

**EFFECT OF FUNDING ON PERFORMANCE OF ABIA STATE SKILLS  
ACQUISITION PROGRAMMES  
(A STUDY OF SELECTED SKILLS ACQUISITION CENTRES)**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the effect of funding on performance of Abia State skill acquisition programmes. Specifically the study objectives were to identify the effect of funding on performance of Abia State skills acquisition centers and identify the extent to which Abia State skills acquisition centers contribute to the capacity of their graduate self –employment. The study made use of primary data and 59 respondents were selected from among the center principals, instructors and trainees. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and means. Pearson correlation coefficient model were utilized to test the research hypothesis in the study. The findings showed that Funding has a significant positive effect on the performance of Abia state skills acquisition center, Abia state skill acquisition programme contributes to the capacity for self-employment of graduates of the skill acquisition programme. The study recommends that Abia state government should develop an effective policy framework that will enhance funding and improve information channels for effective financial accessibility of the center and its trainees for improved performance and growth.

**Key Words:** Skill Acquisition, Funding, Self-Employment, Graduate.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

One of the problems that pose a serious threat to the global developing economy in this 21<sup>st</sup> century is unemployment, which refers to the state of being without any work for an individual to earn a livelihood. There are several types of unemployment namely: cyclical unemployment, structural unemployment, regional unemployment, classical unemployment, seasonal unemployment, frictional unemployment and voluntary unemployment (Eme, 2014).

Nigeria as a country is battling with this unemployment issue. The National Bureau of Statistics (2019), examined the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2018 and the report showed that the number of unemployed persons in the country constituted 31.1% in 2000, 13.6% in 2001, 12.6% in 2002, 14.8% in 2003, 13.4% in 2004, 11.9% in 2005, 13.7% in 2006, 14.6% in 2007, 14.9% in 2008, 19.7% in 2009, 21.1% in 2010 and 23.9% in 2011, dropped to 18.8% in Q3 2017, 23.1% in 2018.

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To curb this rate of high rate of unemployment proactive measures need to be adopted. Hence, Abia State Government considered the establishment of skills acquisition programmes in the state, to train her unemployed citizens in different skills as an economic development strategy and or panacea for youth restiveness (Eme, 2014).

Jimba(2007) defined skills acquisition as the process of demonstrating the habit of active thinking or behavior in a specific activity. Jimba(2007) further stated that skills acquisition is seen as the ability to do or perform an activity that is related to some meaningful exercise, work or job. Jimba(2007) maintains that for a skill to be acquired, appropriate knowledge, attitudes, habits of thought and qualities of character are learnt to enable the acquirer develop intellectual, emotional and moral character which prepare him or her for a bright future.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In spite of efforts made by State Government and other private organizations in establishing skills acquisition centers, there is serious indication that Government at certain levels are yet to determine the enormous value of empowerment through skills acquisition programme. It is regrettable that the skill levels of our people is still low and has not contributed to the expansion of the industrial market in Nigeria, nor the growth of exportable products in the economy.

Report shows that about 55.9% of Nigerians between the ages of 15-64 (most vibrant and active population) are jobless. Also, the national unemployment rate increased to 23.1% in 2018 compared to 21.1% in 2010 and 19.7% in 2009. Given the emphasis of the transformation policy of the present state Government on employment generation, wealth creation and poverty eradication, it is imperative to ascertain whether there has been real change in the skill acquisition programmes of the state due to funding by the Government

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of funding on performance of Abia State skill acquisition programmes. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the effect of funding on the training facilities, Infrastructures, employees turn over, trainee turnover, trainees' retention rate, employees/staff motivation, trainees acquisition cost and revenues/income performance of Abia State skills acquisition center.
2. To identify the extent to which Abia State skills acquisition center contributes to the capacity of their graduate for self-employment.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are there any effect of funding on the training facilities, Infrastructures, employees turn over, trainee turnover, trainees' retention rate, employees/staff motivation, trainees acquisition cost and revenues/income performance of Abia State skills acquisition center?.

2. What are the extent to which Abia State skills acquisition center contributes to the capacity of their graduate for self-employment?.

## 1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the research objectives and research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated.

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between funding and performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: The Skill acquisition programmes of Abia State do not have a significant relationship with capacity for self-employment of the graduates

## 2.0. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework Crossman Skill Acquisition Theory

The skill acquisition theory was propounded by Crossman in the year 1959. He asserts that practice leads to performance improvement.

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Crossman (1959) suggested that, when faced with a new task, there are many strategies that can potentially be used. With practice of the task, one monitors the outcome, which is the result of various strategies used. With time the individual will favour the more efficient strategies. These are used more often and this produces performance speed-up.

Crossman in Adeniyi (2001), model qualities as an example of a theory that proposes that practices leads to more efficient procedures for performing a task. The theory does not suggest that practices modify strategies to make them more efficient. Practice leads to the selection of the most efficient strategies among several. Crossman's theory provides an account of the power law of learning. According to the theory, it is easier to find faster, more efficient methods early in practice and so large gains in performance time are more likely at this stage.

Hence, after the acquisition of appropriate skills for self-reliance by participants of the Abia state skill acquisition programme, it is therefore expected of them to put into practice the skills they have acquired so as to get the desired results. As practice continues, more efficient methods become harder to find, and so performance time improves by ever-smaller amounts. Crossman's theory did not deal with the issue in any great detail beyond a re-statement of Thorndike's identical elements hypothesis: transfer of skill from one task to another will take place where methods appropriate to one are also appropriate to the other (Crossman in Adeniyi, 2001).

## 2.2 Empirical Review:

Magide et al, (2013) in their study examined entrepreneurial skills in technical vocational education and training as a strategic approach for achieving youth empowerment in Nigeria. Their study examined each stages of skills acquisition and their result shows that each stage embodies unique characteristics relative to an athlete's level of performance of a skill or activity.

Odia and Odia (2013), in their study in developing entrepreneurial skills and transforming challenges into opportunities found

out that wealth creation acquired through youth empowerment is expected to reverse the structural weakness and imbalances in the economy by providing strategic focus and direction, and inculcating in the youths the right ethics, discipline, values, hard work, honesty, respect and humility among others.

Douli (2002), in the study on Overview of Nigeria Economic Reforms. Central Bank of Nigeria, identified the skills acquisition programme instituted in Nigeria over the years to include the following:

- i. The green revolution programme, which was in response to the programme of Operation Feed the Nation in 1976.
- ii. The School-to-land programme and skills acquisition programme in 1978.
- iii. The youth employment and vocational skills development scheme of (National Directorate of Employment) in 1986.
- iv. The small-scale industrial and graduate farmers programme of National Directorate of Employment in 1988.
- v. The national open apprenticeship scheme of 1988.

Prominent among the reasons for the growth and expansion of skills acquisition programme in Nigeria was the need for the survival of the youths through self-reliance programmes. Initially, the efforts of the government towards youth empowerment was in Agricultural production, but overtime, the idea was diversified into industrial and handcrafts production that can yield income and make the youths self-reliant.

## Review on Skills Acquisition Programmes in Abia State

In accordance with the numerous skills acquisition programmes instituted in Nigeria, Abia State was not left behind in making sure that youths in the State were adequately trained and empowered with differing skills. It is imperative to note that Abia State first introduced Skills acquisition programme in 2004 by the Orji Uzor Kalu Administration, though it became operational with the building and equipping of the skills acquisition center at Ogurube Layout, very close to Nnamdi Azikiwe

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Secretariat, Umuahia by Chief T.A. Orji's Administration.

The center was placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (Abia State Official report, 2015). In 2016, under the administration of Governor OkezieIkpeazu, Ph.D, the state expanded the centers to Aba South Local Government and Umunneochi Local Government to cover effectively the three geo-political zones of Abia State (Abia South, Abia Central and Abia North).

It was designed in such a way that Aba center will serve the Abia South Zone, Umuahia center for the Abia Central zone, while Umunneochi will cover the Abia North Zone. From the records available at the principal's office Skills Acquisition center Umuahia, the programme has graduated 1,215 persons in different skills from 2012 to September, 2017. The beneficiaries of the programme include National Youth Service Corps members serving in the State, Industrial training students of tertiary institutions, civil servants and the unemployed. And at the end of six months intensive training, the trainees will be issued with a certificate and also empowered subject to the availability of fund.

The training programmes are very effective except that the materials for the training are provided by the trainee as government provided the center and equipments (Abia State Official report, 2015).

Trainees are trained according to the structure of the various training centers in the state such as;

- **Umuahia Center, Ogurube Layout:** fashion designing, craft, bead making and interior decoration, computer operation, hair dressing, catering chemical and applied products
- **Aba South Center :** Tailoring, Craft , Computer training, Food processing, Hair dressing
- **Umunneochi Center:** Tailoring, Computer training, Hair dressing, Catering

### Education for Employment (E4E)

This is a programme aimed at training over 100,000 youths in various technical and vocational skills by the Abia State Government. The skills are expected to enable the youths to be self- employed or take up jobs in industries and help grow the economy (Ekong and Ekong, 2016). The present Administration, under the leadership of Dr. OkezieIkpeazu through this programme, gave a boost to skills acquisition programme in many areas with the launch of Education for Employment (E4E) programme at Boys Technical College, Aba, on September 18, 2015. Education for Employment (E4E) programme was established to develop the human capital of Abia State in line with international best practices.

The **objectives** of the programme include:

- (a) Assessment of the current systems and services in place for Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) and Youth Development.
- (b) Development of a short, medium and long term strategic plan to manage expectations and meet identified needs.
- (c) Bridging the gap between educational institutions and industries in Abia State, through effective employer engagement of fit for -purpose curricula.
- (d) Re-establishment of technical and vocational trades in the technical colleges and ensure National Board for Technical Education accreditation.
- (e) Providing institutional capacity- building, for technical and vocational education in the state.
- (f) Increasing the relevance of our Technical and Vocational Education Training in the local industry in particular and the state in general.
- (g) Creating and managing Business Development centers (entrepreneurship hubs) in the 17 Local Governments Areas of Abia State.
- (h) Providing initial and on-going support for entrepreneurs to ensure successful outcomes.
- (i) Sourcing local and international funding for these projects.

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- (j) Training and providing post training support services for 100,000 youths in 4 years.
- (k) Development of a Labour Market Information System (LMIS) to manage the programme.
- (l) Establishment of more technical and vocational institutions to meet identified needs.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^z)} \quad (1)$$

where  
 n = sample size  
 N = Total population size  
 I = Constant  
 e<sup>z</sup> = Acceptable level of error 0.05 or 5%

The sample size is therefore calculated thus:-

$$n = \frac{80}{1 + 80(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{80}{1.2n} = 66.666667 = 67$$

**3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in Abia state, Nigeria. Abia state is situated in the eastern part of Nigeria, created in 1991 from part of Imo state and is made up of 17 Local Government areas. Abiastate is the 5<sup>th</sup> most industrialized state in Nigeria, and has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest index of human development in the country, with numerous economic activities (NBS, 2016). The study adopted a Survey design in eliciting data required for the study. This study made use of both primary and secondary data.

The primary data used were those of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, response rates on level of funding and patronage, and level of participation in the skill acquisition centers in the state. The secondary data that was of interest to the study were statistics on previous trainer and trainee participation by numbers in the various skill acquisition centers.

The sample size was determined according to the sample size determination formular of Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973)

**Pearson Correlation Coefficient**

The Pearson Correlation formula is presented as;

$$r = \frac{n\sum_{xy} - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2)(n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2)}} \quad (2)$$

where

r = Pearson Correlation Coefficient  
 X = Independent Variable  
 Y = Dependent Variable  
 $\sum x$  = Summation of X  
 $\sum y$  = Summation of Y  
 n = Number of observations

Hence from equation 2, the correlation coefficient between X and Y is not unity

**4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The distribution of the questionnaire distributed and retrieved from the respondents of Abia state skill acquisition centers is presented in Table 1

**Table 1: Response rate of respondents of Abia state skill acquisition centers**

Staff	No of questionnaire distributed	No of questionnaire returned	Percentage response
Center Managers	3	3	5
Instructors	12	9	15
Trainees	52	47	80
Total	67	59	100.0

Source: field survey data, 2021

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Table 1 shows that out of three (3) copies of the questionnaire distributed to the center Managers of Abia State skill acquisition centers, same copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned from the managers representing 5% response rate from the center managers in the entire questionnaire returned and used for the study. Similarly, table 4.1 shows that out of twelve (12) copies of the questionnaire distributed to the Instructors from Abia State skill acquisition centers, nine (9) copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned from the instructors representing 15.3% response rate from the instructors in the entire questionnaire returned and used for the study, and lastly, out of fifty-two (52) copies of the questionnaire distributed to the trainees of Abia State skill acquisition centers, forty-seven (47) copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned from

the trainees representing 79.7% response rate from the trainees.

Therefore, in this study, a total of fifty-nine (59) copies of the questionnaire that was returned were used for analysis. The mean responses of employees were pooled together and the analysis was then done on total staff basis.

**Effect of Funding on the Performance of Abia State Skills Acquisition Center.**

The mean score responses of the respondents on the effect of funding on the performance of Abia State skills acquisition center is presented on Table 2

**Table 2: Mean score responses of the respondents on the effect of funding on the performance of Abia State skills acquisition center**

Statement	X	standard Deviation
Procurement of quality training facilities for improved training	3.63	0.84
Periodic maintenance of the infrastructures in the training centers needed for optimum learning which invariably attracts other trainees to the center	3.14	0.48
Funding increases the attractiveness of the job thus increases the employees turn over.	3.46	0.66
Funding increases trainees retention rate in the center	3.64	0.78
Funding increases Staff motivation to function at their best	3.52	0.57
Funding helps to reduce the trainees acquisition cost	3.83	0.86
Funding help to decongest the population in a particular skill center by expanding and building skill acquisition centers in many locations of the state	3.86	1.05
Funding increases the revenue income of the skill acquisition center	3.98	0.99
Enhances the commercialization of products produced at the centers which in-turn returns revenue to the state	3.57	0.61
<b>Overall mean score</b>	<b>3.63</b>	
<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>59</b>	
<b>Mean cut point</b>	<b>3.00</b>	

Source field survey data, 2021. X = mean.

The result as analyzed and presented on Table 2 shows that the overall mean responses of the respondents on the effect of funding on the performance of Abia State skills acquisition center on a 5-point scale by respondents in the Abia state skill acquisition centers, was high, with a grand mean score of  $\bar{X} = 3.63$ .

Specifically in Abia State, the respondents responded highly that Funding increases the revenue income of the skill acquisition center ( $\bar{X} = 3.98$ ); Funding help to decongest the population in a particular skill center by

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expanding and building skill acquisition centers in many locations of the state ( $\bar{X} = 3.86$ );

Funding helps to reduce the trainees acquisition cost ( $\bar{X} = 3.83$ ); Funding increases trainees retention rate in the center ( $\bar{X} = 3.64$ ); Procurement of quality training facilities for improved training ( $\bar{X} = 3.63$ ); Enhances the commercialization of products produced at the centers which in-turn returns revenue to the state ( $\bar{X} = 3.57$ ); Funding increases Staff motivation to function at their best ( $\bar{X} = 3.52$ ); Funding increases the attractiveness of the job thus

increases the employees turn over ( $\bar{X} = 3.46$ ) and Periodic maintenance of the infrastructures in the training centers needed for optimum learning which invariably attracts other trainees to the center ( $\bar{X} = 3.14$ ).

**Contribution of Abia state Skill Acquisition Centers towards their Graduate Self Employment.**

The mean score responses of the respondents on the contribution of Abia state skill acquisition centers towards their graduate self-employment is presented on Table 3

**Table 3: Mean score responses of the respondents on the contribution of Abia state skill acquisition centers towards their graduate self employment**

Statements	x	Standard Deviation
Graduates are well equipped to start their business by the state skill acquisition center	3.20	0.54
Graduates are empowered with management skills on business management	3.41	0.71
Funds are adequately disbursed to the graduates by the skill center to promote their practices	3.46	0.68
The graduates are trained to be self-confident and strongly believe in themselves	3.59	0.84
The graduates are impacted with ability to work for a longer period	3.49	0.42
The state skill acquisition programme provide adequate marketing channel for its graduates to market their products	3.24	0.56
Linking their graduates to companies and big firms for practical experience that gives them confidence for self-employment and makes them better than their colleagues in other states	2.77	0.81
Periodic promotion and market fare to promote their graduates skill abilities	3.00	1.02
Improving the usage of Information and communication Technology (ICT) amongst the graduates which enhances their operational efficiency in their own business	3.14	0.58
<b>Overall mean score</b>	<b>3.26</b>	
<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>59</b>	
<b>Mean cut point</b>	<b>3.00</b>	

Source field survey data, 2021 $\bar{X}$ = mean

The result in Table 3 showed that the respondents responded positively on eight (8) out of the nine (9) statements bordering on the contribution of Abia state skill acquisition centers towards their graduate self-employment with overall mean score of >3.00. This implies that Abia state skill acquisition centers contributed to the self-employment of their

graduates. The respondents posited that Abia state skill acquisition centers contributed in such areas as, The graduates are trained to be self-confident and strongly believe in themselves ( $\bar{X} = 3.59$ ); The graduates are impacted with ability to work for a longer period ( $\bar{X} = 3.49$ );

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Funds are adequately disbursed to the graduates by the skill center to promote their practices ( $\bar{X} = 3.46$ ); Graduates are empowered with management skills on business management ( $\bar{X} = 3.41$ ); The state skill acquisition programme provide adequate marketing channel for its graduates to market their products ( $\bar{X} = 3.24$ ); Graduates are well equipped to start their business by the state skill acquisition center ( $\bar{X} = 3.20$ ); Improving the usage of Information and communication Technology (ICT) amongst the graduates which enhances their operational

efficiency in their own business ( $\bar{X} = 3.14$ ) and Periodic promotion and market fare to promote their graduates skill abilities ( $\bar{X} = 3.00$ ).

**HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>**: There is no positive relationship between funding and level of performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme.

**Ho<sub>A</sub>**: There is positive relationship between funding and level of performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme.

**Table 4: Correlational relationship between funding and level of performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme**

		<b>Performance</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>Funding</b>	Pearson correlation	0.701***	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	Df	59	59
<b>Performance</b>	Pearson correlation	1	0.701***
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	Df	59	59

Source field survey data, 2021\*\*\* Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant relationship between funding and level of performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme, showing df 59, r 0.701, p<0.05. The findings reveal that funding highly influenced the level of performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme, hence the study rejects the null hypothesis which states that there is no positive relationship between funding and level of performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme and accepts the alternative which states that there is positive relationship between

funding and level of performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme.

**Hypothesis 2**

**Ho<sub>2</sub>**: Skill acquisition programme does not have a significant relationship with the capacity for self-employment of the graduates

**Ho<sub>A</sub>**: Skill acquisition programme have a significant relationship with the capacity for self-employment of the graduates

**Table 5: Correlational relationship between Skill acquisition programme and capacity for self-employment of the graduates**

		Capacity for self-employment of the graduates	Skill acquisition programme
Skill acquisition programme	Pearson correlation	0.821***	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	Df	59	59
Capacity for self-	Pearson correlation	1	0.821***



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employment of the graduates	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	Df	59	59

**Source field survey data, 2021\*\*\*** Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 reveals that there is a significant high relationship between skill acquisition programme and capacity for self-employment of the graduates, showing df 59, r 0.821, p<0.05. The findings reveal that skill acquisition programme has a strong positive effect on the capacity for self-employment of the graduates hence the study rejects the null hypothesis which states that skill acquisition programme does not have a significant relationship with the capacity for self-employment of the graduates and accepts the alternative which states that skill acquisition programme has a significant relationship with the capacity for self-employment of the graduates.

**5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**CONCLUSION**

This study evaluated the effectiveness of skill acquisition programme of Abia State Government. The study therefore concludes that funding is a significant factor that contributes to the performance of Abia state skill acquisition programme. Abia state skill acquisition programme contributes to the self-employment of its graduates by ensuring that the trainees are trained to be self-confident, empowered with management skills on business management and trained on the use of modern information and communication technologies amongst others.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The following recommendations are made to improve the skills acquisition programme in Abia State.

1. There is need for the Abia state government to develop a policy that will enhance funding and improve financial information infrastructure for financial accessibility of the center and its trainees for improved performance and growth.

2. The state should increase the spread of the skills acquisition programme to all the rural areas and also should be incorporated in the secondary schools curriculum, to inculcate the idea of entrepreneurship among our younger ones. This will create wealth, self-reliance and employment, and also improve the standard of living of the participants.

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