

The Influence of Technical Skills Acquisition in Curbing Insecurity Challenges in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of Technical Skills acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State. A population of 56 technical education Lecturers and 32 technologists in the three Technical Institutions in Rivers State was used for the study. The population was manageable; therefore, the study was a census study whereby the entire population was adopted for the study. Three research questions and two hypotheses were answered and tested at 0.05 level of significant, respectively. The instrument for the study was a survey questionnaire tagged “Influence of Technical Skills in Curbing Insecurity” (ITSCI). The instrument was partitioned into three sections (A, B & C). Section A was structured in the form of checklist to identify technical skills. Sections B & C were structured in the pattern of Likert 5 point rating scale of agreement. The instrument was face validated by two experts in the department of Vocational and Technology Education in Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, and a z-test was used to test the hypotheses. The study found that technical skills, such as; furniture making, machining, phone repairs, masonry, electrical installation, boat building, foundry, automobile and others are relevant for youth empowerment in Rivers State and that the acquisition of these skills by youths will empower youths to be self-reliant thereby reducing the level of insecurity in the state. It was recommended among others that there should be an immediate enrolment of youths at the constituency level in the state for technical training

Keywords: Acquisition, Curbing, Insecurity, Skill and Technical

Introduction

Insecurity is a phenomenon in some countries in the world today. Many countries in the world are faced with this ugly trend which has claimed a lot of lives globally. Therefore, it is not peculiar to one state or country, but the approach adopted in mitigating insecurity differs from one country to another. The term “insecurity” has been described by several authors. According to Udoh (2015), insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury. Also, Okwelle and Amaechi (2017) described insecurity as a state of being prone to danger or a situation whereby an individual is open to an attack that can cause harm, danger and injury, loss of lives or destruction of properties. Therefore, insecurity could be described as a state of unrest whereby people are harassed or properties and lives destroyed.

Insecurity in the world today has been attributed to several factors which could be dependent on the region, state or country where insecurity is experienced. In the case of Nigeria, unemployment has been noted as a major factor that contributes to insecurity. In the words of Matawal in Ochogba, Johnwest, Isiodu and Igwe (2017), out of the 67 million populations of youths within the age bracket of 18-35 in Nigeria, 42 percent do not have means of livelihood. This percentage of youths is found in the street searching for any means of survival, which could involve any form of criminal activities. In line with this, Niyi (2011) opine that the factors responsible for the high rate of insecurity in Nigeria includes; unemployment of youths and corruption among leaders. Also, Olabanji and Ese (2014) perceived insecurity to be a product of several factors, such as; ethno-religious conflicts, political based violence, systemic and political corruption, economic based violence, pervasive materials, inequalities and unfairness, unemployment/poverty, organized violent groups, weak security system and porous borders.

On the effect of insecurity in the country, Udoh (2015) assert that due to insecurity in Nigeria, there is an increase in killings, kidnapping, armed robbery, arson and others. In Rivers State, Eze (2015) pointed out that Rivers State is confronted with security challenges, especially illegal bunkering, piracy, kidnapping, armed robbery, political killings and so on. In a recent research on insecurity in Rivers State by Okwelle and Amaech (2017), it was found that there is a high rate of killing, kidnapping, shooting, robbery and the likes. The study recommends that there should be an immediate training of crime offenders with vocational and technical skills.

According to Ogundele (2013), skill can be seen as that which enables someone to do something well, usually gained through training. It then means that skill is the ability to do something proficiently. The act of getting this skill and knowledge could be described as acquisition (Ogundele, 2013). These skills can be acquired either through teaching, training, retraining, practical experience and on-the-job training (Uzoka and Bayode, 2010). Through teaching and training, several skills are acquired, such as; technical, vocational, managerial, entrepreneurial, communication, accounting, information and communication technology and many more. In this context, technical skills will be considered.

Technical skills could be described as skill, expertise or technical competence related to the field of engineering or technical (Medina, 2010). Technical skills are often associated with the use of tools, equipment related to work properly and efficiently, as well as all technical matters (MD-Nasir, Ali, Noordin & Nordin, 2011). In view of the above, David (2010) posits that through apprenticeship and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), specific technical skills are acquired, such as; automobile, machining, welding, plumbing, electrical craftsmanship and masonry. The acquisition of technical skills has been noted to be very instrumental in both human and national development. On this premise, Ogundele (2013) stated that the acquisition of vocational/technical skills for a particular job can be able to transform a trainee to become self-employed and to contribute to the development of the society. Also, Onwuka in Umunnadi (2014) pointed out that through skill acquisition an individual could be empowered to develop capabilities and values for the benefits of the individual and that of the society. The empowerment of youths through vocational/technical skills benefits the society in the sense that youth and adult who participate in these skills will be gainfully engaged in paid employment or self-employment as artisans, skilled craftsmen, technicians and technologists thereby diverting their attention from lawless activities, which will result to reduction in the level of insecurity in the society (Ibidapo, 2015).

However, with the quest for a peaceful environment in Nigeria, it is expedient to eliminate factors that contribute to insecurity. As noted in this context, unemployment is a major factor that contributes to insecurity hence, it should be ameliorated. Therefore, the recommendation of technical skills for youths ought to be fully implemented. The question is, what influence will the acquisition of technical skills have in some youths that have taken crime to be their lifestyle? This question is what this research intend to address as regards to youth empowerment.

Purpose of the study

The study investigated the influence of technical skills acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to;

- Identify technical skills for youth empowerment in Rivers State.
- Determine the influence of acquired technical skills in youth empowerment in Rivers State.
- Examine the influence of youth empowerment through technical skill acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State.

Research questions

- What are the technical skills for youth empowerment in Rivers State?
- What is the influence of acquired technical skills in youth empowerment in Rivers State?
- What is the influence of youth empowerment through technical skill acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of technical education lecturers and technologists in the three tertiary institutions in Rivers State on the influence of acquired technical skills in youth empowerment in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of technical education lecturers and technologists in the three tertiary institutions in Rivers State on the influence of youth empowerment through technical skill acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State.

Methodology

The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The study was carried out in Rivers State. The population of the study comprised 56 technical education lecturers and 32 technologists in the three Technical Institutions in Rivers State. The population was manageable; hence, it was a census study whereby the entire population was adopted as the sample size for the study. The instrument for the study was a survey questionnaire tagged “Influence of Technical Skills in Curbing Insecurity” (ITSCI). The instrument was partitioned into three sections (A, B & C). Section A was structured in the form of checklist to assess the technical skills to curb insecurity in Rivers State. Sections B & C were structured in the pattern of Likert 5 point rating scale of agreement. The instrument was face validated by two experts in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education in Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt. The reliability of the instrument was established using Kuder Richardson 20 (for section A) and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient method (for sections B & C) for a measure of internal consistency of the instrument. To achieve the reliability of the study, 16 technical education lecturers outside the state were purposively sampled and their responses

were used. The reliability coefficients achieved were 0.87 and 0.83. Copies of the instrument were administered and retrieved by the researchers at the spot. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses. Percentage <50% was rejected while Percentage \geq 50% was accepted. More so, mean scores <3.00 were rejected while mean scores \geq 3.00 were accepted.

Results and discussions

Table 1: Responses on technical skills relevant for youth empowerment

Skills (N=56)	Technical Lecturers		Technologist (N=32)	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Scaffolding	53(95%)	3(5%)	26(81%)	6(19%)
Machining	54(96%)	2(4%)	23(72%)	9(28%)
Auto mobile	56(100%)	-	30(94%)	2(6%)
Boat building	45(80%)	11(20%)	27(84%)	5(16%)
Welding	56(100%)	-	32(100%)	-
Carpentry	56(100%)	-	32(100%)	-
Furniture making	56(100%)	-	32(100%)	-
Electronics maintenance	56(100%)	-	32(100%)	-
Plumbing and pipefitting	50(89%)	6(11%)	32(100%)	-
Electrical installation	56(100%)	-	32(100%)	-
Foundry	52(93%)	4(7%)	29(91%)	3(9%)
Automobile driving	47(84%)	9(16%)	32(100%)	-
Coupling	42(75%)	14(25%)	30(94%)	2(6%)
Forging	51(91%)	5(9%)	27(84%)	5(16%)
Phone repairs	43(77%)	13(23%)	28(88%)	4(12%)
Masonry	56(100%)	-	32(100%)	-

Table 1 shows that the listed technical skills such as; scaffolding, machining, boat building, Auto mobile, Welding, carpentry, plumbing, phone repairs and masonry, among others were accepted by both technical education lecturers and technologists as skills relevant for youth empowerment in Rivers State based on the fact that their percentages were more than 50% which is the acceptable percentage. This study is in line with David (2010) that through apprenticeship and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), specific technical skills are acquired, such as; automobile, machining, welding, plumbing, electrical craftsmanship and masonry.

Table 2: Responses on the influence of acquired technical skills in youth empowerment in Rivers State

Variables	Technical Lecturers (N=56)		Technologists (N=32)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Grand Mean	Remarks
Encouraging self-employment	3.66	1.51	3.81	1.30	3.74	Accepted
Providing diverse job opportunities	3.59	1.32	3.94	0.80	3.77	Accepted
Employment	3.66	1.33	3.53	1.39	3.60	Accepted
Provision of required job attitude	3.41	1.42	3.59	1.25	3.50	Accepted
Ability to take up contracts	3.56	1.38	3.88	1.41	3.72	Accepted
Ability to initiate good business plan	3.59	1.38	4.28	1.02	3.94	Accepted
Innovation of technical products for commercial purposes	3.61	1.31	3.69	1.42	3.65	Accepted

Table 2 shows respondents' opinion on the influence of acquired technical skills in youth empowerment in Rivers State. The grand mean responses of respondent shows agreement of respondents in the following variables as the influence of acquired technical skills in youth empowerment in Rivers State; encouraging self-employment (3.74), providing diverse job opportunities (3.77), employment (3.60), provision of required job attitude (3.50), ability to take up contracts (3.72), ability to initiate good business plan (3.94) and innovation of technical products for commercial purposes (3.65). This study is in line with the assertion of Ogundele (2013) that the acquisition and usage of skills for a particular job can be able to transform a trainee to become self-employed and to contribute to the development of the society. Also, Onwuka in Umunnadi (2014) pointed out that through skill acquisition an individual is empowered to develop capabilities and values for the benefits of the individual and that of the society

Table 3: responses on the influence of youth empowerment through technical skill acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State

Variables	Technical Lecturers (N=56)		Technologists (N=32)			Remarks
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Grand Mean	
Building confidence in youth on economic stability	3.46	1.39	3.91	1.09	3.69	Accepted
Eliminating the thought of crime in youths	3.63	0.77	3.69	0.89	3.66	Accepted
Engaging youths in meaningful ventures	3.75	1.27	3.27	1.50	3.51	Accepted
Building good societal values	3.64	1.24	3.50	1.08	3.57	Accepted
Building good morals among youths	3.76	1.26	3.66	1.34	3.71	Accepted
Reduction in cult activities	3.68	1.23	3.56	1.37	3.62	Accepted
Reduction in kidnapping	3.66	1.24	3.50	1.44	3.58	Accepted
Reduction in robbery	3.69	1.25	3.38	1.35	3.54	Accepted
Reduction in election crime	3.72	1.33	3.81	1.57	3.77	Accepted
Reduction in harassment of urban and rural dwellers by restive youths	3.77	1.20	3.66	1.45	3.72	Accepted

Table 3 shows the opinion of respondents on the influence of youth empowerment through technical skill acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State. The grand mean responses of respondent shows agreement of respondents in the following variables as the influence of youth empowerment through technical skill acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State; building confidence in youth on economic stability (3.69), eliminating the thought of crime in youths (3.66), engaging youths in meaningful ventures (3.51), building good societal values (3.57), building good morals among youths (3.71), reduction in cult activities (3.62), reduction in kidnapping (3.58), reduction in robbery (3.54), reduction in election crime (3.77), reduction in harassment urban and rural dwellers by restive youths (3.72). This study compliments the findings of Ibidapo (2015) that when youths and adults acquire entrepreneurship and employability skills, they will be gainfully engaged in paid employment or self-employment as artisans, skilled craftsmen, technicians and technologists thereby diverting their attention from lawless activities

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of Technical Education Lecturers and technologists in Rivers State on the influence of acquired technical skills in youth empowerment in Rivers State

Table 4: z-test responses on the influence of acquired technical skills in youth empowerment in Rivers State

Variables	Technical Lecturers (N=56)		Technologists (N=32)				Remarks
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	z-cal	z-crit	
Encouraging self-employment	3.66	1.51	3.81	1.30	0.51	1.98	NS
Providing diverse job opportunities	3.59	1.32	3.94	0.80	1.64	1.98	NS
Employment	3.66	1.33	3.53	1.39	0.37	1.98	NS
Provision of required job attitude	3.41	1.42	3.59	1.25	0.64	1.98	NS
Ability to take up contracts	3.56	1.38	3.88	1.41	1.06	1.98	NS
Ability to initiate good business plan	3.59	1.38	4.28	1.02	2.80	1.98	S
Innovation of technical products for commercial purposes	3.61	1.31	3.69	1.42	0.27	1.98	NS

SD (Standard Deviation), S (Significant), NS (Not Significant)

Table 4 shows that all the items except item 6 had their z-cal less than z-crit (1.98) which mean that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of technical education lecturers and technologist for all the items except for item 6. Therefore, the stated hypothesis was up held for all the items except for item 6.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of technical education lecturers and technologists in the three tertiary institutions in Rivers State on the influence of youth empowerment through technical skill acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test responses on the influence of youth empowerment through technical skill acquisition in curbing insecurity in Rivers State

Variables	Technical Lecturers (N=56)		Technologists (N=32)				Remarks
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	z-cal	z-crit	
Building confidence in youth on economic stability	3.46	1.39	3.91	1.09	1.80	1.98	NS
Eliminating the thought of crime in youths	3.63	0.77	3.69	0.89	0.33	1.98	NS
Engaging youths in meaningful ventures	3.75	1.27	3.27	1.50	1.55	1.98	NS
Building good societal values	3.64	1.24	3.50	1.08	0.57	1.98	NS
Building good morals among youths	3.76	1.26	3.66	1.34	0.35	1.98	NS
Reduction in cult activities	3.68	1.23	3.56	1.37	0.42	1.98	NS
Reduction in kidnapping	3.66	1.24	3.50	1.44	0.54	1.98	NS
Reduction in robbery	3.69	1.25	3.38	1.35	1.09	1.98	NS
Reduction in election crime	3.72	1.33	3.81	1.57	0.28	1.98	NS
Reduction in harassment of urban and rural dwellers by restive youths	3.77	1.20	3.66	1.45	0.37	1.98	NS

SD (Standard Deviation), S (Significant), NS (Not Significant)

Table 5 shows that all the items had their z-cal less than z-crit (1.98) which mean that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of technical education lecturers and technologists for all the items. Therefore, the stated hypothesis was up held for all the items.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it was deduced that the acquisition of technical skills, such as; furniture making, pipe fitting, machining, phone repairs, masonry, electrical installation, boat building, foundry, automobile, scaffolding, welding and electronics, among others will

help in empowering youths in Rivers State, hence reducing insecurity by building good morals among youths, building good societal values, eliminating the thought of crime in youths, and others.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made;

- Well-equipped technical training centres should be built in all the constituencies in Rivers State to help train youths who are unemployed.
- There should be an immediate enrolment of youths at the constituency level in the state for technical training. With this, there will be a re-orientation of youths in the state on how to be responsible.
- Upon completion of training, youths should be given start-up pack for them to be self-employed with strict supervision. This will help in sustaining the programme.
- Every outstanding trainee should be employed by government to start up industries that will be involved in the manufacturing of engineering products under the supervision of expertise. With this, the government will be able to industrialize the state thereby improving her economy.

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