

# The Impact of Learning on Youth Development in Nigeria: A Study of Anambra State

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the gendered impact of learning on youth development in Anambra State, Nigeria, with particular focus on mentoring and knowledge transfer. The general objective was to determine the relationship between learning and youth development, while specific objectives included assessing how mentoring influences skill acquisition and how knowledge transfer affects empowerment among male and female youths. Using a correlational survey design, data was collected from 300 respondents across five Local Government Areas. Findings revealed that mentoring significantly enhances skill acquisition and knowledge transfer strengthens youth empowerment for both genders, though female youths often face structural and cultural barriers in accessing opportunities. The study concludes that gender-sensitive policies are required to promote equitable youth development. Recommendations include targeted mentorship for female youths, government support for inclusive skill acquisition programs, and community-driven initiatives to reduce gender gaps in empowerment. This research contributes to ongoing debates on youth development, unemployment, and gender equality in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, skill acquisition, youth empowerment, gendered impact, knowledge transfer

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Youth development remains central to national growth, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, where unemployment, corruption, and poor infrastructure undermine young people's potential. While previous studies highlight unemployment rates and skill gaps, they often fail to emphasize the critical role of learning processes such as mentoring and knowledge transfer in youth empowerment. In Anambra State, the challenges of youth underemployment are compounded by gender disparities; female youths frequently encounter additional barriers in access to entrepreneurial training, mentorship, and financial support. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020),

Nigeria's youth unemployment rate exceeded 34.9%, with women disproportionately affected. This makes it imperative to investigate how learning interventions can bridge both developmental and gender gaps. This study therefore focuses on mentoring and knowledge transfer as key drivers of youth empowerment in Anambra State, analyzed through a gender lens.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Despite government and private sector interventions, youth unemployment remains high in Anambra State. Although mentoring and knowledge transfer are widely assumed to enhance skill acquisition and empowerment, there is insufficient empirical evidence on how these processes affect male and female youths differently. Most programs do not integrate gender considerations, leaving female youths underserved. Outdated statistics and generalized claims further obscure the true picture. The research gap lies in understanding the extent to which learning (mentoring and knowledge transfer) contributes to youth development in Anambra State and how gender influences these outcomes. Addressing this gap is essential for designing inclusive youth policies that align with Nigeria's broader goals of empowerment and gender equality.

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The major objective of the study is to examine the relationship that exists between learning and youth development in Anambra State. However, the specific objectives are:

1. To analyze the relationship between mentoring and skill acquisition of male and female youths in Anambra state.
2. To determine the effect of knowledge transfer on youth empowerment with emphasis on gender differences.

## **1.4 Research Question**

1. What is the relationship between mentoring and skill acquisition among male and female youths in Anambra State?
2. How does knowledge transfer influence youth empowerment across genders in Anambra State?

## **1.5 Hypotheses**

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between mentoring and skill acquisition among youths in Anambra State.

$H_{02}$ : There is a significant relationship between mentoring and skill acquisition among youths in Anambra State.

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer and youth empowerment across genders in Anambra State.

$H_{02}$ : There is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and youth empowerment across genders in Anambra State.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This research work will be of great benefit to the youth as it reveals the importance of mentoring to the development of youth. This study will also reveal the importance of effective mentoring on skill acquisition. This study will be of immense benefit to the society as it will reveal the importance of youth development as it helps to increase creativity, employment opportunity and production capacity. The study shall also contribute to the body of knowledge on youth development. This study will be very useful to the various stakeholders especially the key participants in the economic financing system: banks, industrialists and government agencies. The findings of the study will finally serve as a reference point to future researcher who will embark on similar topics.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The research work is delimited to learning and youth development in Anambra state. The study also covers the effect of mentoring on skill acquisition of youths and the effect of knowledge transfer on youth empowerment in Anambra state.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

#### **2.1.1 Learning**

Learning is the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience or being taught. Learning is the act of acquiring new modifying and reinforcing existing, knowledge, behaviors, skills, values or preferences which may lead to a potential change in synthesizing information, depth of the knowledge, attitude or behavior relative to the type and range of experience (Subba, 2009). The strategic function of learning in the entire education process cannot be over-emphasized especially when consideration is given to the fact that it is the teaching/learning process that makes it possible for an individual acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills which in turns make them educated and useful members of the society (Osifila 2008). Therefore, in this study, learning can be explained as the process by which a teacher gives out information to a learner in order to acquire, modify and reinforce existing knowledge and skills so as to achieve a solid youth empowerment.

### **2.2.1 Youth Empowerment**

Youth empowerment is a process where children and young people are encouraged to take charge of their lives through skill development. They do this by addressing their situation and then take action in order to improve their access to resources and transform their consciousness through their beliefs, values, and attitudes. Williams (2015) defined youth empowerment as the process whereby young people gain the ability and authority to make informed decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people. It is a means of encouraging youths to do great things for themselves and also to make great impact in their society. Youth empowerment aims to improve quality of life. Youth empowerment is achieved through participation in youth empowerment programs. These programs can be through non-profit organizations, government organizations, schools or private organizations. Youth empowerment is different from youth development because development is centered on developing individuals, while empowerment is focused on creating greater community change relies on the development of individual capacity. Therefore, in this study youth empowerment can be define as the ability of the government or financial institutions to empower the youth either through skill acquisition or financing of youth development so as to develop the economy. **Youth Empowerment involves the following:**

- Helping youth identify, utilize and maximize their potentials.
- Helping the youth to develop confidence and self-identity
- Encouraging youth to grow together in accountability
- Imbibing in youth, the eagerness to create a change.

### **2.1.3 Mentoring**

A mentor can be explained as the person that facilitates personal and professional growth of an individual by sharing the knowledge and insight that have been learned through the years. Mentoring is a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps less experienced ones (Ojedokun, 2013). Galbraith (2011) viewed mentoring as a process by which persons of superior rank, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and /or career development of persons identified as protégées. Mentoring is a close, developmental relationship between two people in which a partner willingly avails him /herself of the full range of superior experience, knowledge, skills, or status of the other partner in all spheres of human endeavour (Okurame, 2013).

Bilesanmi (2013) posited that mentoring is a set of tailors- made advice and incentive that a more experienced staff, in an innovative way can offer less experienced members in a plethora way and on a range of competencies. Mentoring is therefore a process in which mature and more experienced managers share their wisdom and experience with the younger employees on a one-on-one basis. Mentoring is a method growing in use for establishing relationship between junior and senior employees, a method gaining popularity in facilitating both employee and management development in the organization (Russel, 2010). Mentoring relationship involves exchange of wisdom, learning and development of skills and knowledge about the organization for the protégé's career growth (Akinbobola, 2013).

#### **2.1.4 Skill acquisition**

Skill acquisition is a process by which a symbolic domain in the culture is changed. New Songs, new ideas, new machines are what Skill acquisition is all about (Mihaly 2009). Skill acquisition is the ability to make or otherwise bring into existence something new, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form. Wyckoff (2013) defines creativity as new and useful. Skill acquisition is the act of seeing things that everyone around us sees while making connections that no one else has made. Skill acquisition is moving from the known to the unknown. Culture exerts a negative force on creativity. Drucker (2008) argued that skill acquisition is the tool of entrepreneurship. In addition, both skill acquisition and employment opportunities

demand creativity.

Pearce (2014) stated that “were it not for creativity, culture itself would not be created.” Innovation is the process of bringing the best ideas into reality, which triggers a creative idea, which generates a series of skill acquisition events. Skill acquisition is the process that transforms new ideas into new value—turning an idea into value. Schumpeter (2008) believes that the concept of Skill acquisition, described as the use of an invention to create a new commercial products or service, is the key force in creating new demand and thus new wealth. Skill acquisition creates new demand and entrepreneur brings the innovation to the market. This destroys the existing markets and create new one, which will in turn be destroyed by even newer products or services. Schumpeter calls this process “creative destructions.” Aldrich, (2009) opined that skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. According to International Labour Congress, (2013), Africa had the highest unemployment rate. The truth remains that the major causes of the unemployment among these vibrant youths is lack of skill to back up what they learnt from their institutions of learning. When these graduates were still in school, they did not bother to learn at least one single skill, maybe that which is related in computer card designing, typing, plumbing, electric maintenance and others.

### **2.1.5 Knowledge transfer**

Knowledge transfer is a key mechanism for organizations success. Von Krogh, (2010) emphasizes the importance of knowledge sharing. While Fernandez and Sabherwal (2011) found that social processes played an important role in the transfer of tacit knowledge among members in an organization. Nonaka and Takeuchi (2011) opined that workplace relationships such as mentoring should be fostered to promote transfer of tacit knowledge. Mentorship is such a factor in that it promotes guidance on career development and role modelling which both contribute greatly to employee’s development. The existence of interpersonal bond that fosters mutual trust enables the protégées to identify with their mentors to offer their support and counsel needed. The mentor applies active listening and rapport skills that enables both individuals to address their concerns. The mentor reinforces with the protégé that both of them are highly valued employees and contributors to their organization. Career support is a lifelong series of activities that

contribute to a person's career exploration, establishment, success and fulfillment (Dessler, 2011).

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1976)**

This study is anchored on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1976), which explains that individuals acquire knowledge and behaviour through observation, imitation, and interaction with role models. In the context of youth development, mentoring serves as a direct application of this theory, where youths learn skills and behaviours from experienced mentors. Knowledge transfer similarly reflects observational and participatory learning, reinforcing skills acquisition and empowerment. Importantly, gender dynamics influence the mentoring process, as female youths may face fewer opportunities for role modelling due to cultural biases. Integrating gender into this theoretical framework underscores the necessity of ensuring equitable access to mentoring and knowledge transfer for both male and female youths in Anambra State.

## **2.3 Empirical Studies**

Benjamin & Onyeizugbe (2013) carried out a study on Business Mentoring and Entrepreneurship Development in Selected States of Nigeria. The study was guided by one research question and descriptive survey design was adopted. The focused on six states in Nigeria and proportionate stratified random sampling method was used to select 131 people. The data used was a primary data collected through structured questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between effective learning and entrepreneurship development. The researchers recommend among others that steps should be taken to enhance business mentoring for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria

Nnayeere (2015) investigated Role of Mentoring Programs on the Employee output in Organizations in Nigeria, the study highlights that the mentoring program is an important employee development method practiced in successful organizations. The ability of mentors either informally or formally to implement the mentoring program activities may

lead to higher employees' performance, stratified random sampling was used to select the subjects included in the sample. The data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively by use of descriptive and inferential statistics to measure the formulated objectives so as to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The study established that mentorship programmes play an important role in employee output and are enhanced through knowledge transfer, career development guidance and skills enhancement in mentoring.

Martin, (2009) examined the job creation as a correlation of skill acquisition. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between skill acquisition and job creation. The study was guided by one research questions and survey research design was adopted. The data used was a primary data collected through structural questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between skill acquisition and job creation.

Recent studies (Adebayo, 2019; Okoro, 2021) highlight that female youths are particularly disadvantaged in accessing entrepreneurship credit and mentorship. Similarly, UNESCO (2022) stresses that gender sensitive interventions are critical for sustainable youth empowerment in Africa.

Unlike previous works, this study focuses on Anambra State and integrates mentoring, knowledge transfer, and gender considerations, filling a crucial gap in youth development literature.

## **METHODS**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The study adopted correlation survey design and attention was paid to the variable of study which are mentoring, knowledge transfer (independent variables measured with



learning) and the dependent variable such as skill acquisition and youth empowerment (dependent variables) measured with youth development.

### 3.2 Area of the Study

The area of study of this research work comprises of the selected Local Government in Anambra state which include Nnewi, Nnewi South, Awka South, Idemili North, Idemili South. These local Governments were selected using simple random sampling technique.

### 3.3 Population of the Study

The study is delimited to five Local Government Areas in Anambra state of Nigeria. The selected Local Government Areas are Nnewi North, Nnewi South, Awka South, Idemili North, Idemili South. The total population of the study consists of 1204 youths.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/N	Local Government	Total Population
1	Nnewi North	312
2	Nnewi South	251
3	Awka South	249
4	Idemili North	208
5	Idemili South	188
<b>Total</b>		<b>1204</b>

**Source:** Local Government Matters Anambra State 2018.

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 300 was determined using Taro Yamene formula. Since the population is large, the researcher adopted Taro Yamene to sample the population. This is shown as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

were,

n = sample size,

N = population size,

e = error of significance,

1 = constant.

Using the formula, we have

Therefore, let  $n$ ?  $N = 1204$ ,  $e = 5\%$  or  $0.05$

$$n = \frac{1204}{1 + 1204(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 300.23 \cong 300$$

### 3.5 Method of Data Collection

The source of data for this work is based mainly on the primary source of structural questionnaire. The primary data were elicited by administering questionnaire to the selected respondents.

### 3.6 Instrument of Data Collection

The researcher used structured questionnaire as major instrument of data collection. Questionnaire is used because it helps in gathering information in a survey and also provides a quick means of obtaining respondents view on the whole range of subject.

### 3.7 Validity of the Instrument

The instrument used in measuring the sample size is content validity. The questionnaire was given to the supervisor and some senior academic staff to ensure that instrument measured correctly what it set out to measure. Their comment and correction were used in the final correction of this study.

### 3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure that the instrument will be able to elicit consistent result, it was tested for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha test. The pilot study was conducted using ten

percent (10%) of the sample size of the study which is thirty (30) copies of questionnaire. At the end, twenty-five (25) copies were retrieved. The result obtained is shown in the table below:

**Table 3.1 Reliability Statistic**

Cronbach's Alpha	N. of items
.701	25

**Source: Field Survey (pilot Study), 2018**

**Computation: SPSS ver. 23**

From the result obtained, the reliability coefficient was .701 which if converted into percentage is 70%. This signifies that the instrument is reliable and capable of eliciting consistent result.

### **3.9 Method of Data Analysis**

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed in analyzing the statistical data with the aim of establishing the strength of relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

The correlation formula is given below:

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

$$0 < r^2 < 1$$

In this study,  $r^2$  is used to determine the relationship between the sub-variables.

**Decision Rule:** accept the null hypothesis when the alpha value is greater than the probability values, otherwise we reject.

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This chapter deals with presentation and analysis of data based on the hypotheses stated in the study.

## 4.2 TEST OF HYPOTHESIS USING STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE (SPSS, 23)

### Hypothesis I

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between mentoring and skill acquisition among youths in Anambra State.

$H_1$ : There is a significant relationship between mentoring and skill acquisition of youths in Anambra State.

### Sample Distribution by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	160	53.3
Female	140	46.7
Total	300	100.0

### Descriptive Statistics for Mentoring and Skill Acquisition

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mentoring	59.40	12.50	300
Skill Acquisition	62.10	13.20	300

### Hypothesis II

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer and youth empowerment across genders in Anambra State.

$H_1$ : There is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and youth empowerment across genders in Anambra State.

### Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation (r)	Sig. (p-value)	N
Mentoring & Skill Acquisition	0.79	0.002	300
Knowledge Transfer & Empowerment	0.84	0.001	300

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary of Findings

Results indicated strong positive relationships between mentoring and skill acquisition ( $r=0.79$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and between knowledge transfer and empowerment ( $r=0.84$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Disaggregated analysis showed that male youths benefited more from mentorship programs, while female youths reported limited access due to cultural and financial barriers. Tables and cross-tabulations confirmed these differences, underscoring the need for gender sensitive interventions.

These findings suggest that while learning significantly promotes youth development, gender remains a determinant of access and outcomes.

### 5.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that learning through mentoring and knowledge transfer has a significant impact on youth development in Anambra State. However, gender disparities persist, with female youths facing more challenges in accessing opportunities.

To address these gaps, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Policymakers should design gender-sensitive mentorship programs that provide equal opportunities for male and female youths.
2. Government and NGOs should establish inclusive skill acquisition centers with financial support tailored to address female youth participation.
3. Community leaders and stakeholders should advocate for cultural shifts that encourage female involvement in entrepreneurship and mentorship.
4. Further research should explore how digital mentoring platforms can expand access for female youths in underserved areas.

These recommendations aim to strengthen youth empowerment and contribute to Nigeria's broader development goals of gender equality and inclusive growth.

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