

Secretarial Skills and the Challenges of Youth Unemployment in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The issues of unemployment in Nigeria have become a source of concern to collective authority and citizens in general. The study examined secretarial skills and the challenges of youth unemployment in Ogun State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. A total of 278 undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Tai Solarin University of Education, Federal Polytechnic Ilaro and Abiola Moshood Polytechnic represented the sample size of the study. Researchers developed questionnaire tagged: Secretarial Skills and Youth Unemployment Questionnaire (SSYUQ) with 0.84 reliability coefficient which was used for data collection. Research questions 1 and 2 were answered using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation while research question 3 was answered through multiple regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed that there are significant predictors causing youth unemployment in Ogun State which include high rate of graduates' turnout, lack of employability skills, lack of self-reliance skills, inadequate of entrepreneurial skills, collapse of manufacturing industries, unstable electricity supply and lopsided curriculum design and implementation. Possession of secretarial skills such as communication, analytical/research, flexibility/adaptability/managing multiple priorities, multicultural sensitivity/awareness, planning/organizing, result-driven, problem-solving/reasoning/creativity, interpersonal, innovation, self-improvement and information and communication technology skills could help an individual in solving the challenges of unemployment in Ogun State and that about 66% of the variance in youth unemployment was accounted for by the linear combination of the secretarial skills. The study recommends among other things that the government and management of tertiary institutions in Ogun State should provide more funds to the department of Secretarial Administration or Business Education in order to provide better working condition for the staff and the needed materials for instruction delivery. More of the secretarial administration instruction should be based on practical aspect as this will better open eyes of the students towards the benefits of the programme for solving youth unemployment.

Key Words: *secretarial skills, youth unemployment, self-reliance, self-employment*

Introduction

Records have shown that one of the significant factors that is contributing towards insecurity in developing countries like that of Nigeria is youth unemployment (Subuola & Akintola, 2015). Youth unemployment is the situation of young people who are looking for a job, but cannot find a job. As revealed by Worldometer elaboration of the United Nations, the current population of Nigeria is 215,259,375 as of April year 2022. Out of this population, a total of 43.67% were youths which represent significant proportion of the Nigeria (Okolocha, John- Akamelu & Muogbo (2019). Youth population supposes to be the economic benefits and comparative advantage to the Nigeria economy, however, other seems to be the case. A situation where majority of the youths (including graduates from the tertiary institutions) were not engaged in productive economic activities and these circumstances may also be among the determinants that fuelled cheap labour and crime activities in the country. Public opinions have shown that some tertiary institution graduates be it university, polytechnic or colleges of education seems to be lacking self-employment or self-reliance skills. Skills that can make them stand alone for economic survival and self-actualization. Ogbonna (2012) posited that self-reliance refers to dependence on one's own abilities, judgments, or resources or independence. It thus means the ability to rely on oneself to do whatever should be done. It entails the development of local markets, local production, local processing of previously imported goods, and greater cooperation amongst local economic entities. Self-reliance is the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family (Enwere, Ugwu, & Olawoyin, 2013). In order to be self-reliant, there is need to acquire certain skills which will equip individual for being on his or her own in the society.

Literature Review

Possession of secretarial skills could be seen as an antidote towards solving the contemporary challenges of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Having secretarial skills such as communication, flexibility/adaptability/managing multiple priorities, planning/organizing, interpersonal, business, self-improvement, organizational culture, healthy work environment, morale, profitability and ICT skills can encourage graduates to venture into small and medium scale business enterprises such as opening a business centres outlet and becomes employer of labour rather relied on none available government and private sectors job placements (Ogbonna, 2012). Ogbonna (2012) contended that graduates with sound secretarial skills cannot remain unemployed for longer time, rather such individual have opportunity to venture into secretarial business activities such as cybercafé, business centres, transcription, resume writing and career consultation, word processing, editing and proofreading, business writing, preparing spreadsheets and presentation materials, bookkeeping and billing, database and contact.

According to Amiaya (2015), secretarial skills are skills acquired by graduates of secretarial studies in tertiary institutions during and after training to enable them perform their office jobs effectively and efficiently as well as being self-employed hence, in business education, it is described as education for the world of work and education for entrepreneurship. These skills are also needed for the success of every organization. Those possessing professional secretarial skills pass through the process of human capital development. According to Sunia (2014), communication skill is part of secretarial skills needed by individual to excel in office work likewise as an entrepreneur. These skills have to do with written, verbal and listening skills. By far, some of the communication skills most often mentioned by employers are

the ability to listen, write and speak effectively and fluently. There is no gain-saying the fact that successful communication is critical in modern day business organizations. Analytical/research skills is another form of secretarial skills and this is in the area of thinking with demonstrated talent for identifying, scrutinizing, improving and streamlining complex work processes. Computer-technical literacy; with the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and by implication the use of the computer, almost all jobs in the office now require some basic understanding, application and use of the computer hardware and software, especially word processing, data processing, spreadsheets and e- mail.

Secretarial skills such as flexibility/adaptability/managing multiple priorities relates today's goal-driven leaders, including the graduates of secretarial studies who maintain a productive climate and confidently motivates, mobilizes, mentors and coaches subordinates to meet and sustain high performance standards require these skills. Multicultural sensitivity/awareness also relates to secretarial skills needed for youth gainful employment or self-employment. There is possibly no bigger issue in the work place today than the subject of diversity. Such diversities include language, religion, the concept of federal character as in the case of Nigeria, gender, individual characteristics and dispositions, among others. The job seekers, particularly the secretaries, require demonstrating a conscious and deliberate awareness and understanding of other people. Planning/organizing skills, in these areas, the skills and ability to design, plan, organize and implement projects and tasks within a stipulated time frame are very important. The subject of goal-setting is not isolated – the graduates should be able to set measurable and achieving goals, taking into consideration, all known and unforeseen constraints. Teamwork, in modern-day organizations, teamwork requiring working in one or more work groups is inevitable. It thus becomes necessary for the individual to develop and sustain the ability to work with others in a professional manner in the course of attempting to achieve organizational and individual goals.

Result-driven skills, the graduates of secretarial studies should be result-driven and an achiever with exemplary planning and organizational skills, and possessing a high degree of detailed orientation. Problem-solving/reasoning/creativity skills, this involves the ability to find solutions to problems using the power of creative reasoning of past experiences along with the available information and resources (Subuola & Akintola, 2015). Self-improvement skill is also among secretarial skills that can drive youth employment and the individual concerned has to understand and improve upon personal strengths, and being conscious of self-awareness and limitations. Secretarial skills are a pre-requisite for national and individual development, especially on the part of practitioners notwithstanding the attendant or associated problems, such as funding. These, no doubt, help to expand the horizons of the human intellect and an overall personality of secretaries (Aluko, 2014). According to George and Jones (2017), secretarial skills acquired through the concept and process of human capital development helps in increasing the productivity of an individual which, in turn, contributes to the achievement of organizational and personal goals.

Though, different studies have been conducted on the factors that may be causing youth unemployment in Nigeria, even with that, much still need to be done in this area. Literature such as Okolocha, John-Akamelu and Muogbo (2019) examined the extent to which programme on skills acquisition could enhance youth employability in Anambra State while Ubulom and West (2021) investigated the impact of ICT skills on graduates on secretarial studies employability in Rivers State. Likewise, Udo (2014) reviewed the extent to which acquisition of OTM skills

could act of predictors towards graduate self-reliance in Nigeria using content analysis. Gbinigie (2017) look into how secretarial skills and education could enhance graduates' self-reliance for the solving the challenges of unemployment in the country. However, the author adopted content analysis. Adamu, Bappah, Ahmad and Aibu (2021) examined the inclusion and relationship between employability competencies and OTM curriculum in Nigeria. They authors based the study on content analysis. Aina (2019) examined the interaction between secretarial studies or OTM and graduates job demands for self-employment in Ekiti-State. However, despite those related studies have received significant attention from the body of literature, most of these studies were based on contents analysis which failed to capture individual opinions on the issues discussed and that studies on the relationship between secretarial skills and the challenges of youth unemployment among tertiary institutions in Ogun State have received less attention.

Theoretical framework for this study was human capital theory propounded by Robert in 1991. The theory postulated that prescribes education, training and skills acquisition as mechanisms for attaining productivity, workers' efficiency and overall socio-economic development is sure success towards eradication of unemployment. The spending on human capital (workforce) is a worthwhile and productive investment similar to investment in nation's physical assets. The human capital model of Robert (1991) advocates education as a tool for improving human capital, stimulating labour productivity and boosting the levels of technology across the globe. Human capital enhancement through quality education is a critical factor that is responsible for the massive economic growth and development in East Africa, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan.

Statement of the Problem

Observations have shown that majority of the graduates produced in Nigeria tertiary institutions years back still roaming the street looking to job placement either in private or public organizations. Different public opinions have condemned Nigerians graduates that they were unemployable; meaning many of them lack employability and self-employment skills; they cannot perform efficiently in organization if found employed unless retrained again. One may begin to wonder the reasons for continuous growth in the numbers of youth unemployment in Nigeria society which may also among the predictors fuelling insecurity indices such as rampant kidnapping of innocent individual for ransom, armed robbery, banditry, boko-haram, internet fraud activities and many others. These circumstances are disturbing and of major worry to the collective authority and the society at large. Government, stakeholders in the economy, citizens and students have begun to look for an antidote to solve youth unemployment. To fill this gap, the present study is of the opinion that possession of secretarial skills could be one of the antidotes toward curbing youth unemployment in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in this study:

1. What are the predictors causing youth unemployment in Ogun State?
2. What are the secretarial skills for solving youth unemployment in Ogun State?
3. To what extent do secretarial skills can jointly contribute towards solving the challenges of youth unemployment in Ogun State?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted by the researcher in carrying out this study. The researcher used this design over other because it helps in collecting needed information from the respondents with shortest period of time. The study was carried out among government owned tertiary institutions that offered Secretarial Studies/Administration or Office Technology and Management popularly called OTM as the case maybe. These Institutions include Olabisi Onabanjo University, Tai Solarin University of Education, Federal Polytechnic Ilaro and Abiola Moshood Polytechnic. A total of 278 undergraduates of these tertiary institutions were selected as sample size of the study. Stratified sampling technique was used in the process of selecting the sample size in order to be devoid of gender bias. Researcher developed questionnaire tagged: Secretarial Skills and Youth Unemployment Questionnaire (SSYUQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts at the Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria. The validation was done at the Department of Business Education and Test and Measurement. Test and re-test methods were carried out among 35 secretarial administration students at Tai Solarin University of Education who were not included in the sample size of the study. The information got was subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) formula and a reliability coefficient 0.84 was arrived. This implied that the instrument (SSYUQ) was reliable and can elicit required data for the study. Researcher and five trained research assistants distributed the questionnaires to the respondents for administration. However, before administrations of the questionnaires, the respondents were briefed on the reason for the study and assurances were provided not to reveal their personal identity in the findings of the study. It took three weeks for the completion of the field work. Research questions 1 and 2 were answered using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation while research question 3 was answered through multiple regression analysis. Decisions were done at 0.05 level of significance. Any mean score of 2.5 and above was regarded as agreed while any one below 2.5 regarded as disagreed. For regression analysis, when p value is less than significance level ($p < .05$), the issues answered was significant.

Findings

A total of 278 questionnaires were administered and only 28 copies were missing and 250 copies returned. Success rate was 89.9% while mortality rate was 10.1%. The analyses of this study were based on success rate.

Research Question 1: What are the predictors causing youth unemployment in Ogun State?

Table 1

Mean and standard deviation responses on the predictors causing youth unemployment in Ogun State

Items	Mean	Std Dev	Remarks
High rate of graduate's turnout	2.51	0.8637	Agreed
Lack of employability skills	2.89	0.7281	Agreed

Lack of self-reliance skills	2.93	0.7111	Agreed
Lack of self-employment skills	2.55	0.9002	Agreed
Inadequate entrepreneurial skills	2.84	0.8461	Agreed
Collapse of manufacturing industries	3.01	0.6936	Agreed
Unstable electricity supply	2.94	0.7996	Agreed
Lopsided curriculum design and implementation	3.18	0.6932	Agreed
Average Mean	2.86		

Source: Field Survey, 2022

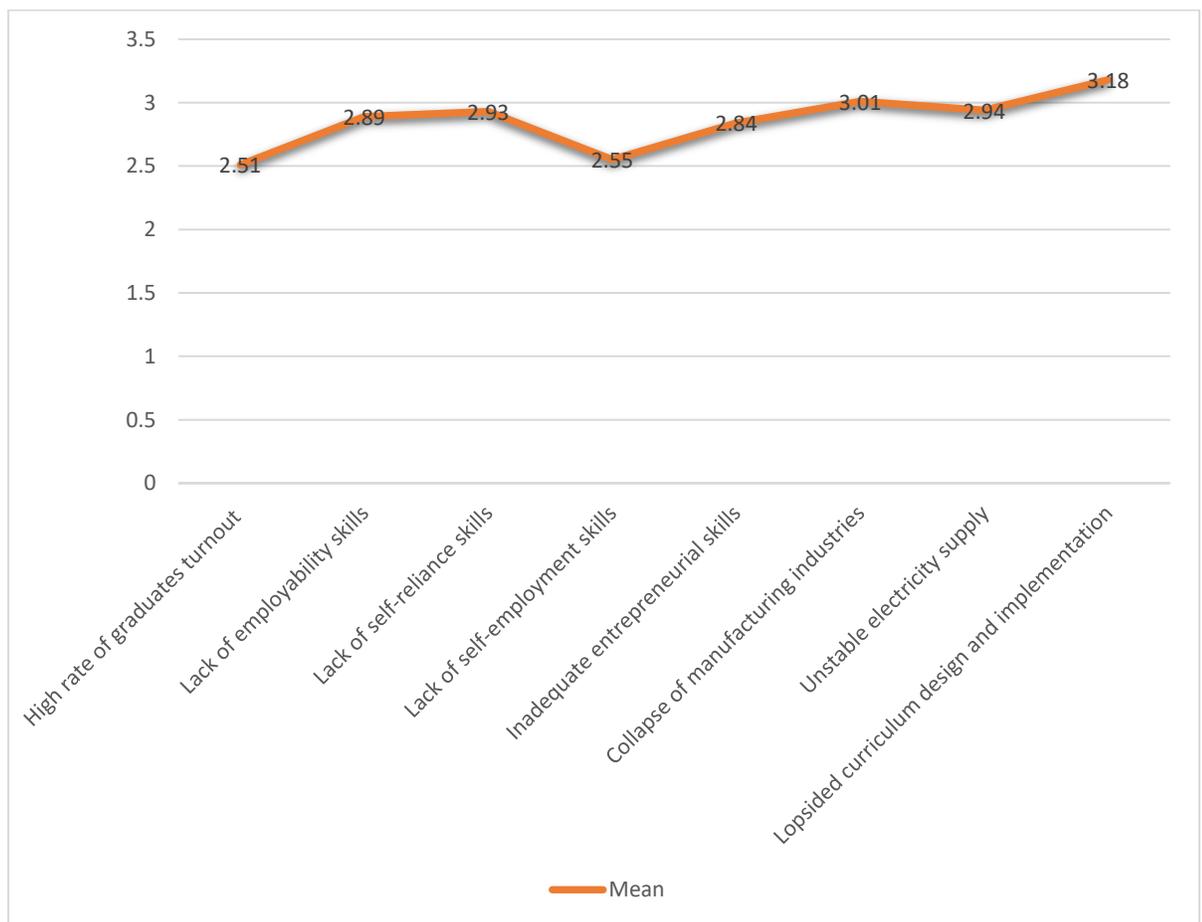


Figure 1: Trend Analysis Showing the Predictors causing Youth Unemployment in Ogun State

Table 1 revealed the average mean to be 2.86 meaning that it greater than the benchmark of 2.50. This implied that there are significant predictors causing youth unemployment in Ogun State which include high rate of graduate’s turnout, lack of employability skills, lack of self- reliance skills, inadequate of entrepreneurial skills, collapse of manufacturing industries, unstable electricity supply and lopsided curriculum design and implementation.

Research Question 2: What are the secretarial skills for solving youth unemployment in Ogun State?

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Secretarial Skills for solving Youth Unemployment in Ogun State

Items	Mean	Std Dev	Remarks
Communication skills	3.05	0.6284	Agreed
Analytical/Research skills	2.74	0.7096	Agreed
Flexibility/Adaptability/Managing Multiple Priorities skills	2.50	0.8693	Agreed
Multicultural Sensitivity/Awareness skills	2.69	0.8999	Agreed
Planning/Organizing skills	2.70	0.6721	Agreed
Result-Driven skills	2.55	0.9854	Agreed
Problem-Solving/Reasoning/Creativity skills	3.16	0.7002	Agreed
Interpersonal skills	3.21	0.6721	Agreed
Innovation skills	3.42	0.5993	Agreed
Self-improvement skills	3.33	0.7645	Agreed
Interpersonal relationship skills	2.98	0.9521	Agreed
Information and communication technology skills	3.48	0.7211	Agreed
Average Mean	2.98		

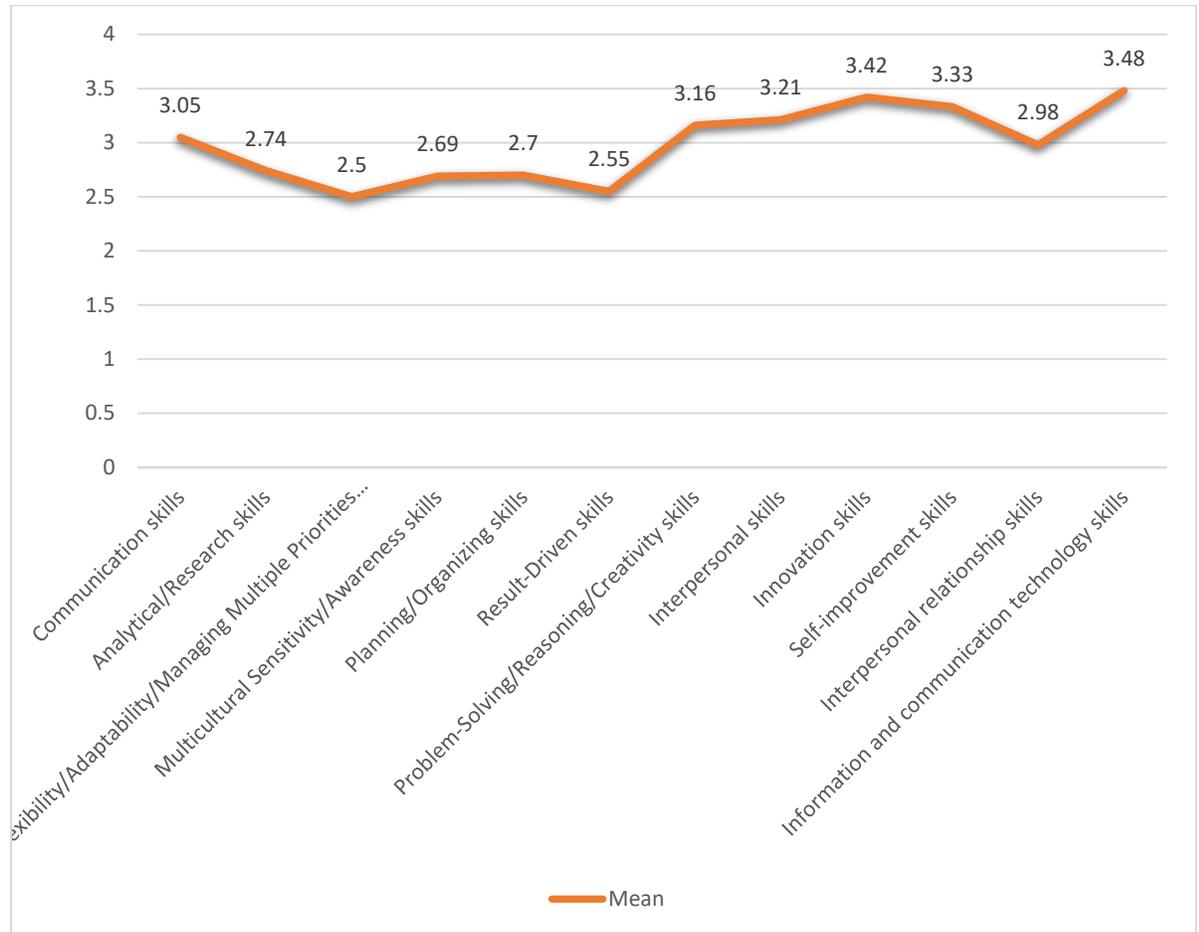


Figure 2: Trend Analysis Showing the Secretarial Skills for Solving Youth Unemployment in Ogun State

Table 2 indicated average mean to be 2.98 which was greater than the benchmark of 2.50. The implications of this result was that the possession of secretarial skills such as communication, analytical/research, flexibility/adaptability/managing multiple priorities, multicultural sensitivity/awareness, planning/organizing, result-driven, problem- solving/reasoning/creativity, interpersonal, innovation, self-improvement and information and communication technology skills could help an individual in solving the challenges of unemployment in Ogun State.

Research Question 3: To what extent do secretarial skills can jointly contribute towards solving the challenges of youth unemployment in Ogun State?

Table 3

Multiple regression results showing the extent secretarial skills jointly contribute towards solving the challenges of youth unemployment in Ogun State

R = .715					
R ² = .672					
Adj R ² = .659					
Std. Error = 3.83526					
ANOVA					
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-ratio	p
Regression	749.370	4	187.342	12.736	0.000
Residual	3603.766	245	14.709		

Dependent Variable: Youth Unemployment

Table 3 showed that there was significant joint contribution of the independent variables (secretarial skills) on the dependent variable (youth unemployment); R = 0.715, p< .05. The table further indicated 65.9% (Adj. R2 = 0.659) that about 66% of the variance in youth unemployment was accounted for by the linear combination of the independent variables. The ANOVA results from the regression analysis showed that there was significant contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variables; F (4, 245) = 12.736, p<.05.

Discussion

Based on research question 1, it was found that there are significant predictors causing youth unemployment in Ogun State which include high rate of graduates’ turnout, lack of employability skills, lack of self-reliance skills, inadequate of entrepreneurial skills, collapse of manufacturing industries, unstable electricity supply and lopsided curriculum design and implementation. These findings correlate with Onoyase (2019) who found that high rate of graduate turn out, neglect of the agricultural sector by government, lack of employable skills by graduates, collapse of manufacturing industries and reforms in the banking sector resulting in regular retrenchment of workers were causal factor of unemployment on graduates of tertiary institutions.

Based on research question 2, the findings indicated that the possession of secretarial skills such as communication, analytical/research, flexibility / adaptability / managing multiple priorities, multicultural sensitivity / awareness, planning / organizing, result-driven, problem- solving / reasoning / creativity, interpersonal, innovation, self-improvement and information and communication technology skills could help an individual in solving the challenges of unemployment in Ogun State. These findings correlate with Ubulom and West (2021) who contended that graduates of secretarial administration possession of ICT and computer skills application could be of help in solving youth unemployment in River State.

Based on the research question 3, the findings revealed that there was significant joint contribution of the independent variables (secretarial skills) on the dependent variable (youth unemployment). These findings correlate with Kemi (2014) who found that some of the small-scale secretarial businesses in Nigeria include cybercafé, business centres, transcription services, browsing or internet services,

typesetting, photocopying, binding, that have help in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Discussions on how to reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria particular in Ogun State have received significant attention which provides different measures towards curbing the menace. However, this study empirical examined how secretarial skills could be of help in solving the challenges of youth unemployment in Ogun State. The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study that there are significant predictors causing youth unemployment in Ogun State which include high rate of graduates' turnout, lack of employability skills, lack of self-reliance skills, inadequate of entrepreneurial skills, collapse of manufacturing industries, unstable electricity supply and lopsided curriculum design and implementation. Possession of secretarial skills such as communication, analytical/research, flexibility/adaptability/managing multiple priorities, multicultural sensitivity/awareness, planning/organizing, result-driven, problem-solving/reasoning/creativity, interpersonal, innovation, self-improvement and information and communication technology skills could help an individual in solving the challenges of unemployment in Ogun State and that about

66% of the variance in youth unemployment was accounted for by the linear combination of the secretarial skills.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are provided:

1. The collective authority should fix power sector and ensure stability in electricity generation, distribution and affordable for enterprises to thrive.
2. Curriculum of tertiary institution should be redress to produce graduates who will be self-reliant and employment rather than graduates who will be looking for unavailable job placement.
3. Government and management of tertiary institutions in Ogun State should provide more funds to the department of Secretarial Administration or Business Education in order to provide better working condition for the staff and the needed materials for instruction delivery.
4. More of the secretarial administration instruction should be based on practical aspect as this will better open eyes of the students towards the benefits of the programme for solving youth unemployment.

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