



Influence of Community-Based Training Skills on Youth and Women Empowerment in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State

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Abstract

The study examined influence of community-based training skills for youth and women empowerment in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The study adopted three research questions to guide the study. the descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was (600) 400 youths and 200 women were used as respondents. the questionnaire on influence of community- based training skills in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State? The sample size of 450 was drawn from the population of 600 using purposive sampling techniques, the instrument was subjected to face and content validation and was determined by the two experts in adult education and measurement and evaluation. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 was obtained for the instrument using Cronbach alpha. Mean and standard deviation was used for data analysis and 2.5 decision mean was adopted as decision rule. Findings of the study revealed that community-based training skills are designed to provide skill acquisition, empowerment and capacity building programs that are tailored to the specific needs of the communities and enhance their self- reliance.

Keywords: Community-based, Empowerment, Skills, Training, Women, Youth.

Introduction

A community can be broadly defined as a group of individuals who share common interests, values, goals, or geographical location and who interact regularly to pursue a common interest and development. This implies that a community is not only a spatial or geographic entity but also a psychological and social construct that fosters a sense of belonging and collective identity among its members. Also a community is characterized by close personal ties, shared beliefs, norms and strong emotional bonds, some scholars have expanded this view, recognized that communities today can exist both physically and virtually, connected through social networks, shared interests, and collective goals rather than mere proximity. (Etzioni, 2019), This reflects the transformation of human interaction patterns in the context of globalization, urbanization, and technological advancement. Wilkinson (2021) emphasized that a strong community serves as a social system through which individuals derive meaning, identity, and support, fostering

resilience and empowerment in the face of social and economic challenges. Moreover, community is closely linked to the concept of participation and empowerment.

Rivers State is characterized by considerable diversity, with urban and rural populations exhibiting different levels of training skills. In many communities, traditional gender roles often restrict women's participation in economic activities, while youth face challenges arising from high unemployment rates and inadequate vocational training. Community-based training skills have been introduced, aiming to bridge the gap for skill acquisition, and community development. (Nwafor, 2020) Empowerment of youth and women has emerged as a critical focus area in community development across the world, particularly in regions where social and economic disparities are pronounced. In Rivers State, where the population is characterized by diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, community-based training skills play important role in fostering empowerment among these marginalized groups. Community-based training skills are designed to provide skill acquisition and capacity building program that are tailored to the specific needs of the community, thus equipping participants with the knowledge and skills necessary for socio-economic advancement (Udo & Watchman, 2021)

Rivers State has in recent years stepped up visible efforts to expand youth empowerment across its communities through a mix of government funding, skill-training initiatives, and partnerships with private and international organizations which includes technical and vocational training, agribusiness support, and targeted investment in employment generation with the state indicating large allocations aimed at youth and women for agricultural development. Women empowerment initiatives in Rivers State communities have gained significant momentum in recent years through a combination of Federal, State, and non-governmental interventions focused on economic independence, skills development, and political participation. According to Akpan, (2015) he opined that Nigeria has a population of 83.5 per cent of youth age from 18 to 40 years and women has about half of the population. For Nigerian economy to be developed, they must consider women and youth empowerment seriously, the youth unemployment rate is 11.1 per cent, mainly due to the limited job opportunities available. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs distributed 386 pieces of equipment across 15 states including Rivers State, accompanied by training programmes handled by experts to equip women for farming, trading, sewing, craft making, tie and dye, livestock rearing, and small-scale business (Akpan, 2015). Community-based training programmes promote empowerment which is underscored by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4, which emphasizes on the importance of skill

acquisition, inclusive and quality training and more learning opportunities for youth and women (United Nations, 2015). Any training that concentrates on skill development does not only enhance individual capabilities but also contribute to community development by reducing poverty and unemployment.

It is important for governments to identify and promote alternative to future livelihoods for youth and women (Shibru, 2017). Women and Youth in every community are the most viable and potential human resources in population and social structure, empowering youth and women are powerful development any community or society can invest on. In developing countries, women face some challenges, inadequate access to finance which has been identified as one major limiting factor to women empowerment, improvement of female access to education and health to enhance women participation in the society and an increase in productivity. The survival of many communities today depends mostly on activities of women in the informal sector. Megahed, Purinton., El-Shimi, Skaggs, & Amer (2018), stated that community-based training skills is a learning approach that blends effective services in a community with instruction to enhance the learning familiarity, strengthen community participation, and instruction on civic responsibilities. It is therefore expected that teachers and other stakeholders involved in it are better prepared with skills and competencies on its implementation, an issue that this paper will deal with it in the latter stages. Community based training skills equip individuals with a broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are recognized as essential for meaningful participation in the present and future. (Danladi, Adamu, Usman & Doma, 2020).

Danladi, Adamu, Usman & Doma, 2020), posit that Community based training skills is understood as an umbrella term that embrace education and training skills which comprises skills development relating to a wide range of occupations, production, services, and livelihood. The skills acquisition helps to develop personal capacities, individuals full potentials, paid jobs, self-employment, life goals and occupational interest. Also, these training skills enable individuals to overcome disadvantages due to circumstances of prior educational experiences or otherwise and they are sewing, hair dressing, baking, soap making, tie and dye, shoe making, hat and mat making, broomstick, cream making, barbing and cooking, they are in harmony with national and local contexts (Ogunmola & Samuel, 2021)

Youths are undermined and overlooked in the society, across the globe there are emphasis placed for the youth population, from family members to global development leaders, youth are the next wave of leaders. Whether as key actors to preserve and continue cultural traditions, or

as potential problem solvers to address the world's issues, there is a local and global understanding that youth shape the future in some way. In order for youth to feel empowered and grow into the expectations of adults, communities must better amplify the voices and needs of their youth. Akintayo and Adiat, (2013), opined that Rivers State needs to invest on education for their youth for formal, non-formal education, vocational training, on-the-job training and other educational guidance which should be advanced as very crucial instrument of empowerment for communities to achieve high levels of wellbeing, there must be adequate levels of youth empowerment, and communities must provide spaces and services that highlight the complexities of the adolescent experience. Youth Empowerment are programmes used to impart skills to young able bodied and mentally fit individual to enable them participate maximally in the harnessing and distribution of economic and social resources for meaningful self-benefits and the improvement of the society. Youth empowerment in Rivers State communities represents a multifaceted approach combining government initiatives, private sector involvement, and federal government training skills programmes aimed at addressing unemployment and capacity building among young people. Youth empowerment entails well developed training skills that can be deployed to improve capacity of young ones to either sustain their livelihood and enable them to live productively in the society upon proper deployment, it can be a major boost to economic development given that the key element of economic development (human resources) is the focus of such programmes and aims on improving life.

Globally, ensuring women's rights and providing them with equal opportunities to fulfill their potential is crucial not only for achieving gender equality but also for meeting broader international development objectives. When women are empowered, they contribute to the health, productivity, and well-being of their families, communities, and nations, generating positive impacts for all. Women empowerment plays a vital role in achieving gender equality by enhancing their self-worth, decision-making power, access to resources and opportunities, control over their own lives, and ability to drive change. Andrei, (2024), stated that community-based education programmes have a transformative role in empowering women in rural communities by addressing barriers to education, skill development, and socioeconomic participation, by fostering literacy, vocational and training skills, and awareness of rights. Community-based training skills empower women to become active contributors to their families, communities, and local economies. focusing on its ability to enhance self-confidence, promote financial independence, self-employment and capacity building, participatory learning, collaboration with local stakeholders is analyzed for overcoming challenges like

poverty, cultural restrictions, and isolation. community-driven training skills have led to improvements in health, learning skills, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement among women.

Statement of the Problem

Empowerment of youth and women has emerged as a critical development priority in Rivers State mostly Emohua Local Government Area where unemployment, poverty and social inequality pose as significant challenges. There is a lack of structured and modern vocational training in areas such as fish farming, sewing, hat and mat making, tie and dye, baking, cooking, bird breeding, soap and cream making, hair dressing, barbing etc which are increasingly essential in today's economy that can enhance employability and entrepreneurship. Additionally, there is an evident absence of community based training skills that limits the ability of youths and women to transform acquired skills into sustainable businesses. There is also inadequate provision of specialized training for women and youth particularly in the above mentioned areas that can promote economic independence. Furthermore, the community lacks effective mentorship and follow-up support systems that can guide trainees after skill acquisition. Without mentorship, access to startup capital, and market linkages, many trained individuals remain unemployed or underemployed despite completing training programmes. This deficiency has prompted the need for this research.

Purpose of the Study

The following objectives are to guide the study.

1. ascertain the extent community-based training skills help youth and women acquire vocational skills in communities in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State.
2. determine the extent to which the skills obtained increase participant chances of self-employment in communities in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State.
3. find out the extent to which participating in community-based training skills improve the economic status of youth and women in communities in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following objectives were adopted to guide the study.

1. To what extent has community-based training skills helped youth and women acquire vocational skills in communities in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does the skills obtained increase participant chances of self-employment in communities in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State?

3. To what extent that participating in community-based training skills improved the income level of youth and women in communities in Emohua Local Government of Rivers State?

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design. This is because the survey design is considered when handling a large population especially on issues of the moment that involves systematic collection of data from population of study. Community-based training skills is the independent variables while youth and women empowerment are dependable variables. The population of this study consist of youth and women in communities in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State which comprises of 300 youth and 300 women from six (6) communities in Emohua Local Goverment Area of Rivers State, purposive sampling techniques was used to select house wives and widows, jobless youths, school drop outs and orphans to get the sample size of 450 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Influence of community-based training skills for youth and women empowerment in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The questionnaire was structured in two parts. Part one elicits responses from the respondents on the demographic features and part two sought respondents' opinion on the items from the research questions. There are 30 items and were structured on a 4point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, High Extent (HE) =3 points, Low Extent (LE) = 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 point respectively depending on the questions. The validity of the instrument was subjected to face and content validity which the researcher drafted the questionnaire, the topic, objectives, research questions and hypotheses was given to the researcher's supervisor and an expert in Adult Education and Community Development from Rivers State University. They subjected the instrument to scrutiny to assess the suitability of the language, adequacy and relevance of the items in addressing the research questions bearing in mind the purpose of study. The Cronbach Alpha was used to obtain the reliability coefficient of 0.70, 0.80 and 0.92 of the instruments.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent has community-based training skills helped youth and women acquire vocational skills in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State?

4.1: Mean Analysis and Standard Deviation on what extent has community-based training skills helped youth and women acquire vocational skills?

S/N	Item	youth and women N=450 X	SD	Decision
1.	The training for hair dressing has improved my skills.	3.45	0.72	VHE
2.	I have been able to apply the skills learned from the training to start my own sewing shop.	3.32	0.65	VHE
3.	The training has provided me with relevant and up-to-date baking skills.	3.50	0.60	VHE
4.	I have been able to get my own barbing shop as a result of the skills i acquired.	3.10	0.85	VHE
5.	I have a clear business plan and after participating in the training.	3.28	0.70	VHE
6.	The training has helped me identify potential business opportunities.	3.40	0.68	VHE
7.	I am more likely to create jobs for others after acquiring skills from the training center	3.22	0.75	VHE
8.	The skills I acquired have increased my chances of securing funding or loans for my business	3.35	0.66	VHE
9.	The training has improved my prospects for self-employment.	3.48	0.62	VHE
10.	The training has provided me with the necessary skills to compete in the job market	3.30	0.71	VHE
Grand Mean /SD		3.34	0.694	VHE

Table 4.1 revealed that the grand mean (3.34) exceeds the decision mean (2.50), indicating respondents overall agree that community-based training improves the income of youth and women employment opportunities. It also shows the response that community-based training skills help youth and women acquire vocational skills to a very high extent in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The mean values were obtained from youth and women which ranges from 3.45 to 3.30 respectively and are higher than the decision mean of 2.5 and the grand mean of 3.34 is also higher than the decision. So, it is accepted that community- based training skills help youth and women acquire vocational and technical skills to a very high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent has the skills obtained from community-based training and vocational skills increased participants' chances of self-employment in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

1.2: Mean Analysis and Standard Deviation on what extent has the skills obtained from community-based training centers increased participants' chances of self-employment.

S/N	Item	youth and women	N=450 X	SD	Remark
1.	The skills obtained from the community-based training center have improved my chances of getting employed.		2.65	0.95	VHE
2.	Participants are confident that the skills obtained will help participant start their own business.		2.75	0.88	VHE
3.	The training has provided me with the necessary skills to compete in the job market.		2.90	0.80	VHE
4.	The skills i acquired have increased my chances of getting a job in my preferred field.		2.55	0.99	HE
5.	The community-based training has significantly improved my employability.		2.68	0.90	VHE
6.	The income i earn now is more stable and reliable compared to before the training.		2.72	0.92	VHE
7.	The training has provided me with skills to improve my economic prospects.		2.60	0.97	VHE
8.	My participation in the training has led to an overall improvement in my standard of living.		2.95	0.98	VHE
9.	The skills I acquired have enabled me to secure a better-paying job.		2.95	0.78	VHE
10.	Participating in the training has Improved my financial stability		3.00	0.89	VHE
Grand Mean/SD			2.967	0.816	VHE

The Results for Table 1.2 mean is $2.967 > 2.50$ overall respondents agree community training increases youth and women income-generating activities to very high extent. It also shows the response that the skills obtained from community-based training skills increased participant chances of self-employment in communities to a very high extent in Rivers State. The mean values was obtained from youth and women which ranges from 2.65 to 3.00 respectively are

higher than the average and the decision mean of 2.5. is also higher than the average. That means skills obtained from community-based training skills increased participant chances of self-employment in communities was accept to a high extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent has participating in community-based training skills improved the income of youth and women in Emohua Local Government of Rivers State?

1.3: Mean Analysis and Standard Deviation on what extent has participating in community-based training skills improved the income of youth and women.

S/N	Item	youth and women N=450 X	SD	Decision
1.	My income has increased since i participated in the community-based training program.	2.30	1.05	VLE
2.	The training has enabled me to acquire new skills that have led to better job opportunities.	2.25	1.02	VLE
3.	I have experienced a significant improvement in my finances. since completing the training.	2.40	0.98	LE
4.	Participating in the community-based training has helped me increase my potential.	2.10	1.10	V LE
5.	The training has improved my ability to contribute to my family's financial well-being	2.55	0.95	HE
6.	Participating in community-based training has increased my personal income.	2.20	1.08	VLE
7.	The training has provided me with skills to improve my economic prospects.	2.35	1.00	LE
8.	I am now financially independent	2.15	1.12	VLE
9.	I have experienced a significant improvement in my financial status.	2.50	0.92	HE
10.	The training has enabled me to acquire new skills that have led to higher pay.	2.45	0.97	HE
Grand mean/SD		2.305	1.000	VLE

The result for Table 1.3 mean = 2.305 $\leq$ 2.50 on average respondents do not strongly agree that these items (as phrased) has improved the income of youth and women. Note: if expect challenge items to be endorsed (i.e., higher mean = bigger challenge), you may want to reword

items for clarity or probe further; also, variability is high ($SD \approx 1.00$). It also shows the response that participating in community-based training skills has not improved the economic status of youth and women in communities in Rivers State. The mean values were obtained from youth and women which ranges from 3.45, to 3.30 respectively are higher than the grand mean of 3.34. That means participating in community-based training skills improved the economic status of youth and women in Emohua Local government Areas of Rivers State was accepted to a high extent.

Discussion of Findings

The result revealed that youth and women has been engaged and transformed with skills they learnt, they are now self-employed. The three research questions helped their training scheme to improve their wellbeing and that of communities and society at large. The mean are all higher than the average this implies that Influence of community-based training skills for youth and women empowerment in Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State are very necessary for capacity building and meet their specific needs and priority

The findings of this work are in consonant with Adebayo & Olatunji, (2022) who opined that community-based training skills acquisition is rooted in participatory development, where training activities are designed, implemented, and managed within the community to meet its specific needs and priorities. Women and Youth who are empowered plays a vital role by enhancing their self-worth, decision-making power, access to resources and opportunities, control over their own lives, and ability to drive change and promote alternative livelihood to future livelihood. (Shibru, 2017).

Community-based training skills are designed to provide skill acquisition and capacity building programs that are tailored to the specific needs of the community, thus equipping participants with the knowledge and skills necessary for socio-economic advancement (Udo & Watchman, 2021)

Conclusion

Influence of Community-Based Training Skills for youth and women empowerment in communities in Rivers State are aiming to bridge the gap between education, skill acquisition, and community development. They are structured learning and empowerment initiatives organized within local communities to equip individuals especially youth and women with relevant vocational, entrepreneurial, and technical skills that enhance self-reliance and socio-economic development. It has helped youth and women acquire vocational and technical skills,

increased participant chances of self-employment. Thus, it is very necessary for there to be more community-based training skills in communities in Rivers State for youth and women empowerment.

Recommendations

1. Individual and community members should engage women and youth in more community-based training skills that will enable them improve their income and wellbeing.
2. Government and non- governmental NGOs should empower youth and women in the communities with more skills and vocational training skills for transformation and capacity building.
3. Special attention should be given to encouraging women and youth by creating a good environment for better training and to improve their financial status.

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