

# The Influence of Vocational Skills Training on Youth Employability and Job Creation in Lagos State

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## ABSTRACT

Curbing the problems of unemployment, employability, and skills development has been of interest to the government, international donors, businesses, and researchers. This study examined the Influence of Vocational Skills Training on Job Creation and Youth Employability in Lagos State. The researcher employed a sequential explanatory mixed method. The study used primary data obtained through a structured questionnaire, and interviews among a sample of participants purposively selected. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson correlation analysis and Descriptive statistics. The study found that there was a positive and strong relationship ( $r=.788$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $n= 118$ ) between youths' employability development (YED) and skills acquisition (SA) in Lagos State. Also, the Pearson correlation result of ( $r = 0.795$ ,  $p$ -value  $0.035$ ), indicated a positive and significant relationship between youth employment and skills acquisition in Lagos State as the  $p$ -value computed at  $0.035$  was lower than the level of significance at  $0.05$ . The Pearson correlation analysis also showed a significant and positive relationship ( $r = 0.732$ ,  $p$ -value  $0.024$ ) between skill acquisition, and entrepreneurial capability in Lagos State. The computed  $p$ -value ( $0.024$ ) was less than the study's chosen significance level ( $0.05$ ). These findings showed that vocational skills training and skills acquisition programmes have impacted youth's employability skills development and employment creation in Lagos State. The study recommended that the government should provide adequate funding for skills acquisition programmes, integrate more relevant partners, and make vocational skills centers available in all local government areas of the state.

**Keywords:** Job Creation, Lagos State, Skills Acquisition, Training, Vocational Skills, Youth Employability

**Word Count:** 240

## INTRODUCTION

Unemployment and poverty reduction are key critical global challenges, more so with developing and underdeveloped economies. Curbing unemployment and dealing with the accompanying challenges has been of interest to governments, international donors, businesses, and researchers especially as youth unemployment remains a critical global issue, particularly in regions with burgeoning young populations like Lagos State, Nigeria. Addressing this challenge necessitates innovative and practical approaches, among which vocational skills training stands out as a significant intervention. The impact of youth unemployment especially in challenged economies with high youths' population ratio is huge with many negative consequences, some of which include security concerns, urban areas population density, migration, depression, and mental health amongst others (Onyeaghala & Okorie, 2018; Yahaya, et.al 2021).

According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, NBS (2023), in Q3, Nigeria's unemployment rate stood at 5.0%, underemployment at 12.3%, youth employment at 8.6%, and youth under-employment at 18.0%. The high unemployment rate is currently a key concern among the numerous socio-economic challenges facing

Nigeria, comprised of a majorly youthful working population (Yahaya, et.al 2021). Despite the high unemployment rate in Nigeria, employers' needs and demands for skilled labour are also on the rise. This suggests that a cursory look into skills mismatch, and the demand and supply sides of labour are required (Ik, 2016). The general problem is that some employers find it challenging to fill available jobs because of a gap in the labour market's supply of the required skills. Also, some aspiring entrepreneurs struggle with starting and running a business due to a lack of enabling skills (FGN, IBRD, & WB, 2015; Dibeh, et al. 2019; Brunello, et al. 2021).

Lagos State, often regarded as the economic hub of Nigeria, faces a paradox of substantial economic opportunities juxtaposed with high rates of youth unemployment. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), youth unemployment in Nigeria has been alarmingly high, with Lagos State reflecting similar trends. Contributing factors include a mismatch between the job seekers' skill set and the employers' requirements, inadequate access to quality education, and limited vocational training opportunities (Lagos Innovates, 2023). Vocational skills training programmes are designed to equip beneficiaries with a specific set of skills that can be directly applied to various industries. These programmes often focus on practical and technical skills, preparing participants for immediate entry into the workforce. In Lagos State, several initiatives have been implemented to enhance the vocational skills of youths, with promising results. For example, the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) has been instrumental in providing vocational training to thousands of youths. A report by the LSETF (2023) indicated that over 10,000 youths have been trained in various vocations, with a significant percentage securing employment or starting their businesses within six months of completing their training; also, with the global rise in demand for tech skills, initiatives focusing on information and communication technology (ICT) have shown remarkable success. Programmes run by organizations like Andela and Lagos Innovates have equipped youths with coding and software development skills, leading to high employability rates in the tech industry (Andela, 2023). Furthermore, the hospitality sector in Lagos State has also benefited from targeted vocational training. Institutes like Wave Academy provide specialized training in hospitality management, leading to improved job placements in hotels and tourism-related businesses (Wave, 2023).

However, despite all these efforts by the Lagos State Government, the level of youth unemployment in the state is still very high due to inadequate funding and resources to guarantee the sustainability of the vocational training programmes; lack of awareness and accessibility as many youths are unaware of the available training opportunities or face barriers to access them, also inadequate quality and standardization as ensuring the quality and standardization of vocational training programmes is essential with regular assessments and updates to the curriculum, based on industry trends and feedback to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of these programmes.

Skills development functions as a platform for supporting employability skills development, job creation, and driving national and economic development; and government at different levels can play critical roles in achieving the desired outcome of fostering a competent and skilled workforce that meets the demands of the labor market, reducing unemployment and underemployment rates, and promoting sustainable economic growth. (International Labour Office, 2007; Obaji & Olugu, 2014; Pepple & Enuoh, 2020).

Therefore, since vocational skills training has a profound impact on youth employability and job creation in Lagos State by bridging the skills gap, fostering entrepreneurship, and contributing to economic stability, this study examined the Influence of Vocational Skills Training on Job Creation and Youth Employability in Lagos State.

The following are the hypotheses for this study:

1. Youths' employability development (YED) and skills acquisition (SA) in Lagos State have no relationship.
2. Youths' employment (YE) and skills acquisition (SA) in Lagos State have no relationship.
3. Entrepreneurial capability (EC) of youths in Lagos State and skills acquisition (SA) have no relationship.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Skill Acquisition

A person's skill is their capacity to learn in new situations while drawing from their past knowledge and experiences. A skill is developed over time and eventually becomes instinctive in terms of practicing. According to Okolocha et al. (2019), a skill is deemed gained when a person can carry out the activity without considering the technique or breaking the procedure down into conventional steps. The process of mastering skills is known as skill acquisition, characterized by using such talents in specific contexts. There is a chance to learn. The key to developing a successful profession is skill acquisition. Skills can be acquired in a variety of methods, including through personal research on a particular topic, imaginative searching, and persistent practice, or by mechanically repeating certain tasks without using any thought processes (Magbagbeola, 2004). Idoko (2014) asserts that given the high unemployment rate in Nigeria, skill development is even more crucial. The acquisition of talents is a continuous process throughout life. As soon as we walk as toddlers, we begin to participate in skill development. The set of skills becomes complicated over time. Everyone will have individual motivations for developing their skills. Nevertheless, the results and process of skill acquisition are advantageous. To develop skills is to become an authority. Delivering top-notch work and emerging as a sought-after specialist are the requirements for becoming an expert, hence developing skills is not an expense but an investment. According to Voelkle et al., (2019), some advantages of skill acquisition include that it helps a person to know more and adjust to real situations.

### Dimensions of Skill Acquisition

There are several dimensions of skill acquisition. Among them are;

#### Technical skill

Technical abilities are those that are required to generate the product or service of the company. These capabilities span industry-specific operations, design, communications, and environmental observation. and research and development. Hysong (2008) claims that technical skills can be used to develop expertise in carrying out manual or digital jobs. Technical abilities are traditionally used by those in mathematics, computer science, mechanics, and information technology. However, a more significant number of sectors increasingly require technological knowledge from their personnel. The usage of point-of-sale (POS) software, for instance, is frequently required of employees in the retail and food service industries. Technical writing, programming languages, software expertise, data analysis, widely used operating systems, project management, and other such things are some specific examples of technical abilities. Sector and job type variations based on technical skill sets are notable. For computer programmers, mastering many coding languages is a specialized ability (Pepple & Enuoh (2020)). Customer care employees may require technical expertise in telephone and customer management. Technical abilities are crucial as many employments depend on several tools, processes, and programmes. If you have in your business widespread abilities and in-demand technological know-how, you'll be a more marketable candidate, claims Olaoye et al. (2019). For instance, listings of both "necessary" and "desired" technical abilities are frequently included in job postings by businesses. Having "required" skills is frequently seen as a requirement for starting a job successfully. For instance, if you're applying to be a chef, you might need to know the fundamentals of cooking.

#### Innovative skill

The ability to capitalize on fresh concepts to advance society or the economy is called innovation skills. The capacity to think creatively, problem-solve effectively, and have functional and/or technical skills are all components of innovation capabilities (Graham-Leviss, 2016). Generally speaking, the capacity to apply a combination of information, abilities, and traits in a particular setting constitutes one's innovation talents. A person with innovation abilities typically stands out for his or her capacity to think creatively in the face of obstacles and to mold the ideas of others reliably and independently. An organization must consistently innovate to succeed and realize its full potential. Unfortunately, this essential capability is lacking in many firms. The real kicker is that every employee can learn how to become a powerful force for innovation.

Typically, innovative skills are nurtured to provide support to leaders and individual contributors in thinking creatively and applying their expertise to make significant strides in the organization. Baba (2013) suggests that the program aids participants in acquiring the abilities necessary to: innovate more quickly and effectively; continually seek out fresh concepts and original solutions; contribute to a culture of experimentation, innovation and creativity; question the status quo and maintain an open mind; communicate and propose innovative ideas; position, promote, and garner support for innovative proposals and ideas.

### **Entrepreneurship Development**

Improving an entrepreneur's competencies and skill set concerning creating, administering, and managing a business venture while considering the associated risks is known as "entrepreneurship development". According to Ugoani (2016), entrepreneurship development is a process that strengthens and expands the number of entrepreneurs while also improving the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs through a variety of classroom coaching and training programmes. According to Awogbenle (2010), entrepreneurship development is advancing an entrepreneur's knowledge and skill set related to creating, administering, and managing a company venture while considering the risks involved. This is accomplished through training sessions and programmes that highlight entrepreneurial skills. To succeed in this sector of work as a career, one must aid aspiring business owners in developing their skills and overcoming their challenges.

### **Employability**

'Employability is a set of skills and attributes expected to be possessed by all labour market participants that ensure their effective performance at the workplace and all-around benefit to them, their employers, and the society at large' (ILO, 2007). Employability is defined by this organization as the capability to network, sell oneself, grow through a profession, maintain employability throughout life, and obtain a job. It calls for the capacity for inquiry, the acquisition of new skills, the identification and evaluation of possibilities, and the comprehension of workplace rights, including the right to a safe and healthy workplace, the ability to adjust successfully to changing circumstances, and the bravery to innovate. A foundation of core skills, access to education, the availability of training opportunities, motivation, the ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning, and recognition of acquired skills are just a few factors that contribute to employability. Employability is vital for enabling workers to find decent work, manage change, and enable businesses to adopt new technologies and enter new markets. Therefore, graduates' employability is their capacity to successfully market themselves, land positions that provide comparable satisfaction, and provide services in line with their skill sets. Graduates must develop the necessary abilities to be hired for the positions they applied for to be employable.

### **Lagos State Employability and Skill Acquisition Programme**

The Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) was formed in 2016 by the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund Law (2016) to address unemployment in Lagos State by boosting entrepreneurship and employment opportunities through various programs including an employability support program. LSETF aims to foster entrepreneurship by improving financial access, enhancing MSMEs' institutional strength, shaping policy, and taking proactive measures to better the business landscape. In addition to creating jobs and offering training to unemployed residents of Lagos, the Fund promotes innovation in the Lagos ecosystem (LSETF 2022). The LSETF employability support project's goal is to combat the youth unemployment epidemic by assisting young people in acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills through vocational training and employment.

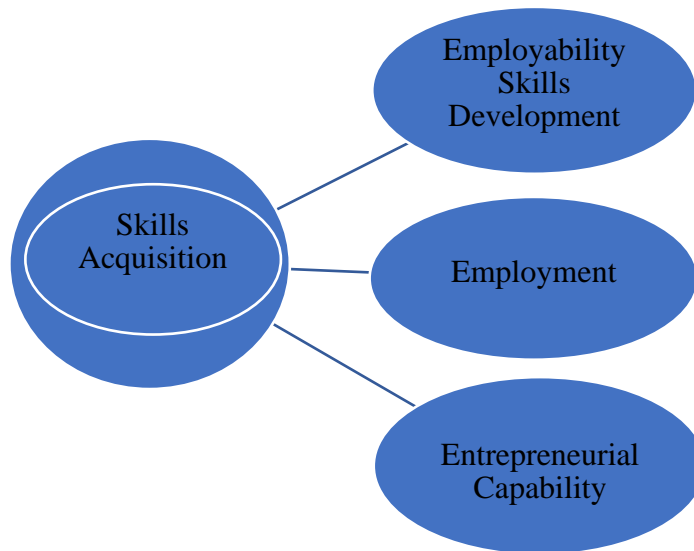
In 2019, LSETF and the United States African Development Foundation (USADF) entered a matching fund partnership to address youth employability and economic development in Lagos State through strategic initiatives focused on vocational skills training and entrepreneurship support. The vocational training programs cover diverse fields such as technology, manufacturing, and creative industries, equipping youths with practical skills that enhance their employability. The partnership has led to the creation of jobs and the establishment of numerous successful businesses, significantly contributing to economic growth and reducing unemployment in the region (USADF, 2021 & LSETF, 2022). The program sets to train at least 3,000 youth between the ages of 18 and 35 annually for a total of 15,000 youth over five years, developing the relevant



industry skills to gain and create employment in Lagos State. The beneficiaries are eligible for paid internships for up to six months, with the expectation that the internship results in a sustainable job opportunity and helps trainees transition into entrepreneurs if they desire.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1. shows the variables for the study and illustrates how they might be related. The independent variable is skills acquisition, which might affect the three dependent variables, employability skills development, employment, and entrepreneurial capability.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Research

**Source:** Author (2023)

The study conceptual model proposes that the acquisition of relevant skills in demand might improve the development of employability skills, the opportunity to get jobs, and enhance entrepreneurial capabilities. The study model relies on the human capital theory. The human capital theory suggests that education, training, and skill acquisition can boost productivity, labor efficiency, and overall socioeconomic advancement.

### Theoretical Review

#### Human Capital Theory (HCT)

The Human Capital Theory (HCT) is a theoretical framework that suggests using education, training, and skill acquisition to increase production, worker efficiency, and general socioeconomic growth. Gary Becker (1964) propounded the human capital theory and asserted that investing in education and training increases the potential for employment and economic production. This theory applies to understanding how training in vocational skills affects youths' employability and the creation of jobs in Lagos State. According to the human capital theory, individuals can contribute to economic advancement by developing skills and knowledge that enhance their productivity and earnings potential. Vocational skills training programmes have become vital for providing youths in Lagos State, with a large youth population, with the skills necessary to enter the job market and support economic development.

Vocational skill acquisition initiatives seek to enhance participants' potential through the enhancement of specific skills associated with specific vocations or industry sectors. Human capital theory suggests that youth potential for employment and employability ought to improve as a result of skills development investments. According to the theory, developing vocational skills aids individuals to be better equipped for permanent employment by enabling them to rapidly adapt to the demands of advancements in technology and the changing job market.

## Empirical Review

Advocating AI Skills Acquisition as a Solution for Youth Unemployment in Nigeria's South-South Region, Faithpraise, et. al (2023) investigates the feasibility of incorporating AI skills education to address youth unemployment. The study aims to explore youth awareness, interest, and willingness to engage in AI skill acquisition. A mixed-methods approach was used, including surveys featuring AI mentor circles and micro-credential programs. The findings revealed a strong interest in AI education, particularly through micro-credential courses and AI mentorship networks, offering promising opportunities for increasing employment and promoting entrepreneurship. The study underscores the need to align policies and educational initiatives to leverage AI for reducing youth unemployment and fostering long-term economic growth in Nigeria's South-South region.

In a systematic review carried out by Shi and Bangpan (2022), qualitative data from 31 unpublished and published studies from 2000 to 2019 were examined to understand the learning processes of young people and the effects of technical and vocational education training (TVET) involvement in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Employing the use of a framework thematic synthesizing method, the study found that TVET engagement had a multifaceted impact on youths' health, and desires, in addition to economic ones. These effects had multiple dimensions and included social capital (social relationships linkage, bridging, and bonding), and cultural capital (socio-emotional competencies, knowledge and skills, and credentials). Numerous factors, such as the features of the intervention, quality, instructors, curriculum, management, and administration, peer relationships, social norms, individual characteristics, and the learning environment all had an impact on the experiences of the participants. The study findings revealed that involvement in TVET was significantly beneficial to underprivileged youth, underlining TVET's potential for enhancing equity and access to education. The study offered a framework for future research and practice in establishing, implementing, and assessing TVET programmes to improve youth overall wellness.

Bojadjieva, et.al (2022) conducted a study focusing on the school-to-work transitions in several Southeastern European (SEE) countries, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. Despite their shared developmental roots, these countries have implemented varied educational reforms due to their unique transition and integration processes within the European Union. The study aimed to assess the impact of different educational levels on youth employability and changes in the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) population rates for those aged 15–24 over the period from 2009 to 2019. Using panel data and multiple linear regression models, the researchers estimated the effects of education on youth employability across these countries. The findings indicated that the impact of education levels on youth employment rates is ambiguous. However, there is a statistically significant and negative relationship between educational attainment and changes in NEET rates in most of the selected countries. The study recommended that tailored educational reforms be considered to enhance youth employability and reduce NEET rates effectively in these regions.

Habiyaremye, et. al (2022) examined the effectiveness of South Africa's upskilling programme aimed at improving job readiness and enterprise development among rural youth. Using Outcome Mapping and probit estimation on self-reported skills improvements, the study found that non-technical skills significantly enhance employability and entrepreneurial success compared to technical skills. Despite the programme's mixed results and slow uptake among alumni, the findings highlight the crucial role of soft skills in overcoming the labour market mismatch. The study recommends emphasizing soft skills training, such as communication and problem-solving, in upskilling initiatives to better address youth unemployment.

A study to assess the effect of skill acquisition programmes on youth employability in Nigeria was carried out by Okolocha, et.al (2020). The study focused on undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate individuals in Anambra State, utilizing a structured questionnaire as the main research instrument. A total of 100 respondents were randomly selected from various local governments within the state. The findings indicated several challenges in skill acquisition for employment, including an overemphasis on academic excellence, a lack of quality skilled trainers, a severe shortage of facilities, inconsistent government follow-up, and poor funding. Based on these findings, the study recommended that teachers should develop professional skills,

gain competence through years of experience, understand the subject matter thoroughly, and effectively involve students in instructional delivery.

## METHODOLOGY

The sequential mixed-method approach was adopted. The nature of the study was explanatory and a cross-sectional research design. It used a purposive sampling technique to select the study population, target, and location. The study used primary data obtained through a structured questionnaire administered among a sample of 118 (one hundred and eighteen) youths between the ages 18 to 35 who participated in the Lagos State Government youth employability programme in the digital marketing, office administration, and sales skills area of business support category between the years 2021 and 2022, and interviews among a sample of 10 (ten) youths, and 3 (three) managers of participating vocational training centers (VTCs) randomly targeted. The questionnaire and interview questions were targeted at the impact of the Lagos State employability programme interventions, how it has aided their employability development skills, employment opportunities, challenges, and suggested areas of improvement.

### Data Presentation, Analysis, and Results

#### Quantitative Data, analysis, and Results

Table 1 below shows the demography of the quantitative questionnaire respondents.

**Table 1:** Demography of Quantitative Questionnaire Respondents

| Category   | Subcategory         | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Sex  | Female              | 73        | 61.86%     |
|  | Male                | 45        | 38.14%     |
| Age  | Between 26-33 years | 59        | 50.00%     |
|  | 34 years and above  | 38        | 32.20%     |
|  | Between 18-25 years | 21        | 17.80%     |
| Qualification                                      | BSc/BA/B.Eng.       | 63        | 53.38%     |
|  | OND/NCE/HND/PDG     | 43        | 36.44%     |
|  | SSCE                | 8         | 6.77%      |
|  | MSc                 | 4         | 3.38%      |
|  | PhD                 | -         | 0%         |
| Post Training (Within 3 months after training)     | Paid Interns        | 102       | 86.44%     |
|  | Non-Interns         | 16        | 13.56%     |
| Post Internship (Within 3 months after internship) | Permanent Jobs      | 75        | 63.56%     |
|  | Others              | 23        | 19.49%     |
|  | Self-employed       | 20        | 16.95%     |

**Source:** The Author 2023

Following Table 1, 38.1 % of males and 61.86% of females were among the respondents. This outcome demonstrates that women participated in the study more than men. This explains why women are no longer considered inadequate in sectors demanding estimation because of a fear of stereotyping. 18 to 25-year-olds made up 17.80% of the respondents, 26 to 33-year-olds made up 50.0%, and 34-year-olds made up 32.20%. 6.77% of respondents hold an SSCE, 36.44% hold an OND, NCE, HND, or PDG, and 53.38% hold a BSc, BA, or B.Eng., 3.38% hold an MSc, and none of the respondents hold a Ph.D.

Within 3 months of finishing their training, 102 (86.44%) of the respondents secured paid internships, while just 16 (13.56%) of the respondents were unable to secure paid internships. Similarly, 75 (63.56%) of the interns were able to secure permanent jobs within 2-3 months after their internship, 20 (16.95%) of the interns were self-employed while the 23 other interns have not secured a job. These results confirm the impact of skill acquisition on youths' employability and entrepreneurial capability.

**Table 2:** Correlation Matrix of the Relationship between Skill Acquisition (SA), Youth Employability Development (YED), Youth Employment (YE), and Entrepreneurial Capability (EC).

| Variable | Statistic    | SA | YED    | YE      | EC       |
|----------|--------------|----|--------|---------|----------|
|          | Pearson's r  | —  | 0.788* | 0.795** | 0.732*** |
|          | p-value      | —  | 0.035  | 0.023   | 0.024    |
|          | 95% CI Upper | —  | 0.491  | 0.488   | 0.834    |
|          | 95% CI Lower | —  | 0.016  | 0.012   | 0.615    |
|          | N            | —  | 118    | 118     | 118      |

**Source:** The Author 2023

**Hypothesis H1:** Youths' employability development (YED) and skills acquisition (SA) in Lagos State have no relationship

The relationship between SA and YED has been determined by subjecting both variables to correlation analysis. This relationship was found to be positively and strongly correlated with ( $r=0.788$ ,  $p=0.05$ ,  $n=118$ ).

**Hypothesis H2:** Youths' employment (YE) and skills acquisition (SA) in Lagos State have no relationship.

According to the Pearson correlation result ( $r = 0.795$ ,  $p$ -value  $0.035$ ), a positive and significant association exists between youth employment and skills acquisition in Lagos State. The  $p$ -value computed at  $0.035$  is lower than the level of significance at  $0.05$  the investigation utilized; this correlation is significant. This suggests that skill development and youth employment in Lagos State have a significant relationship.

**Hypothesis H3:** there is no significant relationship between Skill Acquisition (SA) and Entrepreneurial capability (EC).

According to the Pearson correlation analysis, skill acquisition and entrepreneurial capability in Lagos State have a significant and positive relationship ( $r = 0.732$ ,  $p$ -value  $0.024$ ). The computed  $p$ -value ( $0.024$ ) is less than the study's chosen significance level ( $0.05$ ). This suggests that in Lagos State, skill acquisition and entrepreneurial capability are significantly correlated.

**Profile of the Qualitative Interview Respondents**

The table below shows the qualitative interview respondent's profile.



**Table 3:** Profile of Interview Respondents

| Interview Respondent | Gender | Position          | Age                | Qualification   | Post training<br>(Within 3 months after training) | Post Internship<br>(Within 3 months after internship) |
|----------------------|--------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| R1                   | Female | Beneficiary Youth | Between 18-25yrs   | OND/NCE/HND/PDG | Paid Intern                                       | Permanent Job   |
| R2                   | Female | Beneficiary Youth | Between 26-33yrs   | OND/NCE/HND/PDG | Paid Intern                                       | Permanent Job   |
| R3                   | Female | Beneficiary Youth | Between 26-33yrs   | OND/NCE/HND/PDG | Paid Intern                                       | Self Employed   |
| R4                   | Male   | Beneficiary Youth | Between 26-33yrs   | OND/NCE/HND/PDG | Paid Intern                                       | Paid Interns  |
| R5                   | Male   | Beneficiary Youth | Between 18-25yrs   | SSCE            | Paid Intern                                       | Permanent Job   |
| R6                   | Male   | Beneficiary Youth | Between 26-33yrs   | BSc/BA/B.Eng    | Paid Intern                                       | Permanent Job   |
| R7                   | Female | Beneficiary Youth | Between 26-33yrs   | OND/NCE/HND/PDG | Paid Intern                                       | Permanent Job   |
| R8                   | Male   | Beneficiary Youth | Between 26-33yrs   | OND/NCE/HND/PDG | Paid Intern                                       | Permanent Job   |
| R9                   | Female | Beneficiary Youth | 34 years and above | BSc/BA/B.Eng    | Paid Intern                                       | Permanent Job   |
| R10                  | Male   | Beneficiary Youth | 34 years and above | MSc             | Paid Intern                                       | Self Employed   |

| Vocational Training Center (VTC) Mangers |        |             |
|--|--------|-------------|
| Interview Respondent                     | Gender | Position    |
| R11                                      | Female | VTC Manager |
| R12                                      | Female | VTC Manager |
| R13                                      | Male   | VTC Manager |

**Source:** The Author 2023

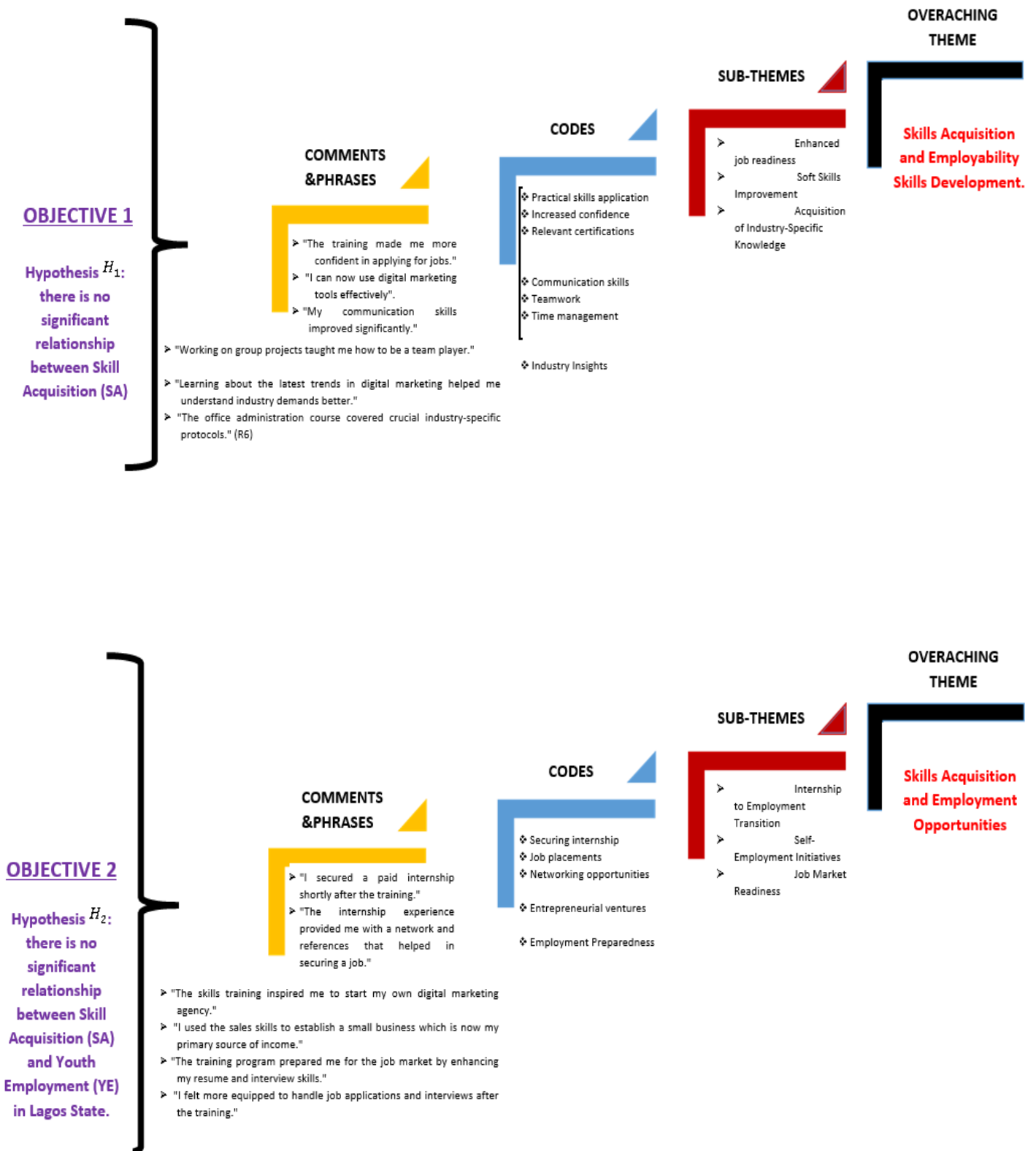
### Thematic Analysis Result of Interviews

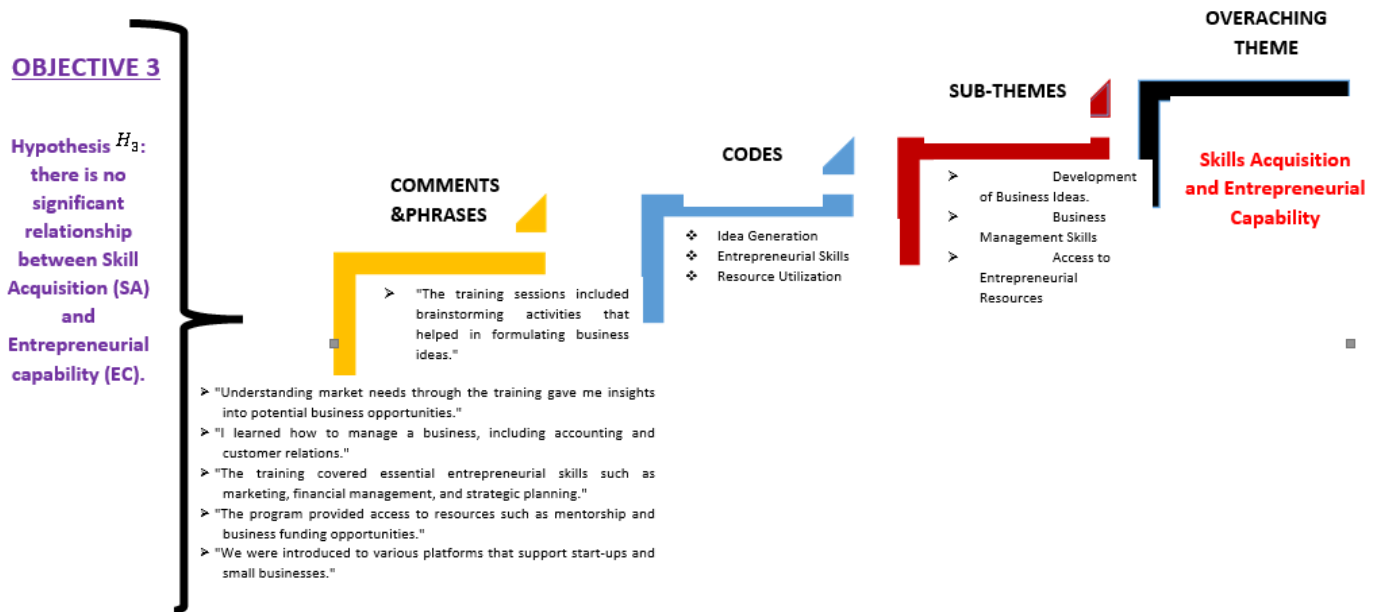
The thematic analysis results summary of the interviews with the thirteen respondents are presented in Figure 2 grouped along study objectives 1 to 3. The overarching themes were defined along the study objectives. The result presents the overarching themes, sub-themes, codes, and corresponding comments by respondents.

These analysis processes were done for each of the interviewees' interview responses and then compressed for

all of them. All interviewees' responses to similar questions were compiled under a single code in a single document that was clear and usable for result interpretation.

### Thematic Analysis Summary





Interviews responses also revealed that that skill type, training curriculum, duration, and vocational center location are some of the concerns of eligible participants for skill acquisition intervention programs, whilst partnership engagement terms, funding, and eligible youths' mobilization are some of the challenges of the vocational skills centers. All the interviewed affirmed that the programme has assisted them in improving employability skills and aiding in securing of paid employment or starting their own business.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)** assumes that Youths' employability development (YED) and skills acquisition (SA) in Lagos State have no relationship. However, the findings of the study based on the correlation analysis in Table 2 provide evidence to reject this hypothesis. The results indicate that a significant relationship exists in Lagos State between Youth Employability Development (YED) and Skill Acquisition (SA). The quantitative result analysis findings are supported by the qualitative study thematic analysis result in Figure 2 under objective 1 evidenced by the themes, codes, and comments. The respondents suggest that skills acquisition will enhance employability development and opportunities. According to the respondents "The training made me more confident in applying for jobs." (R1), "I can now use digital marketing tools effectively." (R2), "Learning about the latest trends in digital marketing helped me understand industry demands better." (R5); these also provide support to the relationship between Youth Employability Development (YED) and Skill Acquisition (SA) being significant.

These quantitative and qualitative study findings support the works of Finch et al. (2013) which suggest that high values are placed by employers on problem-solving abilities and soft skills, and the lowest on academic reputation, and also demonstrate that efforts to increase the employability of recent graduates must center on learning outcomes connected to the growth of employability skills. The findings also align with those of Okolocha et al. (2020) which posits that skill acquisition programmes are a tool for young employability in Nigeria since they lower unemployment rates, reduce crime and other social vices, and boost economic investment.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>)** assumes that Youths' employment (YE) and skills acquisition (SA) in Lagos State have no relationship. However, the study findings based on the correlation analysis in Table 2 provide evidence to reject this hypothesis. The results indicate that Youths' employment (YE) and skills acquisition (SA) in Lagos State have a significant relationship. The quantitative result analysis findings are supported by the qualitative study thematic analysis result in Figure 2 under objective 2. According to the respondents "I secured a paid internship shortly after the training." (R7), "The internship experience provided me with a network and references that helped in securing a job." (R8), "The training program prepared me for the job market by

enhancing my resume and interview skills." (R1). The quantitative and qualitative study aligns with the findings of Onyeaghala & Okorie (2018), and Adetayo et al. (2015) that show that skill development is a potent instrument for youth employment.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>)** assumes that the Entrepreneurial capability (EC) of youths in Lagos State and skills acquisition (SA) have no relationship. However, the findings of the study based on the correlation analysis in Table 2 provide evidence to reject this hypothesis. The results indicate that there exists a significant relationship between the Entrepreneurial capability (EC) of youths in Lagos State and skills acquisition (SA).

The quantitative result analysis findings are supported by the qualitative study thematic analysis result in Figure 2 under objective 2. According to the respondents "Understanding market needs through the training gave me insights into potential business opportunities." (R4), "The training covered essential entrepreneurial skills such as marketing, financial management, and strategic planning." (R6). The study findings support the works of Moses et al. (2016), and Ogundele et al. (2012), which posit that developing skills can aid a person in being creative and fostering entrepreneurship.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Findings showed that skills acquisition has impacted youth's employability skills development and employment creation in Lagos State. It also shows that skill type, training curriculum, duration, and vocational center location are some of the concerns of eligible participants for skill acquisition intervention programs, whilst partnership engagement terms, funding, and eligible youths' mobilization are some of the challenges of the vocational skills centers.

The study recommends that the government should allocate increased funding for skills acquisition initiatives, collaborate with key industry partners, and establish vocational training centers across each local government area within the state to enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of the programs. There is also a need for curriculum review in traditional schools to include employability and entrepreneurship skills courses so that there would not be too much leaning on government interventions when students are out of school. It is also recommended that there should be a review of student's lifecycle in schools such that each student is made to go through internships before graduating from any level of higher institution in addition, government intervention programmes should be a catalyst for organisation's workplace readiness programmes, employers should begin to consider how to make interventions beyond equipping their primary workforce.

A paradigm shift in policy that is essential to the effective growth of entrepreneurship is required, according to the work of Ikechukwu (2012), if the Nigerian government wants to revive its economy, gradually lower unemployment, and create more employment possibilities.

Several recommendations for further study are made concerning the study's findings to further develop the comprehension of the effects of vocational skills training on youth employability and job creation in Lagos State. Conducting longitudinal studies that track participants over an extended period would provide insights into the long-term effects of vocational training on employment sustainability, career advancement, and continuous skill development. Furthermore, a comparative study beyond the business support sector, like the construction, creative, hospitality and tourism, healthcare, and technical trades, would provide a deeper comprehension of how vocational training affects entrepreneurship and employability in diverse professions. Further research should also examine the function of soft skills in boosting employability and assessing the influence of integrated soft skills education on job performance and productivity. Additionally, further study should also assess the integration of technology in vocational training to provide insights into modernizing educational approaches

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