

VOCATIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL YOUTHS: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study was to investigate the vocational and entrepreneurial skills development for rural youths and the implications for grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State. Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State and the population of the study consisted of all the rural youths that have undergone vocational and entrepreneurial skills. Stratified sampling technique was used in selecting 180 respondents. For this to be achieved, 4 local government areas were randomly selected from each of the 3 senatorial districts (Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial Districts). From each local government areas 15 youths were randomly selected and used for the study. The instrument used for data collection in this study was a questionnaire titled "Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skills Development for Grassroots Development Questionnaire (VESDGDQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.85, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as percentage analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. From the result, it was observed that the level of grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State is very poor. It was also observed that there are various types of vocational and entrepreneurial skills engaged by the youths of Akwa Ibom States (Fashion Design, Auto Servicing Skills, Electrical Skills, Construction Service Skills, Shoe Crafting, Carpentry Skills and many more) though with very low extent of operations due to poor power supply. Finally, it was concluded that there is significant relationship between vocational

entrepreneurial skills and grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State in a dwindling direction. One of the recommendations made was that government should make adequate provision of gainful vocational and entrepreneurial skill development programmes for the youths of Akwa Ibom State where the beneficiaries' must be selected objectively and without any bias.

Keywords: Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skills Development, Rural Youths, Grassroots Development and Akwa Ibom State

INTRODUCTION

Education has traditionally been seen as a mechanism for fostering entrepreneurial skills and grassroots development. It has surely extended perspectives and fostered creative minds, skills, and abilities among rural youngsters, which are hallmarks of grassroots growth and innovation. One of the important indicators of a sustainable economy is a country's ability to provide gainful work for its population in order to contribute to national development (Amaechina & Alaubi, 2018). Because no society can develop above the level of its educational system, productivity acumen is strengthened through the vocational and entrepreneurial skills taught in the curriculum. The development of vocational and entrepreneurial skills in rural areas is a technique of supporting a country's grassroots growth, which necessitates the youth being more capable, purposeful, and strategic in their operation. Rural areas, according to Okafor, Chukwuemeka, and Udentia (2105), are the most fundamental and vital section of the Nigerian population. Despite the huge magnitude of rural mass deprivation caused by the inability of local governments to function effectively as the third tier of governmental activity with powers to address socioeconomic difficulties, the rural population contributes significantly to overall grassroots development.

Vocational and entrepreneurial skills can aid in the development of rural communities through appropriate management of local resources. Governments in developing countries have realized that no progress will be significant unless rural communities are also carried along (Nwankwo & Okeke, 2017). This awareness stems from the fact that rural residents make up a sizable portion of the population. Vocational and entrepreneurial skills are acquired through specialized training provided to students or trainees in order to develop skills, ideas, managerial talents, and capabilities for self-employment rather than being employed for compensation. According to the European Commission (2006), vocational and entrepreneurial skills training is provided to individuals in order to instill a sense of initiative and the ability to transform ideas into action. It entails being creative, innovative, and risk-taking, as well as being able to organize and manage projects in order to attain goals and master one's own life. Vocational and entrepreneurial skills refer to the capacity to efficiently manipulate input resources within a certain firm to meet output goals. According to Oguntimeh and Nwosu (2014), in order for Nigerian young to be economically empowered, they must be provided the essential skills acquisition, and in order for this to happen, the curriculum must be efficiently implemented.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has been noted with dismay that residents in rural Akwa Ibom State have been denied opportunities to learn vocational and entrepreneurial skills development programs over the years. The cause of this neglect is a lack of power, among other things. It is true that a dearth of vocational skill options leads youths' focus to anti-social activity, forcing them to destroy rather than build. Unfortunately, the neglect of rural areas has contributed to the state's awful grassroots position.

The appalling status of the grassroots in Akwa Ibom State, on the other hand, has been witnessed with dismay. This illness has put many people in a bleak scenario that, in most circumstances, only gets worse. It is apparent that the inhabitants of Akwa Ibom State's rural areas have been crying out for many years owing to a lack of development in the area, but to no avail. This study was undertaken on this premise to determine the extent of rural development in Akwa Ibom State as a function of vocational and entrepreneurial skills development involving grassroots youths in Akwa Ibom State.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the level of grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To examine the extent of rural youth's involvement in vocational and entrepreneurial development skills in Akwa Ibom State.
3. To find out the types of vocational and entrepreneurial development skills engaged by the rural youths in Akwa Ibom State.
4. To determine the relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skills development and grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the extent of rural youth's involvement in vocational and entrepreneurial development skills in Akwa Ibom State?
3. What are the types of vocational and entrepreneurial development skills engaged by the rural youths in Akwa Ibom State?
4. What is the relationship between vocational/entrepreneurial skills development and grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between vocational/entrepreneurial skills development and grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State.

CONCEPT OF VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The process of building and applying a self-concept is referred to as vocational development. Vocational choices and behaviors change as the self-concept becomes more

realistic and secure. Vocational development refers to the process of setting professional goals and launching a career, which entails a slew of decisions and actions that most people complete before settling into a job or profession (Brule & Skinner, 2012). Vocational development is the support that a company gives to its employees' professional progress, particularly when they transfer to a new role or project within the business. Coaching, mentorship, skill development, networking, and career planning are all common forms of assistance. Human resources functions (such as learning and development, talent management, or recruiting) and HR business partners or managers in the corporation frequently promote vocational development. According to Baer, Flexer, Luft, and Simmons (2008), vocational development is a lifelong process that includes childhood growth and change, formal career instruction at school, and maturational processes that continue throughout a person's working adulthood and into retirement. According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2006), a career is divided into stages, and the individual is presented with distinct difficulties at each stage. Individuals must analyze, make personal decisions, and conduct job transition measures at various stages throughout their lives due to the usual pattern of many careers during their adult years.

The process by which an individual's occupational status evolves is referred to as vocational development. It is the process of making long-term learning decisions in order to link personal demands for physical or psychological fulfillment with prospects for job success. Vocational development can also refer to an individual's cumulative work-related experiences leading up to the occupational function they may take inside an organization (Hite and Linda, 2016). Vocational development is a crucial duty for young adults, but determining vocational goals and launching a career can be difficult. Young people understand that their career decisions can have long-term effects. Workplaces can become extended "neighborhoods" or "families," and they can provide a source of meaning and identity. Jobs are sources of income, and thus influence living conditions and recreational options; they are how people spend much of their time, and thus fill their waking hours; they can become extended "neighborhoods" or "families," and they can provide a source of meaning and identity. It's no surprise that young people may believe the stakes are great. They will need the help of their families, schools, companies, and society as a whole to negotiate this responsibility productively.

TYPES OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Vocational skills are created to broaden the range of work-based learning opportunities available to rural kids. Skills are critical for supporting economic growth and addressing youth unemployment. In Akwa Ibom State, there are numerous sorts of vocational skills that prepare people to work in a skilled profession or trade.

FASHION DESIGN: Fashion design is a diverse and fascinating talent to learn. Learning this ability will allow you to design and make interesting textiles and clothing. For this type of expertise, there are numerous skill acquisition training institutes (Michael, 2022). The rigors of fashion design necessitate the acquisition of a unique expertise. This art demands the ability to create designs while also style them, which is required by everyone from celebrities to models, painters, and even the regular individual. Fashion design is another choice if you want to learn a cool skill that pays well.

AUTO SERVICING SKILLS: In Nigeria, mechanics, as they are usually called to and known, provide essential services that should not be disregarded. Mechanics workshops are easily found due to their placement on every side of Nigeria, which can be in areas or shops, in order to provide swift aid and comfort to those people whose vehicles may have spoilt in an odd spot and at an inconvenient moment. Mechanic abilities, when performed or carried out by experts or specialists in the field, can earn a solid living, despite the fact that the career is dirty and energy-intensive.

ELECTRICIAN SKILLS: Electricians install, maintain, and repair electrical wiring and equipment. Because of the inherent risks of electrical systems, workers in this area must receive considerable training in how to interpret blueprints, diagnose and troubleshoot electrical problems, and execute installations and repairs while adhering to strict health and safety rules (The Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

CONSTRUCTION SERVICE SKILLS: Shelter, like clothing and food, is one of a man's essential needs. The demand for roads, residences, hospitals, halls, churches, schools, and any other reason why people need to construct a building is now high in Nigeria, which increases the demand for construction workers. They learn how to build buildings through occupational skills training rather than academic institutions where they will spend more than four years. Plungers, sand, cement, shovels, and other materials are used by construction experts, who must have received rigorous training in vocational education and training institutions, to create the buildings named above and those not on the list.

SHOE CRAFTING: In Nigeria, shoemaking has traditionally been a popular occupational skill. It is one of the most ancient and relevant arts and crafts. It's amazing how humans can be so inventive in creating unique footwear designs (Michael 2022). Apprenticeships or vocational skill training classes are available in shoe-making enterprises. Learning this talent will allow you to hone your handy skills and express your creativity. It is also quite profitable to make shoes and sell them to customers. You are talented at designing shoes; adding crafts would be a fantastic idea.

CARPENTRY SKILLS: Carpenters must be able to create and install wooden building structures and frameworks. They also need technical skills to repair and install other building elements, such as roofing. These workers are involved in a variety of building projects. Carpenters, for example, construct and install wooden cupboards, window frames, and the wooden framework of house roofs. They also do a lot of outside work, such as creating formwork for bridges, drainage systems, and highways.

CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship development is the process of improving entrepreneurs' skills and expertise in the development, management, and organization of a company venture while keeping the risks in mind. This is accomplished through training programs and workshops focused at improving entrepreneurial aptitude. If you choose a career in this industry, you will be enabling skill development among aspiring entrepreneurs and assisting them in overcoming challenges in creating their enterprises (Anyadike, Emeh, &

Ukah, 2012). Entrepreneurship development is a planned process that includes a variety of instruments that focus on the individual's skill development in a variety of methods. A number of key ideas have influenced the evolution of entrepreneurship. These include taking risks, innovating, being creative, and being environmentally conscious. To be successful in business, people must comprehend each of these concepts. "Entrepreneurship development," according to the African Development Report (2011), is the process of improving entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programs. It seeks to broaden the pool of entrepreneurs in order to accelerate the creation of new ventures. The emphasis is on the individual who wants to start or build a business, with an emphasis on growth potential and innovation. Through market innovations, entrepreneurship promotes economic growth and development, and there is a bidirectional relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth and development.

CONCEPT OF RURAL AREA

A rural area, sometimes known as the countryside, is a geographical area located outside of towns and cities. Rural areas typically have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural and forestry areas are sometimes referred to as rural. For statistical and administrative purposes, different countries have different definitions of "rural" (Wikipedia, 2022). Rural life is often described in comparison to the quality of urban life. Some academics have used a rural-urban dichotomy within this comparative paradigm. This method is exemplified by the census criteria. The census has defined rural inhabitants as those living in or near towns of a certain size since at least 1874. (e.g., fewer than 2,500 residents). The limits of this technique are obvious. Even if the intricacies of rural communities can be reduced to measurable dimensions, binary classification cutoff values are imprecise and inherently arbitrary. One manifestation of this issue is densely populated areas outside of cities and towns. These unincorporated areas would have been classified rural under previous census criteria. However, due to population density, these regions should be considered "urban." Recognizing this issue, the census definitions of "town" and "city" have been amended numerous times to account for increased population density within unincorporated regions. Rural areas have distinct economic and social dynamics, as well as connections to land-based businesses including agriculture, forestry, and resource exploitation. They have quite different economies than cities and are vulnerable to boom-and-bust cycles as well as catastrophic weather or natural calamities such as droughts. These dynamics, combined with larger economic forces encouraging urbanization, have resulted in significant demographic declines known as "rural flight," in which economic incentives encourage younger populations to move to cities for education and job opportunities, leaving older, less educated, and less wealthy populations in rural areas. Slower economic development leads to deterioration of services such as healthcare,

education, and rural infrastructure. This cycle of poverty in some rural areas implies that three-quarters of the world's poor reside in rural areas.

CONCEPT OF GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT

The process through which underprivileged people organize themselves to enhance the social, cultural, and economic well-being of their families, communities, and societies is referred to as grassroots development. This notion is founded on the premise that a people-oriented strategy emphasizing participation, organizational growth, and networking is the key to long-term democracies, equitable society, and flourishing economies (Inter-American Foundation, 2021). Grassroots development is also regarded as a self-sustaining process of socioeconomic and political development in which rural residents actively participate and share in the costs and rewards of such development. Poverty reduction, rising incomes, improved health and nutrition status, quantitative and qualitative basic education, increased agricultural operations, and the provision of infrastructure amenities are all vital components of grassroots development (Odo, 2014). Grassroots development is the duty of local governments, with active participation from the state and federal governments, and it aims to improve the welfare of the population within its jurisdiction.

Grassroots development is the process of providing residents with a higher standard of living through noticeable and appropriate changes in all aspects. It is a deliberate social transformation process that prioritizes local organization, visioning, and decision-making. According to Gana (1990), as referenced by Egwemi and Odo (2013), grassroots development is the transformation of the rural economy from a reliant peasant and primarily agricultural economy to one capable of sustaining an enhanced quality of life at the local level. The bottom line in the conception of grassroots development is that it is about increasing the standards and living conditions of rural people. Thus, grassroots development combines participatory approaches with local capacity building to empower vulnerable groups to develop in accordance with their own needs and values. Grassroots development can thus assist communities in living happy, healthy, and prosperous lives that they value and have reason to cherish (Kennedy, 2020). Grassroots development focuses on development mechanisms that deemphasize the trickle-down method or the top-down approach in favor of a bottom-up approach that emphasizes the participation of the local population in addressing local issues as well as promoting and protecting the local inhabitants' interests.

EFFECT OF VOCATIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ON GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT

Vocational and entrepreneurial development at the grassroots level is critical to societal change, thus it makes sense to foster, motivate, and remunerate this most valuable asset to the greatest extent feasible. The influence is so vast that it's difficult to cover all of its facets in a single blog post. According to Mohamed (2020), the following are the relevance and role of entrepreneurship in economic development and society:

It Accelerates Economic Growth: Entrepreneurs are vital in market economies because they can act as the economic development wheels of the country. They create new employment by developing new products and services, resulting in an acceleration of economic development. As a result, public policy that stimulates and supports entrepreneurship should be regarded as critical to economic progress. Entrepreneurship generates several new jobs and possibilities. Entrepreneurship generates a large number of entry-level employment, which are desperately needed to transform unskilled employees into skilled workers. It also trains and employs experienced people in huge industries. The rise of entrepreneurship has a significant impact on a country's total employment. As a result, the significance of entrepreneurship in creating new job prospects is enormous. Entrepreneurial ventures increase productivity by leveraging current resources more effectively by introducing innovation to every part of business. New markets are created by entrepreneurs by offering new and improved products, services, and technology. As a result, they contribute to the creation of new wealth and increase the national income. so that the government can provide greater national benefits to citizens.

It Promotes Innovation: Through proper research and development procedures, entrepreneurs contribute new innovation, which opens the door to new enterprises, markets, products, and technology. Entrepreneurs can help solve problems that existing products and technology haven't yet solved. Thus, entrepreneurship has the ability to enhance people's lives by creating new products and services or bringing innovation to existing products and services.

It Promote Social Changes: Entrepreneurs alter or disrupt societal traditions or cultures, reducing reliance on old methods, systems, and technologies. Essentially, entrepreneurs are forerunners in the introduction of new technologies and processes, which have an impact on society. These changes are related with healthier lifestyles, more generous thinking, higher morale, and more economic options. As a result, social changes gradually influence national and global changes. As a result, the significance of social entrepreneurship must be recognized.

It Promotes Research and Industrial Development: Entrepreneurs advocate research and development in addition to developing new company ideas and thinking outside the box. They nurture their ideas, develop them into new forms, and convert them into profitable commercial ventures. Entrepreneurs are a distinct breed. They are constantly on the lookout for fresh ideas and methods to improve on old ones. Their influence, however, extends beyond their own enterprises and ventures; when one entrepreneur develops a new product, service, or idea, others typically follow (and sometimes refine the ideas). Entrepreneurs' collective action accelerates innovation and industry. They can inspire and motivate one another while also planning to build new industries. At the same time, the transformation in the existing industrial climate creates openings for others. As a result, we can see that the relevance of entrepreneurship to the economy is multifaceted.

It Develops and Improves Existing Enterprises: Entrepreneurs are typically thought to generate completely new products and concepts, but they also have an impact on current

businesses. Because entrepreneurs think differently, they can devise novel strategies to extend and enhance their existing businesses. Modernizing production methods, incorporating new technology into overall distribution and marketing operations, and assisting current businesses in making better use of existing resources are just a few examples of activities that can be implemented. Supporting and supporting entrepreneurship can benefit the country's economy and even current firms, and social entrepreneurship enhances the possibility of discovering innovative solutions to social concerns faced by communities worldwide.

METHODOLOGY

For the study, a correlational survey design was used. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State. The study's population was made up of rural teenagers who had received vocational and business training. A stratified sampling strategy was employed to choose 180 respondents. To do this, four local government areas were chosen at random. 15 youths from Uyo Senatorial District, Eket Senatorial District, and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District were chosen at random and used in the study. The questionnaire "Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skills Development for Rural Youth Questionnaire (VESDRYQ)" was used to collect data in this study. A testing, measuring, and evaluation specialist validated the instrument's face and content. An expert in testing, measurement, and assessment validated the instrument's face and content to ensure that it is accurate, relevant, and complete for the study under consideration. The dependability coefficient achieved was 0.80, which was high enough to support the instrument's use. The data generated for this study was treated to proper statistical techniques, such as percentage analysis, by the researcher. The significance test was performed at 0.05 alpha levels.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Questions 1: The research question sought to find out the level of grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State. To answer the research question percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 1).

Table 1: Percentage analysis of the level of grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State.

LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
LOW EXTENT	79	43.89**
VERY LOW EXTENT	101	56.11*
TOTAL	180	100%

** Low percentage frequency

* Very low percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the level of grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest

percentage 101(56.11%) of the respondents affirmed very low level, while the least percentage 79(43.89%) of the respondents stated that the level of grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State is of low extent.

Table 2: Percentage analysis of the extent of rural youth involvement in vocational and entrepreneurial development skills programme in Akwa Ibom State.

LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
LOW EXTENT	87	48.33**
VERY LOW EXTENT	93	51.67*
TOTAL	180	100%

** Low percentage frequency

* Very low percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 2 presents the percentage analysis of the extent of rural youths' involvement in vocational and entrepreneurial development skills programmes in Akwa Ibom State. From the results of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage 93(51.67%) of the respondents affirmed very low level extent of the rural youth involvement in vocational and entrepreneurship development skills in Akwa Ibom State, while the least percentage 87(48.33%) of the respondents stated that the extent is low.

Research Questions 3: The research question sought to find out the types of vocational and entrepreneurial skills engaged by the rural youths in Akwa Ibom State. To answer the research percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 3).

Table 3: Percentage analysis of the types of vocational and entrepreneurial skills engaged by the rural youths in Akwa Ibom State

TYPES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Fashion Design	51	28.33**
Auto Servicing Skills	27	15
Electrical Skills	31	17.22
Construction Service Skills	17	9.44
Shoe Crafting	12	6.67*
Carpentry Skills	42	23.33
TOTAL	180	100%

** The highest percentage frequency

* The least percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 3 presents the percentage analysis of types of vocational and entrepreneurial skills engaged by the rural youths in Akwa Ibom State. From the results of the data analysis, it was observed that “fashion design” 51(28.33%) was rated the highest engaged type of vocational and entrepreneurial skills by the respondents. This was seconded by “carpentry skills” 42(23.33%). “Electrical skills” 31(17.22%) was rated the third percentage in the group. Fourth in the group was “auto servicing skills” 27(15%). This was followed by “construction service skills” 17(9.44%). While “shoe crafting” 12(6.67%) was rated the least engaged type of vocational and entrepreneurial skills by the respondents with the least percentage.

Research Questions 4: The research question sought to find out the relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skills development and grassroots development in Akwalbom State. To answer the research descriptive analysis was performed on the data, (see table 4).

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skills development on grassroots development in Akwalbom State

Variable	N	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	R	Remarks
Vocational and Entrepreneurial Development Skills	180	10.10	12.5	0.84	*Strong to Perfect Relationship
Grassroots Development		9.60	12.5		

Source: Field Survey

The above table 4 presents the result of the descriptive analysis of the relationship between vocational entrepreneurial development skills and grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State. The two variables were observed to have Strong to Perfect Relationship at 0.84%. The arithmetic mean for vocational entrepreneurial development skills (10.10) was observed to be less than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as regards grassroots development (9.60) was observed to be less than the expected mean score of 12.5. The result therefore means that the level of vocational and entrepreneurial development skills as well grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State is very low. It also shows that there is remarkable relationship between vocational entrepreneurial development skills and grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State in a dwindling direction.

Hypotheses Testing

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skills development on grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State. To test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data (see table 5).

TABLE 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skills development on grassroots development in Akwalbom State.

Variable	Σx	Σx^2	Σy	Σy^2	Σxy	r
Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skills Development (x)	2896	47060				
Grassroots Development(y)			3161	55875	512030.84*	

***Significant at 0.05 level; N =180; df =178;critical r-value = 0.197**

Table 5 presents the obtained r-value as (0.84). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.197) at 0.05 levels with 178 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.84) was greater than the critical r-value (0.197). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skills development on grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State. The result is cognate to the research findings of Mohamed (2020) who affirmed that vocational and entrepreneurial development on grassroots development play an important role in changing society, so it makes sense to cultivate, motivate, and remunerate this greatest asset to the greatest extent possible. Supporting and promoting entrepreneurship can have a positive impact on the country's economy and even existing businesses, and social entrepreneurship increases the likelihood of finding innovative solutions to social challenges faced by communities around the world. Therefore, the significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative was upheld.

CONCLUSION

As a result, it was discovered that the degree of vocational and entrepreneurial skill development, as well as grassroots development, is quite low in Akwa Ibom State. It was also discovered that the youths of Akwa Ibom State engage in a variety of vocational and entrepreneurial skills (fashion design, auto servicing, electrical skills, construction service skills, shoe crafting, carpentry skills, and many more), albeit to a very limited extent due to poor power supply and other factors. Finally, it was determined that there is a strong association, albeit a fading one, between vocational entrepreneurial skills and grassroots growth in Akwa Ibom State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government should make adequate provision of gainful vocational and entrepreneurial skill development programmes for the youths of Akwa Ibom State where the beneficiaries' must be selected objectively and without any bias.
2. Governments should play a critical role in stimulating and developing sustainable local economies to improve youth vocational and entrepreneurial skills.
3. The government should strengthen the curriculum of rural youths to accommodate more vocational and entrepreneurial skills development to improve the grassroots development in Akwa Ibom State.

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