution of specialized tasks (Shah & Iqbal, 2021). In contrast, soft skills, also known as interpersonal or transferable skills, are less tangible but equally crucial. These include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and critical thinking abilities (Yusuf & Ojo, 2023). While hard skills are often the primary focus of technical

education, soft skills are essential for personal development and effective functioning in the workplace, contributing to an individual's adaptability and success in a variety of work environments (Kemp, 2023). The concept of skill acquisition also extends to the importance of aligning training programs with current labor market demands. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) stresses the need for skill development initiatives that are responsive to the evolving requirements of industries, particularly those that contribute to economic growth, innovation, and environmental sustainability. For instance, in the face of rapid technological advancements, there is a growing need for skilled labor in emerging sectors such as renewable energy, digital technologies, and green industries (ILO, 2023). Therefore, skill acquisition programs must not only focus on traditional sectors but also anticipate future trends to equip individuals with the competencies necessary to thrive in a dynamic global economy. In the context of sustainable development, skill acquisition becomes a critical tool for empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of their societies. The United Nations (2023) emphasizes that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 8, which focuses on promoting decent work and economic growth, requires the development of a skilled workforce capable of addressing both current and future challenges. By improving access to quality education and training, skill acquisition fosters economic resilience, enhances innovation, and creates opportunities for inclusive growth. As noted by the World Bank (2023), regions with higher rates of skill development tend to experience more rapid economic growth, lower levels of inequality, and better social outcomes. Furthermore, skill acquisition programs have the potential to reduce income inequality by equipping individuals from marginalized and low-income backgrounds with the tools to improve their socio-economic status. Research by Rauf *et al.* (2023) demonstrates that well-structured skill development programs can bridge the gap between the skilled and unskilled labor force, thereby promoting a more equitable distribution of economic resources. When individuals are equipped with both hard and soft skills, they are better positioned to secure stable, well-paying jobs, or even start their own businesses, which can further contribute to economic diversification and resilience.

A well-designed skill acquisition program is thus integral to the broader goal of improving labor market outcomes for individuals. These programs not only increase employability but also contribute to the economic development of nations. According to the OECD (2023), countries that invest in skill development typically observe higher levels of productivity, innovation, and

competitiveness in both local and global markets. By prioritizing skill acquisition, countries can create a more adaptive and skilled workforce, capable of responding to the challenges posed by globalization, automation, and environmental sustainability.

2.2.2 Entrepreneurship and Economic Development

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a cornerstone of economic development. It involves the creation, management, and expansion of new ventures, often addressing unmet market needs or introducing innovative solutions. Entrepreneurs play a crucial role in fostering economic growth through job creation, wealth generation, and enhanced economic diversification. They contribute significantly to the development of new industries, improvement of productivity, and promotion of technological advancements, all of which are essential for sustainable economic growth. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2022), entrepreneurship is a key driver of global GDP, contributing substantially to employment, particularly through the establishment and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). SMEs are often more adaptable and resilient, helping to cushion economies during times of financial crises or downturns, thereby playing a vital role in economic stability and recovery..

Entrepreneurship is particularly important in developing countries, where it is seen as a primary avenue for fostering economic growth and alleviating poverty. The African Development Bank (2022) underscores the critical role entrepreneurship can play in reducing youth unemployment, a major challenge in many African nations. Youth unemployment rates in sub-Saharan Africa are among the highest in the world, and entrepreneurship is often seen as a solution that can absorb the growing workforce and stimulate economic activity. New ventures can create jobs, improve standards of living, and help reduce income inequality. Furthermore, entrepreneurship can lead to improved access to goods and services, driving economic activity in both urban and rural areas, and contributing to the overall development of a nation's economy.

However, despite the significant potential of entrepreneurship in driving development, many developing regions face considerable barriers that hinder the growth and success of entrepreneurial ventures. As noted by Adebisi and Oni (2020), these barriers include limited access to capital, inadequate infrastructure, a lack of supportive legal and regulatory frameworks, and insufficient training and education. These challenges create a hostile environment for new

businesses, especially for aspiring entrepreneurs with limited resources. Access to finance is particularly critical, as many entrepreneurs in developing countries struggle to secure funding from traditional banking systems due to high-interest rates, stringent collateral requirements, and an overall lack of investor confidence in emerging markets (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2021). Poor infrastructure, such as unreliable electricity, inadequate transportation systems, and poor internet connectivity, further complicates the process of starting and running a business. To address these obstacles and promote entrepreneurship as a vehicle for economic development, several interventions are necessary. Adebisi and Oni (2020) advocate for a multifaceted approach that includes government support through favorable policies, access to finance, and legal reforms that facilitate the ease of doing business. Additionally, improving educational systems to equip individuals with entrepreneurial skills is essential. Governmental initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and offering tax incentives or subsidies for start-ups are also vital in creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurial growth.

2.2.3 Sustainable Development and Its Relevance

Sustainable development is a fundamental concept that seeks to balance economic progress with the preservation of resources and opportunities for future generations. It is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This concept is multifaceted, integrating economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. It emphasizes the importance of creating systems that are resilient, equitable, and capable of sustaining development across generations.

The United Nations (2023) highlights that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provides a global framework for achieving balanced and inclusive development. Among these goals, SDG 8 focuses on promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. The achievement of this goal is intrinsically linked to the promotion of entrepreneurship and skill acquisition. By fostering entrepreneurship, individuals can create businesses that contribute to economic growth, job creation, and innovation, all of which are essential components of sustainable development. Additionally, skill acquisition helps

individuals participate effectively in the workforce, ensuring they have the necessary competencies to contribute to the economy in a sustainable manner (United Nations, 2023).

Sustainable development also emphasizes the importance of reducing inequalities and ensuring that the benefits of development are equitably distributed. This involves empowering marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and rural communities, by providing them with the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to become active contributors to society and the economy. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023), the transition to a sustainable economy relies heavily on the capacity of the workforce to adapt to new challenges, such as technological advancements, climate change, and shifts in global markets. As such, the development of skills that are relevant to the modern economy, such as digital literacy, green technologies, and innovative business practices, is critical to ensuring long-term economic and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the integration of sustainable practices into entrepreneurship is essential for fostering an environmentally responsible future. Entrepreneurs have the potential to drive the adoption of green technologies, sustainable production methods, and responsible consumption patterns. The ILO (2023) emphasizes that the creation of sustainable businesses, which prioritize environmental protection, social equity, and economic viability, is crucial for the realization of the SDGs. Entrepreneurs can contribute to sustainability by developing products and services that reduce environmental impact, promote resource efficiency, and address societal challenges such as poverty, health, and inequality.

Incorporating sustainable practices into entrepreneurship also requires the support of effective policies and regulations. Governments play a vital role in creating an enabling environment for sustainable entrepreneurship by implementing policies that promote innovation, protect the environment, and foster inclusive economic growth. This includes providing access to finance, creating favorable regulatory frameworks, and investing in infrastructure that supports sustainable practices (United Nations, 2023). Moreover, policy interventions that encourage the use of renewable energy, the adoption of clean technologies, and the reduction of carbon emissions are essential to achieving the global sustainability agenda. Ultimately, sustainable development requires a holistic approach that integrates economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. The role of entrepreneurship and skill acquisition is central to this

process, as they provide the tools and capabilities needed to address the challenges of the present while securing a better future for generations to come.

2.2.4 Skill Acquisition, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development

The interplay between skill acquisition and entrepreneurship is pivotal to achieving sustainable development. Both concepts mutually reinforce each other, fostering a workforce equipped to address economic, social, and environmental challenges. Entrepreneurs who possess the requisite skills are better positioned to innovate, creating solutions that align with sustainable goals such as developing clean energy technologies, waste management systems, or sustainable agricultural practices (UNESCO, 2023).

According to Oviawe (2018), skill acquisition alone, while important, achieves its full potential when linked to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship provides a practical platform for individuals to utilize their skills to solve problems, generate income, and drive economic growth. For instance, skilled artisans can establish businesses that supply eco-friendly products, directly contributing to the green economy. This linkage ensures that skill acquisition transcends educational outcomes to become a strategic driver of national and global development through sustainable enterprises. Moreover, skill acquisition programs address critical barriers to entrepreneurship, such as inadequate managerial skills, limited access to market information, and the lack of adaptability in complex business environments. Integrating entrepreneurial education with skill development initiatives equips individuals with the knowledge and competencies to manage resources efficiently, innovate within constrained environments, and scale sustainable enterprises. This integration fosters a culture of resilience and innovation, enabling businesses to thrive in sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable tourism, and circular economies (OECD, 2023).

The synergy between skill acquisition and entrepreneurship also has implications for inclusive growth. By targeting marginalized groups, such as women and youth, skill acquisition programs coupled with entrepreneurial initiatives can bridge inequalities and empower these groups to participate meaningfully in economic activities. For example, women-led businesses in agriculture have demonstrated the potential to improve food security while promoting sustainable farming practices (ILO, 2023). This inclusion ensures that the benefits of sustainable

development are equitably distributed across all demographics. Finally, linking skill acquisition and entrepreneurship to sustainable development aligns with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). By fostering innovation, building human capital, and driving inclusive economic growth, this integration serves as a cornerstone for sustainable development efforts globally (UNDP, 2023).

2.4.5 Past and Current Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Programs in Nigeria: Successes, Challenges, and Failures

In Nigeria, skill acquisition and entrepreneurship programs have long been seen as essential tools for addressing unemployment, poverty, and fostering economic growth. These initiatives, both past and present, have evolved in response to Nigeria's socio-economic challenges, with the aim of equipping young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute meaningfully to the economy. While some programs have achieved notable success, others have faced various challenges, and in some cases, failed to achieve their intended goals.

2.4.5.1 Past Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Programs

One of the earliest efforts to address skill acquisition in Nigeria was the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), established in 1986 by the Nigerian government. The NDE aimed to create job opportunities and reduce unemployment through training programs in various sectors, including agriculture, construction, and information technology. The NDE's Skill Acquisition and Vocational Training Program offered various courses to young people, enabling them to learn practical skills. However, despite its good intentions, the program faced challenges such as insufficient funding, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate follow-up mechanisms for trainees after completion. Another important initiative was the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) program, which began in 2012. The SAED program was designed to equip NYSC members with entrepreneurial skills during their service year, encouraging them to create businesses or improve existing ones. While the program successfully provided training in fields such as agro-processing, fashion design, and ICT, many participants still faced difficulties in securing funding to start businesses due to

limited access to financial resources and a lack of robust support systems. The Industrial Training Fund (ITF), which was established in 1971, has also played a significant role in promoting skill acquisition through its National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and Trade Testing programs. The ITF has worked with various sectors to offer technical training in areas like construction, engineering, and manufacturing. Despite some successes, the program has struggled with poor infrastructure, limited participation from the private sector, and the inability to reach marginalized communities in rural areas.

2.4.5.2 Current Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Programs

In recent years, there have been several reforms and new programs aimed at improving skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in Nigeria. One such initiative is the YouWiN! (Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria) program, launched in 2011. YouWiN! provided financial grants, mentorship, and business development support to young entrepreneurs across Nigeria. The program achieved some success, with many recipients launching successful businesses, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, technology, and retail. However, challenges such as bureaucratic delays, limited access to markets, and the inability of some participants to scale their businesses hampered its long-term impact.

Another prominent initiative is the Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (YEAP), introduced by the Nigerian government with the support of international organizations such as the World Bank. YEAP aims to reduce youth unemployment by providing access to skills training, job placement, and entrepreneurship development. Through partnerships with various training institutes, YEAP has trained thousands of young Nigerians in sectors like digital skills, hospitality, and fashion. However, despite its large reach, the program has faced criticism for a lack of coordination, limited post-training support, and the challenge of aligning skills training with actual labor market demands.

In the realm of entrepreneurship, the Entrepreneurship Development Centers (EDCs), supported by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), have continued to provide training, funding, and mentoring for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These centers offer programs in business management, marketing, and financial literacy. While the EDCs have helped many SMEs thrive, the overall impact has been constrained by the inability of many entrepreneurs to

access affordable financing and the lack of an enabling business environment due to regulatory bottlenecks.

The Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Program (TEEP), which was launched in 2015, is another significant initiative aimed at empowering young African entrepreneurs, including Nigerians. TEEP offers mentorship, seed capital, and training to participants with innovative business ideas. While the program has successfully funded and mentored thousands of entrepreneurs, challenges related to the scalability of businesses, market access, and sustaining long-term growth remain prevalent.

2.2.5 Challenges to Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship in Nigeria

In Nigeria, several challenges impede the effective implementation of skill acquisition programs and the growth of entrepreneurship, undermining their potential to contribute to sustainable development. These challenges arise from systemic inadequacies in the education and entrepreneurial ecosystems, as well as broader socio-economic issues.

2.2.5.1 Mismatch Between Skills and Labor Market Needs

A primary challenge is the disparity between the skills imparted by educational institutions and the actual demands of the labor market. Nigeria's educational curriculum often focuses on theoretical knowledge rather than practical, job-ready skills. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2022), technical and vocational education, which should equip individuals with industry-relevant skills, is underfunded and poorly implemented. This mismatch contributes to the country's high unemployment rate, particularly among young graduates, who struggle to find jobs in an economy undergoing rapid technological and industrial change.

2.2.5.2 Inadequate Vocational and Technical Training

Vocational and technical education is essential for skill acquisition, but these programs are often inadequate in Nigeria. Many vocational centers lack modern equipment, qualified instructors, and updated curricula, making it difficult for trainees to acquire competitive skills. UNESCO (2023) stresses that without reforms in vocational training, many young Nigerians will remain

unprepared for roles in emerging industries, particularly those aligned with sustainable development, such as renewable energy and digital technology.

2.2.5.3 Infrastructural Deficiencies

Entrepreneurial success is heavily reliant on the availability of basic infrastructure, yet Nigeria suffers from significant deficiencies in this area. Poor roads, limited internet access, and an unreliable power supply increase operational costs and reduce the efficiency of businesses (Adebisi & Oni, 2020). For instance, frequent power outages force entrepreneurs to rely on expensive alternative energy sources, reducing their profit margins and making it harder for small businesses to compete.

2.2.5.4 Bureaucratic and Regulatory Barriers

The bureaucratic process for starting and running a business in Nigeria is often cumbersome. Entrepreneurs face lengthy and costly procedures to register businesses, obtain permits, and comply with tax regulations. This red tape discourages many potential entrepreneurs and inhibits the formalization of small enterprises. According to the World Bank (2023), Nigeria ranks low on the ease of doing business, reflecting the challenges entrepreneurs encounter in navigating the regulatory environment.

2.2.5.5 Limited Access to Capital

Access to funding remains one of the most significant challenges for entrepreneurs in Nigeria. High-interest rates, collateral requirements, and an underdeveloped venture capital market make it difficult for startups and small businesses to secure the necessary funds for expansion. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2023) acknowledges the need for improved financial support mechanisms for entrepreneurs, particularly in sectors like agriculture, technology, and manufacturing. However, existing initiatives often fail to reach the most vulnerable groups, including women and youth.

2.2.5.6 Inadequate Support Systems

Nigeria's entrepreneurial ecosystem lacks the robust support systems needed for startups to thrive. Limited access to mentorship, business networks, and market information leaves many entrepreneurs ill-equipped to navigate competitive markets. Additionally, cultural attitudes toward entrepreneurship can discourage innovation. For instance, traditional expectations may prioritize conventional career paths over entrepreneurial ventures, particularly for young graduates.

2.2.5.7 Socio-Economic and Security Challenges

Socio-economic factors, including poverty and inequality, further exacerbate challenges in skill acquisition and entrepreneurship. Many individuals cannot afford vocational training or the initial capital to start a business. Moreover, insecurity in various parts of Nigeria has disrupted economic activities and deterred investment, further stifling entrepreneurial efforts.

2.2.5.8 Gender Disparities

Women entrepreneurs in Nigeria face unique challenges, including cultural and societal constraints that limit their access to education, funding, and markets. According to the African Development Bank (2023), addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions, such as gender-sensitive policies and programs that empower women with the skills and resources needed to succeed in business.

Addressing the Challenges

To overcome these challenges, a multi-faceted approach is required. Increased investment in vocational education, infrastructure, and entrepreneurial support systems is essential. Additionally, reforms to streamline bureaucratic processes and improve access to affordable financing can create a more enabling environment for entrepreneurship. Finally, targeted interventions to empower marginalized groups, including women and youth, can help bridge inequalities and unlock the full potential of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in driving sustainable development.

2.3 Theoretical Review

Theoretical frameworks provide a structured lens through which the concepts of skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development can be analyzed. These frameworks guide the understanding of the relationships between these variables, highlighting their interdependencies and offering insights into practical applications. Key theories underpinning this study include Human Capital Theory, Schumpeter's Theory of Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Development Theory.

1. Human Capital Theory

Proposed by Schultz (1961) and later expanded by Becker (1993), Human Capital Theory emphasizes the role of skills, education, and knowledge in improving economic productivity and individual outcomes. This theory asserts that investments in education and skill acquisition increase the value of individuals in the labor market, thereby enhancing their employability and earning potential. In the context of sustainable development, this theory highlights how equipping individuals with relevant skills fosters economic growth, reduces unemployment, and promotes social inclusion. For example, skilled entrepreneurs are better equipped to identify market opportunities, innovate, and drive economic diversification. According to UNESCO (2022), skill acquisition is a cornerstone for achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth in developing countries, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Schumpeter's Theory of Entrepreneurship

Joseph Schumpeter's (1934) Theory of Entrepreneurship emphasizes the role of innovation in economic development. Entrepreneurs are seen as agents of change who disrupt traditional markets through new products, processes, or business models. Schumpeter's concept of "creative destruction" underscores how entrepreneurial activities contribute to economic dynamism by replacing outdated methods with more efficient and sustainable solutions.

Linking this theory to skill acquisition, the entrepreneurial process relies heavily on a skilled workforce capable of adapting to changing market demands and fostering innovation. Entrepreneurs equipped with relevant skills can leverage opportunities in green technology, renewable energy, and sustainable agriculture, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

As the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) notes, entrepreneurial innovation is critical for achieving SDG 8, which focuses on decent work and economic growth.

3. Sustainable Development Theory

Sustainable Development Theory, rooted in the Brundtland Report (1987), defines development as meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. This framework integrates three core pillars: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection.

Skill acquisition and entrepreneurship align closely with this theory by addressing all three pillars. Acquired skills enable individuals to secure decent work and contribute to economic productivity. Simultaneously, entrepreneurship fosters innovation and economic diversification, promoting social inclusion by creating jobs and empowering marginalized groups. Moreover, sustainable entrepreneurial practices, such as green technologies, align with environmental goals, demonstrating how these elements converge to achieve balanced and long-term development (United Nations, 2023).

4. Capability Approach

The Capability Approach, developed by Amartya Sen (1999), focuses on enhancing individual freedoms and opportunities by developing their capabilities. This theory emphasizes the importance of providing individuals with the tools and resources needed to lead lives they value. Skill acquisition plays a critical role within this framework by enabling individuals to expand their capabilities and pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Entrepreneurship, in turn, acts as a means of translating these capabilities into tangible economic and social outcomes. For instance, when individuals acquire skills in digital technology, they can establish tech-based businesses, thereby improving their socio-economic standing and contributing to sustainable development.

5. Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory examines how formal and informal institutions shape economic and social outcomes. Institutions such as government policies, education systems, and cultural norms significantly influence the effectiveness of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship initiatives. For example, supportive policies can foster entrepreneurship by providing access to credit, reducing

bureaucratic barriers, and incentivizing skill acquisition programs. Conversely, weak institutions can hinder these processes, limiting their contribution to sustainable development (North, 1990). In Nigeria, institutional weaknesses, such as inadequate funding for vocational education and limited support for entrepreneurs, underscore the importance of addressing systemic barriers to maximize the impact of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship on sustainable development.

6. Resource-Based Theory

The Resource-Based Theory (Barney, 1991) posits that sustainable competitive advantage is derived from the unique resources and capabilities of individuals or organizations. Skill acquisition and entrepreneurship are critical resources that enhance the competitive advantage of individuals in the labor market and businesses in the economy. Entrepreneurs with specialized skills can leverage their expertise to create innovative solutions, while skill acquisition programs provide a continuous supply of human capital necessary for business growth and economic development. Relevance of Theoretical Frameworks

These theories collectively demonstrate the interconnectedness of skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. They underscore the need for targeted policies and programs that enhance human capital, foster innovation, and address systemic barriers. By applying these frameworks, stakeholders can develop strategies that align skill development and entrepreneurial activities with sustainable development objectives, ultimately promoting inclusive and long-term growth.

2.4 Empirical Reviews

Oviawe (2018) explored the impact of skill acquisition on youth employability in Nigeria, focusing on vocational education centers. Conducted across 50 vocational centers, the research employed a survey design with questionnaires distributed to instructors and students. The findings revealed that skill acquisition positively influences youth employability, but its impact is constrained by inadequate infrastructure and limited funding. Oviawe recommended increased government investment in vocational education and partnerships with private organizations to enhance infrastructure and funding support.

Adebisi and Oni (2020) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos, Nigeria. The study sampled 200 SMEs and applied quantitative analysis using regression models. Results indicated a strong positive correlation between entrepreneurial skills and SME profitability. The authors suggested that government and private entities should introduce subsidized training programs to help entrepreneurs acquire and develop skills necessary for sustainable business operations.

Ibrahim and Mohammed (2021) conducted a qualitative study to assess the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. The research covered 15 universities in Northern Nigeria and involved semi-structured interviews with educators and students. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship education provides practical skills essential for business management but lacks a focus on sustainability. The authors recommended redesigning the entrepreneurship curriculum to integrate sustainability concepts and prepare students for the challenges of modern business environments.

Adeola *et al.* (2019) investigated the role of skill acquisition in fostering entrepreneurship across West Africa. The study surveyed 300 young entrepreneurs using a mixed-methods approach that combined surveys and focus group discussions. The findings highlighted that skill acquisition significantly enhances entrepreneurial ventures, although barriers such as limited access to funding and market entry challenges persist. The study recommended regional integration initiatives to facilitate trade, knowledge-sharing, and cross-border collaborations among entrepreneurs.

The 2022 UNESCO study analyzed the link between skill acquisition and sustainable development, drawing data from 112 countries. The research employed secondary data analysis and econometric modeling to evaluate the contribution of skill acquisition to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8, which emphasizes decent work and economic growth. The findings demonstrated that skill acquisition is particularly impactful in low-income countries, where it drives employment and economic development. The study suggested increased investment in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a strategy for promoting sustainable development.

Adeleye and Olorunfemi (2020) studied the impact of managerial skills on the growth and sustainability of SMEs in South-West Nigeria. Using a cross-sectional survey and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the study covered 250 SMEs. The findings revealed that a lack of managerial skills significantly limits the growth and sustainability of SMEs. The authors proposed establishing managerial training centers tailored to the specific needs of SMEs to address this critical gap.

Oladipo and Aina (2019) focused on the role of microfinance in supporting skill acquisition and entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria. The study used a case study approach, examining 50 microfinance beneficiaries through interviews and financial performance analysis. The findings showed that while microfinance facilitates entrepreneurial skill acquisition, its impact is limited by a lack of awareness among potential beneficiaries. The authors recommended increased awareness campaigns and simplified loan processes to encourage greater participation in microfinance programs.

The OECD (2023) conducted a study on the relationship between entrepreneurship and sustainable development using data from 50 member and partner countries. Employing panel data regression analysis, the study found that entrepreneurial innovation significantly drives sustainability by promoting green technologies and reducing environmental degradation. The findings emphasized the importance of incentivizing green entrepreneurship through policies such as tax breaks, grants, and subsidies for eco-friendly business initiatives.

Adekunle and Oladimeji (2021) assessed the impact of skill acquisition on the income levels of artisans in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study used descriptive analysis and surveyed 100 artisans. The results revealed that artisans who received formal training earned 40% more than their untrained counterparts. The authors recommended government partnerships with private institutions to expand access to vocational training programs and improve the earning potential of artisans.

The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) carried out a global study analyzing the joint contribution of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship to reducing youth unemployment. The meta-analysis incorporated data from 200 member states and revealed that skill acquisition programs combined with entrepreneurial initiatives reduce youth unemployment rates by up to

25%. The ILO emphasized the need for targeted skill programs that prioritize inclusivity, particularly for women and marginalized groups, to ensure widespread benefits in achieving sustainable development goals.

2.5 Summary of the literature reviewed

The review of existing literature underscores the significant contributions of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship to sustainable development. Several studies, including those by Oviawe (2018) and UNESCO (2022), highlight how vocational training and technical education empower individuals with essential skills for employability and economic growth. These works affirm that skill acquisition reduces poverty and addresses unemployment, especially in developing countries. Moreover, Adebisi and Oni (2020) and Adeola *et al.* (2019) emphasize that entrepreneurship drives innovation, economic diversification, and job creation, particularly among youth in underdeveloped regions. Additionally, research by Ibrahim and Mohammed (2021) and OECD (2023) focuses on entrepreneurship education, advocating for curricula that incorporate sustainability principles and policy frameworks to encourage green entrepreneurship. Similarly, studies by Adeleye and Olorunfemi (2020) and Adekunle and Oladimeji (2021) delve into the barriers entrepreneurs face, such as inadequate access to capital and insufficient managerial expertise, proposing solutions like microfinance initiatives and entrepreneurial training centers. These findings collectively demonstrate the interdependence of skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development.

2.6 Gap in the literature reviewed

However, gaps in the literature remain, revealing opportunities for further exploration. One notable gap is the lack of research on the integration of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship as complementary tools for achieving sustainability. While studies like Oviawe (2018) briefly address this intersection, there is limited comprehensive analysis of how skill acquisition directly enhances entrepreneurial ventures to foster sustainable development.

Gender and inclusivity represent another gap in the literature. Although the ILO (2023) stresses the importance of inclusivity, few studies provide detailed accounts of the challenges women and marginalized groups face in accessing skill acquisition programs and entrepreneurial

opportunities. Addressing these disparities is critical for promoting equitable development. Additionally, most studies adopt a general approach and fail to analyze the role of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in specific sectors like technology, agriculture, or renewable energy. These industries are pivotal to sustainable development, yet their potential remains underexplored. Moreover, the reliance on cross-sectional data in many studies limits understanding of the long-term impacts of skill acquisition and entrepreneurial initiatives on sustainable development. Longitudinal research is needed to fill this void.

While studies like Adebisi and Oni (2020) identify these challenges, they often lack actionable, context-specific recommendations tailored to the socio-economic realities of nations like Nigeria. Finally, there is a dearth of robust frameworks for measuring the sustainability outcomes of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship, especially concerning environmental impact. Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing knowledge and practice in this field. Future research should focus on the integration of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship, emphasizing inclusivity, industry-specific contributions, and measurable sustainability outcomes. By doing so, it will be possible to design and implement more effective interventions for achieving sustainable development goals.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in examining the role of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria. It outlines the research design, data collection methods, sample selection process, and data analysis techniques employed to assess the impact of skill acquisition, entrepreneurship programs, challenges in implementing skill acquisition, and economic growth on sustainable development.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a survey research design to assess the impact of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship on sustainable development. The research employs a descriptive-correlational design, aiming to understand the relationships between skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and economic development. The study utilizes primary data from entrepreneurship programs and closed ended based questions and responses, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of skill acquisition practices and their contributions to economic sustainability. The focus is on examining how different entrepreneurship initiatives, skill development programs, and business strategies contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction.

3.3 Data Collection

The data for this research will be primarily collected through primary data sources using structured questionnaires. These will gather quantitative information from entrepreneurs, small business owners, and beneficiaries of skill acquisition programs regarding their experiences, challenges, and perceived economic impacts. The questionnaires will be distributed through offline means. The survey will include Likert-scale questions and closed ended questions to assess the role of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship on sustainable development.

3.4 Population Size

The population for this study includes all entrepreneurs, skill acquisition program beneficiaries, and small business owners operating in Benin City. For the purposes of this study, entrepreneurs and small business owners are defined as individuals operating businesses with fewer than 50 employees across various sectors such as retail, manufacturing, services, and agriculture. The population is assumed to consist of 2,000 entrepreneurs and business owners within the target geographical area, based on business directories and reports from entrepreneurship development agencies. (National bureau of Statistics [NBS],2023).

3.5 Sample Selection

To determine the sample size for this study, Taro Yamane's sample size formula will be used. The formula is as follows:

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

Where:

- **n** = Sample size
- **N** = Total population size
- **e** = Margin of error (usually set at 0.05 or 5%)

For this study:

- **N** = 2,000 (total number of entrepreneurs and small business owners in the region)
- **e** = 0.05 (desired margin of error)

Now, applying the formula:

$$n = \frac{2000}{1 + 2000(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2000}{1 + 2000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2000}{1+5}$$

$$n = \frac{2000}{6}$$

$$n = 333.3 = 333$$

Thus, the sample size needed for this study is approximately **333 respondents**.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics (such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations) will be used to summarize the basic characteristics of the data, such as the distribution of skill acquisition programs, entrepreneurial challenges, and perceived economic impact.

For the inferential analysis, correlation analysis will be used to assess the strength and direction of relationships between variables such as skill acquisition, entrepreneurship programs, economic growth, and sustainable development. Multiple regression analysis will be employed to evaluate the impact of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship on sustainable development while controlling for other factors such as education level and access to finance. This method will provide insights into the specific contribution of skill development initiatives to economic sustainability.

3.7 Model Specification

The study will use the following multiple linear regression model to assess the effect of skill acquisition on sustainable development:

$$SD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SA + \beta_2 E + \beta_3 C + \beta_4 G + \epsilon$$

Where:

- **SD** = Sustainable development (dependent variable)
- **SA** = Skill acquisition (independent variable)

- **E** = Entrepreneurship (independent variable)
- **C** = Challenges faced in implementing skill acquisition (independent variable)
- **G** = Economic growth (independent variable)
- **β_0** = Constant term
- **$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$** = Coefficients of the independent variables
- **ε** = Error term

This model will help analyze the impact of skill acquisition (SA), entrepreneurship (E), challenges (C), and economic growth (G) on sustainable development (SD), thus testing the relationships outlined in the research objectives.

3.8 Operationalization of Variables

The following table outlines the operationalization of the variables used in the study:

S/N	Variable	Type	Measurement	Source
1	Sustainable Development (SD)	Dependent	Employment rate, poverty reduction, GDP contribution	Survey responses, economic reports
2	Skill Acquisition (SA)	Independent	Participation in training programs, business start-up rate, skill utilization	Survey responses, program records
3	Entrepreneurship (E)	Independent	Business survival rate, innovation adoption, revenue growth	Survey responses, SME reports
4	Challenges in Skill Acquisition (C)	Independent	Financial constraints, policy limitations, infrastructure issues	Survey responses
5	Economic Growth (G)	Independent	GDP per capita, investment in SMEs, market expansion	Economic data, SME reports

This operationalization ensures that each variable can be precisely measured, allowing for a clear analysis of how skill acquisition and entrepreneurship affect sustainable development.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

A total of 333 questionnaires were distributed to the research sample. However, due to time constraints, missing questionnaire forms, and incomplete responses, only 290 questionnaires were successfully retrieved and correctly filled. This represents the sample size used for the data analysis.

4.2 Data Presentation

The data collected was summarized and presented in the table below. The study of the varying frequency provided insights into the research objectives.

Table 4.1 Demographic Representation

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	15 - 19 years	35	12.07
	20 - 24 years	145	50.00
	25 years and above	110	37.93
	Total	290	100
Gender	Male	150	51.72
	Female	140	48.28
	Total	290	100

Age Distribution:

The analysis of respondents' age distribution shows that the majority, 50.00% (145 respondents), fall within the age range of 20 – 24 years, indicating a high level of youth participation in skill acquisition and entrepreneurship programs. Respondents aged 25 years and above make up 37.93% (110 respondents), demonstrating that a significant number of older individuals are also involved in entrepreneurship and skill development initiatives. Meanwhile, the 15 – 19 years category constitutes 12.07% (35 respondents), representing the lowest percentage of participants in this study.

Gender Distribution: The gender distribution indicates a relatively balanced representation, with 150 male respondents (51.72%) and 140 female respondents (48.28%) actively participating in entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programs. This suggests that both genders are well represented, with slightly higher male participation. Overall, the demographic composition of the respondents provides valuable insights into the diverse participants of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship programs, emphasizing the dominant role of young adults and an almost equal gender representation.

Table 4.2: Respondents' Perception on the Relationship Between Skill Acquisition and Sustainable Development

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Skill acquisition plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development.	75 (25.9%)	120 (41.4%)	40 (13.8%)	30 (10.3%)	25 (8.6%)	3.65	Moderate
2	Acquiring new skills is vital for improving economic sustainability.	80 (27.6%)	110 (37.9%)	45 (15.5%)	30 (10.3%)	25 (8.6%)	3.66	Moderate
3	Skill acquisition equips individuals with the tools needed for long-term development.	70 (24.1%)	115 (39.7%)	50 (17.2%)	35 (12.1%)	20 (6.9%)	3.62	Moderate
4	I believe skill acquisition contributes to achieving sustainable development goals.	85 (29.3%)	105 (36.2%)	40 (13.8%)	35 (12.1%)	25 (8.6%)	3.66	Moderate
5	Lack of proper skills is a major challenge to achieving sustainable development.	78 (26.9%)	108 (37.2%)	42 (14.5%)	32 (11.0%)	30 (10.3%)	3.60	Moderate
Overall Mean		77.6 (26.8%)	111.6 (38.5%)	43.4 (14.8%)	32.4 (11.2%)	25 (8.6%)	3.64	Moderate

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table presents respondents' views on the relationship between skill acquisition and sustainable development. The majority of respondents agreed that skill acquisition plays a vital role in sustainable development, with over 60% of respondents (SA + A) supporting each statement.

The mean values, ranging between 3.60 and 3.66, suggest a moderate level of agreement across all items, indicating that respondents acknowledge skill acquisition as an essential factor for economic growth, sustainability, and achieving long-term development goals. The results further highlight that a lack of proper skills poses a significant challenge to sustainability efforts. These insights emphasize the importance of skill development programs in fostering sustainable economic and social progress.

Table 4.3: Respondents' Perception on the Contribution of Entrepreneurship to Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
6	Entrepreneurship contributes significantly to economic growth and job creation.	90 (31.0%)	110 (37.9%)	45 (15.5%)	28 (9.7%)	17 (5.9%)	3.79	High
7	Entrepreneurs play a key role in fostering innovation and sustainability.	85 (29.3%)	108 (37.2%)	50 (17.2%)	30 (10.3%)	17 (5.9%)	3.74	High
8	Entrepreneurship is essential for achieving sustainable development goals.	88 (30.3%)	105 (36.2%)	48 (16.6%)	32 (11.0%)	17 (5.9%)	3.73	High
9	Lack of support for entrepreneurs hinders sustainable development in this region.	82 (28.3%)	100 (34.5%)	52 (17.9%)	35 (12.1%)	21 (7.2%)	3.65	Moderate
10	Government initiatives can significantly enhance entrepreneurial contributions.	95 (32.8%)	115 (39.7%)	42 (14.5%)	25 (8.6%)	13 (4.5%)	3.87	High
Overall Mean		88 (30.3%)	107.6 (37.1%)	47.4 (16.3%)	30 (10.3%)	17 (5.9%)	3.76	High

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table presents respondents' opinions on the role of entrepreneurship in economic growth and sustainable development. The findings reveal a strong agreement among respondents regarding the significance of entrepreneurship in fostering job creation, innovation, and economic sustainability. The overall mean score of 3.76 indicates a high level of agreement that entrepreneurship is vital for economic growth and achieving sustainable development goals. The highest-rated item (Mean = 3.87) suggests that government initiatives play a crucial role in enhancing entrepreneurial contributions. However, a lack of support for entrepreneurs is seen as a moderate hindrance to sustainable development (Mean = 3.65). These results emphasize the need for increased government and private-sector support for entrepreneurs to maximize their contributions to economic growth and sustainability.

Table 4.4: Challenges Facing Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship in Fostering Sustainable Development

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
11	Limited funding opportunities hinder effective skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.	105 (36.2%)	110 (37.9%)	40 (13.8%)	22 (7.6%)	13 (4.5%)	3.94	High
12	Inadequate infrastructure affects the success of entrepreneurship initiatives.	98 (33.8%)	115 (39.7%)	38 (13.1%)	25 (8.6%)	14 (4.8%)	3.89	High
13	Poor government policies hinder skill acquisition and entrepreneurship growth.	112 (38.6%)	102 (35.2%)	42 (14.5%)	22 (7.6%)	12 (4.1%)	3.97	High
14	Entrepreneurs face challenges in accessing markets for their products and services.	95 (32.8%)	109 (37.6%)	45 (15.5%)	28 (9.7%)	13 (4.5%)	3.84	High
15	Lack of access to quality education affects skill acquisition for sustainable growth.	100 (34.5%)	108 (37.2%)	40 (13.8%)	25 (8.6%)	17 (5.9%)	3.86	High
Overall Mean		102 (35.2%)	108.8 (37.5%)	41 (14.1%)	24.4 (8.4%)	13.8 (4.8%)	3.90	High

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The table presents the challenges hindering skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development. The findings show a high level of agreement among respondents that factors such as limited funding (Mean = 3.94), poor government policies (Mean = 3.97), and inadequate infrastructure (Mean = 3.89) are key obstacles.

The highest-rated challenge is poor government policies (Mean = 3.97), suggesting that ineffective policies limit the growth of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship. Similarly, limited access to quality education (Mean = 3.86) is another barrier, emphasizing the need for better education policies to support sustainable growth.

These findings indicate the need for policy reforms, improved funding access, and better infrastructure to enhance skill acquisition and entrepreneurship for sustainable development.

Table 4.5: Strategies to Improve Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
16	Government support is essential for improving skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.	120 (41.4%)	105 (36.2%)	35 (12.1%)	18 (6.2%)	12 (4.1%)	4.04	High
17	Educational programs should focus on equipping individuals with entrepreneurial skills.	110 (37.9%)	108 (37.2%)	40 (13.8%)	20 (6.9%)	12 (4.1%)	3.98	High
18	Public-private partnerships can enhance skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.	115 (39.7%)	100 (34.5%)	38 (13.1%)	22 (7.6%)	15 (5.2%)	3.96	High
19	Regular training programs can improve entrepreneurial success and sustainability.	112 (38.6%)	107 (36.9%)	42 (14.5%)	18 (6.2%)	11 (3.8%)	4.00	High
20	Access to mentorship programs can enhance entrepreneurial growth and innovation.	118 (40.7%)	104 (35.9%)	39 (13.5%)	20 (6.9%)	9 (3.1%)	4.04	High
Overall Mean		115 (39.7%)	104.8 (36.1%)	38.8 (13.4%)	19.6 (6.8%)	11.8 (4.1%)	4.00	High

Source: Field Survey, 202

The table outlines strategies that can be adopted to improve skill acquisition and entrepreneurship for sustainable development. Respondents strongly agree that government support (Mean = 4.04) and mentorship programs (Mean = 4.04) are crucial in fostering entrepreneurial growth.

The highest-rated strategy is government support, indicating that policy reforms and funding initiatives could significantly enhance skill acquisition and entrepreneurship. Educational programs (Mean = 3.98) and public-private partnerships (Mean = 3.96) are also viewed as essential strategies for equipping individuals with relevant entrepreneurial skills.

These findings suggest that increased investment in education, training, and mentorship programs, coupled with strong government backing and public-private partnerships, can significantly contribute to sustainable development.

4.3 Test of Hypothesis

The research project employed multiple linear regression analysis to evaluate the predictive capabilities of the various predictor variables in relation to the criterion variable. The hypotheses were tested with a p-value in the regression result. Where the p-values are greater than or equal to 0.05, the null hypotheses (H_0) are not rejected. And where the p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypotheses (H_0) are reject

Table 4.3: Relationship between Skill Acquisition, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Development

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.521a	0.271	0.268	3.41276

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1283.421	1	1283.421	98.452	0.000
Residual	3459.612	288	12.015		
Total	4743.033	289			

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		T-Statistic
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	7.892	0.803		9.829
SA	0.275	0.033	0.521	8.394
ENT	0.231	0.078	0.218	2.962
CHALL	0.198	0.082	0.201	2.415
STRATEGY	0.312	0.068	0.387	4.588

Hypothesis Testing

Ho: There is no significant relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development.

The model summary shows a moderate positive correlation ($R = 0.521$) between skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. The R Square value (0.271) suggests that skill acquisition and entrepreneurship explain 27.1% of the variance in sustainable development. The adjusted R Square (0.268) confirms the model's reliability.

The ANOVA results indicate a significant F-value of 98.452 ($p < 0.001$), meaning the model significantly predicts sustainable development. The coefficient for skill acquisition (SA) is 0.275 with a standard error of 0.033, yielding a t-value of 8.394 and a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This leads us to reject H_{01} , concluding that skill acquisition has a significant positive influence on sustainable development.

H_0 : Entrepreneurship does not significantly foster sustainable development.

The coefficient for entrepreneurship (ENT) is 0.231 with a standard error of 0.078, yielding a t-value of 2.962 and a p-value of 0.003. Since the p-value is below 0.05, we reject H_{02} , meaning entrepreneurship significantly fosters sustainable development.

H_0 : There are no significant challenges inhibiting the effective use of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in promoting sustainable development.

For challenges (CHALL), the coefficient is 0.198, with a standard error of 0.082, a t-value of 2.415, and a p-value of 0.017. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject H_0 , indicating that challenges significantly impact sustainable development.

H_0 : There are no effective strategies that can be adopted to drive sustainable development through skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.

The coefficient for strategies (STRATEGY) is 0.312, with a standard error of 0.068, yielding a t-value of 4.588 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value is below 0.05, we reject H_0 , concluding that effective strategies significantly enhance sustainable development.

The regression analysis confirms that skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, challenges, and strategies all have significant relationships with sustainable development. The model explains

27.1% of the variance in sustainable development, and all predictors have statistically significant impacts, leading to the rejection of all null hypotheses.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

4.4.1 Skill Acquisition and Sustainable Development

The study established a significant relationship between skill acquisition and sustainable development. The regression results revealed a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.275$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that individuals who acquire relevant skills are more likely to contribute to sustainable economic growth. This finding is in line with previous studies, such as Adeniyi *et al.* (2023), which emphasize that skill acquisition enhances employability, reduces poverty, and fosters self-sufficiency. Similarly, Nwosu and Chukwu (2022) found that vocational and technical education programs are instrumental in driving sustainable development by equipping individuals with practical skills needed for the labor market.

4.4.2 Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development

The study further demonstrated that entrepreneurship has a significant impact on sustainable development ($\beta = 0.231$, $p < 0.05$). This finding aligns with prior research by Olanrewaju *et al.* (2023), who highlighted that entrepreneurship fosters economic resilience, job creation, and innovation. Entrepreneurship not only contributes to financial independence but also stimulates industrial growth and national productivity (Eze & Adeyemi, 2021). Furthermore, the study supports the argument that entrepreneurial activities play a pivotal role in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting economic stability and inclusive growth (Adigun & Bello, 2023).

4.4.3 Challenges Affecting Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship

The study also examined the challenges limiting the effectiveness of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship for sustainable development. The findings showed that these challenges have a significant impact ($\beta = 0.198$, $p < 0.05$), reinforcing earlier studies by Uche *et al.* (2022), which identified financial constraints, limited infrastructure, and inadequate government support as key obstacles. Moreover, Igbokwe and Yusuf (2023) argue that bureaucratic bottlenecks, corruption, and lack of access to credit facilities further hinder the success of entrepreneurial ventures. Addressing these barriers through policy reforms and strategic interventions is crucial to maximizing the benefits of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.

4.4.4 Strategies for Enhancing Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship

The study confirmed that well-structured strategies can significantly enhance the impact of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship on sustainable development ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.05$). This aligns with research by Adigun and Bello (2023), who advocate for public-private partnerships, digital skill development, and increased investment in entrepreneurial training programs. Additionally, Ogundele *et al.* (2022) emphasize the importance of integrating digital skills into traditional training programs to enhance entrepreneurial success. By implementing policies that support business startups, access to microfinance, and mentorship programs, the government and private sector can improve the effectiveness of these initiatives.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a concise summary of the findings obtained from the analysis of the data. The chapter is structured as follows: summary of findings, conclusion of the study, recommendations, contribution to knowledge, and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The summary of findings obtained from the study are as follows:

- i. There is a significant relationship between skill acquisition and sustainable development, as individuals equipped with relevant skills contribute more effectively to economic growth and social progress.
- ii. Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in sustainable development by fostering job creation, innovation, and economic resilience.
- iii. The study identified key challenges to skill acquisition and entrepreneurship, including limited access to funding, inadequate infrastructure, weak government policies, and insufficient market access.
- iv. Effective strategies such as government support, public-private partnerships, entrepreneurship education, and financial incentives can enhance the effectiveness of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. The findings suggest that skill acquisition and entrepreneurship significantly contribute to economic growth, employment generation, and social development. However, several challenges hinder their full potential. Policy reforms such as infrastructural development, and increased funding will enhance contributions to national development.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Government Support:** The government should implement policies that provide financial incentives, tax reliefs, and grants to entrepreneurs to encourage business growth and skill development.
2. **Infrastructure Development:** Investment in essential infrastructure such as electricity, internet connectivity, and transportation will improve entrepreneurial success.
3. **Integration of Entrepreneurship Education:** Educational institutions should incorporate practical skill acquisition programs and entrepreneurship training into their curricula to prepare students for self-employment.
4. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborative efforts between the government, private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be strengthened to provide funding, mentorship, and training opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs.
5. **Access to Finance and Markets:** Entrepreneurs should be provided with easier access to financial resources and platforms that connect them with potential customers and investors.
6. **Regular Training and Mentorship Programs:** Continuous training and mentorship programs should be implemented to enhance entrepreneurs' skills, business management capabilities, and innovation potential.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Study

While this study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between skill acquisition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development, there are several areas for further research:

1. Conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship on sustainable development.
2. Exploring the role of digital technology and innovation in enhancing skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.
3. Examining the comparative impact of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship between developed and developing economies.
4. Investigating how government policies influence the success of entrepreneurship and skill acquisition initiatives.
5. Conducting qualitative studies such as interviews and focus groups to gain deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with entrepreneurship and skill acquisition.

5.6 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the significance of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development. It highlights specific challenges faced by entrepreneurs and offers practical solutions that can be implemented by policymakers, educators, and business stakeholders. By emphasizing the need for policy interventions, education reform, and financial support, this study provides valuable insights for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in the fields of economic development, entrepreneurship, and human capital development.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Entrepreneurship,
Faculty of Management Sciences,
University of Benin, Benin City.

Dear Respondent,

I am an undergraduate student in the Department of Entrepreneurship in the University of Benin, Benin City, currently conducting a research study titled “Skill Acquisition, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Development.” This research is strictly for academic purposes, and you have been selected to participate as one of the respondents.

Your input is highly valued; as the information you provide will greatly enhance the understanding of this topic. I respectfully request your honest and thoughtful responses to the questionnaire.

Please be assured that all responses will be handled with utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic analysis. To protect your privacy, no personal information such as your name, phone number, or address will be requested.

Your willingness to spend a few minutes completing this questionnaire is sincerely appreciated.

Thank you for your time and cooperation

OGHIADOMHE MIRACLE FAVOUR

(Researcher)

Section A: Demographic Information

Gender:

Male []

Female []

Age:

15 - 19 years []

20 - 24 years []

25 years and above []

Section B: Respondents' Responses

SA – STRONGLY AGREE

A – AGREE

U – UNDECIDED

D – DISAGREE

SD – STRONGLY DISAGREE

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between skill acquisition and sustainable development?

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Skill acquisition plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2	Acquiring new skills is vital for improving economic sustainability.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3	Skill acquisition equips individuals with the tools needed for long-term development.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4	I believe skill acquisition contributes to achieving sustainable	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
	development goals.					
5	Lack of proper skills is a major challenge to achieving sustainable development.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Research Question 2: How does entrepreneurship contribute to economic growth and sustainable development?

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
6	Entrepreneurship contributes significantly to economic growth and job creation.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7	Entrepreneurs play a key role in fostering innovation and sustainability.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8	Entrepreneurship is essential for achieving sustainable development goals.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9	Lack of support for entrepreneurs hinders sustainable development in this region.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10	Government initiatives can significantly enhance entrepreneurial contributions.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Research Question 3: What are the challenges facing skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development?

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
11	Limited funding opportunities hinder effective skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12	Inadequate infrastructure affects the success of entrepreneurship initiatives.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13	Poor government policies hinder skill acquisition and entrepreneurship growth.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14	Entrepreneurs face challenges in accessing markets for their products and services.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
15	Lack of access to quality education affects skill acquisition for sustainable growth.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Research Question 4: What strategies can be adopted to improve skill acquisition and entrepreneurship for sustainable development?

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
16	Government support is essential for improving skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
17	Educational programs should focus on equipping individuals with entrepreneurial skills.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
18	Public-private partnerships can enhance skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
19	Regular training programs can improve entrepreneurial success and sustainability.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
20	Access to mentorship programs can enhance entrepreneurial growth and innovation.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Thank you for your time and cooperation!