



# **Practical Skills Gained through Non-Formal Education and Empowerment of the Out-of-School Graduates in Rivers State, Nigeria**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study was carried out to investigate the influence of non-formal education on the practical skills gained by the out-of-school graduates in Rivers State. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Employing a descriptive survey, the study drew a sample of 337 respondents, selected through stratified random sampling technique. These were individuals who had been exposed to non-formal education at: The adolescent project, Skills acquisition centre, Nigerian prisons service, NDE vocational skills acquisition programmes. An instrument titled, Non-Formal Education and Empowerment Questionnaire consisting of 30 items and validated by three experts was used for data collection and with test retest reliability coefficient of 0.67. Research questions answered using mean while analysis of variance was used for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The result of the study showed that non-formal education through the four centres positively influenced acquisition of functional literacy, skills for gainful employment and self-employment for out of school graduates in the study area. The study recommended among others that more non-formal education centers should be established in the Rivers State, especially in the rural areas to increase access for out of school individuals in the localities.

**Keywords:** Out-of-school graduates, practical skills, empowerment, non-formal education

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is an instrument for developing the nation and hidden talents in an individual. It is the only means of eliminating illiteracy and ignorance in any society. The importance of education to the development of the individual and the nation as a whole cannot be over emphasized. It is a great investment any country can make for accelerating development of its technology, economic and human resources. Isife and Ogakwe (2012) explained that education is a powerful tool or weapon that can be used to eradicate ignorance, poverty and diseases and to produce individuals that can function effectively in the society. Onwuka (2012) pointed out that education is an instrument used to free people from incapacitation and exclusion. When an individual is freed from incapacitation and exclusion or illiteracy, there is usually a change in that person's behaviour. This change influences the person's attitude and his whole life (Apebende, 2013).

There are five types of education namely: indigenous (traditional) education, formal education, informal education, non-formal education, and adult education. Indigenous education also referred to as traditional education practiced within the African context is the oral transmission of the people's statement of beliefs, rules and customs from one generation to another. This study is mostly concerned with those practical skills gained through non-formal education that is capable of changing lives, and creating a meaningful living for the dropouts by making them function positively in the society. Non-formal education became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It can be seen as related to the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning. Tight (1996) suggests that whereas the latter concepts have to do with the extension of education and learning throughout life, non-formal education is about 'acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside recognized educational institutions'. Fordham in

Kobani and Alozie (2016) stated that in the 1970s, four characteristics that associated with non-formal education relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups, concern with specific categories of person, a focus on clearly defined purposes and the flexibility in organization and methods.

Poverty and its related issues have been at the centre of national and international discourse. This is because poverty is a global scourge, a threat to humanity and community capacity to sustained development. According to Gaolathe (2004), one in five of the world's population of the developing and emerging industrialized nations live in less than US \$1 a day. This situation has not changed even with the declaration of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which has the "eradication of extreme poverty and hunger" as its first goal; with the target of halving those living on less than a dollar per day in 2015.

The 2010 Human Development Index report released by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), Nigeria was classified as a country with low human development index as one of the "E9" countries, that is, among the 9 countries in the world with the highest number of illiterates. These not only affirm the level of poverty but the poverty of human capital development in Nigeria, and Rivers State in particular. What has sustained and accentuated the poverty level in Rivers State, among others, is the lack of basic skills and capacity for productive ventures. The educational system tends to emphasize the three "Rs": reading, writing and arithmetic, without any appreciable scientific and technological skills. Apart from this pitfall of the educational system, greater numbers of children drop out of school before their ninth year of continued formal education due to poverty as a result of corruption and mismanagement of the country's resources.

A society cannot be said to be developed if it cannot provide its entire people with basic needs such as adequate housing, food, clothing and education. One of the main objectives of development is to raise people out of prime poverty and to provide basic needs at the same time. Development is all about the people. Development efforts are the attempts to utilize national resources to meet the needs of the society, eliminate poverty, maintain the physical and human environment for the present as well as succeeding generation of members of the society, achieve inclusion of all members of the society by ensuring the mobilization and the participation of the society in the development process, as well as equitable distribution of benefits produced.

Over the years, government through its adult and non-formal education in conjunction with the United Nations Development Interventions have embarked on various adult education programmes towards the eradication of mass illiteracy so as to alleviate poverty in Nigeria. The concept of adult and non-formal education goes beyond the ability to read, write and calculate. Non-formal education therefore emphasizes literacy and fundamental education, vocational or job training, as well as education about physical and personal development and other cultural programmes. The United Nations has declared 2005 to 2014 as the decade of education for sustainable development. In other words, education is the key to foster peace, fight against global warming, terrorism, reducing criminality, inequalities, fight against poverty, fight against HIV/AIDs, and fight the marginalization of women and girls (UNESCO, 2009).

In spite of all efforts at global and national levels, a serious threat to personal and national sustainable development is the out-of-school syndrome. It has become a worrisome situation demanding greater attention. This situation encompasses a wide range of realities and refers to children, who do not have access to a school in their community, those that did not enroll despite the availability of a school, those that enrolled later than they should have, those that enrolled in schools that have poor facilities/no teachers, those that dropped out of the education system, those that enroll but do not attend school. Out-of-school in its simplest meaning is the untimely withdrawal from school. These students who withdraw from school prematurely end up not obtaining any certificate of graduation. The issue of out of school is a global problem confronting the education industry round the world. Researchers like Mohsin, Aslam & Bashir (2004), DeCos (2005), Bridgeland, Dilulio & Morison (2006) and Oghuvbu (2008) have since buttressed this fact. Fafunwa (1983) noted that out-of-school is one of the most serious problems that have continued to bedevil our educational system since independence in 1960 from the colonial administration. Even before our independence, the menace of out-of-school had already established its grip on our educational system. This can be buttressed with

the remarks made by Nuffield foundations in 1953 that in the West coast of Africa, there is a considerable proportion of out-of-school of each year.

Commenting on the importance of graduation from higher institution, DeCos (2005) noted that with the economy changing from a dependence on manufacturing towards more reliance on technology, services and a “knowledge economy”, the need for education up to tertiary level has grown. In Nigeria of today, a Bachelor degree or Diploma from a tertiary institution is considered as the minimum qualification required for most jobs and status positions. This development has serious implications for the economic well-being of dropouts and the society at large. In this era of global economic meltdown and global economic competitiveness, Rivers State must make concerted efforts to raise the educational attainment of all its youths, who are the leaders of tomorrow. Globally, reasons why students drop out of school can be categorized into four clusters these include school related, Job related, family related, and community related.

This study is targeted mainly on the out-of-school and the socio-economically vulnerable (such as orphans, street youth, sex workers, domestic workers) from marginalized rural and urban-slum communities in Rivers State. In order to empower the vulnerable and marginalized youths, the Federal, State governments and non-governmental agencies have provided them(out-of-school) with vocational and livelihood training in different skills or trades including hairdressing, tailoring, carpentry, motor mechanics, electronics, welding and functional literacy to enable them to read, write and arithmetic (3Rs). In addition, these non-formal education centres also provide participants with life skills training programmes with particular focus on health issues including HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, nutrition, child-rearing, peer-counseling, drug and alcohol abuse.

In Rivers State, the syndrome of out-of-school has become a worrisome situation. This situation could be caused by poor financial background, health condition, parental background, social values, and poor academic performance among other factors. The implication here is that most of the out-of-school gets involved in anti-social vices such as armed robbery, political thugery, kidnapping, cultism, militancy, etc. The manifestation of these vices has contributed to the high level of illiteracy, insecurity and criminality in the society. Meanwhile, adult and non-formal education is designed to equip beneficiaries with knowledge and skills for self-reliance and human capital development. However, there seems to be no study that is carried out in the past to assess the utilization of non-formal education to address the menace of out-of-school. It is based on this premise that this study is necessary to be carried out to examine the influence of non-formal education as a means of equipping the Out-of-School clientele with necessary skills and knowledge with a view to reducing unemployment, criminality, and social vices; so that they can be useful to themselves and contribute to national development.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of non-formal education on the practical skills gained by the out-of-school graduates in Rivers State. Specifically, the study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To determine whether practical skills gained through non-formal education can influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduates for functional literacy in Rivers State.
- ii. To examine whether practical skills gained through non-formal education can influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduates for self-employment in Rivers State.
- iii. To verify whether practical skills gained through non-formal education can influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduates for gainful employment in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How can practical skills gained through non-formal education influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduates for functional literacy in Rivers State?
2. How can practical skills gained through non-formal education influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduates for gainful employment in Rivers State?
3. How can practical skills gained through non-formal education influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduate for self-employment?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H<sub>01</sub>. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of out of school graduates of the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for functional literacy.
- H<sub>02</sub>. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of out of school graduates of the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for gainful employment.
- H<sub>03</sub>. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of out of school graduates of the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for self-employment.

### METHOD

This study adopted descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey was considered an appropriate design for this study because the researcher collected information on the influence of non-formal education on the empowerment of out of school graduates with functional literacy, gainful employment and self-employment.

The population for this study consisted of 1,686 out-of-school graduates of the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State, namely; Nigeria Prisons Service, Port Harcourt (345 persons); Rivers State Skills Acquisition Centre, Aluu Ikwerre Local Government Area (285 persons); National Directorate of Employment, Secretariat Complex Port Harcourt (600 persons); and The Adolescent Project Elelenwo Obio-Akpor Local Government Area (456 persons).

Twenty percent (20%) of the participants in the four non-formal education centres was selected as the sample size for the study. Presently there are 1,686 participants in these centres. Twenty percent of the entire population consists of 337 participants representing the sample size. Stratified random sampling procedure will be adopted to draw the sample size used in this study.

The research instrument used for this study is known as Non-Formal Education and Empowerment Questionnaire (NFEEQ) developed by the researcher. The 30-item instrument consisted of four sections. Section A elicited information about non-formal education center. Section B consisting of 10 items, elicited information about the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for functional literacy. Section C consisting of 10 items, elicited information about the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for gainful employment. Section C consisting of 10 items, elicited information about the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for self-employment. Each of the sections was rated on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) with 4 points; Agree (A) with 3 points; Disagree (D) with 2 points and Strongly Disagree (DA) with 1 point. A cut off mean of 2.50 (Average of 4+3+2+1) was adopted for the study.

To validate the instrument, three sets were distributed to three experts. These included the research supervisor and two others for face and content validity. Necessary corrections were made based on their comments before the final copy of the instrument was produced for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test-retest method. Copies were distributed to 20 respondents and retrieved for calculation of mean response. After two weeks, it was administered to same group and retrieved for mean calculations. The two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson's Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) Statistics. This resulted in a reliability coefficient of 0.67.

The research questions were answered using mean. Any mean response equal to or greater than the cut off mean of 2.50 was considered accepted. Any mean response less than the cut off mean of 2.50 was considered unacceptable. The hypotheses were analysed using one analysis of variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** *How do practical skills gained through non-formal education influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduate for functional literacy?*

**Table 1: Mean responses on influence of NFE on functional literacy**

S/N	Variable	TAP		SAC		NPS		NDE		RMKS
		M	ST.D	M	ST.D	M	ST.D	M	ST.D	
1	Through Non-formal education I can write my name.	2.96	1.10	3.09	1.18	2.77	1.15	2.83	1.08	AG
2	Through Non-formal education I can read road signs.	3.36	0.95	3.46	0.80	3.58	0.76	3.37	0.92	AG
3	Through Non-formal education I can understand road signs.	3.44	0.87	3.35	0.86	3.48	0.78	3.35	0.89	AG
4	Through Non-formal education I can use cheque book to withdraw money from bank.	3.41	0.98	3.46	0.85	3.59	0.63	3.44	0.86	AG
5	Through Non-formal education I have gained skill to communicate my ideas in writing.	3.45	0.91	3.51	0.60	3.51	0.63	3.46	0.86	AG
6	Through Non-formal education I have a deeper understanding of my role in community development	3.37	0.90	3.30	0.84	3.32	0.92	3.33	0.93	AG
7	Through non-formal education, I acquired numeracy skills to help me in my buying and selling business.	2.90	1.02	3.04	0.87	2.80	0.87	2.82	0.96	AG
8	Non-formal education has not enhanced my reading ability.	1.95	0.70	1.79	0.62	1.97	0.73	1.91	0.71	DA
9	Non-formal education has not enhanced my writing ability.	1.41	0.60	1.47	0.60	1.46	0.65	1.52	0.66	DA
10	Through non-formal education I have acquired knowledge of how to use the computer to send an email.	3.19	0.84	3.02	0.83	3.06	0.87	3.00	0.87	AG

Table 1 shows the responses of the out of school graduates regarding the influence of non-formal education on their functional literacy skills. As shown, they agreed that non-formal education enabled them to write their names, read and understand road signs; use cheque book to withdraw money from banks; communicate ideas in writing; gain deeper understanding of their role in community development; gain numeracy skills to aid in buying and selling business; gain reading ability; gain enhanced writing ability; gain skill for using computer to send email. This is indicated by mean responses greater than 2.50 for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 for the four groups of out of school graduates. The respondents however disagreed that non-formal education did not enhance their reading and writing abilities. This is indicated by mean responses less than 2.50 for items 8 and 9 for the four out of school groups.

**Research Question 2**

*How can practical skills gained through non-formal education influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduates for gainful employment in Rivers State?*

**Table 2: Mean responses on influence of NFE on gainful employment**

S/N	Variable	TAP		SAC		NPS		NDE		RMKS
		M	ST.D	M	ST.D	M	ST.D	M	ST.D	
1	Through NFE I have learned work attitude needed for gainful employment.	3.34	0.82	3.33	0.81	3.29	0.77	3.33	0.78	AG
2	Through NFE I have learned self-management skill needed for gainful employment.	3.22	0.92	3.25	0.87	2.88	0.99	3.04	1.02	AG
3	Through NFE I have acquired team work skill needed for gainful employment.	3.36	0.91	3.40	0.90	3.49	0.68	3.31	0.91	AG
4	Through NFE I have acquired problem solving skill needed for gainful employment.	3.55	0.70	3.37	0.77	3.39	0.75	3.27	0.97	AG
5	Through NFE I have learned communication skill needed for gainful employment.	3.38	0.76	3.33	0.72	3.33	0.72	3.31	0.88	AG
6	Through NFE I have learned information and communication technology skills needed for gainful employment.	3.03	0.98	3.07	0.80	3.20	0.87	2.99	0.97	AG
7	Through NFE I have acquired literacy skill needed for gainful employment.	3.32	0.83	3.23	0.89	3.35	0.78	3.13	0.96	AG
8	Through NFE I have acquired technical skill needed for gainful employment.	3.59	0.73	3.44	0.87	3.62	0.67	3.56	0.71	AG
9	Skills acquired through NFE cannot really help me gain employment.	1.71	0.81	1.86	0.67	1.75	0.77	1.84	0.77	DA
10	Through NFE I have acquired specific job related skill needed for gainful employment.	3.36	0.93	3.35	0.92	3.65	0.61	3.43	0.81	AG

Table 2 shows the responses of the out of school graduates regarding the influence of non-formal education on their employability. As shown, they agreed that non-formal education equipped them with: work attitude; self-management skill; team-working skills; problem solving skill; communication skill; information and communication technology skills; literacy skills; technical skills and specific job related skill for gainful employment. This is indicated by mean responses greater than 2.50 for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 for the four groups of out of school graduates. The respondents however disagreed that non-formal education cannot really help them gain employment. This is indicated by mean responses less than 2.50 for items 9 for the four out of school groups.

**Research Question 3**

*How can practical skills gained through non-formal education influence the empowerment of the out-of-school graduate for self-employment?*

**Table 3: Mean responses on influence of NFE on self-employability**

S/N	Items (NFE = Non-formal edu)	TAP		SAC		NPS		NDE		RMKS
		M	ST.D	M	ST.D	M	ST.D	M	ST.D	
1	Through NFE, I gained business communication skills needed for self-employment.	3.36	0.95	3.46	0.80	3.58	0.76	3.37	0.92	AG
2	Through NFE, I gained basic maths skills needed for self-employment.	3.44	0.87	3.35	0.86	3.48	0.78	3.35	0.89	AG
3	Through NFE, I gained skill for evaluating possible problems in my business.	3.41	0.98	3.46	0.85	3.59	0.63	3.44	0.86	AG
4	Through NFE, I gained skill in the steps to proffer solutions to possible problems in my business.	3.45	0.91	3.51	0.60	3.51	0.63	3.46	0.86	AG
5	Through NFE, I gained knowledge of using by skills to provide paid service.	3.37	0.90	3.30	0.84	3.32	0.92	3.33	0.93	AG
6	Through NFE, I gained networking skills for business promotion.	2.90	1.02	3.04	0.87	2.80	0.87	2.82	0.96	AG
7	Through NFE, I acquired vocational skills for self-employment.	3.34	0.82	3.33	0.81	3.29	0.77	3.33	0.78	AG
8	Learning from NFE, cannot aid me in self-employment.	1.21	0.48	1.19	0.55	1.26	0.56	1.26	0.57	DA
9	Skill acquired through NFE cannot aid me to operate a business.	1.97	0.77	1.86	0.67	2.00	0.69	1.91	0.65	DA
10	NFE equips me with knowledge of business opportunities available to me.	3.36	0.91	3.40	0.90	3.49	0.68	3.31	0.91	AG

Table 3 shows the responses of the out of school graduates regarding the influence of non-formal education on their self-employability. As shown, they agreed that non-formal education equipped them with: business communication skills; Arithmetic skill; skill for evaluating problems; skill for steps needed to solve problems; knowledge of using skill to provide paid service; skill for networking to promote business; vocational skill for self-employment and knowledge of business opportunity available to me. This is indicated by mean responses greater than 2.50 for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 for the four groups of out of school graduates. The respondents however disagreed that non-formal education cannot aid in self-employment and business operation. This is indicated by mean responses less than 2.50 for items 8 and 9 for the four out of school groups.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of out of school graduates of the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for functional literacy.

**Table 4: ANOVA for NFE and functional literacy**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>	P <sub>value</sub>	Decision
Between	0.17	3	0.06	0.31	2.63	0.82	Accept
Within	60.02	333	0.18				
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.18</b>	<b>336</b>					

Table 4 shows the test of significance of difference in the mean response of the out of school graduates from the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for functional literacy. As shown in the table, F<sub>cal</sub> is 0.31 while F<sub>crit</sub> is 2.63. Since F<sub>cal</sub> is less than F<sub>crit</sub>, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is similarity in mean responses of the out of school graduates from: The Adolescent Programme (TAP); Skill Acquisition centre; Nigeria Prison Service and National Directorate of Employment.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of out of school graduates of the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for gainful employment.

**Table 5: ANOVA for NFE and gainful employment**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>	P <sub>value</sub>	Decision
Between	0.33	3	0.11	0.43	2.63	0.73	Accept
Within	86.78	333	0.26				
<b>Total</b>	<b>87.11</b>	<b>336</b>					

Table 5 shows the test of significance of difference in the mean response of the out of school graduates from the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for gainful employment. As shown in the table, F<sub>cal</sub> is 0.43 while F<sub>crit</sub> is 2.63. Since F<sub>cal</sub> is less than F<sub>crit</sub>, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is similarity in mean responses of the out of school graduates from: The Adolescent Programme (TAP); Skill Acquisition centre; Nigeria Prison Service and National Directorate of Employment.

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of out of school graduates of the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for self-employment.

**Table 6: ANOVA for NFE and self-employment**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>	P <sub>value</sub>	Decision
Between	0.26	3	0.09	0.39	2.63	0.76	Accept
Within	73.72	333	0.22				
<b>Total</b>	<b>73.97</b>	<b>336</b>					

Table 6 shows the test of significance of difference in the mean response of the out of school graduates from the four Non-formal education centers in Rivers State regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for self-employment. As shown in the table, F<sub>cal</sub> is 0.39 while F<sub>crit</sub> is 2.63. Since F<sub>cal</sub> is less than F<sub>crit</sub>, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is similarity in mean responses of the out of school graduates from: The Adolescent Programme (TAP); Skill Acquisition centre; Nigeria Prison Service and National Directorate of Employment.

## DISCUSSION

### **Non-formal education in Rivers state and the acquisition of functional literacy for out of school graduates**

From the result they agreed that non-formal education enabled them to write their names, read and understand road signs; use cheque book to withdraw money from banks; communicate ideas in writing; gain deeper understanding of their role in community development; gain numeracy skills to aid in buying and selling business; gain reading ability; gain enhanced writing ability; gain skill for using computer to send email. The result however shows that they disagreed that non-formal education did not enhance their reading and writing abilities. The result also showed no statistical significant difference in the mean responses of the out of school graduates from the four centers. This result is similar to the findings of Manuel, Popov & Buque (2015) that carried out a research on programme improvement in non-formal vocational education and training in Mozambique. Using a qualitative approach, the study found that non-formal vocational education and training in Mozambique empowered people to actively participate in the social and economic life of their local communities and broader society.

### **Non-formal education in Rivers State and the acquisition of skill for gainful employment for out of school graduates**

From the result they agreed that non-formal education equipped them with: work attitude; self-management skill; team-working skills; problem solving skill; communication skill; information and communication technology skills; literacy skills; technical skills and specific job related skill for gainful employment. The result however shows that they did not agree that non-formal education can really help them gain employment. The result of this study also showed no statistical significant difference in the mean responses of the out of school graduates from the four centers which implies that influence of the programme on empowerment for gainful employment for these graduates is similar across the four centers in Rivers State. Kamuiru and Mbwisa (2014) reported that members of a community that participated in a community project benefited from it. This result is similar to the result obtained by Višnja and Brčić (2014) who conducted to investigate the relationship between non-formal education and employability within the context of socio-cultural changes in Croatia. Using a descriptive survey, the study found non-formal education enhances functional education and employability.

**Non-formal education in Rivers State and the acquisition of skill for self-employment for out of school graduates:** From the result they agreed that non-formal education equipped them with: business communication skills; Mathematics skill; skill for evaluating problems; skill for steps needed to solve problems; knowledge of using skill to provide paid service; skill for networking to promote business; vocational skill for self-employment and knowledge of business opportunities available to them. The result however disagreed that non-formal education cannot aid in self-employment and business operation. The result also revealed no significance difference existing in the mean responses of the out of school graduates regarding the influence of non-formal education on empowerment for self-employment. This result is similar to the result obtained by Iyunade (2014) who examined the relevance of non-formal education technical capacity building on self-reliance development among youth in Ogun State, Nigeria and found out that non-formal education enhances youth technical capacity in trade, craft, fabrication, and many other employments fit life skills. Similarly, Ololube and Egbezor (2012) in their study assessed the role and importance of non-formal education to human and national development in three states (Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers) in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria, found non-formal education to significantly related to human and national development.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that non-formal education through TAP, SAC, NPS and NDE in Rivers state equipped out of school graduates with necessary skills for functioning literally in the society. It equipped them also with skills for gainful employment and self-employment.

### **Implication of the Findings**

The result of the findings implies that out of school individuals in the state should be encouraged to enroll in non-formal education through these centers. If more enrolment would be expected, then, it

further implies that the adequacy of resources in the training centers needs to be critically evaluated and necessary actions taken.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1 More non-formal education centers should be established in the Rivers state, especially in the rural areas to increase access for out of school individuals in the localities.
- 2 Partnership between non-formal education centers and local industries to enable trainees gain industry experience.
- 3 Opportunity for soft loans should be created and made assessable to enable out of school graduates who may want to own small or medium scale business to be engaged after training in order to be self-employed and employers of labour.

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