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UNEMPLOYMENT, POVERTY AND CRIME IN NIGERIA: CAN TVET SKILLS ACQUISITION REVERSE THE TREND OF THE TRIPLE TEAM BROTHERS?

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Abstract
The study examined the relationship between TVET skills acquisitions and unemployment, poverty and crime and in Nigeria. Three (03) research questions and three hypotheses gave credence to the study. A correlational survey was used for the study. Two thousand one hundred and fifty five (2155) graduates of skill acquisition centres and a sample size of 216 graduates were used. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. A modified four-point rating scale of 'Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed' was the instrument. The reliability of the items of the instrument using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics (PPMCC) and the result yielded a reliability coefficient value of 0 .79. Descriptive and inferential statistics were the statistical tools used for data analyses. The result of the investigation disclosed that there is a meaningful association between skills acquisition and unemployment reduction, reduction in poverty and crime reduction. From the investigation, it was recommended that more jobs through TVET skills acquisition should be created by all stakeholders in order to reduce crime and poverty reduction in the society, among others.

Keywords: TVET Skills Acquisition; Unemployment; Poverty reduction; Reduction in Crime;

Introduction
The 21st Century era is full of economic uncertainties that demand a number of measures to curtail them. The recent protest to end bad governance is a case in point. The issue of unemployment in Nigeria has grown exponentially to the level that it is no longer tolerable. A combined effort is required to tackle this menace. This menace has affected all sectors of the economy. Higher institutions graduate a number of students on a yearly basis, but this number outgrows the available job spaces. The situation has become embarrassing to citizens of Nigeria as well as international communities. The unrest and criminal activities may have been attributed to the high and alarming incidence of youth unemployment. The issue of youth unemployment may have contributed to the social vices such as smuggling, 'boko-haram' insurgency, kidnapping, and other financial crime being experienced in Nigeria. As a result of the seriousness of unemployment in Nigeria, various individuals and organizations have noted this menace that has helped to destroy the fabrics of the society in no small measure.

Lain and Pape (2023) quoting the World Bank Blogs as saying that unemployment rate stood at 33.3% in the 4th quarter of 2020. It added that Nigeria is rated as one of the world's highest unemployment profile with many Nigerians living a pitiable life and the purchasing power weakens due to high inflation rate.

The Nigeria Economic Summit Group (2024) stated that unemployment is capable of launching the youths and adults to wallow in the realm of abject poverty. World Bank Group (2025) in its report used $3.0 per person a day as the parameter for calculating poverty rate

and came to the conclusion that the poverty rate in Nigeria is 47.2%. Sasu (2023) stated that 88.4 million people lived in extreme poverty with the poverty threshold of $1.90 a day. With this threshold, it was estimated that over 93.7 million Nigerians will remain in poverty in 2025. Porter (2024) defined poverty as a state or condition in which people or communities lack the financial resources and other essentials for a minimum standard of living. Poverty in Nigeria has become a worrisome situation. For instance, National Bureau of Statistics pointed out that 67% of Nigerians are comparatively poor. It further revealed that 50% of the population gets access to good drinking water, while only 38% has opportunity to access primary health care. A caring government will not rest from such a terrible or bad situation until solutions are proffered. Unemployment and poverty have contributed immensely to the increase in crimes and other social vices in Nigeria as a nation.

The crime rate in Nigeria is unimaginable and disturbing. For instance, National Bureau of Statistics (2017) stated that 134,663 crimes were committed in 2017. It added that 68,579 of such cases was Offence against property, Offence against persons 53,641 cases, while offence against lawful authority recorded 12,443 cases respectively. To support this claim, Ephraim (2023) reported that Nigeria ranks second in Africa on organized crime index. In the same vein, Babangida (2023) quoting Global Organized Crime Index, Nigeria is facing a myriad of spiraling security challenges that have led to multiple humanitarian crises over the years. Nigeria is also facing security challenges in terrorism, human trafficking, and arms smuggling, money laundering and corruption, among others. As a result of the triple team brothers pervading the Nigeria society, is there still hope? Will TVET skills acquisition reverse the trend?

TVET skills acquisition appears to be one of the pillars upon which the development of any society is to be built. TVET skills acquisition seems to stimulate all the segments, be it social or economic. This development is based on the investment in human capital. Human capital makes the employees to be who they are with experience and skills that include education, training, intelligence, and also loyalty and punctuality of the employees to work. Echtelt (2018) defined a skill as an ability to perform a specific task or activity to a high level of proficiency. A skill may be seen as the ability to effectively and readily use one's knowledge in accomplishing result or performance. Skills are pathways to employability and prosperity. A skill maybe seen as an embodiment that enables one to carry out an action of a definite task in achieving a desired goal. This is one of the more reasons why governments all over the world including Nigeria take TVET skills acquisition as one of its priorities in policy formulation and implementation.

Acquisition of TVET skills is the capability to be directed on a specific motive and remain committed at it. TVET skills acquisition may be seen as the ability to be trained on a particular subject, field or function and become good at it. Student Personal Proficient Hub (2020) defined skills acquisition as the process of making superlative output a general characteristic of one's behaviour in a given field. It encompasses a step-by-step change from one behaviour to another. Skills acquisition could be seen in stages: the reasoning stage, dependent stage, and the independent stage. The reasoning stage is when the learner is learning the skill, the dependent stage is when learner is becoming proficient in the skill, and the stage three which is the independent or autonomous stage is when the learner has become an expert in the skill. These skills acquisition are provided for its recipients in vocational centres in Nigeria.

Vocational and training centres are facilities for the instruction of specific skills, which meet the state and/or federal requirements to be accredited. It could be a school that offers teaching and practical experience in skilled-trades such as carpentry or plumbing, wood works, metal fabrication, fashion design, and so on. Abdulrahaman (2013) stated that vocational centres are centres that prepare people for a skilled craft as artisans, trade as

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tradespersons, or work as technicians. Vocational school/training centres maybe seen as schools that help to prepare students for a specific career. Vocational and training centre could take place in trade schools, technical schools or colleges or on-the-job training programmes like National Directorate of Employment (NDE), and individual assisted centre like Lift Above Poverty Organisation (LAPO). The TVET skills acquired in these schools, colleges and centres may be beneficial to the individual, the government and the society

Uzochukwu (2019) identified self-employment; diverse opportunities; employment generation; and reduction in crime as the benefits of TVET skills acquisition: It is believed that when an individual is self-employed, he or she may be able to cater for himself or herself. Dollarhide (2023) identified the main types of self-employment categories as independent contractor, which is an individual working a specific job; a sole proprietorship, which is a business enterprise run by an individual and which may or may not have additional employees; and a partnership, which is a business structure between two or more individuals with ownership status. A self-employed person may help to generate jobs to help others.

On employment generation, governments all over the world are unable to provide jobs for its citizens probably because they lack the needed TVET skills to function or the jobs are scarce compared to number of applicants. Someone who is well equipped on skills may help to train others. Those who are self-employed may have the opportunities of offering more business opportunities to others. Individuals who possess pool of TVET skills stand the chance of having many job opportunities from many establishments. They are sought after from many organisations because of their diverse knowledge in skills acquisition. As a result of their diverse opportunities, they are able to generate employment for others. These individuals sought after by many organizations may not have the tendencies of going into criminal activities. This may help in the reduction of crime and criminality. On reduction in crime, TVET skills acquisition may reduce the crime rate in many nations. This is because when people are involved in one skill activity or the other, they may think of their job rather than thinking of crime and criminality.

The Government of Nigeria has put a number of measures in place to reduce crime to the barest minimum, to reduce unemployment as well as poverty but efforts seem not to produce any meaningful result. In spite of the laudable programmes of Government on skills acquisition, unemployment and crime rate appears to be very high and alarming. What could be responsible for this? This present study was designed to statistically provide answers to this salient question raised by the researchers.

Purpose of the Study

The present study examined the relationship between benefits of TVET skill acquisition and unemployment, poverty and crime in Delta State. Specifically, the study determined the relationship between:

i. TVET skills acquisition and unemployment eradication
ii. TVET skills acquisition and poverty reduction and,
iii. TVET skills acquisition and crime reduction.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

1. What is the relationship between TVET skill acquisition and unemployment eradication?
2. What is the relationship between TVET skill acquisition and poverty reduction?
3. What is the relationship between TVET skill acquisition and crime reduction?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested

1. There is no significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and unemployment eradication.
2. There is no significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and poverty reduction
3. There is no significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and crime reduction

Methodology

The study employed a correlational survey research design. A correlational survey measures two or more relevant variables and assesses the relationship among the variables. The design was deemed to be the most suited for this study because the study examined the relationship between the independent variables unemployment, poverty and crime and the dependent variable, TVET skills acquisition. Two thousand one hundred and fifty five (2155) graduates formed the population from the selected and identified vocational centres that specialize in skills acquisition in Nigeria, while 216 graduates was the sample from the various vocational skills centres in 2023, representing 10% of the population using proportionate sampling technique. A questionnaire was used titled Unemployment, Poverty Crime and Skill Acquisition a Questionnaire (UPCSAQ). A 4-Point modified Likert scale made up of four response options of 'Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2), Strongly Disagreed (1)' respectively.

The reliability of the instrument was 0.79 using test re-test method. Twenty graduates were used from the population. The first and second administrations were done within an interval of two weeks. Data obtained were analyzed using Person's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and a reliability coefficient was obtained**.**

The instrument was administered to the respondents in their respective vocational training centres with twelve (12) research assistants. The goal of the study as well as the distribution and collection of the questionnaire were explained to the research assistants. After two weeks, the completed copies of the instrument were collected and properly checked to ascertain the level of compliance by respondents. Only 200 copies of the questionnaires were successfully collected from the total number of 216 copies administered which represented 92.6% retrieval rate

The information collected from the respondents was analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics'. Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) were used to analyze the research questions and the PPMC was used to test the null hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at an alpha level of 0.05 (2-tailed).

The decision rule for the correlation as suggested by Rosnow and Rosenthal (1989) was as follows: 0.1 to 0.3 represented small or weak relationship; 0.3 to 0.5 represented moderate relationship; 0.5 to 0.7 represented strong/high relationship; 0.7 to 0.9 represented very strong/high relationship; and 0.9 to 1.0 represented extremely strong/high relationship. The positive or negative signs explained the direction of the relationship, while the unity values of 1 and 0 was regarded as perfect relationship and no relationship respectively. For the hypotheses, the probability value (p) was used. If the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not retained, otherwise it was retained.

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Results

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and unemployment eradication

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation between TVET Skills Acquisition and unemployment eradication

Variables	Respondents	Pearson r	Sig (2-tailed)
TVET skills Acquisition	200	.313**	.000
Unemployment Eradication			

Table 1 shows a Pearson r of .313 and a p-value of .000 testing at an alpha of .05. Since the p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between unemployment and skill acquisition is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and unemployment eradication.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and poverty reduction

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between TVET Skills Acquisition and Poverty Reduction

Variables	Respondents	Pearson r	Sig (2-tailed)
TVET Skills Acquisition	200	.276**	.000
Poverty Reduction			

Table 2 shows a Pearson r of .276 and a p-value of .000, testing at an alpha of .05. Since the p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and poverty reduction is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and poverty reduction

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and crime reduction

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation between TVET Skills Acquisition and Crime Reduction

Variables	Number	Pearson r	Sig (2-tailed)
TVET Skills Acquisition	200	.227**	.000
Crime Reduction			

Table 3 shows a Pearson r of .227 and a p-value of .000, testing at an alpha of .05. Since the p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between reduction in crime and skill acquisition is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between reduction in crime and skill acquisition

Discussions

Table 1 showed that there is no significant relationship between unemployment and TVET skills acquisition and unemployment eradication. This finding is in consonance with Leibus, Ozola, and Irmeja (2010) who stated that employment has economic but mostly social impact

which provides the opportunity for the people to have both employment and income, thus reducing the negative influence of economic fluctuations as well as decreasing the burden on the country's social economic system. The finding is also in agreement with the finding of Bashir, Gebremedhin, and Chandhry (2014) which stated that creative and qualified self-employed individuals contribute to economic growth by inventing new products, production processes, distribution methods and employing other people'. The finding of the study is further in tandem with the finding of Bashir, Gebremedhin and Fletcher (2011) which opined that self-employment is a measure of entrepreneurship which gives room to accelerate regional economic development. The research finding agrees with the finding of Kizi (2021) who maintained that creative and qualified self-employed individuals contribute to economic growth by inventing new products, production processes, distribution methods, and employing other people. The reason for this agreement with the finding is that self-employment helps to start new firms, creates jobs, promotes inventions and innovations, and ultimately brings about increased in the well-being to society.

Table 2 showed that there is a significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and poverty reduction. This finding is at variance with the finding of Ijaiya, Ijaiya, Bello and Ajayi (2011) which posited that there is no relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction. The finding is also at variance with the finding of Tsaro (2022) which posited that there is no correlation between poverty reduction and national development. This the researcher said that despite several poverty reduction programmes embarked on by Government were sector specific, the poverty incidence in Nigeria was steadily on the increase thus validating the proposition that poverty reduction strategies of the World Bank and IMF are merely technical responses to a fundamentally political challenge. The finding is in disagreement with the finding of Olasode, Eke and Olaleye (2022) which posited that there is no significant relationship between poverty reduction and national development. They stated that Nigerian economy has experienced significant growth over the last two decades, but poverty rates in the country remain high.

Table 3 showed that there is significant relationship between TVET skills acquisition and crime reduction. The finding is in tandem with Scholars International Institute of Technology (2022) which opined that when there is crime reduction in many nations and the world at large, there is bound to be national growth and development because people are usually engaged and self-sufficient and are constantly looking for ways to improve and stayed updated, so much that they have limited or no time engaging in crimes. The finding is in agreement with Adekoya and Abdul-Razak (2017) who in their finding stated that crime affects economic growth. In other words, crime imposes the costs of prosecution and punishment on the citizens and country, which influences the growth of the economy. The research finding is in consonance with the finding of Oluwakemi (2017) which opined that criminal activities hinder national development. Oluwakemi further stated that crime brings about moral laxity, retardation of progress, growth and development. In a similar vein, Okpuvwie, Akinyede and Tohozin (2021) stated that crime hinders economic growth, instills fear and tension.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it was concluded that self-employment, poverty reduction and crime reduction, have relationship with skill acquisition in Nigeria. Consequently, with viable skill acquisition programme put in place by all stakeholders, it is expected that there will be employment generation, and poverty reduction and reduction in crime for the teaming population.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. According to the findings, skill acquisition is capable of reducing unemployment in Nigeria. Therefore, all hands should be on deck to encourage skill acquisition to strive
2. Skill acquisition has the tendency of poverty reduction. Hence there is need to reduce poverty by creating more job opportunities to enhance stability in homes and society
3. Crime reduction is an anti-anathema to national development, hence there is need for all stake-holders to discourage crime in every sector of the economy by creating more awareness on skill acquisition.

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