Investigating the impact of Skill Acquisition Programmes on Graduates Unemployment Dilemma in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Graduates Unemployment (GU) in Nigeria has hit the roof. Studies have established that graduate unemployment has increased from 12.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2016 to 13.3 per cent at the end of the second quarter in the same year. Lagos state being the centre of attraction and the most popular city in Nigeria has the highest percentage of unemployed graduates. Therefore, the study examines the impact of skill acquisition programmes on graduate unemployment rate in Lagos State, Nigeria. The Refugee effect and Schumpeter effect on unemployment and entrepreneurship was employed as theoretical guide. Descriptive survey designed was adopted for the study. Sample size comprised of 326 students of 4 Skill Acquisition Centres (SACs) in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. The selection of the respondents was done through multi-stage sampling technique. Semi-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The finding revealed that skill acquisition programmes have direct influence on graduate unemployment reduction in Lagos State, Nigeria. It also promotes culture of creative ideas, self-reliance, business initiative as well as low level of dependency among the youths in Lagos State, Nigeria. Thus, it was recommended that more efforts in terms of funds, facilities and materials must be provided by the government and non-governmental organizations to expand the capacity of skill acquisition programmes in Nigeria in order to help actualize the dream and vision of a better life for the youths.

Keywords: graduate unemployment; skill acquisition programmes; youths; Lagos
1. Introduction

Graduates Unemployment (GU) is a situation where graduates are actively looking for jobs in the labor market and are unable to secure one. It is often defined as unemployment among people with academic qualifications or tertiary degree holders. Substantially, Fajana (2000) identified two categories of graduates who fall within the landscape of graduates unemployment to include those who have never worked after graduation from the tertiary institution and those who have lost their jobs due to frustration, corruption, downsizing or retrenchment and thereby seeking re-entry into labor market (Fajana, 2000). Research undertaken by Bai (2006) proved that incidences of graduates unemployment are indicators of institutional ineffectiveness and inefficiency which Okafor (2011), Oluseyi & Elegbede (2012) highlighted as lack of entrepreneurial skills among Nigerian graduates; defective manpower planning strategy in Nigerian organizations; economic recession; high expectation of Nigerian graduates; graduates attitude to some type of jobs; use of capital intensive technology, formal-informal sectors differentials.

In Nigeria, graduates unemployment rate has increased from 12.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2016 to 13.3 per cent as at the end of the second quarter in the same year (National Bureau of Statistic, 2016). The root cause of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has been attributed to institutional/structural deficiency that gave birth to disequilibrium between labor market demand and job-seekers employability skill, political instability, policy inconsistency, corruption, poor industrial growth and inadequate manpower planning among others. As such, many Nigerian graduates are yet to achieve their dreams and visions of quality life, desirable employment and financial independent. Lack of financial independent jeopardizes graduates opportunities to utilize their talents, skills and potentials towards promoting national economy growth (Industrial Training Fund, 2007). This situation if not urgently attended to is like adding salt to injury for a country that has been suffering from youth restiveness, crime, insecurity and ultimately to the consequences of uncontrolled youth migration cum brain drain and brain dry syndrome in Nigeria. Hundreds of thousands of Nigerian youths who are supposed to serve as engine of growth have left the shore of the country due to political, social and economic instability in search for greener pasture, better life, happiness and opportunity to utilize their potentials.

Lagos State being the nation’s mega city and the centre of excellence is often considered to have more job opportunities than any other state in Nigeria and this mind-set encourage constant influx of graduates from every part of the country into Lagos State for the purpose of securing job opportunities (Emeh, 2012). Unfortunately, the volume of job opportunities in Lagos State can only engage little percentage of graduates in the state. Thus, Lagos State government initiated youth
empowerment programmes to handle graduate unemployment situation in the state yet studies have shown that this is not enough considering the fact that about 65% of Nigerian graduates move to Lagos State after graduation annually. This phenomenon generates what we referred to as Lagos graduate’s unemployment dilemma that poses a challenge to the people and government of the state in recent times. The manifestations of graduates’ unemployment have intensified the rate at which undesirable social problems (like political thuggery, armed robbery, fraudsters, prostitution, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, and illegal migration) are happening in Lagos State, Nigeria. This is true because failure to engage agile, able and educated minds resourcefully will resort to destructive, distractive and disastrous acts (Okafor, 2011).

Moreover, current studies have shown that graduate unemployment effect the living conditions and outlook of many Nigerian graduates in Lagos State with concomitant implication on their future and the society in which they are supposed to be part of (Oluseyi & Elegbede, 2012; Idoko, 2014). Eminent on this, unemployed graduates experienced several kinds of humiliation which affect their psychological well-being, moral standing and zeal for productive social relationships. In an attempt to resolve the various challenges facing unemployed graduates in Nigeria, previous studies posited that provision of skill acquisition programmes (SAPs) for graduates will better enhance graduates employability skill, self-reliance, creativity and energy to address the problem of unemployment in Lagos state and Nigeria at large (Emeh, 2012; Magbagbeola, 2004). It is on this template that the study focuses on the impact of skill acquisition programmes on graduates’ unemployment in Lagos State, Nigeria.

1.1 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of skill acquisition programmes on graduates’ unemployment in Lagos State, Nigeria. While the specific objectives are to:

i. Examine the strength of skill acquisition programmes in reducing graduates unemployment in Lagos State, Nigeria;

ii. Investigate the combined influence of all the skill acquisition programmes on graduate job opportunities;

iii. Examine the case of gender difference in exposure of graduates to skill acquisition programmes; and

iv. Investigate the role of skill acquisition programmes on socio-economic development in Lagos State, Nigeria.
2. Literature Review
2.1 Graduates Unemployment: Meaning and Definition

The concept “graduates unemployment” is used to denote the interaction between two words “graduate” and “unemployment”. The word graduate means an individual who had passed through a tertiary institution, undergone series of training and examination to become a professional in a particular field through which s/he would be confirmed worthy to earn a tertiary certificate or qualification. While, unemployment implies lack of jobs or opportunities to be gainfully engaged for socio-economic activities through which steady income can be earned or secured. Therefore, graduate unemployment then refers to the unemployment among people who have graduated from tertiary institutions and who are qualified to work but do not have a suitable paid job (Oluseyi & Elegbede, 2012).

In the case of Nigeria, graduates unemployment means a situation where graduates of tertiary institutions who have completed the one-year National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and they are willing and able to work but fail to secure jobs (Akinyemi, Ofem & Ikuenomore, 2011; Anyadike, Emeh & Ukah, 2012). Unfortunately evidence based researches have shown that there has not been accurate figure on unemployment rate in Nigeria yet the National Bureau of Statistics catalogued the figure from 2005 to 2015 as presented in the table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The phenomenon of graduates’ unemployment has engendered the incubation and manifestation of different social vices such as political thuggery, armed robbery, fraudsters, prostitution, youth militants and vandalization of pipelines, white collar criminals as well as dwindling economy among others (Akeju and
Olanipekun, 2014; Anyadike, Emeh & Ukah, 2012; Emeh, 2012). The situation has become very pervasive in Nigerian urban cities because every year, thousands of graduates are turned out from tertiary institutions into the society for whom there are no jobs. Nigerian urban streets are mostly littered with graduates as hawkers, street dancers, fraudsters, corporate beggars, job seekers who ordinary would have found gainful employment in some enterprises had there been the enabling environment (Muhammad, Oye & Inuwa, 2011). As recently observed by scholars, the large numbers of graduates that are unemployed would constitute a serious threat if engaged by the political or religious extremists for clandestine activities (Akeju and Olanipekun, 2014; Anyadike, Emeh & Ukah, 2012; Emeh, 2012). At this juncture, it is pertinent to examine factors responsible for graduate unemployment in Nigeria.

2.2 Causes of Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria


2.2.1. Abandonment of the Agricultural Sector: Since the era of the oil boom, the agricultural sector which had been the leading source of employment in Nigeria particularly after independence when the sector was responsible for the provision employment for over 60 percent of the entire Nigerian population (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012). But unfortunately, as a result of oil discovery, the focus of the economy was gradually shifted away to the oil sector which has low capacity for such huge employment. The consequence is the increasing number of job seekers who cannot secure employment in the oil industry. And now that oil prices have fallen globally, this poses a lot of threat to people working in the oil industry. It is an indicator that a lot of persons will possibly be laid off.

2.2.2. Age and Experience barriers: Several graduates are unemployed in Nigeria not because of lack of competence but of the age limitation on some jobs (Adesina, 2013). Some organizations prefer youthful and unmarried graduates to their older and married counterparts. Also some jobs require some years of experience which young graduates or individuals who have been long unemployed will not be eligible for.

2.2.3. Corruption: Corrupt practices have also contributed in no little to graduates unemployment. several funds meant for developmental projects have been grossly misappropriated, embezzled, diverted, and hidden in foreign banks, while it must be stated that some incompetent and fraudulent public servants, civil servants, technocrats and administrators in the public enterprise have shut down liquidated several organizations because of selfish interests (Okafor, 2011; Onah & Okwuosa,
2016). Okafor stated that the collaboration of the political elites, foreign and local contractors to inflate contract costs have deprived Nigeria the chances of harnessing $500 billion estimated revenue from the sales of oil in the last five decades to develop a vibrant economy which would have provided jobs for the graduates youths in the various sectors of the economy.

2.2.4. Lack of Stable and Sustainable Power Supply: Lack of stable and sustainable power supply and crises in the energy sector despite the various attempts on the part of the government has forced several firms to depend more on power generating plants for their operation and the cost of buying, fueling and maintenance are very high, thereby also increasing the cost of operation coupled with high multiple levies and taxations paid by these organizations. Generally, challenges emanating from energy crises have threatened the survival of small scale business in Nigeria. Several companies due to these reasons have lay off several staff and reduced the prospect of recruiting new ones. These also worsen the crisis of graduates’ unemployment in the labour market (Akande, 2014).

2.2.5. Low Standard of Education: Several development researchers have posited that the average Nigeria graduate is not employable and as such does not possess the skills needed by the employers of labour for a formal employment. The school curricula are outdated and lacked the content of employable skills (Salami, 2011; Anyadike, Emeh, & Ukah, 2012; Adamolekun, 2013; and Enwegbara, 2014). Most employers pay employees that will facilitate the profit making of their organization as the primary goal of every business is to make profit. But on a sad note, the course contents of several tertiary institutions in Nigeria are deficient in entrepreneurial contents that would have guaranteed graduates to create job rather than become job seekers. Access to vocational training such as woodwork, tailoring, catering, and computer among others is being constraint by access to capital to establish personal ventures after the training. Inadequate farming tools remain the challenge of mechanized agriculture.

2.2.6. Misconception of Vocational education: The erroneous impression of parents and students about the place of vocational education is also responsible for the deterioration of employability of graduates in Nigeria (Anyadike, Emeh, & Ukah, 2012). This is partly because some of the years of experience or job exposure required by the prospective organizations would have been catered for by the period the graduate has learned in a vocational class. Though there is generally an enduring societal biased attitude towards vocational education, yet a large number of job seekers who are adjudged to lack practical skills that could enhance self–employment would have learned the basics while passing through vocational classes.
2.2.7. Rapid Expansion of the Educational System: This practically leads to increase in the supply of educated manpower more than the equivalent demand for them and it adds to the challenges of the unemployment in Nigeria. Shadare & Elegbede (2012) stated that the total number of graduates turned out by the higher institutions in Nigeria is more than 150,000 annually. Presently, with over 124 universities in Nigeria (including federal, state, and private), over 62 polytechnics (federal, state, and private) and the increasing demand for higher education has been the dilemma of suitable employment for the several classes of graduates who are produced by these higher institutions every year. Although, this should not have become a problem, but the truth is that the Nigeria’s economy is very weak to absorb this huge population of graduates (Uddin & Uddin, 2013).

2.2.8. Rapid Population Growth: In tandem with the 2006 census in Nigeria which showed that the annual growth rate of 3.2 percent, the projections for the future revealed that the population could more than 180 million in year 2020 (National Population commission and ICF Macro, 2013). With this population, Nigeria remains the most populous country in Africa. It is arguable that the degree of increase in population has brought about the rapid expansion of the labor force, which is far exceeding the supply of jobs. The ever-increasing level of population on Nigeria’s unemployment problem is complicated.

2.2.9. Rural-Urban Migration: Graduates from rural communities relocate to urban areas with the prospect of securing well-paid job in the urban industries (Onah & Okwuosa, 2016). Also, there is much availability of social amenities in the urban areas which makes it more appealing for the graduates to start a new life. This connotes that rural areas are deserted in the allotment of social and economic opportunities.

2.3 Exploring the Concept of Skill Acquisition Programmes (SAP)

Skills are construe to mean the ability of an individual or group of individuals to acquire more proactive skills for resolution of a particular situation or challenge. Skill acquisition programmes are therefore processes involving skill upgrading through teaching in vocational and technical activities that are germane to social and economic subsistence of the nation (Idoko, 2014). It also embodies different creative measures of developing basic and strategic ideas of becoming self-employed or self-reliance. In other words, skill acquisition programmes are empowerment strategies that are expected to imbibe or produce the spirit of craftsmanship and entrepreneurship in the youths particularly unemployed graduates to make them job creators instead of job seekers (Ochiagha, 1995; Donli, 2004). It is important to note that skill acquisition programmes is not just skill acquisition for acquisition sake (Idoko, 2014). It is an acquisition of productive skills and creative
ideas for the sake of creating employment for oneself and also for others (Idoko, 2014). It includes a holistic method of building creative ideas to facilitate human and social development based on technical and vocational know-how (Donli, 2004). Technical and vocational education is the comprehensive term used to describe the integration of both formal and non-formal aspects of skill acquisition programmes. The non-formal, as well as the formal aspects of skill acquisition renders specific skills, competencies and attitudes that the learners should acquire in order to survive in the contemporary society (Idoko, 2014).

Furthermore, skill acquisition programmes (SAPs) is a factor of empowerment encircling processes of improving human potentials and capacities through vocational, technical and entrepreneurial exercise that aims at teaching individuals or group on how best to make use of their hands, minds and thoughts to earn a better standard of living, generate job opportunities and contribute positively to the development process of their society. In other words, SAPs are knowledge building programmes involving the application of theory and practical methods of teaching to develop not only practical skills but also the right attitudes and habits for achieving national development (Emeh, 2012; Syme, 2007 and Magbagbeola, 2004).

To buttress this supposition, Magbagbeola (2004) computed the guidelines for entrenching skill acquisition programmes to incorporate teaching that provides trainees the room to obtain productive skills that are appropriate for advancing into a field of trade for gainful employment. It evolves around delivery of skills in relation to a specific trade or profession that would be done by competent, experienced and qualified instructors in a conducive environment. More so, some scholars were of the view that skill acquisition programmes must be able to effect positive and drastic reconfiguration of social, education and economic institutions in Nigeria (Emeh, 2012; Anyadike, Emeh & Ukah 2012; Douli, 2002) if not so, it will be impossible to quench the boiling issue of unemployment and its attendant problems in Nigeria.

Reflecting on the issue of human capacity building and the desire to address graduates unemployment in Nigeria, government at all levels (Federal, State and Local) and non-governmental organizations embarked on skill acquisition programmes expressly designed to assist unemployed graduates to develop productive entrepreneurial, vocational and managerial skills, to become self-reliant by creating job for themselves as well as to overcome obstacles which might prevent them from achieving their potentials toward adding positive value to the national economy development (Adebisi & Oni, 2012). For example, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP), Youth Enterprise with New Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN) to mention but a few (Anyadike, Emeh & Ukah 2012; Douli, 2002). All these empowerment programmes have been launched in several states in Nigeria including Lagos State by various stakeholders to imbibe in
Nigerian graduates the culture of creativity, entrepreneurship, self-reliance and the energy to create industrious environment upon which the edifice of national development can be built.

2.4 The Role of Skill Acquisition Programmes in Socio-economic Development

Skill acquisition programmes unarguably translates to development of small, medium and sometimes large scale businesses based on creativity and innovation (Okegbemiro and Alao, 2016). The success of these businesses in turn helps in socio-economic growth of any nation (Okegbemiro and Alao, 2016; Idoko, 2014). It also assists efficiently in lessening poverty rate among people with working age through creation or expansion of business ventures (Okegbemiro and Alao, 2016). Evidences abound that countries like Germany and Norway established exclusive engineering-oriented business programmes in their universities in order to create avenue for their potential engineers to pursue creative ideas and subsequently develop the promising ones from discovery phase to commercialization (Okegbemiro and Alao, 2016; Jane, 2010). Similarly, skill acquisition programmes was established to instill innovation spirit that is consciously aimed at the youths (Jane, 2010). Socially, skill acquisition programmes have the capacity the reduce crime rate and criminal intentions by engaging unemployed people actively and productively through self-employment or job creation.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is built on two theoretical assumptions namely; the refugee effect and Schumpeter effect of entrepreneurship on unemployment rate.

2.5.1 The Refugee Effect

The refugee effect as a theoretical stance stems from the effort to deflate unemployment phenomena among people through entrepreneurship activity. This theoretical assumption can be traced back to the work of Oxenfeldt (1943), who submitted that people who are challenged with unemployment and low prospects for securing wage employment frequently move to self-employment as a workable alternative. This thought was also found in Knight’s (1921) view that individuals are bound to make decision within three states – unemployment, self-employment and employment (Riti & Kamah, 2015). In the same vein, the simple theory of income choice emphasized that refugee effect of unemployment will translates to increase in start-up business activity based on the assumption that the ‘Opportunity cost of starting’ a firm will enlarge (Blanch flower and Meyer, 1994). To support this theoretical postulation, Evans and Leighton (1990) posited that unemployment is positively connected with the tendency to instigate new firm. Similarly, Reynolds,
Miller & Makai (1995) and Reynolds, Storey & Westhead, (1994) in their studies revealed that increase unemployment rate serves as a catalyst for business initiatives and start-up intentions in any given society. In this regard, some scholars believed that creation of new businesses will require more employees to work which invariably translates to decrease in unemployment rate (Pfeiffer and Reize, 2000).

2.5.2 The Schumpeter Effect

The term “Schumpeter effect” can be understood as an attempt to encourage entrepreneurial activity among individuals in order to lessen the rate of unemployment in any economy (Riti and Kamah, 2015; Schumpeter, 1934). As such, Garofoli (1994) and Audretsch and Fritsch (1994) subscribes to the view that unemployment has an adversely relationship to new business start-up intentions which implies that unemployment is a product of lack of new businesses development or initiatives. This true because when new businesses are established employment opportunities amassed and stimulated while unemployment rate reduces substantially. Similarly, Lucas (1978) and Jovanovic (1982) observed that an increase in unemployment rate is a reflection and/or a consequence of low degree of entrepreneurial activities and low tendency to set up new business enterprises among people living in a particular society. The significance effect of this assertion is that majority of those who are unemployed tend to stay unemployed because they have low human capital skills and they lack entrepreneurial talents necessary to commence and sustain new business enterprises that will keep them afloat in spite of dwindling global economy. In the same way, low degree of entrepreneurial skill and culture of establishing business venture will result to low economic growth, which may further translate to upshot in unemployment and poverty rate.

Based on the information gathered from literature and theoretical supposition presented in this study, it is therefore necessary to test the following research hypotheses:

**H1**: Skill acquisition programmes have direct influence on graduates unemployment reduction in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**H1**: Skill acquisition programmes have direct influence on graduate’s job opportunities.

**H1**: There is gender difference in exposure of graduates to skill acquisition programmes in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**H1**: Skill acquisition programmes have direct impact on socio-economic development.
3. Methodology

This research work utilized descriptive survey design. This study was conducted in Lagos State, Nigeria. It is the smallest state in Nigeria with an area of 356,861 hectares of which 75,755 hectares are wetland, yet it has the highest population which is over five per cent (17.5 million) of the national estimate (National Population Census, 2006). Lagos state consists of twenty (20) Local Government Councils and thirty-seven (37) local Government Development Areas. However, the researchers employed multi-stage sampling technique to select four (4) LGAs (Apapa, Oshodi/Isolo, Eti-Osa, Somolu /Yaba LGDA, and Ikeja) from which the targeted respondents were reached. The targeted respondents were registered candidates of Lagos Empowerment and Resource Network (Apapa); PEI Center Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition (Ikeja); Eti-Osa Skill Acquisition Center (Eti-Osa) and Yaba Skill acquisition Centre (Somolu/Yaba). A total number of 326 respondents were sample size used for the study. The justification for selecting 326 respondents was to have appropriate representation based on the total population of the four Local Government Areas. The calculation for sample size as extracted from the work of Berenson and Lavine (1998). The sample size is calculated as 326. These authors identified the following formula suitable for research in social science.

\[ n = \frac{t^2 p (1-p)}{m^2} \]

Description:

- \( n \) = sample size; \( t \) = level of confidence; \( p \) = proportion of target population (i.e. Summation of residents in selected local governments); \( m \) = permitted error \( m = 0.05 \) constant; \( t = 1.96 \) at 95\% confidence interval;

Data was gathered through a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was organized around the study objectives with specific focus on the research hypotheses. The questionnaire consists of open and close ended questions on the impact of skill acquisition programmes on graduate unemployment rate in Lagos State, Nigeria. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; section A inquires about the socio-demographic attributes of respondents while section B contains items on the subject matter. Also, the questionnaire was designed in resemblance of 5 point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Dreyfus’s (1981) ‘novice to expert’ scale was adopted. The scale contains 20-items designed to measure how skill acquisition knowledge is treated, how skill acquisition is recognized in terms of its relevance, assessment of the context of skill acquisition programmes and decision making. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents by the researchers with the support of two (2) research assistants, while the respondents were allowed to fill the questionnaire on their own, without any influence or manipulation from the researchers. The validity of the research instrument (questionnaire) was
determined through the efforts of specialists in tests and measurement. This was done by critical examination of the content of the instrument to ascertain that the instrument meets acceptable standard. The reliability of the items was also determined through a test retest method. This enables the researchers to know whether the results obtained through the research instrument were consistent. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed through frequency counts and percentages for section A, while linear regression and t-test were used for testing the research hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. However, for easy understanding the results were presented in tables while interpretation and discussions were done under each table.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Socio-Demographic Variables of the Respondents

The socio-economic and demographic characteristics of respondents as presented on the table 2 below showed that participants representing 46.6% were males while 53.4% were females. The result revealed that there were more females than males in the Skill Acquisition Centres (SACs) situated in the study area. Also, the result revealed that majority of the respondents’ 31.2% was between the age bracket 33 – 37 years, while the least of the respondents’ 5.2% are within the age bracket 53 years and above. This indicates that bulks of the people who enrolled in Skill Acquisition Centres (SACs) were within working age group and they are economic active population. The educational qualification showed that 8.8% of the respondents had NCE/OND and Diploma qualification, 53.2% had HND and B.Sc qualification, and 32.2% had M.Sc/MBA and other professional qualification while 5.8% had Ph.D qualification. Hence it can be inferred that all the respondents had one form of educational qualification or the other. Furthermore, marital status of respondents showed that the majority of the respondents 51.8% were married, 25.5% were single, 12.6% were divorced and 10.1% were widowed. This showed that most of the people who participated in this study were married with family responsibilities which require a reliable source of income.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents’ Views on Socio-Economic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moreover, the ethnic identities of the respondents showed that most respondents who participated in the study were Yoruba (57.3%), others included Igbo (30.1%) and Hausa (12.6%). As expected, a large majority of the respondents were Yoruba extraction, considering that Lagos state is predominantly inhabited by the Yoruba. More so, the presence of other ethnic groups indicated the cosmopolitan nature of Lagos State.

4.2 Testing of Research Hypothesis
The responses of respondents were tested using regression analysis and analysis of variance to determine the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.
Hypothesis One

H1: Skill acquisition programmes have direct influence on graduate unemployment reduction in Lagos State, Nigeria

Table 3 Summary of Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>24.280</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>4.220</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>73.892</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>.437</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98.001</td>
<td>326</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant (p<0.05 *)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.354</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td>3.009</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill acquisition programmes have reduce graduate unemployment rate in Nigeria</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>1.634</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that promoting vocational and technical training among Nigerian graduates help to solve the problem of unemployment</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>1.726</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you think that creation of skill acquisition centres with adequate training facilities lessen the rate of crime among graduates who are yet to secure employment.  
Do you agree that skill acquisition programmes have contributed positively to entrepreneurial culture among Nigerians?

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{Do you think that} & 0.502 & 0.306 & 0.345 & 1.110 & 0.023 & \ast \\
\text{creation of skill} & 0.518 & 0.219 & 0.315 & 1.423 & 0.008 & \\
\text{acquisition centres with} & & & & & & \\
\text{adequate training} & & & & & & \\
\text{facilities lessen the rate} & & & & & & \\
\text{of crime among} & & & & & & \\
\text{graduates who are yet to} & & & & & & \\
\text{secure employment.} & & & & & & \\
\text{Do you agree that skill} & 0.340 & 0.108 & 0.157 & 2.366 & 0.010 & \ast \\
\text{acquisition programmes} & & & & & & \\
\text{have contributed} & & & & & & \\
\text{positively to} & & & & & & \\
\text{entrepreneurial culture} & & & & & & \\
\text{among Nigerians?} & & & & & & \\
\end{array}
\]

In the table above, it is revealed that skill acquisition programmes have significant influence on graduate unemployment in Lagos State, Nigeria. Since all the variables tested have p-value (.010, .000, .001, .023, .008, .010) less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Similarly, the result showed that skill acquisition programmes account for 35.8% of the total variance in extenuating graduates unemployment syndrome in Nigeria while extraneous factors constitute 64.2%. This outcome implies that skill acquisition programmes are important and crucial ways to reduce unemployment rate in Nigeria. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis Two**

**H1: Skill acquisition programmes have direct influence on graduates’ job opportunities.**
Table 4 Summary of Regression

| R= .548
| R Square= .235
| Adjusted R square=.0323
| Standard Error=.748

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>32.903</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.451</td>
<td>29.421</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>65.422</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98.001</td>
<td>326</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant (p<0.05 *)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Vocational carpentry, hair stylist, fashion designing, tailoring etc;</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>5.100</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Technical: mechanic, electrical, repairs of GSM handset, Wrist watches, air-conditioner etc; and</td>
<td></td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>1.726</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Entrepreneurial (small scale business such as operation of kiosk, buying and selling of spare parts, restaurants etc).</td>
<td></td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>1.578</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the table above, it is established that skill acquisition programmes have direct influence on graduates’ job opportunities Lagos State, Nigeria. That is, the combined influence of vocational, technical and entrepreneurial training programmes has p-value (.000, .000, .003) less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. The result revealed that vocational, technical and entrepreneurial training account for 23.5% of the total variance in graduates’ job opportunities in Lagos State, Nigeria while other unidentified factors contribute 76.5%. This implies that skill acquisition programmes are veritable means of creating more job opportunities for graduates in Nigeria. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected.
Hypothesis Three

H1: There is gender difference in exposure of graduates to skill acquisition programmes in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 5: T-test Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.285</td>
<td>.4554</td>
<td>2.737</td>
<td>1.660</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.447</td>
<td>.5039</td>
<td>1.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.634</td>
<td>.4853</td>
<td>1.114</td>
<td>1.592</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.473</td>
<td>.5060</td>
<td>1.209</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1.174</td>
<td>.2932</td>
<td>1.213</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.236</td>
<td>.4808</td>
<td>1.808</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant (p<0.05 *)

The above table shows there is no significant difference between male and female graduates exposure to each of the skill acquisition programmes. The result revealed that all the variables tested have p-value (.054, .082, .064, .023, .008, .010) more than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is rejected while the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Four

H1: Skill acquisition programmes have direct impact on socio-economic development.
Table 6: Summary of Regression

\[
R = .548^a \\
R \text{ Square} = .305 \\
\text{Adjusted R square} = .0323 \\
\text{Standard Error} = .748
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>32.903</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.451</td>
<td>29.421</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>65.422</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98.325</td>
<td>326</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant (p<0.05 *)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill acquisition programmes contribute to gross domestic product (GDP) in Nigeria. Do you think that promoting vocational and technical training among Nigerian graduates enhance the amount of goods and services produce in Nigeria</td>
<td>.502</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>1.634</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.418</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>1.726</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you agree that skill acquisition programmes enhances the volume of locally made goods and services. Do you agree that skill acquisition programmes have encourage consumption of locally made goods and services in Nigeria</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>1.110</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>1.423</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that enhancing skill acquisition programmes have promoted the level of innovation and creativity in Nigeria</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>2.366</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 above shows that skill acquisition programmes have direct impact on socio-economic development. The result revealed that all the variables tested have p-value (.000, .001, .023, .001, .010) more than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. The
result showed that $R^2 = 0.305$ which implies that the predictor (skill acquisition programmes) accounted for 30.5% in the total variance in dependent variable (socio-economic development) while other external factors contribute 69.5%. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected.

5. Discussion of Findings

This study was designed to investigate the impact of skill acquisition programmes on graduates’ unemployment in Lagos State, Nigeria. The first hypothesis established that skill acquisition programmes have direct influence on graduate unemployment reduction in Lagos State, Nigeria. As such, skill acquisition programmes account for 35.8% of the total variance in extenuating graduate unemployment in Lagos State, Nigeria. The finding corroborates the works of Albert, Nnodim & Cookey (2013) who reported that skill acquisition programmes reduce unemployment in Nigeria. This is in tandem with the result of Adebisi & Oni (2012) who submitted that there are various technical and vocational training programmes such as Carpentry, Tailoring /fashion design, Barbing /Hair salon, GSM repairs, Computer training, Hat making, Welding, Bead making, Soap making, Tie and Dye etc. which are of great interest to many Nigerian youths in their efforts to kick out idleness, redundancy and joblessness in Nigeria. However, the result has shown that skill acquisition programmes enable individual to develop better innovation and performance therefore, providing Nigerian graduates with appropriate skills can lead to increasing culture of creativity, entrepreneurship, self-reliance and human energy to create industrious environment as well as reduction of poverty, this was also in agreement with Emeh (2012) and Douli (2002) that skill is a propeller to empowerment.

The second hypothesis revealed that the combined influence of all the skill acquisition programmes have direct influence on graduate job opportunities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The result revealed that vocational, technical and entrepreneurial training programmes account for 23.5% of the total variance in graduates job opportunities in Lagos State, Nigeria. This implies that skill acquisition programmes are veritable means of promoting job opportunities for graduates in Nigeria. Thus, skill acquisition programmes will enhance the sustainability of Nigerian graduates in different fields of trade and commerce. This is so because of the culture of creative ideas instilled in them to make them productive and self-reliant members of the society (Idoko, 2014). This is very important because as Olaitan (1996) rightly noted that skill acquisition programmes are meant for those who need it, want it, and can profit from it. Therefore, SAP can be seen as the safety net for unemployed graduates and less privilege citizens living in the holes of poverty in Lagos State and other parts of Nigeria. This is emphasizing the point that there is need for more proactive effort from various stakeholders to expand the scope and dimension of skill acquisition
programmes in order to accommodate more Nigerian graduates walking around the street looking for white collar jobs that are scarce or often not available.

The third hypothesis shows there is no gender difference in level of participation and exposure to skill acquisition programmes in Lagos State, Nigeria. Therefore, male and female undergo same skill acquisition programmes. The finding corroborates Albert, Nnodim & Cookey (2013) who reported that human development programmes tend to foster capacity building hence; there should be no gender difference in skill acquisition programmes in Nigeria. In essence, both male and female respondents have equal chance of participation in skill acquisition programmes devoid of gender discrimination.

The fourth hypothesis skill acquisition programmes have direct impact on socio-economic development. The result showed that $R^2 = 0.305$ which implies that the predictor (skill acquisition programmes) accounted for 30.5% in the total variance in dependent variable (socio-economic development). The finding tallies with Ogbe (1996) who opined that graduates empowerment through skill acquisition programmes is expected to reverse the structural weakness and imbalances in the national economy by promoting strategic focus, business direction as well as inculcating in the graduates the right ethics, discipline, values, hard work, honesty, respect and humility among others that will assist in wealth creation.

This result is also in consensus with the findings of Ochiagha (1995), Magbagbeola, (2004) and Idoko (2014) who submitted that skill upgrading and human capacity development signifies how diverse creative means of developing basic business ideas through training and education in skills that are pertinent to the socio-economic improvement of the nation. Thus, skill acquisition programmes act as resource appropriating programmes through which citizens of a particular country utilize their potentials and experiences in growing the socio-economic condition of the entire country for the betterment of all and sundry.

6. Conclusion

Skill Acquisition Programmes have assisted Lagos State government in reducing unemployment rate to some extent. It has equally helped to enhance the skills and potentials of hundreds of thousands of Nigerian graduates who resides in Lagos State by providing them with the ability to invent new ideas, products and services that will significantly enhance the growth of nation economy (if continues). As such, skill acquisition programmes should be encouraged by government and non-governmental agencies to ensure its continuity and expansion to other state in Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was therefore recommended that skill acquisition programmes must be encouraged both by government and non-governmental
organizations in order to actualize the dream and vision of better life in Nigeria. For effectiveness, beneficiaries should be selected on voluntary basis and not on compulsion. This will allow them to develop interest on the intended skill. In addition, proper loan facilities should be made available to apprentice or graduates of SAP. This will enable them to secure a store/outlet to establish their private business. With this in mind, the findings of the study have contributed to the existing knowledge on the topic understudy, as it revealed that empowerment is a compulsory engagement for every productive mind. This suffices to say that a failed state is a state that lack empowerment programmes for the young generation particularly graduates and such a state is at verge of losing it potentials, and various social vices will surely set in because, it’s to be noted that skill acquisition programmes is another solution to the problem of insecurity, poverty, technical deficiency, resource waste and manpower underutilization in Nigeria. In addition, it is obvious that, this investigation has some limitations. First, the study is limited in scope by focusing on Lagos State alone. Thus, there is need to widen the scope by inquiring into the impact of skill acquisition programmes on unemployment phenomenon in other states like Ogun state, Imo state, etc. This will also increases the scientific generalization of the findings of the study.

References


Emeh, I.J. (2012). Tackling Youth Unemployment in Nigeria; The Lagos State Development and Empowerment Programmes Initiatives. Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences, 3(3.4) Quarter IV


