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Perceived Influence of Skills Acquisition Programmes on Socio-Economic Development of Women in Andoni Local Government Area, Rivers State

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Keywords: skill, skill acquisition programmes social development, economic development, and socio-economic development.

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PERCEIVEDINFLUENCEOFSKILLSACQUISITIONPROGRAMMESONSOCIOECONOMICDEVELOPMENTOFWOMENINANDONILOCALGOVERNMENTAREARIVERSSTATE

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Perceived Influence of Skills Acquisition Programmes on Socio-Economic Development of Women in Andoni Local Government Area, Rivers State

Vidah James Ataije [α] & Dr. Ihejirika, J.C [σ]

Abstract- This study investigated the perceived influence of skills acquisition programmes on the socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Area, Rivers State. The study was guided by five research objectives, five research questions, and four null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 significant levels. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for this study comprised 742 trainees in 20 functional skills acquisition training programmes, out of, which 371 trainees in 20 functional skills acquisition training programmes were selected through a proportionate sampling technique. A validated questionnaire titled "Perceived Influence of skills acquisition programme on Socio-Economic Development of Women" with a reliability index of 0.83 was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyse data collected. The findings revealed that skills acquisition programmes had influenced their socio-economic life by providing them with life-changing skills for self-reliance and improved women social status. The study concluded that socio economic life of women in the area of study has experienced development. Based on the findings and conclusion, the researchers recommended that any skills acquisition programme designed for socio-economic development of women's should be an integrated programme that will not only give them livelihood skills but also empower them to aspire for greater self-development, that fashion and designing programme should not only be a tailoring scheme still, it should include other components of modern fashion training scheme and also re-training package provided at intervals and that in order to sustain women improved status, training and retraining programmes should always be provided by government.

Keywords: skill, skill acquisition programmes social development, economic development, and socio-economic development.

I. Introduction

In Rivers State, women's status in the rural communities is low due to their attachment to subsistence farming, petty trading with little or no skills attached to their vocations. This lack of skills to boost their socio-economic lives has made women in rural areas earn less, thereby belong to the low economic status group in society. In Andoni Local Government Area, economic status of most women living in rural communities are low due to lack of access to better income generating activities. They are mostly fisher folks, sea food gatherers, petty traders, weavers, and so on, who generate little income due to lack of skills to improve their economic activities.

Wife of successive governors in Rivers State, in an attempt to better the lives of her citizens (mostly women and youths) have been providing different skills acquisition training programmes for people. These skill acquisition programmes are expected to empower the beneficiaries to be self-reliant and independent. Among these skills acquisition programmes include fashion and designing training programme, decoration and event planning training programme, cosmetology and production of liquid soap and sanitary agents training programme, catering and pastries making training programme, agricultural training programme, and so on. Also, wives of local government chairpersons/ caretaker committee's chairperson have equally provided skills acquisition programmes in different skills as their pet programmes for the developing their people at the grassroots level.

Women in Andoni Local Government Areas have benefited from skill acquisition programmes such as fashion designing training programme, decoration and event planning training programme, cosmetology and production of liquid soap and sanitary agents training programme, catering and pastries making training programme, agricultural skills training programme. The essence of these programmes is to empower women to be more productive and to contribute to the welfare of their families. Women who benefit from these programmmes are trained on different skills that will make them self-reliant and economically sound to face some economic challenges in their various homes and also contribute meaningfully to the development of the community and society at large. Based on this background, this research is carried out to investigate how the different skills acquisition programmes provided for women in Andoni Local Government Area have influenced the socio-economic development of women in the LGA.

II. Conceptual Clarification

Skills acquisition programme, in general includes every form of education that aims at acquirement of qualifications related to a profession, art, or employment which provides the necessary training and the appropriate skills as well as technical knowledge. This type of training enables learners to

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practice a profession, art or activity, independently of their age and their training level, though the training programme contain elements of general education (Kotsikis, 2007). Ibrahim (2013) emphasised that skills acquisition programme is education and training for work; it is an education where skills are taught to gain employment through exposure to practical experience for self-actualization.

According to Inyang and Agwadu (2017) in traditional Nigerian societies, skill training was largely run on the apprenticeship system. While Fafunwa in Inyang and Agwadu (2017) stated that this vast apprenticeship training system began as part of a wider education process in which indigenous societies of Nigeria passed on their cultural heritage from one generation to the next. To Okoro, in Hime (2003) and Kpanja (2003), apprenticeship was the method of skills acquisition and training before establishing vocational and technical schools. Okoro further maintained that due to inadequate vocational and technical schools, the apprenticeship system still supplied the bulk of Nigeria's skilled and semi-skilled workers. Hime (2000) further revealed that the Federal Republic of Nigeria through National Directorate of Employment (NDE) launched the apprenticeship scheme in a bid to fight unemployment and provide individuals with psychomotor skills. Backer and Mincer (2014) observed that the investment made in acquiring skills was central to the development and advancement of societies. In Industrial Training Fund (ITF, 2014), it was established that citizens' acquisition of relevant skills is a sine qua non for industrialisation and by extension, economic development. This corresponded to Mba's (2008) observation that for any nation in search of a high level of industrialisation to succeed, provision of relevant skills must be given serious consideration.

UNESCO in Ibrahim (2013) defined skills acquisition programme as education designed to prepare skill workers for industries, agriculture, commerce etc. Skilled acquisition programme can be regarded as experience gained directly or indirectly that enables one to participate in a socially useful occupation either in or out of school, at various levels and to be sufficiently equipped to become an intelligent creator of goods and services. Olaitan (1985) conceived vocational skill as a highly useful education as its occupational content is such that the trainee acquires skills, attitudes, interest and knowledge. Given this, Denga in Udo, Boyi, & Ewuga. (2002) contended that by and large, the education that produced technician is technical education while vocational skill is all-embracing since it prepares its recipient for a living. The National Policy on Education (1981 revised) defined vocational Education as an aspect of education, which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as scientific knowledge (Udo, Boyi, & Ewuga. (2002, pp. 2-3).

Okoro, (1999) defined skills acquisition programme as all those experiences where by an individual learns to carry on successfully any useful occupation. These experiences may be organized and institutionalized or unorganized and haphazard. Simply put, skills acquisition programme may be looked at as a series of controlled and organized experiences arranged to prepare a person for socially useful employment. Skills acquisition programme is generally defined as the part of skills acquisition programme that provides the specialized professional knowledge and skills, which attribute professional adequacy to the trainee and are the focus of every skills acquisition programme. Skills acquisition programme training can be seen as an activity or a set of activities designed to transmit theoretical knowledge and also professional skills that are required for certain types of jobs (Kotsikis, 2007).

As an educational policy, it refers to the initial skills acquisition programme training, whose aim are connected to the given-offer and demand of specialties, as they are formed by the structural characteristics of each county's economy (Efstratoglou & Nikolopoulou, 2011). Skills acquisition programme according to Ibrahim (2013) is introduced to enhance livelihood opportunities of women who are at a disadvantageous position and have a scant exposure to technical skills and knowledge. The skills acquisition programme for women aims to develop entrepreneurial skills among women.

Agbogo and Azih (2015) pointed out that skill acquisition programmes should be considered a matter of national policy and designed to train potential entrepreneurs within and outside educational institutions. Skill acquisition programmes focus on entrepreneurship development which is an important aspect of human capital development that is able to contribute to the financial empowerment and self-reliance of the participants

Okolocha (2006), pointed out that skills acquisition programme programs focus on the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies as necessary equipment for the individual to live in adapt to the real work situation and contribute to the development of his society. Skills acquisition programme according to Magaji (2015) is an educational training which comprehends knowledge, skills, competencies, structural activities, abilities, capabilities and all other structural experiences acquired through formal, on-the-job or off-the-job which is capable of enhancing recipient's opportunity for securing jobs in various sector of the economy or even enabling the person to be self-dependent by being a job creator. Skills acquisition programmes are geared towards equipping the beneficiaries with life changing skills that will economically empower them for socio-economic development. Economic empowerment according to Ogbe, in Sunday (2016) is the way of

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motivating individuals in the society to be productive and self-dependent by inculcating into the individual entrepreneurship skills such as personal business initiatives and basic skills in business development. skills acquisition programme for women social-economic development as pointed out by Sunday (2016) will:

1. Contribute to maintaining and improving the skills and competences of women by the needs on the labour market and to furthering competence for socio-economic development of the participants;
2. Contribute to solving lack of financial capability faced by women; and
3. Give women the possibility of upgrading of their status in the society as well as making them self-reliant.

Women's participation in skills acquisition programme is very critical to the development of any society or nation, because they play significant roles in family and nation-building. A mother with a few years of formal education is considerably more likely to send her children to school. In many countries for instance, each additional year of formal education completed by a mother translate into her children remaining in school for additional one-third to one and half years. Aroge (2016) pointed out that many women who have participated in skill acquisition programme have gained experiences that enable them to be self-reliant, establish their small-scale businesses which yield income for their families, communities, and society. This is in support of Hassan and Olaniran's (2011) assertion that skills acquisition programme improves the socio-economic status of individuals and communities. Skill acquisition programme is designed to meet the employment needs of particular areas of the economy. The training provided is closely matched with specific job requirements so as to foster immediate production performance by the trainees. Trainees can become wage earners, thereby becoming more useful and productive citizens who will be assets to the society and not liabilities.

Eheazu in Mbalisi and Oyebamiji (2015) define socio-economic development as it applies to rural dwellers to mean a process of positive social and economic change which aims at raising the standard of living, quality of life, and the dignity of rural dwellers. The definition and explanation of socio-economic development specified a development spectrum that is modeled along human development framework and its impact on the quality of life of the people. Fritz (n. d) noted that the purpose of socio-economic development is to improve the social and material well-being of all individuals and social institutions with the goal of achieving the highest possible level of human development. at community level, the processes of socio-economic development as pointed out by Mbalisi and Oyebamiji (2015) include the provision of functional education; transformation of the basic production processes; provision of adequate infrastructure; and provision of basic industrial technology. Socio-economic development of women is geared towards equipping the beneficiaries with life changing skills that will economically empower them for socio-economic development. This study will evaluate the impact of fashion design, decoration and events planning, pastries and cosmetology training programmes of Andoni Local Government on socio-economic development of women participants.

III. Statement of the Problem

The status of rural women in most rural communities in Andoni Local Government Area is economically low, and this has prompted government and some Non-Governmental Organizations to provide rural people in this LGA with different skills acquisition programmes. Skill acquisition programmes were provided for women to equip them with relevant educational needs which they require to function better in their respective economic lives and also to be able to utilize the gains for development of their economic lives, families and communities. However, based on the expected goal for the provision of the skills acquisition programmes, the researcher is carrying out this research to answer questions on the extents to which the skills acquisition programmes have impacted on the lives of the women from Andoni LGA, who are the beneficiaries of the programmes. Therefore, to answer the question on the extent to which these skills acquisition programmes have influenced the socio-economic lives of women in Andoni LGA, Rivers State is problem of this study.

IV. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived influence of skills acquisition programmes on socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Areas, Rivers State. The objectives of the study are specifically to:

1. Find out the extent to which fashion designing training programme influenced women's socio-economic development in Andoni Local Government Areas.
2. Ascertain the extent to which training in Decoration and event planning programme influence socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Areas.
3. Identify the extent to which training in fisheries has influenced socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Areas.
4. Ascertain the extent to which training in cosmetology influence socio-economic

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development of women Andoni Local Government Areas.

V. Research Questions

1. To what extent does fashion designing programme influenced women's socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Areas?.
2. To what extent has training in decoration and event planning programme influenced socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Areas?.
3. To what extent does skills acquired by women in agricultural skills acquisition programme (fisheries) influenced the standard of living of women in Andoni Local Government Areas?.
4. To what extent has training in cosmetoloy training influenced socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Areas?.

VI. Methodology

The research design that was adopted for this study was descriptive survey design, the study was carried out in communities in Andoni Local Government Area. The population for the study was 446 beneficiaries of 10 functional skills acquisition programmes in Andoni Local Government Areas of Rivers State. Out of which 371 beneficiaries were proportionately sampled. The instrument used for this study was a validated researcher-made questionnaire titled "Perceived Influence of Skills Acquisition Programmes on Socio-Economic Development of Women Questionnaire" (PISAPSEDWQ). The instrument has a reliability index of 0.83.The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the help of two trained research assistants who are literate members of the communities in the area of study. out of the 371 copies of questionnaire administered, 366 representing 98.65 percent was retrieved as dully filled and used for the analysis. 5 copies representing 1.35 percent were not retrieved, therefore not used for the study Data generated was analysed with mean statistic and standard deviation.

VII. Results

Research Question 1: To what extent has fashion designing programme influence women's socio-economic development in Andoni Local Government Area?

Table 1: Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Extent to which Fashion and Designing Training Programme Influence Socio-Economic Development of Women

S/N	Statement	X	SD	Decision
1	Through the fashion designing programme, I am now self employed.	2.71	1.02	High Extent
2	Through the skill I acquired from the fashion design programme, now make money to support my family.	2.86	1.09	High Extent
3	The fashion designing programme provided employable skills for many unemployed beneficiaries, who are now employed in different fashion homes where they earn a living.	2.73	1.06	High Extent
4	The fashioning design programme provided opportunity for some of us to update our fashion and designing skill and have increase our customers base due to increase in patronage.	2.76	1.15	High Extent
	Grand Mean	2.77		High Extent

Table 1 reveals that participants in Andoni Local Government Areas respondent responses on items 1-4have weighted mean values that range from 2.71-2.86 which are all greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and corresponding standard deviations that ranges from 1.02-1.15 which are all positive. Respondent responses gave a grand mean value of 2.77, which is also greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and imply that fashion and designing programme has influenced socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Area by equipping them with improved skills for self-employment; provided capability for making money to support their family, and so on.

Research Question 2: To what extent has training in decoration and event planning programme influence socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Area?

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Table 2: Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Extent to which Training In decoration and Event Planning Programme has Influence Socio Economic Development of Women in Andoni LGA

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
6	I employ people now due to the training from the Decoration and event planning training programme I participated in.	3.08	1.071	High Extent
7	I have my own shop where I do my business due to training, I got from decoration and event planning training programme.	3.16	1.330	High Extent
8	The skill I acquire in Decoration and event planning training programme enable me to get job.	2.90	1.094	High Extent
9	I have been training many people as a result of the training I acquired in the decoration and event planning training programme.	3.08	1.176	High Extent
	Grand Mean	3.05	1.153	High Extent

Table 2 reveals that respondents in Andoni LGA were of the opinion that skills they acquired in decoration and event planning training programme have influenced job opportunities for them. This is shown in their responses mean values of 2.90-3.16, which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The analysis also shows positive response rate with corresponding standard deviations of 1.071, 1.330, 1.094 and 1.176 respectively. The result implies that to a high extent, the training in decoration and event planning programme has influenced socio-economic development of women in Andoni LGA by making the beneficiaries employers of labour, self-employed, employable and also run train-the-trainer programme.

Research Question 3: To what extent has training in fisheries influenced socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Area?.

Table 3: Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the extent to which Training in Fisheries has Influenced Socio-Economic Development of Women in Andoni Local Government Area

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
10	I am now a boss due to my ability to establish my own fish pond due to training i received from agricultural skills acquisition programme training programme.	2.94	1.02	High Extent
11	Through the empowerment I got from the fishery training programme, I am more informed on how to carry out my farming activities.	3.12	1.04	High Extent
12	I no longer wait for people to give me money, due to the training I got from the fishery training programme, I now produce local fish feed.	2.86	0.99	High Extent
13	I am now an employer of labour as a result of training i got from the fishery training programme.	2.88	1.09	High Extent
14	People patronize my farm more now than before because of the improvement on my skill due to the training I got from the agricultural skills acquisition programme. I participated in.	2.89	1.21	High Extent
15	I no longer beg people for financial assistance, due to the training I got from the fishery training programme.	2.98	1.09	High Extent
	Grand Mean	2.95	1.07	High Extent

Table 3 reveals that women in Andoni Local Government Area responses items 10-15 have positive response rates, since their weighted mean values which ranges from 2.82-3.12 are all greater than the criterion mean of 2.5, and also their corresponding SD is also positive. The grand mean value which is 2.95 is also greater than the criterion mean and implies that to a high extent agricultural skills acquisition programme has influenced socio-economic development of women in Andoni Local Government Area by making them self-reliant (commercial farm owner); improved their knowledge of farming methods; they are no longer depending on people for financial assistance; and women are employer of labour due to expansion of their farm.

Research Question 4: To what extent has training in cosmetic, make-up and pastries training influenced socio-economic development of women participated in Andoni Local Government Area?

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Table 4: Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Extent to which Training in Cosmetic, Make-Up and Pastries Training Influenced Socio-Economic Development of Women

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
16	I am now a boss due to my ability to establish my own business due to training i received.	2.69	1.096	High Extent
17	Through the empowerment I got from the skill acquisition programmes, I am more informed on how to carry out my farming activities.	2.86	1.151	High Extent
18	I no longer wait for people to give me money, due to the training I got from the skill acquisition programme.	2.61	1.049	High Extent
19	I am now an employer of labour as a result of training i got from the skills acquisition programmes.	2.62	1.147	High Extent
20	People patronize my business more now than before because of the improvement on my skill due to the training I got from the skills acquisition programmes.	2.87	1.823	High Extent
	Grand Mean	2.73	1.566	High Extent

The result from Table 4 shows that weighted mean values of items numbers 16-20 Andoni Local Government Area on items 16-20 range from 2.61- 2.87 and are all greater than the criterion mean value of 2.5, and this implies that skills acquired in cosmetic, make-up and pastries training have influenced the status of women in Andoni Local Government Area. Also, respondent responses gave grand mean values of 2.73, which is also greater than the criterion mean value of 2.50. This reveals that training in cosmetic, make-up and pastries training influenced socio-economic development of women positively in Andoni Local Government Area by equipping the beneficiaries with knowledge and skills of establishing, maintaining and growing their own business for improved socio-economic development.

VIII. Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that training in fashion design programme, decoration and event planning programme has influenced socio-economic development of women by providing them with job opportunities and thereby promote socio-economic development of women in Andoni LGAs. Skill acquisition training programme are adult learning geared toward self-development. Women who benefited from the skills acquisition programme acquired life changing skills that transform their socio-economic life from dependent to that of self-employed adult. Akko and Addison (2009) asserted that skill acquisition programme provide the beneficiaries with improved employability and income skills that can increase their social status. This is in support of Mbalisi (2010) definition of adult education as any educative and purposeful learning activity organized for adults to initiate them into a new way of life by providing them with relevant skills, competencies, knowledge, information and attitudes required to excel in that aspect of life. Literacy empowers and it is the most essential of all educational skills. Education, formal or non-formal, is the basis for the full promotion and improvement of women status.

Findings also reveal that training in fisheries has improved women beneficiaries' standard of living, the women are more informed on different fishery practices for socio-economic development. Shamsideen's (2016) observed that through skills acquisition programme, beneficiaries will acquire the skills of recording the names of debtors and creditors, the ability to use calculator to calculate profit or loss of trading activities, and transact business at the bank very quickly, among others. That the skills gained will help the beneficiaries to improve on their trading activities and bring about efficiency and profitability.

Training in cosmetics, make-up and pastries skills acquisition programs as established in the findings, revealed that the socio-economic development of women in the area have improved because they gain relevant socio-economic skills for personal development and contributions to their community. With the requisite knowledge on how to grow and to maintain small scale business, productivity could be increased and the level income raised as well. Shamsideen (2016) also observed that adult education has a role to play in nurturing the skills and knowledge necessary to reduce the risk of poverty and also to provide the capacity to withstand poverty-inducing pressures. This is also in line with Sabates in Shamsideen (2016) view that participating in adult learning can help substantially reduce poverty through enhancing employment prospects, improving health levels of poor people and giving better chances of acquiring the tools needed to run their own lives.

IX. Conclusion

The study concludes that skill acquisition programme provided for women have actually influence their socio-economic life because the beneficiaries are now self-employed due to them practicing the different skills acquisition programme they benefited from. They are better informed on how to save money from their various vocations and grow their business, and also contribute to development of their communities.

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X. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Any skills acquisition programme designed for socio-economic development of women should be an integrated programme that will not only give them livelihood skills but also empower them to aspire for greater self-development.
2. Fashion and designing programme should not only be a tailoring scheme but should include other components of modern fashion training scheme and also re-training packages provided at intervals for the beneficiaries of the programme to enhance their capabilities.
3. Job opportunities provided by the decoration and event planning training programme for women should be sustained by provision of soft packages to the trainees to enhance their capabilities.
4. The fisheries training programme should be a continual training process to accommodate new technologies in farming and sustainability of the skills by the beneficiaries.
5. Andoni Local Government Council should promote/ provide regular skills acquisition workshops and make them attractive for women to participate in order to be less economically dependent on their husbands.

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