

## SKILL ACQUISITION AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AS PREDICTORS OF RESTIVENESS REDUCTION AMONG GRADUATES IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

**Nurudeen Alowonle ASUNMO**

Department of Adult Education  
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko,  
Ondo State, Nigeria

E mail: [alowonle.asunmo@aaua.edu.ng](mailto:alowonle.asunmo@aaua.edu.ng)  
[alobim22@gmail.com](mailto:alobim22@gmail.com)

**Felix Kayode OGUNMOROTI**

Department of Adult Education  
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko,  
Ondo State, Nigeria

[felixkayode2211@gmail.com](mailto:felixkayode2211@gmail.com)

**Florence Olajumoke EGBOWON**

Department of Adult Education  
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko,  
Ondo State, Nigeria

[flozyolaegbon@gmail.com](mailto:flozyolaegbon@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*The goal of skill development in Nigeria is to ensure that human resources are developed to the necessary degree to meet predetermined rates of technological change, with adequate and practical skills for the workplace. The study examined skill acquisition and youth unemployment as predictor of restiveness reduction among graduates in Ekiti State. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The sample consisted of 430 university and polytechnic graduates purposively selected from six (6) Local Government Areas in Ekiti State. An instrument titled: "Skill Acquisition, Unemployment and Restiveness Questionnaire" was used to collect relevant data for the study. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. At a significance level of 0.05, multiple regression analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypotheses. The results revealed that skill acquisition and youth unemployment significantly predict restiveness among graduates in Ekiti State. Also, all sub-variables of skill acquisition positively predicted youth restiveness with techno-vocational as the least of predictor of youth restiveness. These results led to the recommendation that educational system and curricula-structure should be designed to support and promote innovative skill acquisition education, employable skills and virile entrepreneurship schemes.*

**Keywords:** Skill acquisition, Unemployment, Restiveness, Graduate

### **Introduction**

Young people in Nigeria frequently aspire to careers in prestigious fields like

medicine, law, engineering, accounting, and so forth. Only a small percentage of applicants would be interested in careers like welding and fabrication, photography, tailoring, electrical work or auto mechanics, among other occupations. This is a common misperception that reduces trades to alternate options for students that lack interest who do not satisfy the qualifications for other prestigious professions. In addition to these professions, acquisition of entrepreneurship helps in creating ideas and employment for oneself and also for others.

The goal of skill development in Nigeria is to ensure that human resources are developed to meet predetermined rates of technological change, with adequate and practical skills for the workplace. In Nigeria, each year, thousands of graduates are produced, and despite this, the number of jobs available to accommodate this army of job seekers is insufficient. Youth unemployment is, therefore, quite obvious. Youth hawkers, who ordinarily would have found productive employment in some businesses, are everywhere in Nigeria's streets. Since they are unable to put their skills to use, self-employment is a challenging situation. The vast number of young people without jobs may be able to undermine democratic practices since they pose a severe threat if used by the political class in covert operations.

The process of teaching someone or a group of people a skill that can help them acquire information for self-sustenance is known as skill acquisition. In the words of Ochiagha (2005), the process of forming an active thought or behaviour pattern for a particular job is known as skill acquisition. He contends that in order to acquire the skill, pertinent thought patterns, knowledge, attitudes, and character qualities must be

mastered. This will enable the learner to build their intellectual, emotional, and moral character, putting them in better position to succeed in the future. Considering the importance of skill acquisition and its practical implications on youth unemployment and restiveness, this study intends to investigate specifically some selected variables of skill acquisition such as techno-vocational skill, entrepreneurial skill and agro-vocational skill.

Due to its multifaceted nature, Youth unemployment in Nigeria is a complicated issue. In spite of the fact that unemployment has become a 21st-century worldwide issue, the situation in Nigeria is getting worse and worrisome. The Nigerian labour market has become known for its unemployment and underemployment rates. The problem has been made worse by the alarmingly high number of recent graduates from universities, polytechnics, and secondary schools. This has had an impact on the frequency of social vices such as robbery, kidnapping, prostitution, human trafficking, drug abuse, and unfair work practices, which are additional obvious elements of the complex dynamics of modern Nigerian employment that are predominantly felt by young people without jobs (Smith, 2022).

One of Nigeria's most pressing socioeconomic issues is the unrest among young people brought on by unemployment. The inability or unwillingness of the Nigerian State to provide employment opportunities, as well as its failure to educate, prepare, or train youths with self-sustaining capacities, predisposes the youth to all forms of restiveness, including drug use and abuse, alcoholism, gangsterism, school dropouts, ethnic violence, cultism, ritualism, robbery, prostitution, and trafficking, among others (Chiapaka, 2012).

Based on the aforementioned, this study investigated the relationship between skill acquisition, youth unemployment and restlessness among graduates in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Nigerian states, there have been cases of armed robbery, conflicts, trafficking, willful destruction of life and property, kidnappings, lootings, and pipeline destruction, among other things, according to recent media accounts and observations (Daily Independent, 2014). The majority of those involved in these activities are young people and unemployed graduates. According to recent security reports in Nigeria, notably in Ekiti State, the rising young unemployment rate has been linked to this tendency. As a result, questions concerning what can be done to stop the threat of graduates' unrest in the State were raised. In the light of the highlighted problems, the study examined the skills acquisition and youth unemployment as predictors of restiveness among graduates in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the influence of skill acquisition in reducing restiveness among graduates in Ekiti State?
2. How do skill acquisition and youth unemployment reduce restiveness among graduates in Ekiti State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were raised to guide the study:

1. The elements of skill acquisition will not significantly predict restiveness reduction among graduates in Ekiti State.

2. Skill acquisition and youth unemployment will not significantly predict restiveness among graduates in Ekiti State.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Skills Acquisition**

Developing one's skills can help to meet both personal and community demands while also addressing the issue of unemployment. Mike (2014) emphasized the significance of skill acquisition, citing a variety of employment opportunities, self-employment, creation of jobs, efficiency and a decrease in crime. Giving tertiary students a variety of skills is one way to address the high unemployment rate because without skill development, achieving national goals will be affected.

To meet the demands of the working environment, there is a tremendous need to create talented individuals and refresh pertinent abilities. When considering skill acquisition from an industrial development perspective, all working-age individuals must participate in training programmes in order to help meet the need for new skills and enable flexibility to changes in the industrial structure. The government of Nigeria has not been oblivious to the issue over the years, according to the aforementioned. Numerous initiatives to reduce unemployment had been started by the federal government. These include Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution (GR), National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP), Empowering Nigerian Youth for Prosperity (NPOWER), National Development Projects (FADAMA 1, 2 and 3) National Directorates of Employment (NDE), and Poverty Alleviation Programmes (PAP). Ekiti State has focused on some areas of the

programmes; such as State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Youth for Commercial Agricultural Development (YCAD) to solve problems of poverty and unemployment.

### **Techno-Vocational Skill Acquisition and Youth Unemployment**

Technical and vocational education may be used in Nigeria's educational system to develop skills. Through instruction, training, retraining, hands-on experience, and on-the-job training, technical and vocational education involves the acquisition of knowledge and practical skills in any subject of study (Uzoka and Bayode, 2010). Ndagi (1998) defined technical and vocational as the form of instruction that disseminates knowledge, abilities, and attitudes necessary to produce resourceful and effective people. Technical and vocational education lays a big emphasis on developing the abilities, know-how, and mindsets needed for efficiency and independence. Because they manage their own business and work for themselves, self-reliant can also be categorized as belonging to the entrepreneurial cadre. The value of technical and vocational education, according to Oladebo (1998), cannot be overstated because it allows for the development of attitudes and knowledge that will help young people participate in the business world and become independent.

### **Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition and Youth Unemployment**

Through technical and vocational education and education about entrepreneurship in career counseling, youth unemployment can be decreased. To solve the issue of unemployment and integrate young people into the job market, governments and international bi- and

multilateral organizations realize the significance of youth entrepreneurship. (ILO, 2009).

Okolocha and Okolocha (2012) defined entrepreneurship skills as those that a person learns to operate efficiently in a demanding business environment as an independent or self-employed individual in order to improve his or her own financial status as well as the general state of society. The results of Okebukola's (2006) study supported the notion that the majority of Nigerian graduates lacked independence and entrepreneurship skills. Similar to this, Olumese and Clark (2011) underlined that Nigerian institutions do not know adequately communication training in entrepreneurship skill development. Youth empowerment via gaining entrepreneurial skills, according to Uloko & Ejinkonye (2010), enhances the possibility that they will use such skills to open up new revenue streams. It takes effective skill development through education and training to enable adolescents to launch enterprises. According to Egwanyenga and Ranor (2012), managerial skills, financial competency abilities, sales and marketing skills, general business skills, and interpersonal skills are all examples of entrepreneurial talents.

### **Agro-Vocational Skill Acquisition and Youth Unemployment**

The agricultural industry, among other things, has the ability to provide a wide range of employment prospects, especially given its multidimensional and multifunctional nature (Lawal and Atteh 2006; Loto 2011). Agriculture has been acknowledged as the foundation of the Nigerian economy since the country's independence in 1960 (Vaarst 2010; Barbu & Capusneanu 2012).

According to Ogen 2007, Lawal and

Atteh 2006, and Loto 2011, agriculture contributed the largest share of the nation's GDP. During this time, Nigeria was a significant producer and exporter of financial products such cocoa, rubber, groundnuts, cotton, and hides and skin (Agbolagba, 2010; Afolayan & Ajibade 2012). Nigeria's abandonment of agriculture and reliance on crude oil alone have slowed the nation's development (Ogen 2007; Ucha 2010; Adesina 2013).

Recent years have seen the Nigerian government place a greater emphasis on agriculture as a sector with the potential to grow the economy and open up a variety of new job opportunities. This indicates how the government views agro-business as a strong building block for long-term development (El-Rufai 2011). Africans continue to work in agriculture in significant numbers, suggesting a strong connection between agro-vocational skills and young employment (Adesina 2008).

### **Youth Unemployment**

Any society's youth are its cornerstone. Youth are people between the ages of 18 and 35, according to the National Youth Development Policy of 2001. A nation's progress and security are determined by the passion, ingenuity, personality, and orientation of its people. Through their hard work and creative abilities, youth enable a country to make great strides. The most fragile and volatile demographic is young people (Anasi, 2010).

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2004), youth between the ages of 15 and 24 make up 52.9% of those who are unemployed, while those between the ages of 25 and 45 make up 41.2 percent (NBS, 2004). There are, therefore, 94.1 percent of all unemployed people between the ages of 15 and 45 (Osibanjo, 2006).

Every country deals with unemployment as a social problem on a regular basis. However, responsible governments must constantly strive for the lowest unemployment rate possible. Fajana (2000) defined unemployment as a state in which people are unable to find full-time or even part-time employment. Nigeria's severe unemployment situation, according to the survey, notably among recent graduates and school dropouts is about 75% who are able and eager to work but cannot find gainful employment..

According to Oyebade (2003), there are two main subgroups of unemployed people in Nigeria: the younger unemployed, the majority of whom have never worked, and the older unemployed who were laid off from their employment, bankruptcy, or retrenchment. In general, the reasons for unemployment may vary from nation to nation or state to state. Studies on unemployment in Nigeria identified the primary factors contributing to youth unemployment by Awogbenle & Iwuamadi (2010), Ayinde (2008), and Morphy (2008). The first is the rapidly growing urban labour force brought on by rural-to-urban migration. Many young people go to cities in quest of attractive job prospects. Additionally, social facilities are more concentrated in urban areas. This suggested that social and economic opportunities are inadequate for rural residents.

The second issue is the swift population growth in the urban centres. Because of the high rate of population increase, it is alleged that the work force has expanded more than relative to job opportunities. The high rate of population increase in Nigeria complicates the issue of unemployment. A considerable and quick rise in the labour force relative to the

economy's ability to take on new workers has an influence on the supply side.

The third is the absence of employable skills and outmoded educational curricula. Because they are unemployed in the formal sector, several academics and others claim that the typical Nigerian graduate lacks the skills required by employers of labour for a formal job. This is sometimes attributed to Nigeria's liberally biased educational system. Lack of entrepreneurial substance in Nigeria's higher education programmes prevents graduates from becoming job producers in place of job seekers.

The fourth is the rapid expansion of the educational system, which immediately causes an increase in the supply of educated workers above the matching demand for them. This aggravates Nigeria's issue with youth unemployment. For instance, Manning & Junankar (2008) remark that from 73,339 graduates in 1986/1987 to 431,016 graduates in 2006/2007, Nigeria's higher education institutions produced an overall rise in graduates. There are currently 217 Universities in Nigeria (49 Federal, 57 State, and 111 Private), and with the demand for higher education growing, there has been an issue with graduates from these higher institutions being able to find acceptable job (NUC, 2022). Normally, this would not have been an issue, but the Nigerian economy is just not strong enough to accommodate these graduates (Utomi, 2011).

### **Concept and Causes of Youth Restiveness**

Youth unrest is a behaviour pattern that has evolved into a current global problem among youth everywhere, including Nigeria. Youth restlessness exemplifies man's negative side of societal development. Sadly, this undesirable development has become one of the numerous security

issues contemporary societies must face. Lives and valuable property costing millions of naira have frequently been lost, vandalized, or even destroyed by unruly youngsters. Youth unrest in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon, and it affects various regions of the nation in diverse degrees.

Chika and Onyene (2010) defined restlessness as the inability or unwillingness to be restrained, particularly if one is bored or dissatisfied with certain judgments, altered rules, or current laws that are perceived as unfavourable. The term "youth restiveness" describes a wide range of actions, attitudes, and conducts that young people exhibit in public that are unhealthy and socially unacceptable. Restlessness is a term used to describe a group of activities, conduct, and behaviours that young people exhibit in reaction to socially awkward and unpleasant situations. Such acts could take the shape of persistent disclosures started by a group of organized teenagers to force a desired consequence on a constituted authority (Elegbeleye, 2005). Young people now utilize youth restiveness as a weapon to get what they want from relevant authorities; the act is typically carried out illegally. It is a planned method of responding to perceived grievances that are becoming more powerful and destructive (Babayaju, 2015).

Restiveness, according to Ukwueze (2013), is a result of a person's emotional and temperamental responses to situations or events as a result of incorrect cognitive perception, assessment, and interpretation of those events, leading to a state of restlessness, unease, nervousness, obstinacy, and uncontrollable behaviour. Thus, because it is characterized by violent acts and the interruption of legal activity, restiveness includes all manifestations of youth activism that threaten or have the potential to pose a

threat to the peace, the safety of individuals and property.

**Methodology**

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consisted of 600 university and polytechnic graduates from six (6) Local Government Areas in Ekiti State. The samples were selected using multistage sampling techniques. In stage one, the State was divided into three (3) senatorial districts: Ekiti-North, Ekiti-Central and Ekiti-South Senatorial Districts, using cluster sampling technique. In stage two, 2 local government areas were selected from each of the senatorial districts namely: Oye & Ido-Osi Local Government (Northern Senatorial District); Ado & Irepodun/Ifelodun Local Government (Central Senatorial District) and Ikere & Emure Local Government (Southern Senatorial District), using convenient random technique. In stage three, researchers targeted youth population in cluster locations from Churches, Mosques,

newspaper vendor outlets and football viewing centers via purposive sampling technique. The sample for the study consisted of 430 university and polytechnic graduates from six (6) Local Government Areas in Ekiti State. A self-designed questionnaire tagged “Skill Acquisition, Unemployment and Restiveness Questionnaire (SAURQ)” was employed to gather pertinent information for the study. The questionnaire consisted of four sections namely section A, B, C and D. Four Point Likert scale was used for section B, C and D of the instrument as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The reliability of the instrument SAURQ was determined through the test-retest method. The questionnaire was administered on 20 graduates twice within a space of two weeks interval at Ise Local Government Area. The responses collected were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics with r value of 0.61.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1: Multiple Regression showing Contribution of Skill Acquisition Variables on Youth Restiveness**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F
	B	Std. Error					
(Constant)	5.407	.857		6.309			
Techno-Vocational	.039	.010	.373	3.446	0.647	0.419	6.238
Entrepreneurship	.068	.022	.471	4.051			
Agro-Vocational	.020	.016	.294	3.009			

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Restiveness

Table 1 indicated that at the 0.05 level of significance, the F-cal value of 6.238 is more than the F-tab value of 2.98, and the null hypothesis was thus rejected. Hence,

variables of skill acquisition would significantly predict restiveness among graduates. All sub-variables of skill acquisition such as techno-vocational,

entrepreneurship and agro-vocational accounted for 41.9 percent predictability of youth restiveness ( $R^2= 0.419$ ),  $F(3, 426) = 6.238$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The result showed that techno-vocational, entrepreneurship and agro-vocational of sub-variables of skill acquisition positively predicted youth restiveness with techno-vocational having a

beta weight ( $\beta = 0.373$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), entrepreneurship ( $\beta = 0.471$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and agro-vocational ( $\beta = 0.294$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The table also indicates that entrepreneurship skill acquisition is the highest predictor of youth restiveness while agro-vocational skill acquisition is the least predictor of youth restiveness.

The regression equation that results is presented as:

$$Y = 5.407 + 0.039X_1 + 0.068X_2 + 0.020X_3$$

where:

- Y = Youth Restiveness
- X<sub>1</sub> = Techno-Vocational
- X<sub>2</sub> = Entrepreneurship
- X<sub>3</sub> = Agro-vocational

**Table 2: Multiple Regression showing Contribution of Skill Acquisition and Youth Unemployment on Youth Restiveness**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	8.168	.928		8.309			
Skill Acquisition	.247	.118	.419	4.136			
Youth Unemployment	.453	.139	.754	6.518	0.892	0.796	13.482

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Restiveness

Table 2 indicated that at the 0.05 level of significance, the F-cal value of 13.482 is more than the F-tab value of 2.98, and the null hypothesis was thus rejected. Hence, skill acquisition and youth unemployment would significantly predict restiveness among graduates. Skill acquisition and youth unemployment accounted for 79.6 percent predictability of youth restiveness ( $R^2= 0.796$ ),  $F(3, 426) = 13.482$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The result showed that skill acquisition and youth unemployment predicted youth restiveness with skill acquisition having a beta weight ( $\beta = 0.419$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and youth unemployment ( $\beta = 0.754$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The regression equation that results is

presented as:

$$Y = 8.168 + 0.247X_1 + 0.453X_2$$

where:

- Y = Youth Restiveness
- X<sub>1</sub> = Skill Acquisition
- X<sub>2</sub> = Youth unemployment

**Discussion of findings**

In hypothesis one which stated that variables of skill acquisition will not significantly predict restiveness among graduates in Ekiti State, the result showed that techno-vocational, entrepreneurship and agro-vocational of sub-variables of skill acquisition positively predicted youth restiveness with techno-vocational having a beta weight ( $\beta = 0.373$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ),

entrepreneurship ( $\beta = 0.471$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and agro-vocational ( $\beta = 0.294$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results indicated that three sub-variables of skill acquisition, techno-vocational, entrepreneurship, and agro-vocational, positively predict youth restiveness among graduates in Ekiti State. The beta weights and p-values provided additional information about the strength and significance of these predictions. According to Mike (2014), the relevance of skill acquisition includes self-employment, a variety of job opportunities, creating jobs, functioning well, and reducing crime. This implies that entrepreneurship skill acquisition is the highest predictor of youth restiveness while agro-vocational skill acquisition is the least predictor of youth restiveness.

In hypothesis two, it was revealed that skill acquisition and youth unemployment would significantly predict restiveness among graduates in Ekiti State. The result showed that skill acquisition and youth unemployment predicted youth restiveness with skill acquisition having a beta weight ( $\beta = 0.419$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and youth unemployment ( $\beta = 0.754$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Donli (2004) claimed that skill acquisition is the embodiment of concepts and knowledge through instruction intended to instill in people the entrepreneurial spirit necessary for substantive development. He continued by asserting that acquiring new skills makes people more cooperative and competitive.

### Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, forms of skills acquisition (Techno-vocational skill, Entrepreneurship skill and Agro-Vocational skills) are proactive solutions to graduates and youth unemployment which is the immediate cause of youth restiveness in Ekiti-State, Nigeria. Also, poverty is a force influencing youth

restiveness. Therefore, it is suggested that all unemployed graduates should have the skills to start a small business from the lowest level. Government should provide enabling environment via youth empowerment programmes. Stake holders should reduce bottle necks in processing and accessing loan facilities, thereby making more affordable funds available to the young entrepreneurs in Ekiti State and Nigeria.

### Recommendations

1. Every graduate is urged to obtain a skill (techno-vocational, entrepreneurship, or agro-vocational) in order to fight youth unemployment and restiveness by decreasing competition for white collar positions.
2. The curricula and structure of the educational system should be developed to facilitate and advance employable skills, creative skill acquisition education, and successful entrepreneurship initiatives.
3. Government should provide enabling environment, standard infrastructures and adequate support for every young business to encouraging young entrepreneurs. Thus, reducing youth restiveness.

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