


ICT entrepreneurship training and job creation in post-COVID-19 in Ikeja Local government, Lagos State, Nigeria

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Background: For an economy to live up to expectation in the committee of nations, Information Communication Technology (ICT) entrepreneurship training for employment generation has become a viable intervention.

Aim: The purpose of the study is to interrogate the role of ICT entrepreneurship training on employment generation in post-COVID-19 pandemic in Ikeja Local Government, Lagos State.

Setting: The study was conducted in Ikeja Local government area of Lagos of Nigeria.

Methods: A survey design was adopted for the study. Data were collected from secondary sources, such as extant literature, journal articles, books, government records and newspapers. Primary data were collected from face-to-face interview from six key informants and structured questionnaires distributed. One hundred and eight respondents were randomly sampled. Out of 108 questionnaires administered, 104 questionnaires were returned (96%), while four non-responses were discarded. Frequency distribution method was used for exploratory analysis, while chi-square statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 17) to analyse and interpret results. Secondary data analysis was adopted to complement empirical analysis.

Results: Findings showed that ICT Entrepreneurship training has promoted job creation and reduction of youths' unemployment in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State.

Conclusion: The study concluded that ICT entrepreneurship training promotes job creation and reduction of youths' unemployment in Lagos State.

Contribution: The study has contributed to a body of knowledge on ICT youths' entrepreneurship education in Ikeja Local government.

Keywords: ICT; Information Communication Technology; ICT entrepreneurship training; post-COVID-19 pandemic; job creation; youths; unemployment.

Introduction

Globally, youth unemployment has become an issue of concern to many economies of developed and developing countries. In Nigeria, about 13.9 million Nigerian youths are unemployed, accounting for unemployment rate of 27.1%, in the second quarter of 2020. In this period, the highest unemployment rate was recorded for youths aged 15–24 years at 40.8%, followed by youths, aged 25–34 years at 30.7% (NBS 2020). Following the adoption of Information Communication Technology (ICT) by individuals, businesses and government, the desire to train ICT entrepreneurs to create jobs and reduce unemployment has become imperative. There has been strong desire to support such schemes.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, World Bank, Department for International Development (DFID) and Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) have initiated moves to support ICT entrepreneurs in job creation and reduce youths' unemployment. World Bank and UK DFID provided '\$200 million in 2015 creating 1.3 million jobs and \$160 million as concessionary loans; while DFID provided 90 pounds to increase the ICT-enabled services' (Uzor 2015:3). Nationally, it was estimated in 2015, that 'ICT sector would create 150 000 formal jobs each year, 10 000 of which are for new IT graduates' (Uzor 2015:3).

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This ugly trend at the national level prompted Lagos State government to establish LSETF in 2016 with N25 billion intervention fund to halt the unemployment scourge. The fund was institutionalised to provide financial support to residents of Lagos State for wealth creation and to tackle unemployment (LSETF 2016). Three key mandates of the LSETF programmes focused on loan scheme, employability and Lagos innovate for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Entrepreneur Start-ups. The loan scheme provides access to quick and affordable loans for Micro, Small, Middle Scale Enterprises to start-ups, build, expand and create wealth and employment for Lagos residents (LSETF 2016). So far, the LSETF has approved N4.9 billion for disbursement to 6548 small business owners and has successfully disbursed N4.1 billion loans to over 4762 beneficiaries (43% recipients are women) (LSETF 2020).

Currently, in Lagos state, total unemployed persons accounted for 1 329 490 (19.5%) and under-employed persons of 1 504 345 (22%) (NBS 2020). The immediate consequences of high unemployment rates are gradual descent of these army of unemployed youths into crime, extreme hunger, malnutrition, inequalities and other social problems. The opportunities for jobs are hardly available and government's efforts to create jobs for employment have become a big problem difficult to solve.

With the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in February 2020, unemployment, poverty, inequality and insecurity exacerbated the staggering youth unemployment data. According to Economic Sustainability Committee (ESC) Report (2020), COVID-19 pandemic crisis risks pushed additional 39.4 million Nigerians into unemployment by December 2020. According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2020, prior to COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rate that was 23.1% in 2019, reached 33% by the end of 2020. This was because of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on business activities. For example, in Lagos State during COVID-19 lockdown, about 914 965 or 13.4% of persons have jobs but did not work (NBS 2020). Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), self-employed individuals, event planners, travel agencies, aviation, transportation, health, education, agricultural supply value chains and hospitality were badly affected by COVID-19 pandemic mostly in Lagos State.

These challenges compelled Lagos State government to launch N5 billion post-COVID-19 economic recovery support for Micro, Small Middle Scale Enterprises, ICT entrepreneurs and innovators in technological space (LSEFT 2020; Oyekanmi 2020). This is in a bid to help businesses in Lagos recover from the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund will provide access to affordable loan at a single-digit interest rate, enhance capacity building, foster market linkages and leverage business expansion opportunities for its beneficiaries (Abisoye 2020).

For our purpose, Ikeja Local government is the area of study. It is the State capital and enjoys ICT infrastructure development

and regular power supply (electricity). It is the hub of ICT entrepreneurs and hosts greater population of unemployed youths. In Ikeja Local government, ICT entrepreneurial beneficiaries were targeted to benefit from the intervention, which was to be supervised by (LSEFT 2020). Hence, choosing Ikeja Local government as the area of study is justifiable.

Against this background, the paper's general objective is to examine how ICT empowered entrepreneurs can create jobs and reduce youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era, using Ikeja Local Government in Lagos State of Nigeria as a case study. Specific objectives include:

- To find out the role of ICT entrepreneurship training on job creation in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State.
- To find out the impacts of loan provided for ICT trained entrepreneurs on reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos state.

In the light of this, the study is driven by the following research questions and statement of hypotheses:

- What is the impact of ICT entrepreneurship training on job creation in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State?
- To what extent has loans provided to ICT trained entrepreneurs reduced youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State?

Statement of hypotheses

H0: There is no significance relationship between ICT entrepreneurship training and job creation in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State.

H1: There is a significance relationship between ICT entrepreneurship training and job creation in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State.

H0: There is no significant relationship between loans provided to ICT trained entrepreneurs and reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State.

H2: There is significance relationship between loan provided to ICT trained entrepreneurs and reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State.

Conceptual framework

For clarification of different concepts needed for the analysis of this study, the following concepts are defined as follows:

Concept of information and communication technologies

Herselman and Hay (2003) described ICT as technologies that support the communication, cooperation of human beings, their organisation and the creation and exchange of knowledge. Information and Communication Technologies

are electronic devices utilised by governments for public service delivery (Sharma 2010). Yu (2010) defined ICT as a range of technologies that allow the gathering, exchange, retrieval, processing, analysis and transmission of information in this study; ICT is described as technologies used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information. They comprise computer system, Wide Area Networks, Twitter, Facebook, E-mail, the internet and mobile computing applications that have the ability to connect with citizens, businesses and other arms of government (Sharma 2010). These technologies access information help to promote service delivery to businesses, government, employees and citizens.

Concepts of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship

Amit, Colsen and Muller (1993) define an entrepreneur as an individual who identifies and creates business opportunities, assembles and coordinates new combination of resources so as to extract the most profit from his or her innovation in an uncertain environment. For this study, an entrepreneur is one who is willing to search for and undertake business opportunities for profit.

The word 'entrepreneurship' has been described in several ways by different scholars. Entrepreneurship is a process through which individuals identify opportunities, allocate resources and create values (McClelland 1966). Entrepreneurship is the process of successfully running innovative enterprises, nurturing them to growth and sustaining them to achieve socio-economic development goals. Entrepreneurship revolves around the realisation of existence of opportunities in combination with decision to commercialise them by starting a new firm.

Concept of job creation

Job creation is difficult to define and also difficult to evaluate or measure. For example, it is difficult to determine if job created did not merely displace jobs in other locations or sectors. Job creation can mean as net new job created without displacing other economic activity (Adam et al. 2011). However, job creation can be interpreted as job created, which can be measured from aggregate data from the Bureau of Labour statistics. This study adopts this definition because of special policy on ICT entrepreneurship training for youths' employment in small-scale businesses context in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State.

Concept of youths

Conceptually, youth's age is classified according to socio-economic and development peculiarities of each country. African Youth Charter (AYC 2006) categorised youths as people falling between 15 and 35 years of age. Caribbean Development Bank (CDB 2015) reported that a youth's age can be extended beyond 35 years, but it is generally possible to go to what is acceptable in the local labour market or be country specific.

Youths in Nigeria are citizens aged between 18 and 35 years, which compares favourably with what obtains in other climes and global institutions. For this paper, youths in active labour force can be categorised as falling between 18 and 35 years. This is because between 15 and 24 years, youths in this category are still pursuing their educational careers. National Bureau of Statistics agrees that ages 15 and 24 are not actively involved in labour activities because of educational pursuit (NBS 2020). As such, in this paper, youths are regarded as those falling between 25 and 34 years of age.

Theoretical framework

Entrepreneurial theories and research remain important to the development of the entrepreneurship field. For the purpose of this study, social network theory has been adopted as the framework of analysis. In this theory, entrepreneurs are embedded in a larger social network structure that constitutes a significant proportion of their opportunity structure (Clausen 2006). It was argued that entrepreneurs should have access to contemporaries in their social network, as the competence and experience these people have represent a kind of cultural capital that nascent ventures can draw upon in order to detect opportunities (Aldrich & Cliff 2003; Gartner et al. 2004). This theory is relevant to ICT entrepreneurs as they are expected to access experienced ICT entrepreneurs to explore experiences and knowledge on chosen venture. This network for ICT entrepreneurs' start-ups was made possible because of the collaboration and partnership of Oracle Network with LSETF under the Innovate programme (Abissoye 2021).

The Social Network Theory is, therefore, justified for this study because ICT entrepreneurship training for job creation and reduction of youths' unemployment in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State of Nigeria represents a resource that is heterogeneously distributed across individuals in post-COVID-19 pandemic era and in effect central to understanding differences in opportunity for start-ups ICT entrepreneurs benefiting from the professional trainings, benefiting from loan facilities and exploiting it for job creation and reduction of unemployment (Anderson & Miller 2003; Chandler & Hanks 1998; Gartner et al. 2005; Shane & Venkataraman 2000).

Entrepreneurship training and job creation

Several empirical researches have been put forward by scholars to explain the field of entrepreneurship. Akanwa and Akpananbia (2012) examined the need for promoting employment in Nigeria through the development of entrepreneurship. The study revealed that governments at all levels should encourage entrepreneurship to reduce unemployment. Asad, Ali and Islam (2014) also examined the need to reduce unemployment through entrepreneurship development. The study revealed that high rate of unemployment has been associated with low level of entrepreneurship development in the economy of Pakistan.

Obajaja (2016) in his study of youth unemployment and level of poverty in Ekiti state noted that unemployment impacted on social vices and reduced economic growth. Smilary, Odukoya (2020) examined the impact of LSETF on MSMEs in Lagos State. The study revealed that funding of MSMEs reduced unemployment in Lagos State. Badejo, Agunyai and Adeyemi (2015) also studied the policy of youth recruitment, empowerment and reduction on unemployment with O-Yes programme in Osun State. The study revealed that 57% of unemployed beneficiaries who responded to the survey said that the scheme did not improve their capacity because it focused on unskilled, mental, jobs, while 84% of the beneficiaries' respondents of Ministry of Finance (MOF) O-yes viewed the scheme as a palliative measure, and not a permanent solution to youths' unemployment.

This study has brought to the fore the significance of new technologies. New technologies have changed the characteristic of employment as they now enable fragmentation of work (Donnelly & Johns 2021). However, there is 'shortage of ICT professionals required to support entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Information Communication Technology industry itself requires 300 000 skilled professionals in the areas of software development, system development professionals, business analysts, ethical hackers, among others (Uzor 2015:31). Information Communication Technology entrepreneurship studies are becoming important in Nigeria in the face of COVID-19 pandemic era, where MSMEs closed shops.

With the disruption of businesses during COVID-19, researchers have argued that the increased use of technology for remote working could result in an autonomy paradox (Mazmanian et al. 20). While ICT offers more flexibility for working and living arrangements, it also imposes pressure for knowledge workers regarding constant connectivity and responsiveness (Sewell & Taskin 2015).

From the review of previous studies, it is obvious that there is gap in literature. It is obvious that sufficient studies have not been carried on ICT entrepreneurship and job creation as mechanism for reducing youths' unemployment, in post-COVID-19 era in Ikeja local government in Lagos State of Nigeria. Previous studies pre-COVID-19 pandemic investigated causes, effects and remedies of youths' unemployment and recommended that government at federal and state levels invest on MSME to reduce unemployment. Hence, this study's focus is to bridge the gap in literature by investigating ICT entrepreneurship training for job creation and reduction of youths' unemployment, in post-COVID-19 pandemic, supported by LSETF Agency programme in Ikeja local government in Lagos State.

Material and methods

This study adopted a mixed-method design. A mixed method research design is a procedure for collecting, analysing and 'mixing' both quantitative and qualitative research

approaches on a single study to understand a research problem (Creswell 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; eds. Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003).

To investigate this study, therefore, qualitative and quantitative data were derived using triangulation method of data collection. These methods included purposive, snow-balling and simple random sampling techniques. Qualitative data were collected using purposive and snow-balling sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 key informants for in-depth interview through the telephone. The key informants included experts and practitioners in entrepreneurship. Snowballing technique was utilised to select interviewees who are potential beneficiaries of LSETF's Programmes. Interview guide designed was unstructured with some open items. The items were grouped into various sections based on research objectives. The sections included cross-questions and probes from interviewees.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using the following steps: content analysis to elicit concepts, transcription of field notes, editing, coding, which involved sorting, categorising and grouping of responses into themes. Inter-coders rating between the research assistants and researcher was undertaken to validate themes elicited. The themes basically fell under respective research questions, which were used to develop structured questionnaires for collecting quantitative data. Key responses based on respective themes from qualitative data were cited verbatim in interpretation of findings and discussion.

For quantitative data collection, a survey design using structured questionnaires were self-administered, using simple random sample on potential ICT entrepreneurship training beneficiaries of LSETF Programmes. To ensure the validity of the quantitative research instrument used in the study, the questionnaires were subjected to pre-test, using some selected students from School of Entrepreneurial Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State. This was aimed at ensuring a high degree of validity of the instruments. They checked on the instruments' content coverage based on the study parameters. The instruments were also given to peers for further review to determine the internal consistency. Based on the experts' comments, the researcher made improvement on the structured questionnaires before administering to respondents in study parameter.

To obtain reliability of the structured questionnaires, a test-retest method was used to pilot it in order to estimate the degree to which the same results could be obtained with a repeated measure of accuracy from the same instrument. The questionnaires were administered to 10 respondents. These came from a population that shared similar characteristics, but they were not part of the study sample. The two research assistants collected the pilot data. After 2 weeks, the same questionnaires were administered to the same group of respondents. Reliability coefficient between the two sets of scores was coded and analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 for Cronbach's alpha test. This yielded alpha 0.7554 reliability coefficient.

Thus, the questionnaires were accepted as reliable (George & Marllery 2003).

The structured questionnaires were then divided into section A and B. Section A comprises demographic characteristics of respondents, while section B consisted of five point-Likert scale, with options ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for quantitative data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used for exploratory analysis. Tables were used to present frequency distribution data. The SPSS version 17 was used to run the descriptive statistics and non-parametric statistics – chi-square to test hypotheses. The quantitative data analysis findings formed the basis of interpretation of findings and discussion in the light of reviewed literature.

Limitation of research methodology

The study is limited in scope as it focused on entrepreneurs who are potential ICT entrepreneurship training beneficiaries from LSETF's programmes on MSMEs. Information Communication Technology entrepreneurs, who are potential beneficiaries of National Directorate of Employment and other Skills Acquisition Centres in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State, were excluded in this study. Hence, future research is required to replicate this study at the federal and Lagos State levels, whether ICT entrepreneurship training promotes jobs creation and reduces youths' unemployment.

Demographic profiles

Out of 108 questionnaires that were distributed to the respondents, 104 representing 96.3% were properly completed and returned for the study. In Table 1, it was observed that 55 (52.9%) of respondents were male and 49 (47.1%) females. On marital status, 88 (84.6%) respondents were single and 16 (15.4%) married. There was no divorced or separated among the respondents. On qualification, respondents with primary six certificate were 8 (8%), General Certificate of Education (GCE), O/L certificate holders 30 (28%), Ordinary Diploma Certificate (OND)/National Certificate of Education (NCE) holders were 10 (10%), General Certificate of Education (HND)/Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree holders were 32 (31%), Master of Arts (MA)/Master of Science (MSc) degree holders were 24 (23%) and no one with Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree certificate.

In terms of age, respondents between 18 and 24 years of age were 32 (31%); between 25 and 34 years were 46 (44%), 35–44 years were 18 (17%); while those above 45 years recorded 8 (8%). Respondents' years of joblessness been 1–4 years record 76 (73%); 5–9 years recorded 24 (23%), while those on 10 years and above recorded 4 (4%). For employment status, respondents on employment were 15 (14%), under-employed 26 (25%), unemployed 36 (35%) and those in self-employment were 27 (26%).

Ethical considerations

In this study, the rights of the research participants were ensured. This was done by ensuring that the principles

governing research participants were followed. The researcher ensured that the principle of voluntary participation, which requires that people are not coerced into participating in research was followed. The informed consent of the participants was ensured by explaining the aim of the study and the procedures involved. The researcher also guaranteed the participants of the confidentiality in their responses to questions. Furthermore, the principle of anonymity was adhered to. The participants remained anonymous throughout the study.

Results

Test of hypothesis 1

H0: There is no significant relationship between the LSETF sponsored vocational training for ICT entrepreneurship and its impacts on job creation for youths in post-COVID-19 pandemic in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

H1: There is significant relationship between the LSETF sponsored vocational training for ICT entrepreneurship and its

TABLE 1: Presentation of respondents' demographic characteristics.

Number	Demographic profile	Frequency	%
1	Gender		
	Male	55	52.9
	Female	49	47.1
	Total	104	100
2	Marital status		
	Single	88	84.6
	Married	16	15.4
	Divorced	-	-
	Separated	-	-
	Total	104	100.0
3	Educational background		
	Primary six Certificate	8	8
	O/level/GCE	30	28
	OND/NCE	10	10
	HND/BSc	32	31
	MSc/MA	24	23
	PhD	-	-
	Total	104	100
4	Age		
	18–24 years	32	31
	25–34 years	46	44
	35–44 years	18	17
	45 years and above	8	8
	Total	104	100
5	Year(s) without job		
	1–4 years	76	73
	5–9 years	24	23
	10 and above	4	4
	Total	104	100
6	Employment status		
	Employed	15	14
	Under-employed	26	25
	Unemployed	36	35
	Self-employment	27	26
	Total	104	100

GCE, General Certificate of Education; OND, Ordinary Diploma Certificate; NCE, National Certificate of Education; HND, General Certificate of Education; BSc, Bachelor of Science; MA, Master of Arts; MSc, Master of Science; PhD, Doctor of Philosophy.

impacts on job creation for youths in post-COVID-19 pandemic in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

Decision rule for hypothesis 1

The hypothesis results of the analysis conducted showed that as chi-square (X^2) calculated value is 68.019 with 4 degree of freedom is greater than the table value of 9.488 and p -value 0.000 is less than that of 0.05 alpha levels, which means that null hypothesis (H_0 : is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_2) is accepted, which states that there is significant relationship between the LSETF sponsored vocational training for ICT entrepreneurs and its impact on job creation for youths in post-COVID-19 pandemic in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

Qualitative research conducted using key informants showed that respondents from eight out of 10 participants (80%) interviewed agreed with quantitative research analysis finding. The eight participants commented, thus:

'LSETF vocational training has made youths to become self-employed in the past. And with the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic era, the State government's vocational training programmes for ICT entrepreneurs have encouraged youths to go into self-employment, working from home instead of searching for unavailable jobs.' (KII, 02 April 2022, Ikeja Local Government)¹

Test of hypothesis 2

H0: Loans provided by LSETF to ICT entrepreneurs have no significant effect on youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

H2: Loans provided by LSETF to ICT entrepreneurs have significant effect on youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

Decision rule for hypothesis 2

The hypothesis results of the analysis conducted show that as chi-square (X^2) calculated value is 84.365 with 4 degree of freedom is greater than the table value of 9.488 and p -value 0.000 is less than that of 0.05 alpha levels, which means that null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and alternate (H_2) accepted, which states that loans provided through LSETF to ICT entrepreneurs have significant effect on reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos state.

However, findings from respondents in in-depth interviews from 10 key informants showed that six out of 10 participants (60%) agreed that loans facilities for ICT entrepreneurs promoted job creation in the form of self-employment, while 40% disagreed. This is summarised below:

'We agree that LSEFTs' loan facilities to entrepreneurs have helped us to start new small businesses and reduced youths' unemployment in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State. With introduction of ICT, entrepreneurs can now work virtually. 4 out

1. Key Informant Interview (KII) held with 40 participants (grouped into 10 participants per session) on 02 April 2022 on MSMEs awareness for Youths' unemployment and self-employment in Ikeja Local Government of Lagos State of Nigeria.

TABLE 2: H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund sponsored vocational training for Information Communication Technology entrepreneurship and its impacts on job creation for youths in post-COVID-19 pandemic in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

Scale	Observed (N)	Expected (N)	Residual
Strongly disagree	6	20.8	-14.8
Disagree	6	20.8	-14.8
Neutral	12	20.8	-8.8
Agree	49	20.8	28.2
Strongly agree	31	20.8	10.2
Total	104	20.8	-

TABLE 3: Chi square (X^2) test statistics (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Chi-Square	Vocational training is capable of creating job in Ikeja Local government Lagos state significantly
Chi-square	68.019†
df	4
Asymp. sig	0.000

†, 0 cell (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 20.8.

TABLE 4: H_0 : Loans provided by Lagos State Employment Trust Fund to Information Communication Technology entrepreneurs have no significant effect on youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

Scale	Observed (N)	Expected (N)	Residual
Strongly disagree	4	20.8	-16.8
Disagree	9	20.8	-11.8
Neutral	5	20.8	-15.8
Agree	50	20.8	29.2
Strongly agree	36	20.8	15.2
Total	104	20.8	-

TABLE 5: Chi square (X^2) test statistics (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Chi-square	Loans provided through LSETF to ICT entrepreneurs have no significant effect on youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State
Chi-square	84.365†
df	4
Asymp. sig	0.000

LSETF, Lagos State Employment Trust Fund; ICT, Information Communication Technology; COVID-19.

†, 0 cell (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 20.8.

of 10 (40%) participants differed. The loans from LSEFT are inadequate for us as many unemployed youths are many in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State. The loan facilities are not capturing all unemployed youths. So, the Lagos State should allocate more funds to LSEFT as loanable fund now that ICT entrepreneurs are involved.' (KII, 02 April 2022, Ikeja Local Government)¹

The disagreements among the key informants clearly show the significance of funding to enable ICT entrepreneurs develop adequate infrastructures for effective business success. Inadequate funding has been a challenge for MSMEs and including ICT entrepreneurs exacerbates the problem of finance for that enterprise.

Discussion

The study investigated that ICT entrepreneurship training for job creation and reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State. The two stated hypotheses in the study were

analysed with a chi-square statistical test, using the SPSS to analyse responses from the questionnaire designed for the study. The findings are quite revealing.

The first finding from test of hypothesis 1 stated that vocational training provided through LSETF for ICT entrepreneurs has no significant effect on job creation and reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State. The result showed that vocational training provided through LSETF has significant effect on job creation through self-employment and reduction of youths' unemployment in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State. This was ascertained with the aid of chi-square statistics using SPSS.

Previous studies in the literature also support the hypothesis that vocational training enhances acquisition of skills for job creation facilitating self-employment in different aspects of the economy, especially agriculture, knowledge workers, information technology entertainment and events planning sectors (Akanwa & Akpanabia 2012; Eghweree & Imuetinyan 2019; Emeh 2012; Odukoya 2020; Sewell & Taskin 2015).

The second finding showed that there is a relationship between loans provided through LSETF to ICT entrepreneurs have significant effect on reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

This hypothesis was tested with the aid of the chi-square statistical tools, using SPSS. The chi-square tested rejected the null hypothesis that stated that loans from LSETF to ICT entrepreneurs resulted in reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State. The alternative hypothesis was accepted. This finding is supported by previous studies from the literature on the subject that granting of loans for entrepreneurs resulted in the reduction of youths' unemployment in Lagos State (LSETF 2020; Odukoya 2020). Test of hypothesis 2 on Ikeja Local government area, therefore, confirms previous studies on the subject matter.

This finding is also supported by responses from participants in key informants' interview in qualitative data analysis. The entire 10 participants (100%) agreed that loans provided by LSETF to ICT entrepreneurs facilitated reduction of youths' unemployment in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State.

Conclusion

In sum, the first finding from the first hypothesis tested showed that LSETF's intervention programmes for ICT entrepreneurs resulted in job creation in post-COVID-19 pandemic era in Ikeja Local government in Lagos State. Before COVID-19 pandemic, unarguably, MSMEs were tools for reducing youth unemployment, creating jobs and promoting entrepreneurship or self-employment in Lagos

State (NBS 2020). Training of ICT entrepreneurs in post-COVID-19 era changed the narrative and generated more ICT-based entrepreneurs in Local government of Lagos State in Nigeria.

The second finding from the test of hypothesis also showed that loans given to ICT entrepreneurs helped to reduce youths' unemployment in Ikeja local government area of Lagos State as it boosted employment opportunities for potential unemployed youths. This shows that post-COVID-19 pandemic era intervention programmes of LSETF for ICT entrepreneurs in Ikeja Local government area have made them to become change agents for job creation and reduction of youths' unemployment.

However, future research direction is required to conduct comparative study on Lagos State's unemployed youths in Ikeja Local government area, who benefitted from Federal Government Directorate of Employment ICT Skill Acquisition programmes.

Based on these findings, the following are the recommendations:

- Improve information and communication technology infrastructural development:

There is need to recognise the fact that government is simply unable to mobilise enough capital required to invest in youths' employment and ICT entrepreneurship intervention programmes, in Ikeja Local government. Lagos State government should, therefore, collaborate with private sector for private capital and know-how required to drive critical sectors, such as electricity supply, computer hardware and software promote and sustain ICT entrepreneurship development. Developing these facilities would provide the enabling environment for sustainable development of MSMEs, especially for ICT entrepreneurs in Ikeja Local government and Lagos State in general.

- Diversify sources of loan facilities for information and communication technology entrepreneurs.
- Lagos State Employment Trust Fund Agency should collaborate with Federal Government Agencies, such as National Directorate of Employment, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), World Bank and UK DFID, banks, cooperative units, among others, for loanable funds accessible to youths. For example:

Federal government funding of N220 billion allocated for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises development (MSMED) and Youths' Entrepreneurship programmes could act as buffer loanable fund for LSETF programme that could promote ICT entrepreneurship. (Onyekelu 2016:12)

- Collaborating with such federal government programmes would create more opportunities for ICT entrepreneurs. The financial programme can bolster loanable funds for startups and encourage working from homes. Besides, multi-sector collaboration should be utilised with cooperative system in the informal sector to provide access for more finance needed for ICT business development and expansion.

- Provision of loans for information and communication technology-based creative enterprises:
Government should encourage wealth creation capability through entrepreneurship activities in ICT-based creative enterprises. Creative enterprises such as performing arts, entertainment, indigenous music, film, visual arts and craft markets festivals can contribute significantly as main drivers of personal wealth, tourism, foreign direct investment and employment. There are pool funds from SMEDAN, such as creative industries fund, fashion fund, cottage fund, agro-processing funds, among others, that can be leveraged to create jobs, thereby reducing youth unemployment in Ikeja Local government in Lagos. These funds can be utilised as additional loanable funds for ICT entrepreneurs in creative industries. The loan would make it possible for ICT entrepreneurs to make use of social media, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, among others, to make income for themselves, thereby reducing unemployment. Creative industries can be a medium of job creation for the government that can reposition Ikeja Local government and Lagos State as cities of excellence in ICT entrepreneurship.
- Vocational information and communication technology entrepreneurship training for skill acquisition and internship:
Lagos State Employment Trust Fund's current vocational training should be reformed as a result of realities of post-COVID-19 pandemic era. Vocational training in digital technology should be emphasised to provide small businesses with a strategic advantage, which can positively influence youths' competitiveness in wealth creation and self-employment. Information and communication technology skills are now considered relevant for health care, such as drones for medical supply deliveries, robotics in surgeons and telemedicine as well as sensors for proximity monitoring, agriculture, e-learning, teleworking, security and surveillance (Inuwa 2020). Vocational training on ICT skills acquisition for youths (male and female) can assist start-ups, who benefit from LSETF 'Lagos Innovates' programme. This would enable the youths to transit from being job seekers to job creators by establishing innovative, technology-based start-ups and other digital enabled businesses. Moreover, internship should be encouraged for ICT entrepreneurs so that they can network with mentors in their chosen field of business endeavours.
- Information communication technology entrepreneurship education:
Ikeja local government and Lagos State should integrate entrepreneurship education into career programmes in tertiary institutions, in order to stimulate ICT entrepreneurial attitudes before they enter employment market, whether as employer or for self-employment.

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