



## SELF-SUSTAINING LIVELIHOOD SKILLS OF ADULT LEARNERS IN INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP) CAMPS IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Persistent insurgency in Borno State has led to large-scale displacement, creating an urgent need to equip adult learners in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps with sustainable livelihood skills. This study surveyed 400 adult learners across four IDP camps (Maiduguri, Bama, Dikwa, and Jere) using a descriptive survey design and a validated Likert five-point scale Questionnaire structured around demographics, educational background, and vocational training perceptions. Findings show that 30% Adult learners in the four (4) IDP camps had no formal education, 55% lacked vocational skills, while 80% were eager to acquire new skills. Significantly, Entrepreneurship (87.5%), Financial literacy (85%), Agriculture, and Digital skills were highly preferred livelihood skills. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed significant age-based differences in skill preferences among the adult learners in the IDP camps. Based on the discussion of the findings and conclusion, the study recommended age-sensitive, inclusive vocational programs for adult learners in IDP camps to enhance self-sustainability and social reintegration.*

**Keywords:** Vocational Training, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Skill Acquisition, Sustainable Livelihoods,

### Introduction

Nigeria is currently grappling with significant social, economic, and environmental crises that could profoundly hinder national development efforts. Insecurity as defined by the United Nations is not only the absence of conflict but also access to basic human rights and social justice. These security challenges often stem from unrealistic and inappropriate methods of agitation for rights and privileges, manifesting in both violent and non-violent forms across the country.

Prominently, the Boko Haram insurgency in North- East Nigeria exemplifies the devastating consequences of violent extremism. Boko Haram, officially known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, emerged in the early 2000s under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf. The group initially propagated a strict interpretation of Islamic law and criticized the Nigerian government for corruption and socioeconomic neglect. However, it soon escalated into violent extremism, engaging in bombings, targeted killings, and mass abductions, which have devastated civilian populations (Campbell, 2020; Onuoha, 2014)

The violent campaign by Boko Haram has resulted in one of the largest internal displacement crises in the world. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees over 2.5 million people have been displaced due to conflict in North -East Nigeria, with Borno State being the most affected (UNHCR, 2020). The insurgency has led to the deaths of more than 35,000 individuals, destroyed entire communities, and left millions in precarious living conditions, including overcrowded camps characterized by food insecurity, inadequate healthcare, and limited educational opportunities (International Crisis Group, 2016). In contrast, Southern regions of Nigeria witness relatively peaceful forms of agitation. Movements such as the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) often rely on civil protest to express grievances. However, other regions face their own forms of violence and

insecurity ranging from cult-related violence and kidnappings in the South-East, to political thuggery and gang activity in the South -West, and militancy and armed robbery in the South-South regions. This multifaceted insecurity complicates the prospects for national cohesion and sustainable development (Adebayo, 2019; Iroegbu, 2017)

The plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially adult learners in Borno State, requires focused and immediate intervention. Displaced adults often face not only the trauma of conflict but also the erosion of their socioeconomic identities. Many have lost family members, homes, and means of livelihood. Like IDPs in conflict zones such as Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, displaced Nigerians encounter barriers to reintegration, including lack of education, employment, and social inclusion (Betts & Collier, 2017). Adult learners in IDP camps are particularly vulnerable due to lack of access to essential services, including vocational and educational training. This vulnerability is compounded by poverty, illiteracy, and limited mobility, leaving many economically marginalized and dependent on humanitarian aid. Without effective reintegration strategies, these demographic risks becoming a reservoir of discontent, further exacerbating national insecurity (Adewale, 2020).

Addressing this crisis demands a comprehensive strategy centered on empowerment through skills acquisition. Vocational, technical, and entrepreneurial training tailored to the needs of displaced adults can provide a pathway to economic independence and societal reintegration. Programs that offer training in agriculture, carpentry, tailoring, and other trades have been shown to reduce dependency on aid, promote dignity, and enhance community resilience (World Bank, 2021; UNHCR, 2020). Beyond economic recovery, such interventions can play a transformative role in promoting peace and stability. Empowered individuals are better positioned to contribute to the development of their communities and resist the lure of extremist ideologies. Education and skills training serve not only as tools for personal empowerment but also as vital mechanisms for national reconstruction and cohesion (Uwadileke:2023; UNESCO 2021).

To this end, the persistent insecurity in Nigeria, particularly in Borno State, underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions among internally displaced adults. The Boko Haram insurgency has decimated communities and created a humanitarian crisis that threatens the socio-economic fabric of the nation. By investing in vocational and entrepreneurial education for adult learners in IDP camps, Nigeria can create pathways for recovery, reduce vulnerability, and lay the groundwork for lasting peace and development. As affirmed by the World Bank and other global institutions, human capital development is indispensable to post-conflict reconstruction and national stability (World Bank, 2021).

### **Statement of Problem**

The ongoing insecurity in Nigeria, particularly due to the Boko Haram insurgency and other violent conflicts, has led to the displacement of millions of individuals, particularly in Borno State. This displacement has severely affected the education and economic opportunities of many adult learners in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. As these adults face significant barriers to accessing vocational training and employment, their ability to achieve self-sustainability is compromised, leading to increased economic marginalization and social instability. Thus, there is a critical need to identify the specific skills required by these learners to facilitate their reintegration into society and promote self-reliance.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the educational background and skill level of adult learners currently residing in IDP camps in Borno State?
2. What vocational and technical skills do adult learners in IDP camps in Borno State perceive as necessary for achieving self-sustainability?



3. How effective are the existing vocational training programs in meeting the skill needs of adult learners in IDP camps?
4. What strategies can be implemented to improve skill development and self-sustainability among adult learners in Borno State's IDP camps?

### Research Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>): There is no significant difference in skills needs among internally displaced persons (IDPs) based on their age groups.

### Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of all the registered adults in the IDP camps. The sample of the study consisted of 400 Adults. Participants were categorized into three age groups: young adults (18-25 years), who constituted 30% of the sample; Adults (26-40 years), making up 50%; and older adults (41 years and above), representing 20%. The study encompassed four IDP camps located in major local government areas: Maiduguri, Bama, Dikwa, and Jere. These camps were selected based on their population size and the diversity of challenges experienced by the IDPs. Data collection involved multiple methods to ensure a robust analysis. A structured Questionnaire, titled "IDP Demographic and Skills Assessment Questionnaire", was administered to 400 IDPs across different camps. This Questionnaire consisted of several sections: section A: which consisted of demographic Information of the respondents. Captured basic details such as age, gender, marital status, and local government area.

1. Educational Background: Assessed the highest level of education attained and any interruptions in formal schooling due to displacement.
2. Employment History: Gathered information on previous employment, vocations, and any skills acquired before displacement.
3. Skill Assessment: Explored vocational skills and training needs relevant to the local economy.

To establish content validity, the questionnaire items were developed through a rigorous process that involved a literature review and consultations with local stakeholders, including NGOs and educational experts. These experts reviewed the questionnaire to ensure that the items were relevant and appropriate for the target population. A pilot test was conducted with a small group of IDPs prior to the main data collection, allowing for further refinement of the questionnaire based on feedback regarding clarity and relevance.

Reliability of the questionnaire was done using a test-retest method. A subset of participants completed the questionnaire twice, with a two-week interval between administrations. The results were analyzed using Pearsons correlation coefficient, yielding a high correlation ( $r = 0.85$ ), indicating that the instrument produced consistent results over time. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each section of the questionnaire, achieving values greater than 0.75, confirming good internal consistency across the items.

Quantitative data analysis was carried out using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were employed to answer the research questions, while hypothesis testing were performed at a 0.05 level of significance. This analytical framework provided a solid foundation for understanding the needs and conditions of IDPs in Borno State, guiding future interventions and support initiatives.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the educational background and skill level of adult learners currently residing in IDP camps in Borno State?

**Table 1: Educational Background and Skill Levels of Adult Learners in IDP Camps**

| Variable                           | Category                      | Frequency<br>(n) | Percentage<br>(%) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Educational Background</b>      | No formal education           | 120              | 30.0              |
|                                    | Incomplete primary education  | 100              | 25.0              |
|                                    | Completed primary education   | 80               | 20.0              |
|                                    | Completed secondary education | 60               | 15.0              |
|                                    | Higher education              | 40               | 10.0              |
| <b>Vocational Skills</b>           | Tailoring                     | 60               | 15.0              |
|                                    | Agriculture                   | 50               | 12.5              |
|                                    | Carpentry                     | 40               | 10.0              |
|                                    | Plumbing                      | 30               | 7.5               |
|                                    | No vocational skills          | 220              | 55.0              |
| <b>Desire for Further Training</b> | Yes                           | 320              | 80.0              |
|                                    | No                            | 80               | 20.0              |

Table 1 shows significant information on the educational backgrounds of adult learners in IDP camps, with 30% lacking formal education and 25% reporting incomplete primary education. This situation emphasizes the long-term impact of conflict on education and highlights the necessity for targeted educational support. Additionally, 55% of participants possess no vocational skills, limiting their employment opportunities and economic self-sufficiency. However, 80% of individuals expressed a desire for further training, indicating a strong motivation to improve their circumstances. This interest underscores the need for accessible, relevant vocational programs to help IDPs rebuild their lives and enhance their resilience.

**Research Question 2:** What vocational and technical skills do adult learners in IDP camps perceive as necessary for achieving self-sustainability?

**Table 2: Perceived Vocational and Technical Skills for Self-Sustainability Among Adult Learners in IDP Camps.**

| SN | Item statement                                                               | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1  | Basic computer skills improve job opportunities for individuals.             | 300                   | 75             |
| 2  | Tailoring skills allow for making and selling clothes.                       | 250                   | 62.5           |
| 3  | Cooking skills help in feeding families economically.                        | 280                   | 70             |
| 4  | Agricultural techniques support sustainable food production efforts.         | 320                   | 80             |
| 5  | Carpentry skills enable individuals to repair furniture.                     | 220                   | 55             |
| 6  | Entrepreneurship training encourages starting small businesses successfully. | 350                   | 87.5           |
| 7  | Financial literacy aids in managing personal finances wisely.                | 340                   | 85             |
| 8  | Healthcare knowledge is essential for community well-being.                  | 300                   | 75             |



Table 2 shows results indicating that adult learners in IDP camps prioritize skills necessary for self-sustainability. A notable 87.5% of respondents identified entrepreneurship training as crucial, reflecting a strong desire for independence through small business ventures. Similarly, financial literacy (85%) is recognized for its role in effective personal finance management. The emphasis on agricultural techniques (80%) and cooking skills (70%) underscores their importance in ensuring food security, while basic computer skills (75%) are deemed essential for improving job opportunities. Though tailoring (62.5%) and carpentry skills (55%) are acknowledged, they appear to hold moderate importance, indicating varying priorities among individuals based on their circumstances. Overall, these insights highlight critical areas for targeted vocational training programs.

**Research Question 3:** How effective are the existing vocational training programs in meeting the skill needs of adult learners in IDP camps?

| SN | Item Statements                                                | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1  | Vocational training programs meet my skill needs effectively.  | 250                   | 62.5           |
| 2  | Training sessions provide relevant skills for employment.      | 300                   | 75             |
| 3  | Instructors are knowledgeable and support my learning process. | 270                   | 67.5           |
| 4  | Training duration is sufficient for mastering skills learned.  | 220                   | 55             |
| 5  | Support services are available during training programs.       | 260                   | 65             |
| 6  | Course materials are accessible and easy to understand.        | 280                   | 70             |
| 7  | Training programs adequately prepare me for self-employment.   | 310                   | 77.5           |
| 8  | Participants are encouraged to ask questions during training.  | 240                   | 60             |

Table 3 shows that adult learners in IDP camps have mixed perceptions about the effectiveness of existing vocational training programs. A staggering 77.5% of respondents feel that training programs adequately prepare them for self-employment, indicating a positive impact on their economic independence. However, vocational training programs meeting skill needs (62.5%) and sufficient training duration (55%) received lower ratings, suggesting potential areas for improvement. While training sessions provide relevant skills (75%) and course materials (70%) are regarded as accessible, the perceived support from instructors (67.5%) and encouragement for questions (60%) reveal opportunities for enhancing the learning experience. Overall, these findings highlight critical areas for program development.

**Research Question 4:** What strategies can be implemented to improve skill development and self-sustainability among adult learners in Borno State's IDP camps?

**Table 4: Implementable Strategies for Skill Development and Self-Sustainability Among Adult Learners in Borno State's IDP camps?**

| SN | Item Statements                                                     | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1  | Vocational training requires strong support from instructors.       | 340                   | 85             |
| 2  | Learning outcomes depend on the relevance of training content.      | 320                   | 80             |
| 3  | Peer collaboration enhances understanding during training sessions. | 300                   | 75             |
| 4  | Sufficient practice time builds confidence in new skills.           | 310                   | 77.5           |
| 5  | Access to resources is critical for successful learning outcomes.   | 350                   | 87.5           |
| 6  | Constructive feedback from instructors improves skill mastery.      | 330                   | 82.5           |
| 7  | Engaging activities increase motivation to learn new skills.        | 270                   | 67.5           |
| 8  | Continuous assessment helps track learner progress effectively.     | 260                   | 65             |

Table 4 shows that Adult learners identify several interdependent factors that significantly impact the effectiveness of vocational training programs. A substantial 87.5% emphasized the necessity of access to resources, which is crucial for achieving successful learning outcomes. Additionally, strong support from instructors (85%) is deemed essential, indicating that effective teaching relationships foster a positive learning environment. The relevance of training content (80%) alongside peer collaboration (75%) suggests that cooperative learning aids comprehension and retention. Moreover, sufficient practice time (77.5%) is recognized for building confidence, while constructive feedback (82.5%) is vital for mastering new skills. The need for engaging activities (67.5%) highlights the importance of motivation, and continuous assessment (65%) provides learners with valuable insights into their progress. Overall, these insights underline the importance of a holistic approach to enhance vocational training effectiveness by addressing these interconnected factors.

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant difference in skills needs among internally displaced persons (IDPs) based on their age groups.

**One-Way ANOVA Table: Skills Needs by Age Group**

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares (SS) | df  | Mean Square (MS) | F    | p-value |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----|------------------|------|---------|
| Between Groups      | 200.45              | 2   | 100.23           | 6.58 | 0.002   |
| Within Groups       | 609.25              | 397 | 1.53             |      |         |
| Total               | 809.70              | 399 |                  |      |         |

Table 5 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA that examines differences in skills needs across three age groups: 18-25 years, 26-40 years, and 41 years and older. The analysis yields an F statistic of 6.58 and a p-value of 0.002, indicating statistically significant differences in skills needs among these groups. Since the p-value is below the conventional alpha level of



0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that age is a significant factor influencing the skills needs of IDPs. To pinpoint the specific age groups responsible for these differences, a post-hoc analysis was conducted.

***Tukey's HSD Post-Hoc Analysis Table***

| Comparison      | Difference in Means | Standard Error (SE) | p-value | Significance    |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------|
| 18-25 vs. 26-40 | 0.85                | 0.20                | 0.032   | Significant     |
| 18-25 vs. 41+   | 1.30                | 0.22                | 0.004   | Significant     |
| 26-40 vs. 41+   | 0.45                | 0.21                | 0.186   | Not Significant |

Table 6 details the post-hoc analysis, revealing significant differences in skills needs among the IDP age groups. The comparison between the 18-25 and 26-40 age groups shows a mean difference of 0.85 ( $p = 0.032$ ), indicating that younger individuals (18-25 years) have a greater need for specific skills tailored to emerging job markets, such as technology and entrepreneurship. A more substantial mean difference of 1.30 ( $p = 0.004$ ) is noted between the 18-25 and 41+ age groups, underscoring that older adults face markedly different skill requirements, likely due to reduced opportunities for skill enhancement. In contrast, the comparison between the 26-40 and 41+ age groups yields a mean difference of 0.45 ( $p = 0.186$ ), which is not statistically significant, suggesting that the skill needs of these groups are relatively aligned. Therefore, training programs for older adults can remain applicable across these age ranges without requiring substantial modifications. (use for discussion Overall, these findings underscore the critical need for diverse training programs that cater to the unique skills requirements of different age demographics within the IDP population. By addressing the distinct needs of younger and older participants, training initiatives can significantly enhance their chances of successful reintegration into the workforce, thereby promoting economic stability and individual empowerment in the face of displacement.)

## Discussion.

The finding of the study with respect to research question revealed significant educational disruption among Adults in IDP's. This finding supports Adewale (2020) who asserts that conflict-induced displacement severely hamper long-term educational development. Furthermore, it was shown that majority of the respondents lack vocational skills, which further limits their employment opportunities This finding underscores the pressing need for accessible and inclusive vocational programs that simultaneously address educational gaps and economic aspirations. These programs will offer viable pathway to self-reliance and long-term recovery for Adults in IDP' camps.

Finding of the study with respect to research question 2 shows that the type of vocational and technical skills possessed by adult learners in IDP camps are necessary for achieving self-sustainability. The finding shows that IDPs highly prioritize entrepreneurship and financial literacy as crucial for achieving economic independence. This aligns with Betts and Collier (2017) who emphasized on entrepreneurship as a key driver of self-sufficiency among displaced populations. In addition, practical skills such as agriculture and cooking were considered vital for both food security and income generation. (Campbel, 2020). This finding gives insights to the necessity of diverse vocational offerings that are both skill and demand-driven.

Finding of the study with respect to Research Question 3 revealed that majority of participants felt that vocational training would adequately prepare them for self-employment. This lends support to Adebayo (2019) who claimed that well-structured programs contribute to socio-

economic stability This finding is in response to the identified gaps in program delivery, which need to be improved through skill development and self-sustainability among adult learners in Borno State's IDP camps. This is reinforced by Adewale (2020) who asserts that resource availability significantly impact programs.

Finally, on the influence of age on vocational preferences, the study provides valuable insights for tailoring programs more effectively. Finding with respect to the null hypothesis revealed a statistically significant age-based difference in the vocational skill preferences of IDPs. This suggests that age is an important factor in determining training needs. Younger IDPs (aged 18–25) favored modern skills such as digital literacy and entrepreneurship, while older adults (41+) showed a stronger preference for traditional, hands-on trades. Interestingly, no significant difference was observed between the 26–40 and 41+ age groups, indicating similar vocational interests among these older cohorts. This finding underscores the need for age-sensitive training designs that reflect the developmental stages and experiences of learners. Given the overlap in preferences between the 26–40 and 41+ groups, program developers can streamline training modules for these demographics with minimal customization, thereby improving efficiency without compromising relevance.

## **Conclusion**

The study highlights the critical need for tailored vocational programs in IDP camps in Borno State, addressing the significant educational and skill gaps among adult learners. With 30% lacking formal education and 55% without vocational skills, the findings underscore the long-term socio-economic risks of current disruptions. Despite obstacles, a strong desire for skill acquisition among 80% of respondents offers hope for rebuilding. Prioritizing entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and practical skills, the data advocates for a responsive, holistic training model that emphasizes instructor support, resource access, and peer collaboration. Age-sensitive program designs are essential to meet diverse learner needs effectively.

## **Recommendations**

**Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made;**

1. Training organizations should develop age-sensitive vocational programs addressing learners' realities.
2. IDP camps should incorporate entrepreneurship and financial literacy trainings into the rehabilitation programs of displaced persons.
3. Governments should ensure consistent access to resources and qualified instructors for displaced persons in IDP camps.
4. Community - based NGOs should encourage peer collaborations and mentorship for motivation of Adult learners and other displaced persons in IDP camps.
5. Program coordinators should engage relevant stakeholders in the planning and evaluation of life sustaining programs for displaced persons in IDP camps.



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