

Stemming the Tide of Political Violence among Youths and Women in the Rural Areas of Ebonyi State through Work Force Development

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Abstract: The study centered on stemming the tide of political violence among youths and women in rural areas of Ebonyi State through work force development. It sought to enlighten youths and women, train them on saleable skills and carry out a follow-up of the youths and women for sustainability projects. The study focused on solar energy installation and maintenance, bead making/wiring, insecticide, rodenticide and pesticide production, cosmetology (hair products, detergents, perfumes, among others), car wash production, liquid soap production. The area for the study is Ikwo and Ezza South in Ebonyi State. 100 participants were chosen using stratified random sampling techniques to ensure that the communities were adequately represented. Data were collected using test-retest method and analyzed using SPSS version 20. The findings of this study revealed that participants had initial skills and knowledge between 1.04 and 1.79 in the areas covered in the training. However, after the training, the participants' skills and knowledge increased to a level between 3.76 and 4.32. The researchers recommended that; more of this training should be carried out in other Local Government Areas of Ebonyi state, more skill areas of technology and vocational education should be included in future trainings among others.

Key words: Stemming, Tide, Political violence, Youth, Workforce Development, Rural Areas

I. INTRODUCTION

Stemming the tide simply means To stop the course of a trend, opinion, or the like. The verb to stem, meaning to stop or restrain, comes from the Old Norse word stemma, meaning "to dam." It would take an enormous dam to stop ocean tides, but the tide of public opinion, for example, can be checked or diverted (Omoniyi, 2019).

Workforce development is a term used to describe employment initiative services offered by agencies and government programs. Across the United States, cities and small communities embrace workforce development because it is an essential component in creating, sustaining and retaining a viable workforce. Through workforce development, communities are able to create social and

economic prosperity (Kay, 2017). According to Global Inclusion Strategies, workforce development can help companies and small businesses tap into new markets and grow nationally or globally. Through workforce development, companies are able to increase their cultural competence and potentially create an international presence. Workforce development doesn't just focus on the entire community but also focuses on individuals. Through workforce development, individuals receive training that increases their competency and makes them a greater asset in the workforce. Workforce development provides assistance to those who are unemployed or are veterans. According to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (2017), youths who are finding it difficult to reenter the workforce can benefit from the services many workforce development agencies provide, such as job matching. Leadership development is also essential to ensuring a strong workforce. Through workforce development, the capacity of local leaders is increased, and they are better equipped to create new opportunities and recruit more youths into the workforce.

Youth is the time of life when one is young, and often means the time between childhood and adulthood (maturity) (Altschuler; Strangler; Berkley; Burton, 2009). It could be defined as "the appearance, freshness, vigor, spirit, among others, characteristic of one who is young". Its definitions of a specific age range varies, as youth is not defined chronologically as a stage that can be tied to specific age ranges; nor can its end point be linked to specific activities, such as taking unpaid work or having sexual relations (Furlong, 2013). Youth is an experience that may shape an individual's level of dependency, which can be marked in various ways according to different cultural perspectives (Christine, 2013). Personal experience is marked by an individual's cultural norms or traditions, while a youth's level of dependency means the extent to which they still rely on their family emotionally and economically (Altschuler et al, 2009).

Violence is an extreme form of aggression, such as assault, rape or murder (American psychology Association, 2020). Violence has many causes, including frustration, exposure to violent media, violence in the home or neighborhood and a tendency to see other people's actions as hostile even when they're not. Certain situations also increase the risk of aggression, such as drinking, insults and other provocations and environmental factors like heat and overcrowding.

In this regard, violence is the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy (Allen, 2001). Less conventional definitions are also used, such as the World Health Organization's definition of violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (Scheerer, 1993).

Internationally, violence resulted in the deaths of an estimated 1.28 million people in 2013 up from 1.13 million in 1990 (Smihula, 2013). Of the deaths in 2013, roughly 842,000 were attributed to self-harm (suicide), 405,000 to interpersonal violence, and 31,000 to collective violence (war) and legal intervention. In Africa, out of every 100,000 people, each year an estimated 60.9 die a violent death (Schechter, Willheim, McCaw, Turner, Myers & Zeanah, 2011). The World Health Organization (WHO) divides violence into three broad categories such as, self-directed violence, interpersonal violence and collective violence (WHO, 2019).

This initial categorization differentiates between violence a person inflicts upon himself or herself, violence inflicted by another individual or by a small group of individuals, and violence inflicted by larger groups such as states, organized political groups, militia groups and terrorist organizations. These three broad categories are each divided further to reflect more specific types of violence which includes; physical, sexual, psychological and emotional (Schechter et al, 2011). Collective violence is subdivided into structural violence and economic violence. Unlike the other two broad categories, the subcategories of collective violence suggest possible motives for violence committed by larger groups of individuals or by states. Collective violence that is committed to advance a particular social agenda includes, for example, crimes of hate committed by organized groups, terrorist acts and mob violence. Political violence includes war and related violent conflicts, state violence and similar acts carried out by larger groups. Economic violence includes attacks by larger groups motivated by economic gain such as attacks carried out with the purpose of disrupting economic activity, denying access to essential services, or creating economic division and fragmentation. Clearly found amongst youths as the dominant populace in elections and acts committed by larger groups can have multiple motives (Gammeltoft, 2016).

In Nigeria, the political class has continuously empowered the youths to commit crimes in order for them to achieve their

selfish aims (Olasunkanmi, 2010). Whatever the authentic number might be, it is unacceptable that what is supposed to be a non-violent civic responsibility by peace-loving citizens has turned into a harvest of killings, maiming and intimidation (Christine, 2013). There have been cases of bloodshed, heinous crimes at every point in our political life (Eze 2013). Political violence stems up as a means of maintenance of status quo. Politicians themselves are assassinated, youths are maimed, innocent passersby are killed, souls and destinies are destroyed in unholy quest for power. Most often, the deaths recorded during such violence were never accurately recorded. The contending politicians and political forces are different though certain individuals feature prominently.

Political violence is part and parcel of a broader epidemic of violence that has devastated the lives of tens of thousands of Nigerians since the country's return to civilian rule in 1999 (Adeyemo, 2000). Many politicians have taken advantage of rampant poverty and unemployment to recruit young men, who intimidate and even kill their opponents or opponents' supporters. On January 9th 2015 alone, about 2000 Nigerians lost their lives in insurgency related attacks (Ucha, 2010). After lamenting on the death of many Nigerians such as former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige; Lagos based politician Funsho Williams, Ogun State Governorship candidate of the Action Congress (AC) in the 2007 election, Dipo Dina among others who have been killed by either suspected robbers or Assassins. Eme, (2011) stressed that whether we accept it or not, Nigeria is steadily sliding into a state of lawlessness. Most of the conflicts and collective violent behaviours in Nigeria resulted from dissatisfaction from the poor and unemployed (Vanguard, July 19, 2011). Nigeria has emerged as a leader in international affairs like the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), which is trying to emphasize the importance of good governance and respect for human rights, said (Takirambudde, 2015). However to maintain its credibility there, Nigeria needs to prove she is willing and able to deal with human rights violations at home, including political violence.

According to a forthcoming survey of media and other sources undertaken by Human Rights Watch and Johns Hopkins' School for Advanced International Studies, more than 11,000 Nigerians lost their lives in clashes along political, ethnic, religious, and other lines between the handover of power to the Obasanjo's government and the end of 2006. Nigeria's National Commission for Refugees has estimated that more than three million Nigerians were internally displaced by this strife (Human Right Watch, 2007).

Political violence can take a number of forms including heinous crime, razing down of buildings, killings and maiming of lives, rendering people homeless, allegations, intimidations, harassments, assassinations (Olasuunkenmi, 2012). At other times government use force in order to defend their country or conquer territories. Non action on the part of government can also be characterized as a form of violence.

Groups of people have harmonized themselves to destabilize the democratic regime and the transition process that fits into patterns of ethnic competition. Members of the same ethnic group go against each other in struggles for leadership posts. Conflicts come up as a result of competition over economic opportunities. Lack of internal democratic structure and processes have made political parties to impose unpopular candidates on party members, weakness of the electoral body and the law enforcement agents, social downturns that have remained unaddressed for a long period of time have poised main causes of political violence over time.

Skill acquisition makes the learner move from the cognitive state to the associative and then the autonomous state. Skills make an individual well equipped and become a master also an employment of labour. A master in particular skill can generate income, becomes a functional person in the society, generates employment and become financially stable (Ukwuagbala, 2019).

Life skills in youths; Evidence shows that the life skills acquired in social development programmes can reduce involvement in violence, improve social skills, boost educational achievement and improve job prospects. Happenings in the nation and specifically in Ebonyi State over time has presented desperate and daring politicians that are cruel in taking and retaining power. They use the youths to unleash their mayhems and cage them at the heart of most violence in the state as a tool in perpetuating such violence and women at the receiving end (Eze, 2013). In Ebonyi state, in 2011, Uburu community experienced great and deadly violence as houses were razed down, youths killed; families rendered homeless, property worth millions of naira were lost. Onueke also experienced such violence in 2011 and 2019. Ikwo youths clash has been on from 2003 through to 2019 erupting unexpectedly killing over hundreds of youth, maiming over hundreds of youth and incarceration of many in the prisons. Political violence has been on the increase in the nation generally and specifically in Ebonyi State. Happenings have proved that violence has been on the increase with youths as tools for perpetuating it and women at the receiving end (Eze, 2013). In Ebonyi State in 2011, Uburu community experienced great and deadly violence as houses were razed down, youths were killed, families were rendered homeless and property worth millions of naira were lost.

Onueke also experienced such violence in 2011, Ikwo youths clash from 2003 till date killing over hundreds of youths, maiming hundreds of them and incarceration of the youths in prisons has been on an alarming increase.

Efforts by government and individuals to eradicate poverty have failed to retard the ugly trend and violence has been on the increase as a result of poverty. In the light of the government's concern for poverty reduction, numerous policies and programmes have been designed at one time or another and by the end of 1998, there were sixteen poverty

alleviation institutions in the country. Among previous and most recent strategies were; (1) Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), (2) Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE), (3) Green Revolution, (4) Low Cost Housing Scheme, (5) River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), (6) National Land Development Authority (NALDA), (7) Agricultural Development Programs (ADP), (8) Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), (9) Strategies Grains Reserves Program (SGRP), (10) Rural Electrification Scheme (RES), (11) Rural Banking Program (RBP), (12) Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), (13) Better Life Program (BLP), (14) National Directorate of Employment (NDE), (15) Family Economic and Empowerment Program (FEPP), (16) People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), (17) Community Banks Program, (18) Family Support Program (FSP), (19) Family Economic Advancement Program (FEAP), (20) National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) and (21) Small Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and so many others. None of these approaches was able to reduce poverty in Nigeria. Poverty has been on the increase from 21.8% in 1980 to over 70% of the country's population since the year 2019. This is because most of these efforts were misdirected. For example, the better life for rural women of a late first lady was always carried out in the Federal Capital Territory, and the closest it got to the rural women was at their various state capitals. Therefore Nigeria should evolve a programme which has the power to increase the capacity of the nation's human resource to effectively utilize available natural resources. Thus poverty is a problem of low wages, low labour returns to rural self-employment activities, underemployment, and protracted unemployment. Unemployment in Nigeria has reached an alarming rate that something needs be done urgently to curb it and avert its economic and social consequences. Which method will be more effective in handling this national poverty problem? This study was aimed to adopt skill training on solar energy installation and maintenance, bead making, baking, and soap making skills to reduce political violence in Ebonyi State.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was Action Research; this is because practitioners use it to address practical problems in the society rather than produce independently validated and reproducible findings, Is an inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them (Herr and Anderson, 2005). Ebonyi State is made up of thirteen local government areas with a population of 1.676 million people (projected population census, 2018). The study was carried out in Ebonyi central political zone, which consist of Ikwo, Ishielu, Ezza North and Ezza South Local Government Area. The focal point is Ikwo and Ezza South Local Area Government. The two Local Government Area were chosen because they have been experiencing incessant politically stirred youth clashes from 1999 till date, thereby reducing the area to be socially and economically backward and leaving the surviving youths and women poor. The sample size for the

study was 100 participants. The participants were drawn from the communities in the two Local Government Areas (Ebonyi Central). From each of the two Local Government Area fifteen women and thirty five youths were selected respectively for the training using stratified random sampling techniques. The youths were made up of fifteen girls and twenty boys; this was done purposively because boys play active roles in political crimes. Ethical clearance was obtained from EBSU research ethics committee. A follow up visitation was also carried out regularly to ensure the achievement of stated objectives. A structured questionnaire was administered to the participants to evaluate the study objectives using correlation to determine the relationship between previous knowledge and newly acquired knowledge from the present study (pre test and post test). The pretest data were collected on 24th June, 2019 and 29th July, 2019 in Ezza and Ikwo Local Government Area respectively why the post test data were collected on 5th August, 2019 and 2nd September, 2019 in Ezza and Ikwo Local Government Area respectively and the data were further analyzed.

Prior to the research, the researcher wrote a letter for an application for ethical clearance and also filled an ethical clearance form (Checklist). The checklist was designed by the Ebonyi State University Research Committee (EBSU-UREC) to help investigators to ensure that all elements necessary for the development of a complete and ethically sensitive protocol are covered and to prepare a research protocol that satisfies UREC requirements. The completed the checklist, and one of the element described in the checklist was found missing from the research protocol, changes was made in the protocol to include autonomous of will to withdraw from training.

EBSU-UREC follows the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (1964), amended in 2000, with Notes of Clarifications provided in 2002 and 2004, as well as the International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects published in 2002. During the ethical review of a protocol, the EBSU-UREC evaluated the risks and benefits to the research participants and research communities in the following domains: Respect for persons, Justice and Autonomy. A committee of Directors examined the form filled and the application written, if it meets up with the stated rules guiding research that involves human then a consent letter is given to the researcher bearing a congratulatory note. Technical Assistants, Research Assistants and Research Informants were employed and trained to enhance the rigour of the research process.

Data analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS@IBM version 20. SPSS is one of the most advanced statistical tool, is a short statistical package for the social sciences and it is used by various kind of researchers for complex statistical data analysis (Ben, 2018).

III. RESULTS

The findings of the study are also presented and discussed.

Research Question 1

What is the effect of training on solar energy skills in Ebonyi State?

The data for answering research **question 1** are presented in **Table 1**

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of responses of participants on their skills and knowledge of solar energy installation and maintenance

Descriptive Statistics						
	Skills and Knowledge in Solar Energy	N	Pre	Test	Post	Test
			Mean	Std. Devn	Mean	Std. Devn
1	Knowledge of sun capacity	86	1.27	0.45	3.91	0.68
2	Work tools	86	1.79	0.85	4.06	0.65
3	Uses of solar energy	86	1.09	0.29	4.32	0.54
4	Safety rules	86	1.48	0.50	3.94	0.60
5	Functions of solar panel	86	1.11	0.32	4.02	0.59
6	Types of solar panel	86	1.20	0.40	4.04	0.61
7	Differences between cell and panel	86	1.41	0.49	3.93	0.64
8	Meaning of PVC	86	1.46	0.97	4.00	0.57
9	Panel installation skills	86	1.04	0.21	3.93	0.68
10	Charge regulator installation	86	1.67	0.98	4.12	0.59
11	Knowledge of types of battery	86	1.11	0.32	4.08	0.79
12	Differences between deep cycle and lead acid battery	86	1.18	0.58	3.97	0.63
13	Sizing solar components	86	1.06	0.25	3.96	0.65
14	Battery installation	86	1.39	0.49	4.02	0.63
15	Ability to make right solar recommendations	86	1.11	0.32	4.02	0.65
16	Ability to make Series connection	86	1.27	0.45	3.95	0.61
17	Ability to make Parallel connections	86	1.78	0.85	3.97	0.57
18	Ability to make Preference of solar Panels	86	1.19	0.29	4.03	0.64
19	Knowledge of stand alone	86	1.58	0.50	3.98	0.65
20	Knowledge of grid connections	86	1.13	0.32	3.97	0.61
21	Ability to handle stand alone	86	1.27	0.40	3.95	0.68
22	Ability to handle grid solar system	86	1.41	0.49	3.98	0.58
23	Knowledge of all solar energy components	86	1.36	0.97	4.11	0.60
	Valid N (listwise)	86				

Table 1 showed that there was an increase in the skills and knowledge of the candidates on solar energy installation and maintenance. The mean responses of the candidates indicated 1.04 as the lowest, while 1.79 was the highest. But after training, candidates’ response increased between 3.91 and 4.

32. The closeness of standard deviation of candidates' responses show that their opinions are not dispersed.

Research Question 2

What is the effect of training on bead making skills in Ebonyi State?

The data for answering research **question 2** are presented in **Table 2**

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of responses of trainees on their skills and knowledge of bead making

Descriptive Statistics						
	Skills and knowledge in Bead Making	N	Pre Test		Post Test	
			Mean	Std. Devn	Mean	Std. Devn
1	Employment in bead making	44	1.34	0.52	3.77	0.71
2	Aspect of clothing and textile	44	1.47	0.76	4.05	0.61
3	Cultural heritage	44	1.18	0.44	4.00	0.52
4	Curative nature of bead making	44	1.31	0.51	3.82	0.58
5	Knowledge of bead fixing	44	1.22	0.56	3.89	0.57
6	Neck designs	44	1.11	0.32	3.91	0.60
7	Purse bead making	44	1.25	0.43	3.86	0.63
8	Bead sequencing	44	1.29	0.73	3.89	0.53
9	Bead curves	44	1.29	0.87	3.84	0.64
10	Knowledge of bead sale points	44	1.47	0.79	3.86	0.63
11	Alternative for bead wires	44	1.25	0.43	4.02	0.59
12	Creativity and skills in bead making	44	1.20	0.50	3.76	0.59
	Valid N (listwise)	44				

Table 2 shows a significant increase in the knowledge and skills in bead making by the candidates. The responses the candidates indicated a lowest pretest mean of 1.11 and the highest mean of 1.47. After the training, the post test showed the lowest mean response of 3.86 and highest mean response of 4.05. The standard deviation of candidates' responses indicated that their responses are close to one another.

Research Question 3

What is the effect of training on baking skills in Ebonyi State?

The data for answering research **question 3** are presented in **Table 3**

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of responses of trainees on their skills and knowledge of baking

Descriptive Statistics						
	Skills and knowledge in Baking	N	Pre Test		Post Test	
			Mean	Std. Devn	Mean	Std. Devn
1	Baking tools	93	1.34	0.47	3.89	0.82

2	Flour selection	93	1.73	0.86	4.06	0.62
3	Egg as a glazing pasteries	93	1.09	0.29	4.05	0.53
4	Work of margarine	93	1.45	0.50	3.90	0.60
5	Work of yeast	93	1.09	0.29	4.00	0.58
6	work of vanilla	93	1.19	0.39	4.03	0.61
7	Use of oven	93	1.37	0.48	3.92	0.64
8	Use of bicarbonate of soda	93	1.38	0.90	3.96	0.57
9	Yeast as a living organism	93	1.08	0.28	3.90	0.73
10	Weighing of confectionary materials	93	1.69	0.95	4.01	0.58
11	Right apron for baking	93	1.09	0.29	4.09	0.60
12	Importance of baking skills	93	1.17	0.56	3.97	0.62
	Valid N (listwise)	93				

Table 3 shows a significant increase in the skill and knowledge of the participants on baking after training. The mean response of the participants' knowledge and skills was highest with right apron for baking (4.09) and lowest with baking tools (3.89). Their standard deviation also shows a closeness of participants' responses.

Research Question 4

What is the effect of training on soap making skills in Ebonyi State?

The data for answering research question 4 are presented in **Table 4**

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of responses of trainees on their skills and knowledge of soap making

Descriptive Statistics						
	Skills and knowledge in Soap Making	N	Pre Test		Post Test	
			Mean	Std. Devn	Mean	Std. Devn
1	Oil and caustic soda applications	118	1.33	0.47	3.91	0.66
2	Soap Production methods	118	1.76	0.86	4.06	0.60
3	Production of modern and local soaps	118	1.09	0.29	4.04	0.52
4	Car wash production	118	1.45	0.50	3.91	0.59
5	Detergent production	118	1.10	0.30	4.00	0.56
6	Use of palm kernel oil for soap production	118	1.19	0.39	4.01	0.59
7	Saponification	118	1.38	0.48	3.94	0.61
8	Addition of oil to caustic soda	118	1.40	0.92	3.96	0.56
9	Purification	118	1.07	0.26	3.92	0.66
10	Foaming agent	118	1.68	0.94	4.00	0.56

11	Improvement of washing power	118	1.10	0.30	4.07	0.58
12	Chemical reaction	118	1.16	0.55	3.97	0.60
13	Right apron for soap making	118	1.15	0.38	4.00	0.56
14	Potentials in soap production	118	1.22	0.43	4.05	0.58
15	Safety rules in soap production	118	1.16	0.36	3.96	0.59
	Valid N (listwise)	118				

Table 4 shows that the pre test mean score ranged between 1.07 and 1.76. But after training, the mean score ranged between 3.91 and 4.07. This shows a significant increase due to training.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that participants had initial skills and knowledge between 1.04 and 1.79 in the 6 areas covered in the training. However, after the training, the participants' skills and knowledge increased to a level between 3.76 and 4.32. The high achievement indicated that the training was a tool that could enhance learning, skill acquisition and reduce violence in Ebonyi State. This finding agrees with the finding of UNESCO (2010), which states that skills in technology and vocational education and training (TVET), can effectively be used for tackling insecurity problems in sub Saharan Africa.

Violence in different forms, especially electoral related crises is a regular scene in Nigeria, including Ebonyi State. Poverty and unemployment were attribute major causes of such hostile behaviours (NBS, 2015). Although Ojimele (2015) suggested massive lending to the poor as a means of reducing poverty and its attendant mutiny, saleable skills will bring money in the long run and make the poor stable. Technology and vocational education and training (TVET), can effectively be used for tackling insecurity problems in sub Saharan Africa (Tersoo, 2013). In Nigeria, TVET was adopted in cringing the crisis in Niger delta region. This indicates that TVET gave them what they lacked, which led them to perpetration of violence. Those who acquired technical and/or vocational skills among them never went back to the creek. Therefore, electoral violence reduction can be achieved by giving the teaming youth of Nigeria skills that will enable them gain paid employments or be self employed.

However, technical vocational education and training has remained the major engine for imparting imaginative and innovative skills that have resulted in the development of craftsmen, technicians, and other skilled personnel. Technology and vocational skills increase the dignity of man. This training prepared its recipients as craftsmen, technicians and other technical specialists who are drivers of the country's development process. This gave them a positive image which

he/she will not like to taint. I think, therefore, that no nation can develop without the efficient harnessing of this critical mass of human and material resources, and putting them to productive use. TVET encompass the recruitment and engagement of the youths in apprenticeship programmes to enable them acquire skills necessary to become proficient in a trade, craft and or a profession under the tutelage of a specialist. During the period, they are put through hands-on training, especially practical exercises, to enable the trainees understudy the critical processes in the various fields.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that, the participants had initial knowledge of solar installation, but after the training the participants' skills and knowledge increased. This means that the high achievement indicated that the training was a tool that could enhance learning, skill acquisition and reduce political violence in Ebonyi State. The findings of this study also concluded that the participants had initial knowledge of bead making/wiring, liquid soap/Car wash liquid production and confectioneries, but after the training, the participants' skill and knowledge increased. This means that technical vocational education and training has remained the major engine for impacting imaginative and innovative skills that will result in the development of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel and this may reduce violence among youths and women.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was supported by funding from Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) administered by the Directorate of Research, Innovation & Commercialization Ebonyi State University Abakaliki (Reference No: EBSU/TETFUND/IBR/2018/008)

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