

Effects of Unemployment on Youth Development in Selected Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State

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Abstract

This research titled “Effects of Unemployment on Youth Development in Selected Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State” sought to determine the effect of youth unemployment on skill development among youths in the six selected local government areas of Ebonyi State; ascertain the effects of youth unemployment on efficient skill mobilization for youth development in the selected local government areas in Ebonyi State; and find out the extent to which youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory by Gary Becker in 1964. Descriptive survey research design was adopted to study a population of 1,442,000 which was reduced to a sample size of 400 using Taro Yamene’s formula. The study combined simple random and stratified sampling techniques. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire instrument was used in data collection. Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation whereas Chi-Square statistical tool through SPSS method was used in empirical testing of the hypotheses that guided the study. Findings revealed that youth unemployment significantly hinders skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State; youth unemployment significantly hinders mobilization of youths for development in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State; and youth unemployment to a great extent hinders efficient utilization of skills of youth in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. The study therefore recommended that there is need for government and other key stakeholders to focus attention on youth skill development as a sustainable measure rather than providing palliative measures such as payment of monthly stipends; there is urgent need to mobilize youths for fruitful ventures as this has denied the nation and Ebonyi State in particular the opportunity to utilize the potentials in youths; and there is also need to efficiently utilize the skills of available youths in Ebonyi State in order to enhance and boost the socio economic development of the area among others.

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I. Introduction

Over the years, Nigeria has been faced with myriads of challenges, one of which is unemployment. Unemployment has been conceptualized by Ekong and Ekong (2016) as a situation whereby people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. From their perspective above, the unemployed refers to the numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seek for work, including people who have lost jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. The increase in unemployment rate in Nigeria over the years, has affected many young school leavers and other youths who fall within the working age and who have no access to job opportunities. .

Globally, Nigeria inclusive, and Ebonyi State in particular, unemployment is found mostly among the youths. Unemployment among the youths accounts for about 78% of the unemployed labor force in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Youth unemployment remained stable at 50% between 2010 and 2013, according to Gallup surveys of 148 countries. Unemployment was highest in the Middle East and North Africa (22%) and Sub-Saharan Africa 17%. However, Nigerian unemployment rate is higher than the sub-regions average of 23.9% in 2014 compared to the previous years (Osimen, Chuke and Micah, 2016). Available data indicate that more than half of the Nigerian population is under the age of 35 years and significant proportion of this population are unemployed while sizeable number of the youths are still under-employed (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; National Population Commission, 2013; NBS, 2019). Thus, unemployment has posed serious threat to social and economic stability and is seemingly contributing to the high rate of poverty in the country (Ajufo, 2013).

Nwagwu (2014) submitted that successive governments have made attempts aimed at addressing youth unemployment in Nigeria. Such efforts have been geared towards formulating and implementing empowerment programmes. Notable among these programmes included the 1976; Operation Feed the Nation which was

launched with the aim of teaching the rural farmers including the youth how to use modern farming tools in order to engage them meaningfully. The failure of this programme led to the introduction of Green Revolution Programme in 1979 structured to reduce food importation and increase local food production above subsistence farming and promoting agricultural entrepreneurship among the youth. With increased rate of poverty and youth unemployment, the government in 1986 introduced the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). Like its predecessors, the programme failed to ensure food stability and poverty in Nigeria. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE), established in 1986 to empower the youths through skill acquisition programmes. In 1993, Family Support Programme and the Family Economic Advancement Programme were introduced to empower individuals including the youth and households on business ownership and economic empowerment. However, this programme could not deliver on its objectives. In 2001, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) designed to boost and sustain poverty alleviation and youth empowerment in Nigeria was introduced. Each of these programmes was undoubtedly aimed at empowering Nigerians towards economic development, poverty alleviation and skill acquisition especially among the youths. However, their failure in achieving their mandates led to the continued search for empowerment programmes for the youth.

The Subsidy Re-investment Programme (Sure-P) was introduced in 2012 to improve on the lots of the youths in Nigeria. According to Odey and Sambe (2019), the SURE-P policy designed by the administration of Goodluck Jonathan was part of effort to provide job opportunities for graduates of tertiary institutions. It was a whole range of activities and programmes including the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), Community Services Scheme (CSS), Vocational Training Scheme (VTS), and Community Services, Women and Youth Empowerment (CSWYE), YOU WIN among others. One of the most successful schemes of the SURE-P was the GIS, which offered unemployed graduates the opportunity to undergo a one-year internship in firms, banks, ministries, government departments and agencies, as well as in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), relevant to beneficiaries' disciplines. The purpose of GIS was to help beneficiaries acquire appropriate skills and practical knowledge that would make them more suitable for the job market (Odey and Sambe, 2019).

Furthermore, the President Muhammadu Buhari Administration introduced its own policy on youth empowerment called "N-Power" in 2015. According to Odey and Sambe (2019), the Federal government investment in youth development through this programme targeted some of the perennial inadequacies in public services- low teacher to pupil ratio in public primary schools; high rate of preventable diseases; lack of science and knowledge to bolster production; and a lack of enough taxable persons within the tax net. To achieve these objectives, the Scheme was divided into two categories- Graduate Category (N-Power Volunteer Corps) and Non-Graduate Category (N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build).

Despite the above efforts, unemployment especially among the youths continues to top socio-economic challenges in Nigeria. These challenges in recent time draw from its dimension, magnitude and governments inability to substantially address the problem through sound policies and programmes.

In Ebonyi State, the story is not different, as able-bodied youths who are supposed to be gainfully employed stay without jobs. Uwem and Abubakar (2013) submitted that many youths in Ebonyi State are "active poor" because they are unable to secure stable jobs or start and manage businesses. According to the National Bureau of statistics (2019), the unemployment rate in Ebonyi State stood at 30.6%, an increase from 20.7% in the third quarter of 2017, while the under employment rate was 19.9%. This represents a 9.9 percentage point increase in unemployment rate and a 0.2 percentage points drop in under employment rate when compared to the rates realized in Q₃, 2017. The labour force population increased to 1, 936, 9998, from the figure recorded in Q₃, 2017, representing an increase of 140,177. The total net number of employment persons within Q₃ 2017 and Q₃ 2018.

Some of the initiatives by the Ebonyi State Governments to empower and develop the youths apart from the federal government programmes which cut across the 36 states of the federation include the People Empowerment Programme Initiative (PEPI) introduced by the wife of a onetime governor of Ebonyi State, Mrs. Onari Duke; the Calabar Development Authority (CUDA); Youth employment and Social Support Operations (YESSO) Programme. Despite the above efforts, youth unemployment and development appears to still constitute the major socio-economic challenges facing the state. The above notwithstanding, there appears to be a disconnection between the above programmes and youth development. Some youths in the state seem to have taken to kidnapping, armed robbery, hostage taking, thuggery, breaking into homes, theft, internet fraud, rape, to just mention but a few. This justifies the need for youth development.

Youth development can be seen as a process whereby a youth is enabled to grow in life, through the acquisition of wide experience, breath and increasing confidence resulting from the exercise of varied and tested responsibilities, the aim being to enable him to reach the top or achieve his best in life. It is about young people gaining a: sense of contributing something of value to the society; feeling connectedness to others and to society; belief that they have choices about their future; and feeling of being positive and comfortable with their own identity. It is promoted through activities and experiences that help youth social, ethical, physical and

cognitive competence such as employment, job creation and empowerment programmes. In the words of Hamilton, Hamilton and Pittman (2004) human qualities that need to be promoted through youth development include competence, connections, confidence and contribution.

There appears to exist, a relationship between youth employment, unemployment and youth development. When a youth is gainfully employed, he or she earns monetary reward to cater for their immediate and future needs, the needs of their dependants and by extension reduces the level of poverty. He is given opportunities to develop or build more skills and experiences towards contributing to the development of the society; he is less likely to think or perpetrate criminal activities. Engaging youths as argued in profitable jobs is one of the ways of mobilizing able bodied youths to contribute their quota to nation building. When youths are engaged in profitable ventures, it gives them a sense of belonging and recognition as partners in the overall development of the society. It guarantees physical and psychological safety for the youths and avoids misuse of time. Unemployment tends to dampen on the social and psychological needs of the youths and thereby exposing them to commit all kinds of social vices. It is based on the above that this study became imperative.

Statement of the Problem

Youth development is a way of empowering the youths through job creation. It is an effort made to mobilize and utilize their skills for their own betterment and development of the society at large. Unfortunately, the Nigerian youths especially in Ebonyi State, seem not to have been given adequate opportunities for development and they often may not have been seen as critical part of socio-economic development of the state. Undie and Edimyang (2015) regretted that Nigerian socio-economic environment has been so poor for the youth and this in no small magnitude variously affected the youths. The dearth of jobs (employment) has created a very serious and growing threat to the youth as it is an incidence that has been lingering for an age now without sustainable remedial efforts by the government and relevant stakeholders.

The unemployed appears to be overwhelmed by social, psychological and economic problems which include poverty, insecurity, low self-esteem, low self-confidence, general irritability, sense of hopelessness and frustration. The unemployed as argued by many are emotionally depressed, think illogically and these cultivate a feeling of worthlessness, apathy, depression, the tendency to involve in social vices and criminal act, leading to loss of social status.

In Ebonyi State as in other places, there appears to be a nexus between youth unemployment and increase in the rate of crimes such as hostage taking, kidnapping, child trafficking, armed robbery, thuggery, rape, internet fraud among others, with their attendant consequences. It is regrettable that most youths in the state have not been gainfully employed to earn monetary reward and care for their immediate and future needs. This seems to expose them to unlawful activities in order to survive. And this appears to portend a bleak future for the youths and their dependence on their parents and guardians for survival. It is also worrisome that unemployment seems to deprive the youths the opportunities of skill development and gaining of experiences towards contributing meaningfully to the society. It is also unfortunate that unemployment appears to deprive the state the opportunity to develop to the youths through effective mobilization as well as skill utilization. Youths are supposed to enjoy physical and psychological safety borne out of development. However, this is hardly the case in Ebonyi State and other places in Nigeria. Longe (2017) regretted that the phenomenon of youth unemployment as it is being experienced today in developing countries including Nigeria constitutes a peculiar problem to the labour market and the general economy of these countries.

Many youths seem not to have been given a sense of belonging and recognition as partners in the overall development of the state through job creation and employment. Hence, some youths may not have utilized their time in fruitful ventures; a factor which seems to portend great danger for youth development and the overall development of the state. Unfortunately, available youth empowerment programmes are mere palliatives that are not sustainable. It is against this background that this study investigates the effects of unemployment on youth development in selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study;

- i. What is the effect of youth unemployment on skill development among youths in the six selected local government areas of Ebonyi State?
- ii. How does youth unemployment affect skill mobilization for development in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State?
- iii. To what extent does youth unemployment hinder effective utilization of skills in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to determine the effect of unemployment on youth development in selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. The specific objectives are;

- i. To determine the effect of youth unemployment on skill development among youths in the six selected local government area of Ebonyi State.
- ii. To ascertain the effects of youth unemployment on efficient skill mobilization for development in the selected local government areas in Ebonyi State.
- iii. To find the extent to which youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study;

1Ho Youth unemployment does not significantly hinder skill development among youths in the six selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

2Ho Youth unemployment does not significantly hinder mobilization of youths for development in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

3Ho Youth unemployment does not to a greater extent hinder efficient utilization of skills of youth in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

II. Review of Related Literature

Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment as a concept has been variously defined. Simply put, unemployment describes the condition of people who are without jobs. The International Labor Organization (ILO) cited in Uddin and Uddin (2016) defined the unemployed as number of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. Also, Adebayo (1999) cited in Longe (2017) stated that unemployment exists when members of the labor force wish to work but cannot get jobs. Every economy is characterized by both active and inactive populations. The economically active ones are referred to as the population willing and able to work, and include those actively engaged in the production of goods and services and those who are unemployed.

Ugal, Nwagbara and Uyang (2011) in a similar perspective, conceptualized the unemployed as the conglomerate of active population with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any; or cannot find the type of job that they are trained to do, and which they will be proud to do as their area of expertise. When the supply of labour outstrips the demand for labour, it causes joblessness and unemployment. From all indications, unemployment is seen as the proportion of labour force that was available for work but did not work at a given period of time.

In a similar perspective, Oppong and Sachs (2015) adduced that, unemployment is the number, proportion or degree of active population in a given economy that is capable and willing to work, but unable to find jobs. This definition established unemployment as a specific type of unemployment among people working zero hour and earning zero income.

Longe (2017) in his own view observed that unemployment is the condition of involuntary idleness of labour force that are actively seeking for remunerative employment, but cannot find any, under the prevailing economic circumstance.

Deducing form the foregoing definitions, it can be rightly argued that unemployment is a condition in which active labour who is willing and able to work cannot find work at a given point in time. Unemployment therefore, is the conglomerate of active labour with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any; or cannot find the type of job that they are trained to do, and which they will be proud to do as their area of expertise. When the supply labour outstrips the demand for labour, it causes joblessness and unemployment. Given the lack of sufficient employment opportunities in the formal sector, people may be forced to engage in casual work and other unorthodox livelihood sources, thus leading to underemployment.

Concept of Youth

The concept of youth has attracted various interpretations thereby amounting to a state of controversy. This controversy arises because of the difficulty in reaching an agreement on the age bracket that should constitute the acceptable youth age. Many countries see youth as ending at the age when a person is given equal treatment under the law – often referred to as the “voting age”. In many countries, this happens when the young person is 18 years old. After this age, the young person is considered adult. In spite of the disparity in these views, it is generally agreed that youth is the period that marks the physical, psychological and social transformation into adulthood. Others specify age bracket.

For instance, The United Nations (2005) cited in Adedokun (2014) defined youth as all individuals aged between 15 and 24. This definition no doubt is full of shortcomings and inapt in the context of this study. Why? Because, it constrained the scope of youth to 24 years of age. People who are a little below and a little above this age are even the most vital population when the idea of “youth” is raised. This must be why the World Bank (2007) expanded the definition of youth to include all young people aged between 12 and 24 (Odey and Sambe, 2019). Like its preceding definition, the World Bank’s idea though made a step away, still falls short of expectations because it failed to take cognizance of the vital age group above 24 years. Being aware of these shortcomings, Ayodeji, Salau, and Adeniyi, (2014) on their part described youth as a group of young people between the ages of 13 to 30. The definition offered above is more appropriate as it took cognizance of the vital population above 24 years to expand to 30 years. Expanding further the concept of youth, Abu (2015) described the youth as all young males and females aged between 18 and 35 years.

The above definitions of youth are primarily anchored on the parameter of age bracket. Yet being a youth may mean more than just age bracket. Youth do not just constitute the age cluster but the inherent characteristic sought after in the youth and which can be universally agreed upon is their potential energies and innovativeness. These notable features may be lacking in either childhood or adulthood. Abu (2015) noted that no matter what the age range of years of the youth may be, the point is that anytime we talk and think about youth, it implies a group of young people in a society who have a lot of energy, new ideas and new ways to see life and face problems.

One thing is clear, the boundaries defining the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood is not clear. Therefore, defining youth globally according to some exact age range can be a very difficult task. The age range often used by the United Nations and others are simply for statistical purposes. Apart from the statistical definition of the term “youth”, the meaning of the term “youth” have continued to change in response to fluctuating political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances.

The National Bureau of statistics (2004) in Osimen, Chuke and Micah (2016) defined the youth as young people aged between 15 and 24 years. Conventionally, youth is any person between the ages of 15 and 35 years. In some cases, you may see persons who are up to 50 years of age heading youth organizations. In Nigeria, for instance, once you are more than 30, by age, you are no longer qualified for the National Youth Service Corps (NYCS) scheme.

Therefore, the categorization of the youth proves to be difficult sometimes. Youths are a particular segment of the national population that is sensitive, energetic, active and the most productive phase of life as citizens. The National Youth Development Policy (2001) as cited in Uddin and Uddin (2013) defined youth as people aged between 18 and 35. They constitute about 75 percent of the more than 190 million people of Nigeria. It is important however, to maintain that despite the debate, the most vital point is that, the youth are indispensable facet of any given society. The task of developing them to enhance societal growth rests squarely on the shoulder of the state that beholds them.

Concept of Youth Development

Youth Development (YD) is strategic approaches with a focus on practices for helping all youth thrive. It builds on traditional youth service approaches by emphasizing long term, systemic strategies for cultivating qualities and traits desirable in young people through the creation of environments that support their developmental needs and capacities. The YD approach is founded on the belief that young people thrive when they are developmentally supported across all sectors of the community- school, youth serving agencies, faith organizations, community governance, business, juvenile justice system and more.

Youth development is to empower, engage and create value so that young women and men can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their families and countries and to their own fulfillment.

Enyioko (2006) in Akujuru and Enyioko (2019) also identified the following dimensions of youth development: young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of these actions.

Similarly, Youth development is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives (Obadan, 2017).

Developing young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the directions of others. The enabling conditions according to Aderonmu (2017) fall into four broad categories: an economic and social base; political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks; a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy and access to knowledge, information; and skills and a positive value system.

From these foundational issues, Momoh (2008) in Akujuru and Enyioko (2019) insisted that any transformational agenda for young women and men in Nigeria must of necessity, address these four areas to empower young people to make their much-needed contribution to the peace and development of this country. At this juncture, the study agrees with Akujuru and Enyioko (2019) who opined that the quality of a country is not based on the number of men and women in its armed forces nor is it determined by faithfulness to the application of the principles of zoning and or the allocation formulae of political offices, which in Nigeria is actually a euphemism for sharing public funds. No country becomes great by the number of politicians jostling for political offices or the number of times its constitution is amended in a quarter. The greatness of any nation is in the quality of its people in the worth of its governance and in the empowerment of its youths.

Aside skill acquisition, skill utilization is another significant variable in youth development and unemployment reduction. Skill utilization refers to an employee's opportunity to use specific job skills in the working process (Anja, Bert, Hannes & Emmerik, 2015). Moreover, skill mobilization being the last aspect of youth development strengthens participation of youths in decision-making, improves their access to social and production services and efficiency in the use of available financial resources, and enhances opportunities for asset-building by the youths. It entails harnessing the youths to take part in every facets of social, economic political and social development.

Effects of Unemployment on Youth Development in Nigeria

The youth all over the world should constitute the largest labour force of any given country. Therefore, their contribution to the rapid growth and development to a nation can never be overemphasized. Youth unemployment is a situation whereby economically active youths, who are capable and willing to work stays without job. This includes those who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. In this case, the focus is on graduate and non graduate youths.

However, the World Bank (2009) cited in Akujuru and Enyioko (2019) have decried constraints youths face that make them to be largely excluded in nations economy. It has been pointed out that lack of employment opportunities has militated against young people's contribution towards societal growth in many countries (Ayodeji, Salau & Adeniyi, 2014)

In Nigeria, unemployment among the youth is a major issue government has been faced with in its recent history. The soaring rate of youth unemployment in the country resulted to logical predictions that unemployment is like a time bomb waiting to explode if nothing is done to address the perennial issue (Salami, 2013). The data from NBS in recent times depicts scary situation as it tagged youth (18-35 years) unemployment in the last quarter of 2017 at 42%. The consequences of high unemployment among the youth is that heinous activities such as terrorism, insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, drug trafficking, prostitution, child trafficking, ritual killings, political thuggery, assassinations and suicide can be on the increase (Abu, 2015; Ayodeji, Salau & Adeniyi, 2014; Salami, 2013). Abu (2015) pointed out that youth's unemployment is a societal problem in any nation, but the Nigerian situation is pitiable and it most times account for most of the social crimes perpetrated by graduates in Nigerian society today.

The upsurge of mass graduate unemployment and social vices articulated from the foregoing indicates that, the highly skilled trained manpower and infrastructure facilities are underutilized. In fact, data from Nigerian University Commission shows that massive unemployment exists among most graduates of tertiary institutions in the country; a situation that was said to be traceable to the disequilibrium between labor market requirements and essential employment skills of these graduates (Ayodeji, Salau & Adeniyi, 2014). The situation is pathetic because as the labour force grows, with an increasing proportion of youth, employment growth is inadequate to absorb labour market entrants (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012). The increasing rate of unemployment in the country is now affecting professionals and graduates (Ayodeji, Salau & Adeniyi, 2014).

The Nation's economy becomes badly affected when a chunk number of youth and graduates are not economically active. This poses even greater threat to Nigeria's development, security and peaceful co-existence (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012). As mentioned earlier, the current unemployment rate among the age bracket 18-35 years by the National Bureau of Statistic 2017 which stood at 42% needs urgent attention. This high rate of unemployment showcases the difficulties associated with youth and graduate unemployment. It has become worrisome because this category falls within the very active labour force population (Kale & Doguwa, 2015). Hence, policies that address youth and graduate unemployment phenomenon in the country are required to checkmate this ugly trend before it explode.

Factors Propelling Unemployment in Nigeria

Several factors have been held responsible for the growing rate of unemployment in Nigeria especially among the youth. Awobgenle and Iwuamadi (2010) cited in Akujuru and Enyioko (2019) have identified the main causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria. They are examined thus:

i. Rural urban migration

Rural urban migration is usually explained in terms of push-pull factors. The push factor includes the pressure resulting from man-land ratio in the rural areas and the existence of serious underemployment arising from the seasonal cycle of the lack of infrastructural facilities, which makes the rural life unattractive. Youths move to urban areas with the probability of securing lucrative employment in the industries. In addition to this, there is the concentration of social amenities in the urban centers. This meant that the rural areas are neglected in the allocation of social and economic opportunities.

ii. Rapid Population Growth

Akande (2014) asserted that Nigeria has continued to experience high rate of population growth. This increasing population growth has produced an overwhelming increase in the youth population thereby resulting in an increase in the size of the working age population. Going by the 2006 census in Nigeria, the nation's population was put at 140,431,790 and projections for the future indicate that the population could be over 200 million by the year 2020, given the annual growth rate of 3.2 percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). With this population, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa. It is argued that the high population growth rate has resulted in the rapid growth of the labour force, which is far outstripping the supply of jobs. The accelerated growth of population on Nigeria's unemployment problem is multifaceted. It affects the supply side through a high and rapid increase in the labour force relative to the absorptive capacity of the economy.

iii. Low standard of education

Some scholars and commentators have argued that as far as the formal sector is concerned, the average Nigeria graduate is not employable and, therefore, does not possess the skills needed by the employers of labour for a formal employment. After all employers do not need people to pay or spend their money on but people that will help their organization grow and make more profit as the primary goal of every enterprise is to make profit. Often, this is attributed to the Nigeria's education system, with its liberal bias. The course contents of most tertiary education in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial contents that would have enabled graduates to become job creators rather than job seekers. Access to entrepreneurial training such as tailoring, computer, incubation is been constraints by access to capital to establish their own after the training. Inadequate farming tools that could enhance mechanized agriculture. Henrik (2006) cited in Onno (2011) assert that low opportunities for young graduates create problem of violence due to lack of job and idleness, because without job they will not be able to play a useful role in the society.

iv. The rapid expansion of the educational system

The rapid expansion of the educational system which directly leads to increase in the supply of educated manpower above the corresponding demand for them, contributes to the problem of the youth unemployment in Nigeria. For instance, according to Manning and Junankar (1998) in Aduwole (2015), the total number of graduates turned out by the higher institutions in Nigeria, which were 73,339 in 1986/1987 which rose to 131,016 in 1996/1997. Presently, with over 97 universities in Nigeria (both federal, state, and private) and the increasing demand for higher education there has been the problem of suitable employment for the varieties of graduates who are turned out by these higher institutions every year. Ordinarily, this should not have been a problem, but the reality is that the Nigerian economy is too weak to absorb this large number of graduates (Utomi, 2011).

v. Corruption

Corruption, which has permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria, has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base. Funds meant for development projects have been misappropriated, diverted, or embezzled and stashed away in foreign banks, while some incompetent and corrupt bureaucrats and administrators in the public enterprise and parastala have liquidated these organizations (Okafor, 2010). The point being made here is that the collaboration of the political elites, local and foreign contractors in the inflation of contract fees have robbed Nigeria of the chances of using more than \$500 billion estimated revenue from the oil sale in the last 50 years to develop a vibrant economy that would have created jobs for the youths in various sectors of the economy. The ruling (political) class failed because they replaced the vision, policy and strategy, which should be the thrust of every leadership with transactions (contract award and other mundane money-related activities), as each successive government took turns to prey on the nation's wealth, by using public power, resources, good will, utilities, instrument of abuse, and personal gains (Okafor, 2005). Thus, crippling the economy and engendering and exacerbating unemployment which creates abject poverty, hunger and frustration.

vi. Paucity of relevant skills

In addition, lack of employable skills due to inappropriate school curricula is another factor contributing to the rising youth unemployment. Analysts have argued that in Nigeria generally, the skills that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demands of employers (Oduwole, 2015). The schMadour affirmed that the education system in Nigeria has its liberal bias which indeed over supplies the labour market with graduates

who do not possess the skills required by employers. Many graduates in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self-employment.

vii. Negative orientation towards employment

The perception of policy makers and the youth themselves about employment is a major factor in unemployment. As adduced by Aduwole (2015), to the policy makers and the youth, employment means a job with salary and working for someone else. It is this perception that has continued to influence the institutions in Nigeria that provide skills and training. Based on this, curricula and training programmes are generally tailored towards preparing young people for formal sector jobs. Since these jobs do not exist, there is often a mismatch between the skills possessed by the job seekers and the available jobs. In this regard, evidence shows that Nigeria is committed to education reforms.

The promulgation of Decree 9 of 1993 created rooms for the establishment of private institutions in the country. Following the deregulation of education in Nigeria, government has encouraged the opening of private schools and universities. As at May, 2012, the total of approved universities in Nigeria was 137, comprising of 37 federal government-owned, 50 states' government-owned and 50 privately-owned universities. The aggressive creation of more private and publicly-funded universities and colleges of technology has inadvertently created an adverse disparity in job creation efforts. This is because Nigeria has not pursued a commensurate job absorption strategy for the many graduates from these educational institutions. Whereas universities have grown geometrically, jobs and employers have grown at arithmetic progression. This gap in Nigeria strategic approach to job creation has led to the supply of skilled graduates being higher than the demand in the economy thus driving down wages and further increasing unemployment.

viii. Bad governance

Most pitiable among the factors responsible for youth unemployment are poor governance, ineffective targeting of the poor resulting in resources being thinly spread among competing projects, overlapping of functions, poor coordination and lack of sustainable measures (Musari, 2009 cited in Aduwole, 2015). Implicit in the view above is that in response to the alarming unemployment situation, Nigerian governments at various times have made several attempts to solve the nagging unemployment problem by setting up various solution agencies. Notable among these agencies are the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). However, it is on record that these attempts have not made much significant impact on youth unemployment.

Consequences of Unemployment in Nigeria

Unemployment has become a major problem bedeviling the lives of Nigerian youth, causing increased militancy, violent crimes, kidnappings, restiveness and socially delinquent behaviour. Youth unemployment is devastating to both the individual and the society as a whole both psychologically and economically. The following are some of the effects of unemployment in Nigeria which include:

Inequality of income is one of the effects of unemployment in Nigeria. The National Bureau of statistics opined that as at 2018, 65% of Nigeria's wealth is owned by 20% of the population, which manifest itself in so many dimensions such as concentration of wealth on the hands of few individual while many are in abject poverty. Inequality of income, poverty and unemployment has led to increase in violent crimes in Nigeria. Hallary (2012) assert that the crisis in Nigeria was a result of failure of governance to address socio-economic issues facing the nation.

Decline in quality of life depends largely on family income, insecurity, tension and conflict. Decline in access to shelter, education and health care, nutrition are drastically reduced which ultimately led to reduction in life span. NLC (2012) assert that bodied employment growth and improvement in the GDP had not transform into social well being, adding that unemployment had aggravated the spate of insecurity among other social vices in the polity.

Youth unemployment poses a risk to the Nigerian society. The consequence of this problem, if no major corrective initiatives are taken, could be disastrous for the nation. Youth unemployment has national and global impacts, notably among which are increased violence, crime, drug abuse and political instability. Desperation can drive many people into living outside the law in order to survive and as a means of expressing dissatisfaction at the apparent neglect of their very existence.

Furthermore, the negative consequences include poverty, psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility, abduction, murder, armed robbery, and all manner of criminal behaviours causing general insecurity of life and property. All these crimes are a consequence of unemployment. Crime affects the economy through a number of channels/ways. First, it increases the cost of doing business for the private sector and public sector.

Unarguably, youth unemployment is a major issue in developing countries, including Nigeria where it affects young men and women with a potential for crime and social unrest. Madoukitan (2015) stated that, aside from terrorism, youth unemployment is one of the greatest threats to national security mainly because idle hands

are the devil's workshop. Example, many graduate job seekers lost their lives recently in Nigeria during a nationwide recruitment exercise by the Nigeria Immigration Service in 2015 (Madouikitan, 2015). Yet in Port Harcourt alone, some 25,000 applicants were to participate in a recruitment interview at the 16,000 capacity Liberation Stadium. According to Odey and Sambe, (2019) recently, over 500,000 young people applied for the 4,500 job openings in the Nigerian Customs Service just like the Nigerian Police Force, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency among others. This shows that youth unemployment in Nigeria has reached a crisis point.

Historicity of Efforts at Reducing Unemployment and Improving Youth Development in Nigeria

Over the years, Nigerian governments, international institutions, philanthropic individuals and agencies have exerted concerted efforts in the eradication of unemployment and increasing youth development in the nation. Ovie and Orhioghene (2011) espoused that the Nigerian Government, as far back as 1971, had identified unemployment as the bane of national development in the country. According to them, early employment generation measures were targeted at the agricultural sector. The rural areas which comprise more than 90 percent of the agricultural sector of Nigeria are believed to have the highest level of manpower in the country. As such, between the 1960s and 1980s, youth development focused in creating opportunities in the agricultural sector for the youths to engage in agricultural production. Since then, government has been determined to create more jobs for unemployed persons and stimulate production.

For instance, Nwagwu (2014) submitted that successive governments have made robust attempts aimed at addressing youth unemployment in Nigeria. Such efforts have been geared towards formulating and implementing empowerment programmes. Notable among these programmes included the 1972 National Accelerated Food Production Programme aimed at increasing production capacity in the agricultural sector with the youth as the major target. However, the failure of this programme midwife the Operation Feed the Nation Programme. In 1976, Operation Feed the Nation was launched with the aim of teaching the rural farmers including the youth how to use modern farming tools. The failure of this programme led to the introduction of Green Revolution Programme in 1979 structured to reduce food importation and increase local food production above subsistence farming and promoting agricultural entrepreneurship among the youth. With increased rate of poverty and youth unemployment, the government in 1986 introduced the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). Like its predecessors, the programme failed to ensure food stability and poverty in Nigeria.

In 1993, Family Support Programme and the Family Economic Advancement Programme were introduced to empower individuals including the youth and households on business ownership and economic empowerment. However, this programme could not deliver on its objectives. Within the same period, the government recognized that about 70 percent of Nigerians are poor in real terms and earmarked 50 percent of Poverty Alleviation Programmes (PAP) jobs for youths; 25 percent for women and the remaining 25 percent for the men, with special preference for the destitute and disabled persons. The jobs thus created were spread among states at (5000 persons each) while the balance of 15,000 was shared among thickly populated cities. In addition, PAP participants were paid monthly stipends of N3500 each (Rufus and Oluwatunmise, 2017).

In 2001, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) designed to boost and sustain poverty alleviation and youth empowerment in Nigeria. Again, Rufus and Oluwatunmise (2017) maintained that in less than two years, the original outlay of the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was amended and renamed National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); its major components were the Mandatory Attachment Programme (MAP), the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) and the Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP) (Ovie and Orhioghene, 2011).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was launched in January 2000 and Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015 to accelerate socio-economic development and empowerment of the youth, women and children. It had eight goals one of which was youth development. However, like its predecessors, targeted objectives were not achieved. As such, in 2008, Third National FADAMA Development Project (FADAMA III) was launched. Each of these programmes was undoubtedly all aimed at empowering Nigerians towards economic development, poverty alleviation and skill acquisition especially among the youths. In 2012, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was introduced. Accordingly, their failure in achieving their mandates led to the continued search for empowerment programmes for the youth.

Still in the same year, the Subsidy Re-investment Programme (Sure-P) was introduced in 2012. According to Odey and Sambe (2019), the SURE-P policy designed by the administration of Goodluck Jonathan was part of effort to provide job opportunities for graduates of tertiary institutions. It was a whole range of activities and programmes including the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), Community Services Scheme (CSS), Vocational Training Scheme (VTS), and Community Services, Women and Youth Empowerment (CSWYE), YOU WIN among others. One of the most successful schemes of the SURE-P was the GIS, which offered unemployed graduates the opportunity to undergo a one-year internship in firms, banks, ministries,

government departments and agencies, as well as in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), relevant to beneficiaries' disciplines. The purpose of GIS was to help beneficiaries acquire the appropriate skills and practical knowledge that would make them more suitable for the job market. About 50,000 graduates were selected for the first phase of the scheme. Even though around 2000 firms expressed interest in hosting graduates, only 293 firms were approved (Odey and Sambe, 2019).

In recognition of the persistent youth unemployment and its effect on development in Nigeria; the President Muhammadu Buhari administration introduced its own policy on youth empowerment called "N-Power". According to Odey and Sambe (2019), the Federal government investment in youth development through this programme targeted some of the perennial inadequacies in public services- low teacher to pupil ratio in public primary schools; high rate of preventable diseases; lack of science and knowledge to bolster production; and a lack of enough taxable persons within the tax net. To achieve these objectives, the Scheme was divided into two categories- Graduate Category (N-Power Volunteer Corps) and Non-Graduate Category (N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build). The N-Power Volunteer Corps is the post-tertiary engagement initiative for Nigerians between 18 and 35 years. It is a paid volunteering programme of 2-year duration. The graduates undertake their primary tasks in identified public services within their proximate communities. It has four cardinal areas of youth empowerment- N-Power Teaching, N-Power Agriculture, N-Power Health and N-Power Taxation.

The Non-graduate category is composed of N-Power knowledge and N-Power building. The N-Power knowledge is 'Training to Jobs' initiative, essentially ensuring that participants can get engaged in the marketplace in an outsourcing capacity, as freelancers, as employees and as entrepreneurs in hardware and software ICT capacity building. The N-Power Build is training and certification (Skills to Job) programme that will engage and train young unemployed Nigerians in order to build a new crop of skilled and highly competent workforce of technicians, artisans and service professionals.

In introducing N-Power, the Federal Government provides a structure not only for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development, but also to epitomize a large volunteer workforce to fix some of the problems in public services and stimulating the larger economy. In 2016, through the N-Power, the Federal Government engaged and deployed 200,000 young Nigerians in public primary schools, primary healthcare centres in all the Local Government Areas in Nigeria (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). This has been the largest post-tertiary engagement of human resources in Africa. In 2017, the N-Power volunteer corps enlisted 300,000 volunteers bringing the number to about 500,000 N-Power Volunteers (Odey and Sambe, 2019).

Strategies for Promoting Youth Development in Nigeria

To address the issue of youth unemployment in the country, Salami (2013) proposed that there is the need for value re-orientation, aggressive emphasis on entrepreneurial education, link agriculture to processing, creation of conducive climate for investors and giving priority to youth sectors. Youth unemployment reduction strategies in Nigeria, therefore, have to incorporate distributive features and high level of inclusiveness. This can be achieved by promoting human capital development programmes such as the N-power. Some of the strategies according to Chukwu and Igwe (2013) include:

a. Employment generation

Given the high rate of unemployment among the youth in Nigeria, it is obvious that serious efforts must be made to generate more employment opportunities for them. Employment generating agencies can fix applicants appropriately in jobs where they have competence. In addition, to create more jobs in Nigeria for the youth, government needs to provide the enabling environment for the private sector to thrive. This could be through the provision of socio-economic infrastructure such as electricity, telephone, roads, and housing, particularly in the rural areas. One of the ways to generate employment for the youth is through agriculture. Government can achieve this by making available modern farm tools and establishment of agricultural hubs in the six geo-political zones that could employ thousands of the youth. These agricultural hubs could be serviced and supported by cottage industries. For example, the setting up of an oil milling factory in a hub where soybeans and ground nuts grow will stimulate the production of groundnuts and soybeans; and also impact on non-farm employment.

b. Moral reorientation

The youth in Nigeria need moral rejuvenation. The moral decadence in the society where the ethos of fairness, impeccable character, hard work and other standards of good epitomized have been jettisoned for greed, god-fatherism and loose morals is deplorable. The country must do everything possible to help the youth in this regard. Moral reorientation of the youth is needed to reduce the mentality of get-rich quick by any means possible, which lures many of them into crime and other deviant behaviours. The ostentatious life style of the elite who display ill-gotten wealth is eroding the philosophy of hard-work and patience in the youth of today. There is therefore, the need for faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations/civil society

organizations, as well as traditional institutions to engage the youth in moral reorientation that preaches against corruption, get-rich quick and occultism.

c. Increased vocational training

Increased vocational training is needed to empower the youth and extricate them out of unemployment and poverty. Deliberate effort must be made by all stakeholders to promote youth vocational training and skills acquisition in all facet of workmanship. To this end, more technical schools need to be established and technological villages established in all states to absorb the youth that will graduate from these technical schools. The national directorate of employment (NDE) must be empowered to increase its capacity in providing vocational skills to unemployed youth.

d. Rural development

Another aspect of making the youth in Nigeria to be productive is by developing the rural areas. Youth unemployment in the rural areas is high and therefore, calls for concerted effort at accelerating rural development. It is important to improve socio-economic infrastructure in the rural areas as a means of empowering the youth in these areas to engage in meaningful endeavours. Rural development will also lead to increased trade, higher income and social development. It will also generate more employment opportunities, which will enhance national security. To achieve rural development, government at all levels needs to engage the private sector to leverage on their resource and competence to transform those areas through the provision of infrastructure on terms such as build, operate and transfer.

e. Improved access to micro credit

There is the need to ensure adequate access of youth to micro-credit in Nigeria. The involvement of youth clubs or community-based organization which the young people belong, that will be guarantors for applicants can help in this regard. The micro-finance banks may be mandated to set aside certain percentage of their loan facilities for the youth. Greater access to micro-credit by the youth will reduce unemployment and poverty among the youth and also assist in reducing rural-urban migration.

f. Provision of sporting facilities

Provision of adequate sporting and recreational facilities both in rural and urban areas for the youth can help them to express their talents. It will also assist the youth to discover themselves in the field of sports such as football and boxing among others. These facilities will engage these youth and remove them from mischief and cultism. Many of them could find lucrative careers in sports.

g. Review of youth policy

The national youth development policy was formulated in 2001 as an official declaration of the importance of youth in national development and reviewed in 2008. It will not be out of place to suggest that another review of the policy be made given the emerging trends in the Nigerian economy since 2008. Such a review would require the active participation of youth from all over the country, and should take into cognizance contemporary issues affecting youth empowerment in Nigeria such as HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, youth restiveness, unemployment and so on. In addition, there are agencies that are supposed to be set up for the youth, which have not been done. A review of the National Youth Policy will address these lapses.

Role of Youth Development in Reducing Unemployment in Ebonyi State

One of the most pragmatic approaches to youth development and unemployment reduction is skill acquisition. Skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. Skill is very important in the life of every human being. The reason why many technicians earns more than some university graduates is because the technicians acquire more practical skills than the theories, unlike the graduates who were fed with theoretical experiences while in the universities. Skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. It is a pity that there is "huge" parading of unemployment in many parts of the world today especially in Nigeria in general and Ebonyi State in particular. The truth remains that the major causes of the unemployment among these vibrant youths is lack of skill to back up what they learnt from their institutions of learning.

According to Ogundele, Akingbade, and Akinlabi (2012), the contribution of skill acquisition and training on unemployment reduction through youth empowerment and social welfare service improvement will be much significant if encouraged at all the level in the state especially at local and community level. This position was corroborated by Madoui (2013), who opined that this is evident from the success story of Youth Empowerment Scheme which has contributed to the economic uplift of the youths by providing them with vocational skill acquisition and counseling services aimed at reorienting their attitudes towards self and societal development. Ekong and Ekong (2016) observed that acquisition of vocational skills lead to a significant reduction of poverty among young adults who participated on skills acquisition programmes. Entrepreneurial studies are inter-disciplinary training that focuses on the tools needed to start a new business or vocation. Because Nigeria is fast becoming a predominantly youthful society with high rate of unemployment, it requires training the youth in entrepreneurship skills in technical vocational education and training to tackle

unemployment which has reached alarming proportions. Amadi and Abdullah (2012), cited in Eme (2014) reported from their study that a greater percentage of the sampled youth reported high and moderate levels of their capacity building: implying that the vocational skills acquisition and development was a successful scheme. They however recommended that the constraints that impede the success of the scheme be addressed by policy makers to make the outcome of the skills training more successful. Adofu and Ocheja (2013) making reference to Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition in Kogi State maintained that since most of the people that benefited from the programme could afford the basic necessity of life, the government should begin to think of the way of developing the programme to the status of poverty/unemployment eradication programme. More often than not, some SchMadouirs focus on Skill Acquisition enshrine in entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship skills acquired in the context of this study refers to an individual's knowledge and ability to perform specific tasks successfully; while entrepreneurship according to Anerua and Obiazi (2009) cited in Ekong and Ekong (2016) is the process of perceiving business opportunities, mobilizing both human and material resources and initiating action(s) under an enterprise which is characterized by risk taking, innovation and creativity to meet individual, group or societal needs. Entrepreneurship skills therefore, are business skills which one acquires to function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an independent or self-employed person in order to improve one's economic status and the society at large. The importance of entrepreneurship skills acquisition cannot be over-emphasized since appropriate skills acquisition through entrepreneurship will help to make young school leavers to be self-reliant and boost their economic status.

Through such Skills Acquisition, the establishment of small businesses helps to generate substantial amount of employment and income which are essential parts of a country's Gross National Product (GNP) on the one hand and reduce unemployment on the other. For the laudable benefits of entrepreneurship skills acquisition to manifest in our youths' and the general public, skills must be learned through formal or non-formal setting. Uloko and Ejinkonye (2011) cited in Uwem and Abubakar (2013) averred that when youths are empowered through the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, there is the possibility that they will use the skills to create new avenues for wealth. Empowering the youth to set up businesses involves proper acquisition of skills through education and training. Such acquisition opens one's eyes to forecast business opportunities using appropriate entrepreneurship skills.

Uddin and Uddin (2013) while stressing the importance of skills acquisition in national growth, emphatically contended that Nigeria's social and economic problems will be drastically reduced if people are given adequate vocational training in skills, raw materials, machineries and equipment. It is only with skilled men that materials can be harnessed, manipulated and transformed into products. With quality skills acquisition programmes, countries like America, Britain, Germany and Japan have rehabilitated drug addicts, school dropouts and several destitute who eventually contributed meaningfully to the economy and the development of high volume of productivity in their countries.

Ebonyi State is a fast growing tourism and conference destination in Nigeria. The State equally has enormous natural resources that can support self sustaining development. But its large youthful population urgently needs empowerment to enhance their employability and capacity for business start-ups (Uwem and Abubakar, 2013). Currently, government is the largest employer of labour, while few private sector jobs are taken up by non-indigenes. The State has a perspective plan document (CRS V2020) that seeks to leapfrog it from a largely subsistence-based agrarian economy, to a service-led tourism and agribusiness economy by 2020, and a critical stock of human resources with requisite skills and competencies is inevitably required (Uwem and Abubakar, 2013). This means many youths that are now described as "active poor" need to be re-socialized to avail the economy of the human resources required for making CRS V2020 a reality. But as explained earlier the "active poor" lack the mental and emotional capabilities due to demographic misfortune, insensitive and ill-equipped education system, and paucity of social security products. These three sets of forces explain why many youths in Ebonyi State are unable to secure well paying jobs or own viable enterprises.

III. Empirical Review

Several efforts have been made by researchers to deem light into the problem of unemployment and youth development in Nigeria. As such, empirical studies relevant to this study were reviewed thus:

Ugal, Nwagbara and Uyang (2013) carried out a study to investigate youth unemployment and its consequences in Calabar Metropolis. Descriptive survey design was adopted to study a population of 120 residents randomly sampled within Calabar Metropolis. Data were gathered through structured questionnaire. Simple percentages and frequency distribution tables were employed in data analysis while statistical chi-square tool was employed in empirical testing of hypotheses that guided the study. The study observed that many social problems in the nature of crime, prostitution, hunger, poverty and general structural inadequacies are mainly the consequences of unemployment among the youths. Based on the findings, the study concluded that youth unemployment does no good to any society. The study recommended among other things the introduction of

safety nets in the form of unemployment welfare benefits to unemployed youths; create decent jobs, as well as free mandatory entrepreneurial education for self reliance in all tertiary institutions in order to avert the consequences of youth unemployment in the country.

Though the study by Ugal, Nwagbara and Uyang (2013) above made remarkable effort in unraveling the consequences of unemployment especially among the youth in Calabar Metropolis being a part of the study area and recommending possible strategies to combat the situation, the study however failed to address the effects of unemployment on youth development which is the major thrust of the present study. The study therefore, did not cover the effects of unemployment on skill development, skill utilization and skill mobilization in Ebonyi State which is the gap the present study is poised to fill.

Uduak and Ekong (2016) carried out a study titled "Skills Acquisition and Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria: A Study of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Akwa Ibom State". The study investigated how Unemployment problem is tackled through Skills Acquisition by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted to study a population of 141 staff and trainees in the agency. The study employed both primary and secondary data. Structured questionnaire were administered on both the trainers and trainees that have completed the skills acquisition training, and trainees currently under training. Secondary evidences provided by the state NDE office were also used to examine the economic relationship of the variables. Findings revealed that there is a positive nexus between Skills Acquisition by NDE and unemployment reduction in Akwa Ibom State and skills acquisition by NDE has help in reducing the rate of unemployment in Akwa Ibom State. These positive influences are not however without challenges, ranging from political willingness of the government to actually implement and care for the training facilities to regional proximities of the unemployed to the training centers, among others. However, the result of the income contributions of NDE in the state was mixed. Though traces of income effect really exist, the effect was minimal to attract wide acceptance. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the location of the centers be more central to aid accessibility. For instances, the skills acquisition center for Uyo Senatorial district is located in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area; NDE should create a forum for beneficiaries to be meeting on regular basis to discuss their challenges and way-forward on a quarterly or at least bi-annual basis. Regular contact with the graduated trainees by the center manager is important so as to know if they are doing fine or not; and that there was need for speedy empowerment of trainees to be done between one to three months after training and certification.

Though the study by Uduak and Ekong (2016) above made remarkable effort at examining the relationship between skill acquisition and unemployment reduction, and recommending possible strategies to combat the situation, the study however, was carried out in Akwa Ibom which is the different from the present study area. The study also failed to address the effects of unemployment on youth development which is the major thrust of the present study. The study therefore, did not cover the effects of unemployment on skill development, utilization and mobilization in Ebonyi State which is the gap the present study is poised to fill.

Similarly, Rufus and Oluwatanmise (2017) investigated the causes and effects of youth unemployment using the case of Oye Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria". The study adopted a descriptive survey design to study 150 respondents sampled from six towns of Oye, Ayegbaju, Ilupeju, Imojo, Ayede and Itapa using random sampling technique. Questionnaire and interview instruments were used in data collection. Data were analysed using simple percentages, mean and standard deviation. It was found that low level of education, the collapse of local industries; inadequate job creation and neglect of the agricultural sector by the State Government are largely responsible for youth unemployment in the local government area. The study also found that low standard of living and high crime rates are the direct results of youth unemployment and recommended the diversification of the economy to enhance the generation of full and part time job opportunities, including the 13pitomizes13ion of collapsed local industries to absorb the growing number of unemployed youths.

The study by Rufus and Oluwatanmise (2017) made significant effort by examining the causes and consequences of youth unemployment thus shading light into the nature of the problem of unemployment among the youths. Though the study by Rufus and Oluwatanmise (2017) above made remarkable effort in unraveling the consequences of unemployment especially among the youth and recommending possible strategies to combat the situation, the study however failed to address the effects of unemployment on youth development which is the major thrust of the present study. Moreover, the study was carried out in Ekiti State which is a different study area from the present study. The study therefore, did not cover the effects of unemployment on skill development, utilization and mobilization in Ebonyi State which is the gap the present study is poised to fill.

In relation, Longe (2017) carried out a research titled "Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria: Causes, Consequences and Remediable Approaches". Using quantitative research method, data were collected from 360 Abuja (Nigeria Federal Capital) based professionals through a self-administered questionnaire structured in line with Likert scale. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling technique. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation and Kurtosis. The study

identified a combination of causal factors as responsible for the aggravated incidence of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Findings also indicated that the socio-economic implications of graduate unemployment on the nation and affected individuals were gruesome. Aside from being a waste of human capital on the nation, those caught in the web were often susceptible to frustration and non-conforming behaviours. Furthermore, findings showed that there was no effective collaboration between universities and labour employers in providing relevant skills required for employability and employment fulfillment of university graduates. From the perspective of remediable measures, the study found amongst others, counter-active top-down approach to job creation programme design and implementation as pathway to graduate unemployment reduction in Nigeria. The study concluded that graduate unemployment was one of the Nigerian's socio-economic challenges and to remediate this social ordeal would require soft wired deliberate policies of government, innovative all inclusive approach and concerted efforts of various stakeholders in the country.

The study by Longe (2017) above is quite commendable in deeming light in the area of graduate unemployment in Nigeria and its attendant effects. The study made significant effort by examining the causes of youth unemployment thus shading light into the nature of the problem of unemployment among the youths. Though the study by Longe (2017) above, made remarkable effort in unraveling the consequences of unemployment especially among the youth, and recommending possible strategies to combat the situation, the study however failed to address the effects of unemployment on youth development which is the major thrust of the present study. Moreover, the study was carried out in Abuja which is a different study area from the present study. The study therefore, did not cover the effects of unemployment on skill development, utilization and mobilization in Ebonyi State which is the gap the present study is poised to fill.

Efe-Imafidon, Ade-Adeniji, Umukoro & Ajitemisan (2017) in their own contribution, conducted a research titled "entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a facilitator of self-employability among Nigerian youths". Based on a conceptual analysis, the study examined strategic industries in which youths should focus efforts in, in developing innovative skills that can stimulate self-employment, create jobs and enhance economic growth and development. Secondary data were used as the means for data collection, from records of the National Bureau of Statistics web site in 5years showing the strategic industries identified in Nigeria and its contributions to GDP. Content analysis method was used in data analysis. The study revealed that Nigerian youth showed that there are presently strategic industrial sector in Nigeria that contribute to the GDP besides the Oil Sector. The researcher recommended among other things that facilitators of entrepreneurial skill training and workshop program, must ensure that skill being taught to the youth match the requirements of the strategic industries in Nigeria.

The study by Efe-Imafidon, et al (2017) made significant effort by examining entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a facilitator of self-employability among Nigerian youths. The study however, made use of secondary data and was based on content analysis. Moreover, the study did not cover the effects of unemployment on skill development, utilization and mobilization in Ebonyi State which is the gap the present study is poised to fill.

Theoretical Framework

This study is rooted on the Human Capital Theory. The best-known application of the idea of "human capital" is that of Gary Becker in his book entitled Human Capital, published in 1964. The Human Capital theory proposes a collection of traits such as knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training, judgment, and wisdom possessed by individuals for improved productivity and entrepreneurship. These resources are the total capacity of the people that represents a form of wealth which can be directed to accomplish the goals of the nation or state or a portion thereof.

Human Capital Theory suggests that education and training are investments that develop and make individuals genuinely more productive. Individuals who are more productive will, according to this theory, also have higher earnings and be more employable. It is an aggregate economic view of the human being acting within economies, which is an attempt to capture the social, biological, cultural and psychological complexity as they interact in explicit and/or economic transactions. Many scholars explicitly connect investment in human capital development to economic development, productivity growth, and innovation. This has frequently been cited as a justification for government subsidies for empowerment and job skills training. For instance, Bisong (2019) argued that one of such programmes that improves human capital is N-Power programme, a National Social Investment Programme of the Nigeria Federal Government geared towards job creation; alleviate poverty and empowering initiatives through volunteering services.

It is argued that Human Capital Development is desirable because of its valuable and sustainable benefits of training and enhance and individual transcend his immediate family, but cut across the society at large. The acquirer uses his talents and capacities to transform and as well enhance the wellbeing of himself as an individual and family, and his society at large. Contributing to the discourse, Bakare (2006) cited in Chikelu

(2016) revealed that there is a significant functional relationship between investments and human capital and economic growth in Nigeria.

The relevance of the Human Capital Theory to this study cannot be overemphasized. The theory underscores the fact that youth empowerment is not distinguishable from human capital development. As such, governments efforts at human capital development entails empowerment of the youth to acquire relevant knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training, judgment, and wisdom for improved productivity and entrepreneurship. Such empowerment would promote significantly and reduce the rate of youth unemployment, poverty and social vices suffered by this productive asset of the nation.

IV. Methodology

The research adopted descriptive survey design. This research was carried out in Ebonyi State. Ebonyi State is one of Nigeria's 36 States. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to study a cross-section of 400 respondents selected across three local governments, one each from the three senatorial zones. The research questions were answered on individual items basis using mean and standard deviation. Also, statistical Chi-Square formula was applied in empirical testing of hypotheses that guided the study.

V. Results

Data presentation and analysis was based on the 400 copies of questionnaire administered on the respondents. There was 100% rate of return as the instrument was administered and retrieved immediately.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

S/N	Variables	Frequencies			
1	Gender	Male 247 (62%)	Female 153 (38%)		
2	Age (years)	18-30 109(27.3%)	31-40 153(38.3%)	41-50 79(19.8%)	51 & above 59(14.8%)
3	Marital Status	Single 131(32.8%)	Married 207(51.8%)	Divorced 41(10%)	Widowed 21(5.3%)
4	Occupation	Farming 121(30.3%)	Trading 49(12.3%)	Public Service 98(24.5%)	Unemployed 132(33.3%)
5	Educational qualification	FSLC-SSE 86(21.5%)	NCE/OND 92(23%)	HND/B.SC 169(42.3%)	M.Sc.-PhD 53(13.3%)

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The table above shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table in variable 1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. It was observed that out of the 400 respondents in the study, 247(62%) were males whereas 153(38%) were females as observed in variable 1. This entails that majority of the respondents were males.

Variable 2 shows the age distribution of the respondents. From the table, it was observed that 109(27.3%) were between the age of 18 to 30 years, 153(38.3%) were between 31-40 years. This implies that majority of the respondents were youth.

From variable 3 showing marital status of the respondents, it was observed that 131(32.8%) were single, 207(51.8%) were married, 41(10%) were divorced while 21(5.3%) were widowed. This implies that majority of the respondents were married.

On variable 4, the table showed the occupation of the respondents. From the table, 121(30%) of the respondents were farmers, 49(12.3%) were traders, 98(24.5%) were public servants whereas 132(33.3%) unemployed. Hence, majority of the respondents were unemployed.

Finally, variable 5 shows the educational qualification of the respondents. From the table, it was observed that 86(21%) of the respondents possessed between FSLC and SSCE, 92(23%) possessed either NCE or OND, 169(42.3%) possessed either HND or B.Sc. whereas 53(13.3%) possessed between M.Sc. and PhD. This implies that majority of the respondents possessed either HND or B.Sc. in educational qualification.

Table 2: Responses to determine the effect of youth unemployment on skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	Std	Decision
1.	Youth unemployment hinders improvement of process skills necessary for effective job performance among youths of Ebonyi State	169	122	69	40	400	3.05	0.1	Agreed
2	Youth who are unemployed are hindered in the acquisition of relevant soft skills that enable people interact effectively and harmoniously with other people in a work environment	178	133	57	32	400	3.14	0.1	Agreed

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3	Youth who are not employed are limited in the development of hard skills and abilities required for success in a job performance	170	123	70	37	400	3.07	0.1	Agreed
4	Youth unemployment hinders the acquisition of technical skills necessary for increased competence among the youth in Ebonyi State	142	111	88	59	400	2.84	0.2	Agreed
5	Youth unemployment hinders the ability to develop entrepreneurial skills necessary for self reliance among the youths in Ebonyi State	182	120	68	30	400	3.14	0.1	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table above shows the mean responses and standard deviation of the respondents on the effect of youth unemployment on skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. The result shows that the respondents agreed that youth unemployment affects skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. Hence, all the items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 had individual mean scores above 2.50 which is the decision benchmark.

Item 1 showed that youth unemployment hinders improvement of process skills necessary for effective job performance among youths of Ebonyi State. This was agreed with a mean score of 3.05 and standard deviation of 0.1 showing high degree of similarity of opinion among the respondents. Item 2 revealed that youth who are unemployed are hindered in the acquisition of relevant soft skills that enable people interact effectively and harmoniously with other people in a work environment. This was agreed with a mean score of 3.14 and standard deviation of 0.1 showing a high degree of similarity of opinion among the respondents. Item 3 showed that youth who are not employed are limited in the development of hard skills and abilities required for success in a job performance. This was agreed with a mean score of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 0.1 implying similarity of opinion among the respondents. Item 4 showed that youth unemployment hinders the acquisition of technical skills necessary for increased competence among the youth in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 0.2 showing that most of the respondents agreed. And Item 5 showed that youth unemployment hinders the ability to develop entrepreneurial skills necessary for self reliance among the youths in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 0.1 showing that most of them agreed.

Table 3: Responses to determine the effect of youth unemployment on efficient skill mobilization for development in the selected local government areas in Ebonyi State

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	Std	Decision
6.	Youth unemployment hinders mobilization of youths for development in Ebonyi State	173	129	77	21	400	3.14	0.1	Agreed
7	Youth unemployment hinders youth participation in community development projects in Ebonyi State	190	132	50	28	400	3.21	0.1	Agreed
8	Youth unemployment hinders the ability of the youths to contribute resources towards the development of Ebonyi State	148	123	90	39	400	2.95	0.2	Agreed
9	Youth unemployment pushes the available manpower to migrate to other areas thereby hindering skill mobilization for development in Ebonyi State	152	140	67	41	400	3.01	0.2	Agreed
10	Youth unemployment increases youth restiveness thereby inhibiting skill mobilization for development in Ebonyi State	171	136	85	8	400	3.18	0.1	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table above shows the mean responses and standard deviation to determine the effect of youth unemployment on efficient skill mobilization for development in the selected local government areas in Ebonyi State. The result shows that the respondents agreed that youth unemployment affects skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. Hence, all the items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 had individual mean scores above 2.50 which is the decision benchmark.

Item 6 revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that youth unemployment hinders mobilization of youth for development in Ebonyi State. This was agreed with a mean score of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 0.1 showing that there was a high level of similarity of opinion among the respondents. From Item 7, it was

observed that youth unemployment hinders youth participation in community development projects in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.1 showing same direction of opinion among the respondents. Youth unemployment hinders the ability of the youths to contribute resources towards the development of Ebonyi State as revealed in Item 8 where the respondents had a mean score of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.2. From Item 9, it was observed that Youth unemployment pushes the available manpower to migrate to other areas thereby hindering skill mobilization for development in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.2 showing that the responses were tailored in one direction. And from Item 10, it was revealed that youth unemployment increases youth restiveness thereby inhibiting skill mobilization for development in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.18 and 0.1 showing a high degree of similarity in opinion among the respondents.

Table 4: Responses to determine the extent to which youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	Std	Decision
11	Youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills of youth in Ebonyi State	161	158	66	15	400	3.16	0.1	Agree
12	Youth unemployment is responsible for waste of active manpower in Ebonyi State	155	131	95	19	400	3.06	0.1	Agree
13	Most youths who cannot have access to job opportunities become victims of social vices	169	125	79	27	400	3.09	0.1	Agree
14	Youth unemployment propels underemployment of professional manpower as they are forced to engage in menial jobs to make ends meet.	183	129	62	26	400	3.17	0.1	Agree
15	Youth unemployment hinders the engagement of competent skills in production processes in both public and private sectors in Ebonyi State	166	122	89	23	400	3.08	0.1	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table above shows the mean scores and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. The result showed that all the items were agreed by the respondents as they all had individual mean scores above 2.50 which is the decision benchmark.

From Item 11, it was observed that youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills of youth in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.16 and standard deviation of 0.1. Item 12 revealed that Youth unemployment is responsible for waste of active manpower in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.06 and standard deviation of 0.1. Item 13 showed that most youths who cannot have access to job opportunities become victims of social vices with mean score of 3.09 and standard deviation of 0.1. Item 14 showed that Youth unemployment propels underemployment of professional manpower as they are forced to engage in menial jobs to make ends meet with a mean score of 3.17 and standard deviation of 0.1. And from Item 15, it was revealed that Youth unemployment hinders the engagement of competent skills in production processes in both public and private sectors in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.08 and standard deviation of 0.1. This shows that there is a high degree of similarity of opinion among respondents on the subject matter.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses that guided the study were empirically tested using chi-square statistical tool thus:

Hypothesis One

1Ho: Youth unemployment does not significantly hinder skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

This hypothesis was tested in line with the data presented in table 4 which is a table of responses to determine the effect of youth unemployment on skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test of Hypothesis One

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.361 ^a	12	.005
Likelihood Ratio	27.469	12	.007
Linear-by-Linear Association	.709	1	.400
N of Valid Cases	2000		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 39.60.

Critical Value

Degree of freedom (v) = (r-1) (c-1)

Where: r = Number of rows = 5

c = Number of columns = 4

v = (5-1) (4-1)

= (4) (3)

= 12

The level of significance = 0.5

Then, X² 0.5:12 = 21.03

Decision

Since the value of the calculated chi-square (28.36) is greater than the critical value (21.03), the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. Hence, it was concluded that youth unemployment significantly hinders skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. Moreover, the p-value of the chi-square 0.00 was less than the level of 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between youth unemployment and effective skill development in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

Hypothesis Two

2Ho: Youth unemployment does not significantly hinder mobilization of youths for development in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

This hypothesis was tested in line with table 5 which is a table of responses to determine the effect of youth unemployment on efficient skill mobilization for development in the selected local government areas in Ebonyi State.

Table 6: Chi-Square test of Hypothesis Two

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	48.885 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	53.586	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.692	1	.405
N of Valid Cases	2000		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 27.40.

Critical Value

Degree of freedom (v) = (r-1) (c-1)

Where: r = Number of rows = 5

c = Number of columns = 4

v = (5-1) (4-1)

= (4) (3)

= 12

The level of significance = 0.5

Then, X² 0.5:12 = 21.03

Decision

Since the value of the calculated chi-square (48.89) is greater than the critical value (21.03), the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. Hence, it was concluded that youth unemployment significantly hinders mobilization of youths for development in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. Moreover, the p-value of the chi-square 0.00 was less than the level of 0.05 level of

significance. Therefore, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between youth unemployment and effective skill mobilization in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

Hypothesis Three

3Ho: Youth unemployment does not to a greater extent hinder efficient utilization of skills of youth in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

This hypothesis was tested in line with the data presented in table 4 which is a table of responses to determine the extent to which youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

Table 9: Chi-Square test of hypothesis three

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.797 ^a	12	.022
Likelihood Ratio	23.792	12	.022
Linear-by-Linear Association	.134	1	.714
N of Valid Cases	2000		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 22.00.

Critical Value

Degree of freedom (v) = (r-1) (c-1)

Where: r = Number of rows = 5

c = Number of columns = 4

v = (5-1) (4-1)

= (4) (3)

= 12

The level of significance = 0.5

Then, X² 0.5:12 = 21.03

Decision

Since the value of the calculated chi-square (23.80) is greater than the critical value (21.03), the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. Hence, it was concluded that youth unemployment to a great extent hinders efficient utilization of skills of youth in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. Moreover, the p-value of the chi-square 0.00 was less than the level of 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between youth unemployment and effective skill utilization in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State.

VI. Discussion of Findings

In the course of this study, three specific objectives were raised which include to determine the effect of youth unemployment on skill development among youths in the six selected local government area of Ebonyi State; ascertain the effects of youth unemployment on efficient skill mobilization for development in the selected local government areas in Ebonyi State; and examine the extent to which youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. The following findings as discussed were made:

Effects of Unemployment on Skill Development among Youths in the Six Selected Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State

In attempt to determine the effects of youth unemployment on skill development among the youths in the six selected local government areas of Cross Rivers State, it was observed that youth unemployment significantly hinders skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. This finding was made from the test of hypothesis one where the result of the Chi-Square run through SPSS showed that the value of the calculated chi-square was greater than the critical value. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Similarly, the p-value of the statistical chi-square 0.00 was less than the level of significance 0.05. Consequently there was enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and uphold the alternate hypothesis. Furthermore, the result of the data presented in table 4 affirmed the finding since Item 1 showed that youth unemployment hinders improvement of process skills necessary for effective job performance among youths of Ebonyi State. This was agreed with a mean score of 3.05 and standard deviation of 0.1 showing high degree of similarity of opinion among the respondents. Item 2 revealed that youth who are unemployed are hindered in the

acquisition of relevant soft skills that enable people interact effectively and harmoniously with other people in a work environment. This was agreed with a mean score of 3.14 and standard deviation of 0.1 showing a high degree of similarity of opinion among the respondents. Item 3 showed that youth who are not employed are limited in the development of hard skills and abilities required for success in a job performance. This was agreed with a mean score of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 0.1 implying similarity of opinion among the respondents. Item 4 showed that youth unemployment hinders the acquisition of technical skills necessary for increased competence among the youth in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 0.2 showing that most of the respondents agreed. And Item 5 showed that youth unemployment hinders the ability to develop entrepreneurial skills necessary for self reliance among the youths in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 0.1 showing that most of them agreed.

This finding of this study is not misleading as it corroborates the findings of Longe (2017) who observed that when a youth is gainfully employed, he or she earns monetary record to cater for their immediate and future needs, the needs of their dependants and by extension reduces the level of poverty. He is given opportunities to develop or build more skills and experiences towards contributing to the development of the society; he is less likely to think or perpetrate criminal activities. Moreover, Ekong and Ekong (2016) has earlier revealed that given the high rate of unemployment among the youth in Nigeria, it is obvious that serious efforts must be made to generate more employment opportunities for them. In this regard, there is need to have a data bank of all unemployed youth, each is matched by skill and educational level. Employment generating agencies can fix applicants appropriately in jobs where they have competence using such data.

Effects of youth unemployment on efficient skill mobilization for development in the selected local government areas in Ebonyi State

From the analysis, it shows that youth unemployment significantly hinders mobilization of youths for development in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. This finding was made from the test of hypothesis two where the result of the Chi-Square run through SPSS showed that the value of the calculated chi-square was greater than the critical value. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Similarly, the p-value of the statistical chi-square 0.00 was less than the level of significance 0.05. Consequently there was enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and uphold the alternate hypothesis. Furthermore, the result of the data presented in table 5 showed that Item 6 revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that youth unemployment hinders mobilization of youth for development in Ebonyi State. This was agreed with a mean score of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 0.1 showing that there was a high level of similarity of opinion among the respondents. From Item 7, it was observed that youth unemployment hinders youth participation in community development projects in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.1 showing same direction of opinion among the respondents. Youth unemployment hinders the ability of the youths to contribute resources towards the development of Ebonyi State as revealed in Item 8 where the respondents had a mean score of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.2. From Item 9, it was observed that youth unemployment pushes the available manpower to migrate to other areas thereby hindering skill mobilization for development in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.2 showing that the responses were tailored in one direction. And from Item 10, it was revealed that youth unemployment increases youth restiveness thereby inhibiting skill mobilization for development in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.18 and 0.1 showing a high degree of similarity in opinion among the respondents.

This finding of this study is in line with the findings of Efe-Imafidon et al (2017) who found that engaging youths in profitable jobs is one of the ways of mobilizing able bodied youths to contribute their quota to nation building. When youths are engaged in profitable ventures, it gives them a sense of belonging and recognition as partners in the overall development of the society.

Extent to Which Youth Unemployment Hinders Efficient Utilization of Skills among Youths in the Selected Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State

The test of hypothesis in respect to the above objective revealed that youth unemployment to a great extent hinders efficient utilization of skills of youth in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. This finding was made from the test of hypothesis three where the result of the Chi-Square run through SPSS showed that the value of the calculated chi-square was greater than the critical value. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Similarly, the p-value of the statistical chi-square 0.00 was less than the level of significance 0.05. Consequently there was enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and uphold the alternate hypothesis. Furthermore, the result of the data presented in table 5 showed that from Item 11, it was observed that youth unemployment hinders efficient utilization of skills of youth in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.16 and standard deviation of 0.1. Item 12 revealed that Youth unemployment is responsible for waste of active manpower in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.06 and standard deviation of 0.1. Item 13 showed that most youths who cannot have access to job opportunities become victims of social vices with mean score of 3.09 and

standard deviation of 0.1. Item 14 showed that Youth unemployment propels underemployment of professional manpower as they are forced to engage in menial jobs to make ends meet with a mean score of 3.17 and standard deviation of 0.1. And from Item 15, it was revealed that Youth unemployment hinders the engagement of competent skills in production processes in both public and private sectors in Ebonyi State with a mean score of 3.08 and standard deviation of 0.1. This shows that there is a high degree of similarity of opinion among respondents.

This finding corroborates the findings of Udensi, Dassi and Emah (2013) who observed that young people constitute clear assets to community development programmes when they are positively empowered to be active citizens especially through employment. According to them, supporting and including young people in development processes is critical for several reasons: firstly, youth have experience, knowledge, and ideas that are unique to their situation, enabling them to offer key insights and perspectives on development that adults cannot; secondly, in many communities, youth make up the majority of the population; as a result, youth voices can be crucial expressions of overall community needs; and lastly, regardless of their current status, young people are the future custodians of their environments and leaders of their peers. A failure to promote youth development – and roles for youth in community development programmes – will negatively affect countries across the world, whereas engaging youths in development, such as taking active participation in the project planning and implementation encourages them to learn peaceful means of impacting their communities and the world. This can only be achieved where the youth are employed.

VII. Summary of Findings

Efforts have been made in this study to determine the effects of unemployment on youth development in selected local government areas of Ebonyi State. Descriptive survey design was adopted to draw a population of 1,442,000 youths from six selected local government areas across the 3 Senatorial Zones of the State. A structured questionnaire was used as the major instrument for data collection and mean and Chi-square tests were used as statistical tools for analysis. Based on the analysis of data carried out, the following findings were made.

- i. The study revealed that youth unemployment significantly hinders skill development among youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State, as unemployment does not give youths the opportunity to engage in job-skill related endeavour.
- ii. It was discovered that unemployment significantly denies a nation, state or local government the opportunity of youth mobilization for development.
- iii. The research also found that youth unemployment to a greater extent hinders efficient utilization of skills of youths in the study area.

VIII. Conclusion

Unemployment continues to top socio-economic challenges faced by both develop and developing countries. In Nigeria especially in Ebonyi State, the rate of youth unemployment is still high. The issue of insecurity and banditry that increases on daily basis in Nigeria recently has been limited to youth unemployment. Youths occupy strategic position in the economy of every nation if they are properly harnessed. Apart from being the leaders of tomorrow, youth comes with great dexterity, resourcefulness, and great energy. If these potentials were not efficiently utilized, it usually results to social, economic, political and psychological consequences in the society; hence the high rate of kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, child trafficking, drug abuse, suicide, internet fraud, thurgery among the youths in Nigeria. This high trend has dire consequences for the nation. Governments' efforts over the years through intervention programmes have been palliative measures which are not sustainable and this is why the number of the unemployed keeps soaring at the detriment of socio economic development of the country and Ebonyi State in particular. The general impression of the study is that government efforts towards reducing the scourge of youth unemployment has not been sustained as different administrations come up with different programmes which has led to discontinuity in the strive to resolve the challenges of youth unemployment. It is based on this submission that the researcher argues that frantic measures must be taken to engage the youths in fruitful ventures.

IX. Recommendations

Arising from the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are put forward as measures to drastically reduce the rate of youth unemployment in the study area and Nigeria in general.

1. In order to tackle the scourge of youth unemployment and its attendant consequences there is need for government and other key stakeholders to focus attention on youth skill development as a sustainable measure rather than providing palliative measures such as payment of monthly stipends. A skilled and gainfully employed youth can train others by so doing the cycle of unemployment among youths will be broken.

2. There is urgent need to mobilize youths for fruitful ventures as this has denied the nation and Ebonyi State in particular the opportunity to utilize the potentials in youths. Lack of adequate youth mobilization has dire consequences on economic development of the nation
3. There is also need to efficiently utilize the skills of available youths in Ebonyi State in order enhance and boost the socio economic development of the area.

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