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Skill Acquisition Training and Unemployment Reduction among Youths in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated skill acquisition training and unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the Study. An ex-post facto research design was employed for the Study. A sample of nine hundred and seventy-one (971) respondents was used for the Study. The selection was made through a multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a Questionnaire. The researchers and two experts from Measurement and Evaluation, University of Calabar, validated the instrument. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through the Cronbach alpha method. The statistical tool employed to test the hypotheses was Simple linear regression. The hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analyses revealed that “fashion designing skill acquisition and unisex hairstyling skill acquisition training significantly predicted unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State”. Based on the Study's findings, it was recommended that the government should embark on massive youth development training programmes to curb unemployment in the State.

Keywords: Skill acquisition training, unemployment, youths, self-employment.

1. Introduction

Unemployment poses a global anomaly and emerges as a significant crisis in Nigeria's economic landscape. The pervasive issue of youth unemployment has deeply permeated societal structures. Serving as a crucial economic indicator, unemployment signifies the challenge faced by young individuals in securing meaningful employment to contribute to the overall

productivity of the economy (Odigwe et al., 2018; Owan et al., 2022a). The roots of this problem, as identified by Ekong and Ekong (2016), can be traced back to the 1970s oil boom era, during which the Nigerian government shifted its focus from skill acquisition to diversifying entrepreneurship practices. This shift led to an overemphasis on academic qualifications, resulting in an upsurge in unemployment.

According to the concept proposed by Ekong and Ekong (2016), unemployment refers to the condition of individuals who are capable of working but struggle to find employment opportunities. The paper highlights the importance of skill acquisition as a powerful mechanism for mitigating high unemployment rates in society. The reduction of unemployment involves providing paid employment or enabling self-employment for individuals within a certain age range, thereby increasing the percentage of gainfully employed individuals in the labor force.

However, the category of self-employment within the labor market has been largely overlooked in many job creation plans implemented in Cross River State (Owan et al., 2023a). Studies conducted by different scholars reveal that the training provided to adolescents has not effectively equipped them with the necessary skills, values, attitudes, and competencies essential for fostering job creation and self-employment (Madumere-Obike, 2016; Nwangwu, 2017; Owan et al., 2022b, 2022c).

The youths in Cross River State are jobless due to a lack of time management and branding skills, marketing and networking skills, and risk propensity skills, among other skills that would have prepared them to face life problems (Petters et al., 2023). In Nigeria's Cross River State, the researcher noted a lack of entrepreneurship skills among the youth. Most youths cannot work for themselves, cannot influence, plan, and organise themselves, as well as make risky business decisions. Many of them are unaware that entrepreneurs' ability to take risks is a crucial characteristic (Owan et al., 2023b).

Some young folks in the State's Northern, Central, and Southern Districts rarely set more meaningful goals for themselves and then focus all their abilities and talent on achieving them. They appear to be slackers with no sense of teamwork. Some do not believe in voluntary collaboration and joint efforts to achieve desired outcomes. Others constantly argue

with themselves, preventing them from mobilising relevant resources and team members' talent for job creation, coordinating groups to work together efficiently, and creating an environment where people may support each other with self-employment.

The Nigerian government has implemented several policies and programs aimed at alleviating unemployment, specifically tailored to address the challenges faced by the impoverished population. Initiatives such as the "Green Revolution Programs", FADAMA, "National Agency for Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP)", "agricultural sector employment program, national open apprenticeship scheme", "subsidy reinvestment" and employment programs (SURE-P), and "Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN)" have been introduced.

Despite the existence of these measures, youth unemployment remains a significant obstacle to Nigeria's economic advancement (Owan et al., 2023a). The prevalence of unemployment among Nigerian youths continues to rise, primarily due to a lack of essential skills necessary for their success upon completing their education.

Fashion designing involves the application of design principles, aesthetics, clothing construction, and appreciation of natural beauty to clothing and its accompanying accessories. It is a practice influenced by culture and evolving trends that vary across different times and locations. To pursue a career in fashion design, one must possess an artistic and creative personality, proficiency in drawing, and the ability to convey ideas through sketches. While being an exceptional artist is not mandatory, the individual should possess outstanding skills in combining colours, tones, and shades. Additionally, proficiency in working with fabrics and creatively utilizing textiles is crucial.

A study conducted by Ajibola, Salau, and Aladejare (2014) indicated various challenges affecting the effectiveness of the two fashion designing schemes in achieving their objectives. The State Skills Acquisition Scheme faced issues such as insufficient funding, lack of a sustainable exit strategy, absence of start-up capital, ineffective monitoring and supervision mechanisms, lack of literacy and numeracy components, and inadequate sensitization efforts.

In a separate study, Iyaji (2018) discovered that fashion skills development serves as a productive avenue for employment in Nigeria. Fashion designing skills acquisition was identified as a potential solution capable of alleviating the adverse effects of unemployment in the country. The conclusion drawn was that with willingness and determination, graduates equipped with fashion designing skills may not necessarily need to seek paid employment, thereby contributing significantly to the reduction of unemployment.

Ekong and Ekong (2016) identified a positive correlation between fashion designing skills acquisition by the NDE and the reduction of unemployment in Akwa Ibom State, albeit not without significant challenges. The analysis of income contributions from these skills to the state's economy yielded mixed results, with 48% acknowledging a positive impact and 40% recognizing only minimal influence. The study recommended the establishment of more NDE training centers across all Local Government Areas in the state to enhance the program's effectiveness, among other suggestions.

Similarly, the findings from Fajobi's (2020) study underscored the crucial role of fashion designing skills acquisition in the economic development of Nigeria, emphasizing that the nation cannot progress without encouraging such skills among the youth. Among the recommendations, the study strongly advocated for the implementation of incentives for youth engaging in skill acquisition and the promotion of

apprenticeship as a viable career pathway for poverty alleviation.

Unisex hair styling is the action or skill of cutting and styling hair for both genders. It is hairstyling for film or photo shoots. This kind of hairstyle, hairdo, or haircut refers to hair styling, usually on the human scalp. Sometimes, this could also mean editing facial or body hair for both males and females, which promotes unemployment reduction among youths.

A study by Nnamdi (2020) on the impact of unisex hairstyling acquisition programme on youth employment in Africa: Barbershop narratives. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the Study. A total of 2,900 respondents were sampled for the Study.

A questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion were used as instruments for data collection. Based on documentary evidence, findings revealed that poor funding and considerable skills gaps were significant challenges for the hairdressing sector in broad terms. It was also found that many youths have struggled to access funding from public sources leading to their incapacity to acquire and deploy new technology for daily operations in unisex hairstyling.

Oluwakemi and Adetunji (2018) discovered that the state of higher education in unisex hairstyling entrepreneurship did not have a significant effect on employment generation. However, it was uncovered that the acquisition of unisex hairstyling skills in Nigeria contributed to increased job orientation, job creation, and self-employment, indicating that strategically positioning these skills could lead to self-employment.

Similarly, Okolocha (2020) investigated the impact of programs focused on acquiring unisex hairstyling skills on the employability of youth in Nigeria. The study employed a random sampling approach, targeting undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students, and used a well-structured

questionnaire as the primary research instrument. Findings revealed that unisex hairstyling was not widely embraced among the youth, and various challenges, including an emphasis on academic excellence, a shortage of skilled trainers, inadequate facilities, inconsistent follow-up by trainers, and insufficient funding, hindered the effectiveness of unisex hairstyling skills acquisition for employment.

The study recommended that trainers involved in unisex hairstyling skills acquisition undergo professional development to enhance the employability of graduates.

Donjour (2021) investigated the role of unisex hairstyling skill acquisition as a tool for poverty reduction in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study explored past skill acquisition training initiatives in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Bayelsa, and examined the implemented measures. Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources, primarily through interviews.

The study identified the primary challenge with unisex hairstyling skill acquisition as being related to policy implementation rather than formulation. Recommendations included establishing more centers for unisex hairstyling skill acquisition in both the state and local government areas, introducing vocational schools that teach valuable skills, and engaging non-governmental agencies and affluent individuals in job creation for the youth.

The study underscored the importance of the government having the political will to collaborate with universities and research institutions that have put forth effective strategies for addressing poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The surge in youth unemployment in Cross River State is experiencing a significant upward trend. Nevertheless, both the Federal Republic of Nigeria

and, more specifically, the Cross River State government have recently taken noteworthy measures to tackle this issue. The government, operating through initiatives such as the Green Revolution, People Empowerment Programme Initiative, Enterprise Nigeria Initiative, Niger Delta Development Commission, National Poverty Eradication Programmes, Community-Based Poverty Reduction Programmes, and others, has been actively engaged in poverty alleviation across various levels.

All these endeavors have been designed with the goal of eradicating youth unemployment. Despite these concerted efforts, tangible positive outcomes seem elusive. The persistently elevated youth unemployment rate in Cross River State is particularly troubling, given the multitude of government programs targeting the reduction of youth unemployment.

The repercussions of this predicament include a rise in criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, child abduction, poverty-driven militancy, crime and violence, human trafficking, hijacking, prostitution, and drug trafficking. In light of these challenges, the study set out to examine whether skills acquisition programs can be predictive of a decline in youth unemployment in Cross River State, Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The Study investigates skill acquisition training and unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigates:

1. The extent to which fashion designing skill acquisition training predict youth unemployment reduction?
2. The extent to which unisex hair styling skill acquisition training predict youth unemployment reduction?

1.3 Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. Fashion designing skill acquisition training does not significantly predict unemployment reduction among youths.
2. Unisex hairdressing skill acquisition training does not significantly predict unemployment reduction among youths.

2. Methodology

The research employed an Ex-post facto research design. This design was chosen due to the researchers lacking direct control over the independent variables in the study.

The geographical focus of this research is Cross River State, Nigeria, which stands as one of the 36 states in the country, situated in the southeastern region, sharing a border with Cameroon. Positioned in the South-South geopolitical zone, the state has Calabar as its capital city, situated between latitude 4°28' and 6°31' North and longitude 7°50' and 9°28' East of the Greenwich meridian.

Cross River State is a coastal region in the Niger Delta, spanning an area of 20,156 square kilometers, as reported by the Cross River State Government in 2014. It shares borders with Benue state in the north, Ebonyi and Abia states in the west, the East Cameroon Republic, and is bordered to the south by Akwa-Ibom and the Atlantic Ocean.

The state is characterized by diverse ethnic groups across its eighteen (18) local government areas, organized into three senatorial districts. The Southern senatorial districts include Calabar

Municipality, Calabar South, Bakassi, Biase, Akpabuyo, Odukpani, and Akamkpa LGAs.

The central senatorial district comprises Yakurr, Abi, Obubra, Etung, Ikom, Etung, and Boki LGAs. The northern part of the state encompasses Yala, Bekwarra, Ogoja, Obudu, and Obanliku LGAs.

The target population comprised 24,275 registered unemployed youths in the three Senatorial Districts of Cross River State.

Information from the Ministry of Youths, Sports and Social Development Calabar Cross River State (2021) revealed that Cross River North Senatorial District has five (5) Local Government Areas with 3,534 registered unemployed youths, Cross River Central Senatorial District has six (6) Local Government Areas with 9,907 registered unemployed youths while Cross River South Senatorial District has seven (7) Local Government Areas with 10,834 registered unemployed youths.

Stratified and proportionate sampling techniques were employed to select the respondents for this Study from the three Senatorial Districts (North, Central and South) of Cross River State. In order to achieve this purpose, the State was stratified into three Senatorial Districts (North, Central and South) to identify and address heterogeneity in the population, thus reducing sampling error in the Study.

Since each Zones stood as a stratum, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 4 per cent (971) of the respondents from the three Senatorial Districts. A ballot system was used to select 173 Wards from 18 Local Government Areas.

To this effect, the names of the Wards were written on pieces of paper, folded and thoroughly mixed in three different bags. The selection was done through the heart and draw method. Therefore, 971 respondents were randomly selected for the Study.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers and validated by two experts from Measurement and Evaluation, University of Calabar.

The survey instrument was carefully designed and divided into two distinct sections, labelled as A and B. Section A was specifically crafted to elicit information regarding the demographic characteristics of the subjects, while Section B comprised items aimed at gathering information related to both the independent and dependent variables of the study.

To assess the reliability of the instrument, a preliminary test was conducted with 50 respondents selected from the study area, individuals who were not part of the primary study. The Cronbach Alpha reliability method was employed to ascertain the instrument's reliability estimate.

In this process, respondents were provided with the instrument once for completion. However, during the scoring phase, the test was divided into two halves. Each participant was then scored on both halves, generating two distinct scores for each respondent, namely Odd and Even numbers. The scores derived from these two sets were subjected to correlation analysis using the Pearson product-moment correlation and further corrected using Spearman-Brown's prophecy formula.

The resulting reliability range fell between 0.77 to 0.88, indicating a high level of reliability for the instrument. A total of 971 instruments were distributed among respondents, and an impressive 680 completed questionnaires were retrieved. Subsequently, the gathered data underwent thorough analysis utilizing a simple linear regression statistical tool.

3. Results

In the presentation of the results, the research questions were answered descriptively. However, the

hypotheses involved in this Study were presented in their null form for statistical testing, and all the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance

3.1 Research Question 1

To what extent does fashion designing skill acquisition predict unemployment reduction among youths? To answer this research question, the mean and standard deviation were applied, and the results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1 displays the Mean scores and Standard deviation of the responses related to forecasting the impact of fashion designing skill acquisition on reducing unemployment among youths. The assessment was conducted on a 4-point scale, where the highest possible response score for each item was four, and the lowest was one.

The cut-off mean, set at 2.50, represents the average score between the highest and lowest scores for each item. It is noteworthy that six specific items listed in the table achieved a mean score equal to or surpassing the established cut-off mean.

From the Table, the skill to fasten fabric materials with a sewing machine had a mean score of (2.11±1.09), knowing how to pass a tread through the needle had a mean score of (2.20±1.02), the skill to effectively cut materials to get exact measurements had a mean score of (2.07±1.11).

The Table equally shows that the skill to make a baby's cloth out of remnants had a mean score of (2.21±1.04), the skill to fix cuffs, buttons and trims for all clothing materials had a mean score (2.06±1.12) while the skill of using wool to design with a machine had a mean score of (2.17±1.17).

This result indicates that the respondents perceived the listed six items to predict the extent of acquisition of fashion designing skills for unemployment

reduction among youths at a low level in Cross River State. This is because the mean scores of each listed item were seen to be less than the grand mean of 2.50, which is also less than the mean cut-off score of 2.59. This indicated acceptance that the extent of predicting the acquisition of fashion designing skills for unemployment reduction among youths is low at different weights, based on the mean score of each item. This implies that the higher the mean score, the more the item is perceived as a predictor within the context of this Study for the acquisition of fashion designing skills.

However, the six items that dealt with the acquisition of fashion designing skills were rejected as having less predictive weight on unemployment reduction among youths in the study area.

Therefore, the answer to the research question seeking to find out the extent to which acquisition of fashion designing skills predicts unemployment among youths in the study area is that the extent of fashion designing skill acquisition for such prediction is shallow.

Thus, to explain the findings reasonably, it can be said that the extent of predicting fashion designing skill acquisition for unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State is shallow.

This could be as a result of youths' failure to acquire skills related to fastening fabric materials with a sewing machine, how to pass a thread through the needle, ineffective to cutting materials to get exact measurements, some cannot make a baby clothes out of remnants, fix cuffs, buttons and trims for all clothing materials and also lack the skill of using wool to design with a machine among other issues.

Table 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Responses to the Extent of Predicting Fashion Designing Skill Acquisition on Unemployment Reduction among Youths (n = 680)

S/ N	Items description	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	I can easily fasten fabric materials with a sewing machine	2.11	1.09	Rejected
2	Knowing how to pass a thread through the needle	2.20	1.02	Rejected
3	I can effectively cut materials to get exact measurements	2.07	1.11	Rejected
4	Ability to make a baby's cloth out of remnants	2.21	1.04	Rejected
5	I can fix cuffs, buttons and trims for all clothing materials	2.06	1.12	Rejected
6	Having the skill of using a wool to design with a machine	2.12	1.17	Rejected
	Grand mean	2.50		

Source: Author's computation of fieldwork, 2021

1.1 Research Question 2

To what extent does unisex hairstyling skill acquisition predict unemployment reduction among youths? To answer this research question, the mean and standard deviation were applied, and the results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows the Mean scores and Standard deviation of the responses to the extent of predicting unisex hairstyling skill acquisition predict unemployment reduction among youths. The evaluation was conducted on a 4-point scale, where the highest response score for each item was designated as 4, while the lowest response score was set at 1.

A cut-off mean of 2.50 was established, representing the average score derived from the highest and lowest scores on each item. Notably, it is evident that the six items listed subsequently attained a mean equal to or exceeding the established cut-off mean.

From the Table, having the skill to make the hairstyles of both males and females had a mean score of (1.17±0.77), knowing the principles of hair design has a mean score of (1.10±0.71), being good at creating a

styling vision for a client has a mean score of (1.85 ± 0.74) . The Table equally shows that the skill to create width in a hair design for a client had a mean score of (1.72 ± 0.66) , inability to make repeated lines in a hairstyle by creating interest, especially in a finger wave, had a mean score (2.46 ± 1.65) while designing curls, waves, curves/straight hair of any combination had a mean score of (2.48 ± 1.79) .

This result indicates that the listed six items were perceived by the respondents to predict the extent of unisex hairstyling skill acquisition on unemployment reduction among youths is at a low level in Cross River State. This is because the mean scores of each listed item, except for items 41 and 42 are seen to be higher than the grand mean of 2.45, which is also less than the mean cut-off score of 2.50.

This indicated acceptance that the extent of predicting the acquisition of unisex hairstyling skills on youth unemployment reduction is low at different weights, which is based on the mean score of each item.

This implies that the higher the mean score, the more the item is perceived as a predictor within the context of this Study for unisex hairstyling skill acquisition.

Table 2. Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Responses to the Extent of Predicting Unisex Hairstyling Skill Acquisition Predict Unemployment Reduction among Youths (n = 680)

S/N	Items description	Mean	SD	Remarks
7	I can make the hair styles of both males and females	1.17	0.77	Rejected
8	I don't know the principles of hair design	1.10	0.71	Rejected
9	I am good at creating a styling vision for a client	1.85	0.74	Rejected
10	I cannot create width in a hair design for a client	1.72	0.66	Rejected

11	Making repeated lines in a hairstyle by creating interest, especially in a finger wave	2.46	1.65	Accepted
12	Designing curls, waves, curves/straight hair of any combination	2.48	1.79	Rejected
	Grand mean	2.50		Rejected

Source: Author's computation of fieldwork, 2022

The six items which dealt with unisex hairstyling skill acquisition were, however, rejected as having less predictive weight on unemployment reduction among youths.

Therefore, the answer to the research question seeking to find out the extent to which the acquisition of unisex hairstyling skills predicts unemployment reduction among youths in the study area is that the extent of unisex hairstyling skill acquisition for such prediction is shallow.

This could be as a result of youths' inability to acquire the skills for making the hairstyles of both males and females, do not know the principles of hair design, are not good at creating a styling vision for a client, they could not create width in a hair design for a client, inability to make repeated lines in a hairstyle by creating interest especially in a finger wave among others.

1.1 Hypothesis 1

This hypothesis posits that there is no significant predictive relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition and unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State. In this hypothesis, fashion designing skill acquisition is the independent variable, while unemployment reduction among youths is the dependent variable. Both variables were measured on a continuous scale.

To assess this hypothesis, a simple linear regression statistic was employed on the data, and the outcome is detailed in Table 1.

Table 3. Results of a Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Fashion Designing Skill Acquisition on Unemployment Reduction among Youths (n = 680)

Model	SS	Df	MS	F-ratio	p	R ²
Regression	2034.58	1	2034.58	1773.27*	.000	.723
Residual	777.91	678	1.147			
Total	2812.49	679				

*P<.05

Table 3 shows that the analysis of variance in the regression output produced an F-ratio of 1773.271 for unemployment reduction. This F-ratio is statistically significant at .05 probability level. This means that fashion designing skill acquisition significantly predicts unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River.

The result also shows a coefficient of determination (R²) of .723 for unemployment reduction among youths in the study area. This implies that 72.3 per cent variance in unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State was accounted for by fashion designing skill acquisition.

Thus, 27.7 per cent of the variance in unemployment among youths in the study area could be attributed to the effects of other extraneous variables in the Study.

1.1 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis posits that there is no significant predictive relationship between unisex hairstyling skill acquisition and unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State.

In this hypothesis, unisex hairstyling skill acquisition serves as the independent variable, while unemployment reduction among youths is the dependent variable. Both variables were measured on a continuous scale. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression statistic was applied to the data, and the results are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. A summary of the simple linear analysis result of the prediction of unisex hairstyling skill acquisition on unemployment reduction among youths (n = 680)

Model	SS	Df	MS	F-ratio	p	R ²
Regression	2234.47	1	2234.47	2620.92*	.000	.794
Residual	578.03	678	0.853			
Total	2812.49	679				

*p<.05

Table 4 shows that the analysis of variance in the regression output produced an F-ratio of 2620.921 for unemployment reduction.

This F-ratio is statistically significant at .05 probability level. This means that unisex hairstyling skill acquisition significantly predicts unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River. The result also shows a coefficient of determination (R²) of .794 for unemployment reduction among youths in the study area.

This implies that the 79.4 per cent variance in unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State was accounted for by unisex hairstyling skill acquisition. Thus, 20.6 per cent of the variance in unemployment among youths in the study area could be attributed to the effects of other variables extraneous to the Study.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed in line with the subheadings below.

1.1 Fashion Designing Skill Acquisition and Unemployment Reduction among Youths

This hypothesis revealed that fashion designing skill acquisition significantly predicts unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State. This finding implies that the more youths are provided with good fashion designing skills, the better the reduction of unemployment among youths in the study area.

The current finding aligns with Adedokun (2020), supporting the notion that fashion designing skill acquisition has a significant impact on reducing youth unemployment. This observation is consistent with the conclusions drawn by Iyaji (2018), whose research demonstrated that the development of fashion designing skills serves as a fruitful pathway for employment creation in Nigeria.

Similarly, the present result is in harmony with the findings of Ekong and Ekong (2016), who identified a positive correlation between fashion designing skills acquisition by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and a reduction in unemployment in Akwa Ibom State, albeit not without notable challenges. Their study revealed mixed income contributions from fashion designing skills acquired by NDE to the state's economy, with 48% affirming a positive link and 40% acknowledging only a minimal influence. Recommendations were made, including the expansion of NDE training centers to all Local Government Areas in the state for enhanced benefits.

In a parallel vein, the outcome is akin to Fajobi's (2020) research, where the importance of fashion designing skill acquisition in Nigeria was explored. Fajobi investigated factors contributing to the decline in apprenticeship development and the career implications for youth engaging in fashion designing skills acquisition.

The study utilized Parson's functional prerequisite postulate and Modernization theory, employing a

cross-sectional research approach that combined questionnaires and in-depth interviews (IDIs) to gather information from selected wards in Ife-east Local Government, Osun State. Through cluster sampling for the questionnaire and purposive sampling for the interviews, the data were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis. The findings underscored the imperative role of fashion designing skills acquisition in the economic development of Nigeria, emphasizing that the nation's progress is contingent upon encouraging these skills among the youth.

1.2 Unisex Hairstyling Skill Acquisition and Unemployment Reduction among Youths

The finding revealed that unisex hairstyling skill acquisition significantly predicts unemployment reduction among youths in Cross River State. This finding implies that the more youths are provided with functional unisex hairstyling skills, the better the reduction of unemployment among them in the study area.

In contrast, the outcomes of this study diverge from those of Nnamdi (2020), whose documentary evidence highlighted significant challenges such as poor funding and substantial skill gaps within the broader hairdressing sector.

Nnamdi's findings also indicated that many youths faced difficulties in accessing funding from public sources, leading to their inability to acquire and implement new technology for daily operations in unisex hairstyling.

Conversely, the present study aligns with the conclusions drawn by Oluwakemi and Adetunji (2018), suggesting that the state of higher education in unisex hairstyling entrepreneurship does not exert a significant effect on employment generation.

Despite these challenges, their research revealed that unisex hairstyling skills acquisition has the potential

to enhance job orientation, job creation, and self-employment. It becomes evident that strategic positioning of unisex hairstyling skills acquisition could lead to self-employment.

Similarly, the findings of this study do not resonate with those of Okolocha (2020), whose research indicated that unisex hairstyling was unpopular among the youth. Consistent with the current study, Donjour (2021) argues that the primary issue with unisex hairstyling skill acquisition lies in policy implementation rather than formulation.

The study recommends the establishment of sufficient unisex hairstyling skill acquisition centers in the state and all local government areas, emphasizing the need for effective policy implementation.

4.1 Conclusion

Drawing conclusions from the study's findings, it can be asserted that skill acquisition training emerges as a substantial predictor of reducing unemployment among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria. The implementation of skill acquisition training has empowered numerous individuals to establish private business ventures, creating employment opportunities not only for themselves but also for their employees. This has had a positive impact on their livelihoods, contributing to an enhancement in living conditions for both entrepreneurs and their employees.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should encourage community education facilitators to promote the art of applying design, aesthetics and clothing construction and its accessories with different trends, times and places to reduce unemployment among youths in Cross River State.

2. There should be a sufficient provision of hairdressing facilities and equipment in all the community training centers to promote unemployment reduction in Cross River State.

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