HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN ANAMBRA STATE, 2017-2024

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of human capital development on poverty reduction in Anambra State. The study disaggregated the human development programme of the Anambra State into investment in education, investment in vocational studies, investment in health, and job creation and business supports. A sample of 384 was drawn based on the Krejcie and Morgan's sample size technique, from a population of 2,002,700 of purposively selected six LGA in Anambra State. A structured Liker-type questionnaire was developed for data collection, and found reliable at Cronbash Alpha coefficient of 0.80. The multiple regression technique was used for data analysis and the results showed that (1) Government investment in education has a positive but insignificant (coef = 0.053, t=1.628; p = 0.102) influence on poverty reduction; (2) Skill acquisition programs has a positive and significant (coef = 0.072, t=21.713; p = 0.00) influence on poverty reduction; (3) Government investment in health has a positive and significant (coef =

0.344, t=6.321; p = 0.003) influence on poverty reduction; and (4) Government job creation and business support has a positive and significant (coef = 0.123, t= 21.837; p = 0.000) influence on poverty reduction. The study thus concluded that government investment for human capital development has enormous is a panacea for poverty alleviation in Anambra state. The recommendation amongst others is that government should monitor and carry out effective supervisory role on her educational programme such as free education, feed programme and curriculum implementation; as these are some of the factors that consolidated quality education.
Key Words: Human Capital Development, Poverty Reduction, Anambra State

Introduction

The concept of poverty is complex, this is evident in various ways depending on the nature and degree of lack faced by individuals. Poverty denotes total or partial lack of rudimentary requirements such as food, housing and medical cares. It also includes the insufficiency of education, opportunities, consumption goods, environmental health and transportation facilities (Iwuno, 2025). Relatively, people are said to be poor when their income falls below the average income in a community (World Bank, 2000). Nigeria's poverty situation is quite alarming. Both the quantitative and qualitative measurements show the rising prevalence and gravity of poverty in the country. This situation however, is quite ironical given the enormous physical and human resources that the country is blessed with. A more disquieting truth, is the fact that successive governments have invested huge material and human resources to arrest the poverty situation, but significant improvement have not been recorded in that direction. The Human Development Report (UNDP, 2003) reveals that Nigeria is one of the poorest among the poor countries of the world.

Nigeria ranks 54th with respect to the human poverty index (HPI) - making it the 20th poorest country in the world. It is also ranked 30th in gender related development index (GDI) while occupying 40th position from below in its human development index (HD1). These figures have not significantly improved for the better till date (Olaore, Adejare & Udofia, 2020).
.Human development refers to the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skill, education, experience which are critical for the economic and political development of a country. Human capital development is thus associated with investment in man and his development as a creative and productive resource (Iwuno, Obikeze, & Ananti, 2021).

The idea of human capital denotes the abilities and skills of human resources of a country, while human capital development refers to the procedure of obtaining and growing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience that are critical for economic growth and development of a country's economy (Oluremi, 2021)
Godstime and Uchechi (2014) described human capital as an important factor used in converting all resources to benefit mankind. Human capital development is strategic to economic development of a nation and includes education, health, labour, employment and women affairs. Investing in human capital development is therefore critical as it is targeted at ensuring that the nation's human resources endowment is knowledgeable, skilled, productive and healthy to enable the optimal

exploitation of other resources to produce growth and development. In a nutshell, investment in human capital development means expenditure on health, education, and social services in general but in a narrow sense, it is capable of measuring all expenditure on social services.

For this study, the two basic objectives of human capital development will be the centre of focus which is Education and Health. They are important ends in themselves. Health is central to well-being and education is essential for a satisfying and rewarding life: both are fundamental to the broader notion of expanding human capability (Shehu, 2021).

Poverty connotes lack of material well-being, insecurity, low self confidence, psychological distress, unpredictability, lack of freedom of choice and action and inability to believe in one self (Narayan 2000).

Poverty can either be absolute or relative or both; poverty is said to be absolute when people fall below the level of income that is necessary for bare subsistence, while relative poverty relates to the living standards that prevail elsewhere in the community in which they live (Shettima, Sharma & Banerji, 2020). Poverty measurements attempt to identify those who are poor. The most frequently used measurements are the head count poverty index given by the percentage of the population that live in the household with a per capita, consumption below the poverty line and the poverty gap index which reflect how far the average poor persons income diverges from the poverty line, and the squared poverty gap which shows the means of the squared proportion rate squared poverty gap which reflects the severity of poverty (Steven, Ahlstrom, Jiang, & John, 2020).

Different government administrations have continuously implemented chains of policies and programmes in an effort to mitigate the impact of severe poverty which majority of the Nigerian society is facing but these policies have not yielded the much needed fruit, prompting a move away from the status quo, hence the need for systematic and human approach to poverty, which see human capital development as the main point of economic development as well as poverty reduction. This new style to poverty reduction got credibility from numerous human development reports published by the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) since 1990, which presents an insightful and all-inclusive study. These shortcomings have contributed to the knowledge gap in the literature which this study intends to close by examining human capital development and poverty reduction in Anambra State using data from 2016-2021, a period of 8 years and increasing the number of human capital development variables and challenges facing human capital development, inspiring policy discussion and presenting policy recommendations for both global and national actions through which the skills, knowledge, productivity and ineffectiveness of people are enhanced.

Statement of the Problem

The world economy is characterized by various problems which the most disturbing one is how to alleviate extreme poverty (Kazeem, 2018). The rising profile of poverty is very alarming and worrisome. Seven hundred and thirty-six million people live in extreme poverty, surviving on less

than $1.90 a day (Dauda, 2016). About 1.75 billion persons suffer from multidimensional poverty, with deprivations in education, economic opportunities, health, and living standard (Dauda,2016). Poverty deprives people of their right to socio-economic well being (Aggreh & Nworie, 2022).

In Nigeria,86.9 million people live in extreme poverty which represents 50% of the estimated 180 million population and having a large population of people in poverty with the population boom which is a major problem in African countries today (Kazeem, 2018). Poverty is a state of absolute economic deprivation in which the individual cannot independently have access to the basic human life-sustaining essentials such as food, clothing, protection and shelter (Ikonne & Nwogwugwu, 2020). Poverty is the lack of income or shortage of assets; the lack of competence, confidence, dis-empowerment, among others.

Poverty is the main cause of hunger and malnutrition which are aggravated by rapid population growth, inadequate and inconsistent policies (Sanni, 2000). Nigeria's population according to 2006 last population census was 140,020,250. In 2012, it was projected at 166.2 million by the National Bureau of Statistics. In 2015, Nigeria's population was projected at 183 million people. In 2019, the population was estimated at 200.96 million which ranks Nigeria the 7th in the world as the most populated country. (World Population Review, 2019). As the population increases and there is no increase in production and social welfare, poverty rate in Nigeria also increases. The percentage of Nigerians living in absolute poverty, those who can afford only the bare essentials of food, shelter and clothing is about 112.5 million (Rasaki, 2021).

Over the years, the Federal government has undertaken some programs with the objective of reducing and totally eradicating poverty in Nigeria. These programs were at least expected to raise the standard of those living in Nigeria. They are means through which the government aims to reconstruct the economy. Some of these programs include Family Support Program (FSP), Community and Small Scale Industries Credit Scheme, the Green Revolution, National Agricultural Land Development Agency (NALDA), Rural Employment Program (REP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Poverty Alleviation Program, Seven Point Agenda, National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), Universal Primary Education (UPE), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), National Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRI), Better Life Program (BLP), YOUWIN program, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), Homegrown School Feeding, N-Power program, Trader-Moni program etc.

Despite these efforts, in 2015, the population in poverty rose to 70% which also increased to 72% in 2016. In June 2018, Nigeria was named the poverty capital of the world by world poverty clock. The number of people living in poverty is about 112.5 million (Kazeem, 2018). The high incidence of poverty in the country has made poverty alleviation programs important policy options over the years.

Okuneye (2001) is of the view that the social dimension of poverty is largely a gender issue, since the greatest weight of poverty is borne by women.

In Anambra state, micro business helps in poverty reduction through generation of employment. With wider ownership spread of micro business, the women get an opportunity to diversify their source of income, create new sources of human capital development and generate additional

employment. 20% of the labor force is employed in micro business in Nigeria (Osunde, 2014). With the growth rate of micro business, it can contribute to enabling households to cope with income shocks to ensure food security, reduce poverty and prevent vulnerable households from falling below poverty line and improve standard of living for the people (Hussain, Bhuiyan & Bakar, 2014). When families move out of poverty, children's health and well- being will improve. According to a 2018 survey by the UN Development Program, many families live in multidimensional poverty. They don't have access to good water, sanitation, electricity, shelter, Education. The review pointed out a strong disagreement on the impact of human capital development on poverty reduction in Anambra State

This disagreement comes in the form of the direction of relationship as well as the level of significance of the relationship. These shortcomings have contributed to the knowledge gap in the literature

Another gap in literature is the coverage of human capital development employed in the investigation of the impact of human capital development on poverty reduction in Anambra State. The present study includes the core human capital development variables such as government investment in education, skill acquisition programes, government investment in health and to identify the challenges of human capital development on poverty reduction in Anambra State.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Clarification

Human Capital Development

Human capital development can be seen as the deliberate and continuous process of acquiring requisite knowledge, skills and experiences that are applied to produce economic value for driving sustainable national development. Among the generally agreed causal factors responsible for the impressive performance of the economy of most developed and newly industrializing countries is an impressive commitment to human capital development (Fashina, 2016).

Human development refers to the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skill, education, experience which are critical for the economic and political development of a country. Human capital development is thus associated with investment in man and his development as a creative and productive resource (Godstime & Uchechi, 2014). Schultz (1961) categorized and developed human resources into six ways: facilities and services: - these involve all expenditure that affects the life expectancy, strength and stamina, vigor and vitality of the people; On – the job training which includes old type apprenticeship organized by firms; formally organized education at elementary, secondary school and higher level; study programmes for adults that are not in agriculture; involves migration of individual and families to adjust changing

job opportunity (factor mobility); and finally, transfer or importation of technical assistance, expertise and consultants.

The concept of human capital refers to the abilities and skills of human resources of a country, while human capital development refers to the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience that are critical for economic growth and development of a country's economy (Iwuno, 2025).

Ejere (2011) posited that human capital refers to the human factor in the production process; and consists of the combined knowledge skills or competencies and abilities of the workforce. Of all the factors of production only human beings are capable of learning, adapting or changing, innovative and creative.

The significance and relevance of human capital development in the achievement of meaningful and sustainable economic growth and development have been widely acknowledged in various studies. In the absence of substantial investment in the development of human capital in any country, sustained economic growth and development would only be a mere wish, never a reality. Therefore, the place of human capital development in economic growth cannot be overemphasized. Human capital development is a key prerequisite for a country's socio-economic and political transformation.

Human Capital Development is strategic to the socio-economic development of a nation and includes developments in education, health, labour and employment and women affairs. Investing in human capital development is therefore critical as it is targeted at ensuring that the nation's human resource base is knowledgeable, skilled, productive and healthy to enable the optimal exploitation and utilization of other resources to engender growth and development. Human capital is recognized as an agent of national development in all countries of the world. Providing education and quality health services to people are part of the several ways of improving the quality of human resources (Godstime & Uchechi, 2014)

Poverty Reduction

According to Akerele-Ale (1998) "poverty is also one of the potent causes of its own persistence since many elements of the poverty situation jeopardize the nation's economic performance and hinder economic growth. (This, of course, is to the extent that inadequate national economic performance, especially economic growth, is an important factor in the causation of persistence of poverty)." In terms of countries, Nigeria cannot be considered to be poor because it has enough, which if well distributed, could eliminate poverty in the country. Given the present understanding that poverty goes beyond material and capabilities deprivation, it is acknowledged in the literature that business as usual will not eliminate or reduce poverty. In other words, poverty reduction requires more than just delivering money and advice.

The poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria have been empirically reviewed by various authors and scholars, such that in other to have a robust review, assertions of different authors have been collated here on the subject matter. To conduct an empirical review on poverty alleviation, recent facts and figures given by scholars and authorities on the subject matter especially those given after the millennium declarations (year 2000) are useful. Given the peculiarities and structural deficiencies of Nigeria, there is a need to be particular with the review so as not to generalize global trend with Nigeria's issue.

Oshewolo (2010) observed the practical realities of the poverty situation in Nigeria and the effect on the citizens. It is worth remarking that many efforts have been put in place to combat this menace. Poverty itself is a social problem but it also creates and sustains other social problems. Continuing, he asserted that the additional problems arise mainly because the mechanisms and strategies through which the poor attempt to cope with their poverty, that is, to survive in spite of their poverty, are not limited to the positive ones but often include some, which victimize other people, pose a threat to the economic and social order. One cannot but agree with this assertion, especially when the spate of societal ills, which includes violence, vandalization of public utilities, killings, robbery etc. are traced to the poor trying to make ends meet.

Aliyu (2002) made specific assessment of basic indicators of poverty using the basic need approach and observed that the poverty and extreme hunger eradication reduced to some extent in between the millennium declaration and this day, worth noting is the fact that poverty level has risen again. Poverty was 28.1% in 1980 but rose to 65.5% in 1996. Afterward, the percentage of the people living in poverty declined from 65.6% to 54.4% in 2004. In the area of primary education, the United Nations report (2007) reveals that in 2005 about 84 out of 100 school age attended schools. The literacy rate among 15-24 years olds also improved from 76.2% in 2004 to 80.20% in 2005.Thus if this rate is sustained there is a bright prospect. Gender equality wise, ratio of boys to girls in primary education rose from 79% in 2004 to 81% in 2005.From the report of UNICEF (2010) female adult literacy as 60% as of male between 2003 and 2007 is given as 80%.Also reduction of child mortality has been a daunting task. Maternal mortality rate, combat of HIVAIDS, malaria and other diseases are not encouraging.

Theoretical Framework
This study is anchored on modernization theory, Modernization theory is used to explain the process of modernization within societies. Modernization refers to a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society. Modernization theory originated from the ideas of German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920), which provided the basis for the modernization paradigm developed by a Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979). The theory looks at the internal factors of a country while assuming that with assistance, "traditional" countries can be brought to development in the same manner more developed countries have been. Modernization theory was a dominant paradigm in the social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s, then went into a deep eclipse. It made a comeback after 1991 but remains a controversial model

Modernization is the term used for the traditional society of the past to modern society as it is found today in the west. Modernization or development theory presents the idea that by introducing modern methods in technology, agriculture production for trade and industrialization dependent on a mobile labour force. Modernization theorists also posits that modernization of the economy is required for wealth creation and poverty will then reduce as benefits 'trickle down' through society. The best known early exponent of this paradigm was W.W. Rostow (1953). Roxborough (1979) provides a general critique of 'modernization' theory while Abbott (1996: 12-17), discusses the way in which modernization theory underpins the 'community development' approach to participation in urban development.

At a wider level, modernization theory recognizes the need to bridge the gap between macro policies and micro realities, placing particular emphasis on the macro level activities that are normally the responsibility of the state government. It recognizes that infrastructure provision will be more effective when it is 'demand-led' and incorporated into plans for improving the effectiveness of government. The government requires the financial, institutional, and planning capacity to respond to development demands. This suggests the need for short-term capacity building, collaboration at the macro- micro interface and the development of cross-sectoral policy support.

Empirical Literature

Edeh, Obi and Obi, (2018) investigates the impact of education spending on poverty eradication in Nigeria using time series data for the period of 1999 - 2017. In other to achieve the objectives of the study, Private Consumption per capita, a proxy measure for poverty, is specified as a function of capital stock (GFCF), primary school enrollment (PSE) and expenditure in education (EDX). The method of ordinary least square regression analysis was used to analyze the time series data. Finding reveals that education expenditure in does not impact poverty reduction over the period under study. The efforts of current political dispensation to wipe out poverty are not yielding the desired fruit. More should be done to increase education allocation in Nigeria's yearly budget to about 25% in the next ten years. In addition, human capital development is not yielding to poverty reduction in Nigeria. Healthcare and Vocational training should be encouraged by increased funding and monitoring to improve the quality of human resources.

Aggreh and Nworie, (2022) examined the contribution of entrepreneurship productivity towards poverty reduction using trading SMEs in Awka South as cases of reference. Specifically, the study determined the extent to which entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial skill acquisition and entrepreneurial innovation affect poverty reduction. Descriptive survey research design was deployed in the study. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered on a sample size of ninety-nine (99). The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach alpha statistic. Hypotheses testing was conducted with the aid of Spearman Ranked Order Correlation Coefficient at 5% level of significance. The results of the analysis revealed that: entrepreneurial education significantly contributes to poverty reduction among selected SMEs in Awka South (rho = 0.589, p-value = 0.000); entrepreneurial skill acquisition significantly

influences poverty reduction among selected SMEs in Awka South (rho = 0.733, p-value = 0.000); and entrepreneurial innovation significantly helps in poverty reduction in Awka South (rho = 0.591, p-value = 0.000). Among others, it was recommended that the Anambra state government should invest more in massive entrepreneurial skill acquisition in order to help the citizens to learn various aptitudes that will enable them to be self-reliant.

Ikonne and Nwogwugwu, (2020). Entrepreneurship policies and programs have been noted and acknowledged globally as one of the instruments for achieving poverty reduction. As a result of the widespread poverty in the country, previous government administrations in Nigeria have at different times initiated policies and programs aimed at poverty reduction. This study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurship policies and poverty reduction in selected states of the South-East, Nigeria. Survey design was employed in the study. The population of the study were three selected states (Abia, Imo and Anambra States). Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in analysis of data. The study found that entrepreneurship policies had joint significant effect on poverty reduction $F(1, 133) = 117.900$, Adj. $R2 = .468$, $p < 0.05$ in Abia state. Also, in Imo State, entrepreneurship policies had significant effect on poverty reduction $F(1, 120) = 237.008$, Adj. $R2 = .663$, $P < 0.05$. Entrepreneurship policies had significant effect on poverty reduction $F(1, 140) = 501.709$, Adj. $R2 = .781$, $P < 0.05$ in Anambra state.

Rasaki,(2021) examined the critical role of human capital formation and utilization in industrial development in Nigeria. It focuses on three fundamental human capital development processes (education, health and migration), based on human capital theory, using the methodology, which involves stylized facts, descriptive statistics and review of related literatures. The findings suggest that the performance of Nigeria in various indicators of human capital development and utilization falls short of what is required for industrial development. It is therefore imperative to enact precise human capital development and utilization policies, which should be vigorously pursued and implemented within specific time frame to enhance industrial development of the country.

Ogunjimi (2021) evaluated the role of SMEs in tackling unemployment in Nigeria. Annual time-series data were sourced from World Development Indicators (2019) for the period between 1991 and 2018. The result of the Dynamic Ordinary Least Square (DOLS), Fully Modified Ordinary Least Square (FMOLS) and Canonical Cointegrating Regression (CCR) showed that the employment generated by SMEs in Nigeria was not enough to solve the unemployment problem in Nigeria. Oluremi (2021) examined how entrepreneurship development is related to employment generation in Nigeria using a sample size of 336 SMEs from 2,690 registered SMEs in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The result of the multiple regression analysis revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurship development and employment generation in Nigeria.

Shehu (2021) examined the effect of entrepreneurship development on employment generation in Jigawa state, Nigeria. Primary data were collected through a 20-item questionnaire administered on a sample of 10 respondents from Hadejia Local Government Area in Jigawa state. The result of the Pearson Correlation analysis showed a very strong positive correlation between entrepreneurship development and employment generation.

Shettima, Sharma and Banerji (2020) examined the impact of small and medium enterprises on employment generation in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Primary data were obtained from a sample size of 1,000 respondents. The correlation matrix indicated that SMEs significantly affect employment generation in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Aamir, Habib, Khan and Ullah (2020) analyzed the influence of entrepreneurship education on poverty alleviation. Primary data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire among participants using simple random sampling. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents. The analysis of the data was conducted using regression analysis and correlation analysis which showed that entrepreneurship education does not significantly affect poverty reduction.

Umaru and Ibrahim (2019) investigated entrepreneurship as a viable tool for poverty reduction in Nigeria. Primary data for the study were collected from a sample of size of 335 entrepreneurs using a questionnaire. Path modeling and bootstrapping were deployed in order to examine the standard error of the estimate and t-values. The findings suggest that entrepreneurship education is positively associated with poverty reduction. Ezeanyeji, Imoagwu and Ejefobihi (2019) examined the effect of entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in Nigeria. The methodology employed for this study was the narrative–textual case study (NTCS) method. Secondary data for the study were obtained with the use of text content analysis. The study concluded that the reduction of poverty is the most difficult challenges facing any country in the developing world, where on the average, majority of the population are considered poor.

Nwobi, Emenike and Chukwurah (2021) contend that the issue of development agency **(**ANIDS**)** in Anambra State has been on negligible level, hence the Anambra Integrated Development Strategy (ANIDS) was initiated by the former Governor of Anambra State, His Excellency Mr. Peter Obi as a strategy to tackle development problems. Throughout the life circle of this progranme, the administration has boasted of sinking huge sums of fund on the progranme but the state is yet to accept its impact in the living condition of its populace. This study therefore tends to examine the said programme vis a vis development strategy in Anambra State. The research used a survey research methodology to elicit facts from the populace regarding how the programme has touched the living condition of Anambrarians. Finding were that, the ANIDS has impacted much on the living condition of Anambrarian

Gap in Literature

A large body of literature exists on poverty alleviation programme and socio economic development. However, despite the profound and lengthy discussions that have been taken place on the subject matter, literature gap still exist.

Following the reviews of scholarly works related to the course under study, their perspective and points of views on the issues under investigation, the researcher observed that scholars such as Oshewolo (2010) observed the practical realities of the poverty situation in Nigeria and the effect on the citizens. Obikeze, Ananti and Onyekwelu (2015) did a study on the challenges of ending rural poverty: an appraisal of national poverty eradication programme (NAPEP). Bellow and

Abdul (2010) carried out a study on "Has poverty reduced in Nigeria 20 years after Etc. However, despite these profound and far-reaching contributions by these schools of taught and scholars, there still seem to be a lacuna in the areas of a proper implementation of poverty alleviation policies on social economic development in Nigeria. Empirical literature that focuses on subject matter is rare and evidently non-existent.

It is already clear from this overview of the main theoretical texts that a number of key areas have been identified for the targeting of policy and action towards social economic development. Poverty alleviation, access to clean water, human health, protecting our natural resource bases, climate change and sustainable production and consumption consistently appear as priorities at all levels of policy-making. Transport, waste, energy, land use and the built environment are also common topics within the poverty alleviation policies on social economic development policy agenda.

The policy themes of the review are, clearly, not an exhaustive representation of the relevant issues and areas for action in the context of the Anambra State. Instead, the review is designed to augment existing syntheses and overview literature and also to compliment other work being undertaken. The study therefore bridges that gap in literature.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted the survey research design. The data generated through the questionnaire were collated and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools.

Model Specification

The ideology on which the model was premised on the conceptual framework of the study. In the study, extent of poverty reduction in Anambra State is a function of the quality and extent of government human capital development programme. The function relationship is shown below:

$$PR = f(GIE, GISA, GIH, CHCD) \qquad\qquad 1$$

PR is the dependent variable while GIE, GISA, GIH, and CHCD are independent variables. The equation form of the model depicting relationship between the dependent and independent variables is as follows:

$$PR = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 GIE + \beta_2 GISA + \beta_3 GIH + \beta_4 JC + \varepsilon \qquad\qquad 2$$

Where:

PR = Extent of Poverty Reduction

GIE = Extent of government investment in education

GISA = Extent of skill acquisition programes

GIH = Extent of government investment in health

JC = Extent of job creation and youth empowerment

α_0 is a constant, ε is the error term while β_{1-4} are the coefficient of the independent variables.

Data Analysis

Presentation of Data

The data for analyses were generated from the questionnaire distributed. The Likert-type scales were coded 1 to 5 indicating "Very Low Extent", "Low Extent" "Moderate Extent","High Extents" and "Very High Extent". The coded responses were then used for data analyses.

Analysis of the Demographic Data of the Respondents

In this section, the gender, age distribution, marital status, educational qualification, number of years of residence in the area of the study were presented and interpreted.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	210	67.1	67.1	67.1
Male	103	32.9	32.9	100.0
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 showed the gender distribution of the respondents. The result indicates that 210 respondents representing 67.1% were female while the remaining 103 respondents accounting for 32.9% were male. This indicates that there are more female respondents than male respondents in the Anambra State local government. This tends to imply that Anambra State comprises approximately 67% of females and 32% male of the of population studied.

Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below - 30 years	96	30.7	30.7	30.7
30 - 40 Years	137	43.8	43.8	74.4
41 - 50 Years	59	18.8	18.8	93.3
51 Years and Above	21	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

The result on Table 2 is the age distribution of the respondents which showed that 96 respondents accounting for 30.7% of the respondents within the age bracket of those below 30 years. The 137 members which is the majority of the respondents are those within the age bracket of 30 to 40 years, representing 43.8% of the sample. 59 of the respondents representing 18.8% fall within the age bracket of 41 to 50 years, while 21 respondents accounting of 6.7% fall those above the age of 50 years. From the analysis, it appears that majority of the population in Anambra State are youths within the age bracket of 30 to 40 years.

Table 3: Marital Status Distribution of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	103	32.9	32.9	32.9
Married	100	31.9	31.9	64.8
Divorced/Separated	30	9.6	9.6	74.4
Widow/Widower	80	25.6	25.6	25.6
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

The result on Table 3 showed the marital status of the respondents. The Table indicates that 103 respondent's representing32.9% were singles; while 100 respondents representing 57.5% were in marital union. However, 30 (9.6) and 80 (25.6%) of the respondents are divorced/separated and widowed respectively. This indicated that majority of the respondents were singles.

Table 4: Educational Qualification Distribution of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary school Education	3	1.0	1.0	1.0
SSCE/GCE and equivalents	114	36.4	36.4	37.4
OND/NCE and equivalents	48	15.3	15.3	52.7
Graduate (HND/BSc/Equivalent)	123	39.3	39.3	92.0
Postgraduate (MsC/PhD/Equivalent)	25	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

The results on Table 4 is the educational qualifications of the respondents in the selected study area in Anambra State. The result indicates that 114 respondents representing 36.4% have SSCE/GCE as their educational qualification, 48 respondents accounting for 15.3% holds OND/NCE as their educational qualification, 123 respondents accounting for 39.3% have B.Sc./HND, 25 respondents accounting for 8% holds postgraduate. However, 3 respondents accounting for 1% do not have education.

Table 5: Number of resident in the LGA

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 10 Years	162	51.8	51.8	51.8
10 - 20 Years	106	33.9	33.9	85.6
21 - 30 Years	36	11.5	11.5	97.1
31 Years & Above	9	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 indicates that 162 respondents accounting for 51.8% have been living in the local government area for less than 10 years; 106 respondents accounting for 33.9% have been in the LGA between 11 to 20 years; 36 (11.5%) respondents between 21 to 30 years while the remaining 2.9% of the respondents have lived for over 30 years in the LGA.

Analyses of Baseline information on the Dependent and Independent Variables

The baseline information of the status of the variables of this study is analyzed in this section. The results from frequency distribution and percentages were used to analyze the extent of occurrence or percentage response on each variable. The cumulative response rate was then used to generalize on the status of the variable. Specifically, the percentage cumulative response is then reclassified as summary into Low, moderate and high to pin-down the decision on the status for each variable. The results are presented on Table 10 to 13 for human capital development variables and Table 14 for poverty reduction.

Table 6: Analysis of Government Investment in Education in Anambra State

SN	Question Items	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Remark
1	School feeding programme	27 (8.8%)	105 (33.5%)	87 (27.8%)	61 (19.5%)	33 (10.5%)	Low extent
2	Free education	34 (10.9%)	78 (24.9%)	71 (22.7%)	66 (21.1%)	64 (20.4%)	Low extent
3	Good classroom blocks	29 (9.3%)	126 (40.3%)	67 (21.4%)	63 (20.1%)	28 (8.9%)	Moderate extent
4	Good teachers and learning	36 (11.5%)	106 (33.9%)	48 (15.3%)	89 (28.4%)	34 (10.9%)	Moderate extent
5	Uninterrupted school system	45 (14.4%)	133 (42.5%)	33 (10.5%)	66 (21.1%)	36 (11.5%)	Very low extent
	Cumulative % Average Response	54.9/5 **10.98%**	175/5 **35.02%**	97.7/5 **19.54%**	110.2/5 **22.04%**	51.3/5 **10.26%**	Low extent

Source: SPSS 26 output from field data, 2025

Summary of Result

Low level :   46.00%

Moderate level: 19.54%
HIgh level: 32.30%

Results of the baseline information about the status of government investment on education is presented on Tables 6. Five question items are used to capture the extent of government investment on education in Anambra State. The results scored low extent for school feeding programme and free education in Anambra State, while classroom blocks and quality of teaching and learning has moderate extent; whereas availability of uninterrupted academic system scored very low extent. This tends to means that the feeding programme, free education and smooth running of the academic session is not satisfactory. However, a moderate level of acceptance was gotten for classroom block infrastructural development and the quality of teachers in public schools.

However, the summarized result showed that the respondents scored the government 46% on low level of investment in education programme; 19.54% on moderate implementation and 32.3% high implementation. This showed that majority of the respondents posit that educational investment of the government is low in Anambra State.

Table 7: Analysis of Skill acquisition programs in Anambra State

SN	Question Items	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Remark
6	Skill acquisition programme for the youth	35 (11.2%)	158 (50.5%)	35 (11.2%)	42 (13.4%)	43 (13.7%)	Low extent
7	Benefited from skill acquisition of the government	35 (11.2%)	123 (39.3%)	30 (9.6%)	78 (24.9%)	47 (15.0%)	Low extent
8	Financial support for business start-ups	42 (13.4%)	83 (26.5%)	118 (37.7%)	34 (10.9%)	36 (11.5%)	Moderate extent
9	Functional food processing centre	205 (65.5%)	28 (8.9%)	24 (7.7%)	35 (11.2%)	21 (6.7%)	Very low extent
10	Government assist agricultural activities	181 (57.8%)	46 (14.7%)	30 (9.6%)	35 (11.2%)	21 (6.7%)	Very low extent
	Cumulative % Average Response	159/5 **31.82%**	139.9/5 **27.98%**	75.8/5 **15.16%**	71.6/5 **14.32%**	53.6/5 **10.72%**	Very low extent

Source: SPSS 26 output from field data, 2025

<u>Summary of Result</u>
Low level :   59.80%
Moderate level: 15.16%
High level: 25.04%

The result on Table 7 is the baseline information on the status of skill acquisition programs in Anambra State. The results are analyzed using five question items numbers 6 to 10. The results showed low extent of implementation for government skill acquisition to the youth and the extent of benefits from the skill acquisition. However, There is moderate extent of implementation on

government financial supports for business start-ups in Anambra State while availability of functional food processing centre and assistance for agricultural activities received a very low extent of investment.

The overall result shown as summary revealed that majority of the respondents scored 59.8% on low level of government investment on skill acquisition programs; 15.16% was moderate while 25.04% said high. This showed that government investment on skill acquisition programs in Anambra State is on the low extent.

Table 8: Analysis of Government Investment in Health in Anambra State

SN	Question Items	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Remark
11	Free health care	19 (6.1%)	32 (10.2%)	78 (24..9%)	134 (42.6%)	50 (16.0%)	High extent
12	Befitting health facility	23 (7.3%)	99 (31.6%)	78 (24.9%)	94 (30.0%)	19 (6.1%)	High extent
13	Health sensitization programme	19 (6.1%)	51 (16.3%)	108 (34.5%)	95 (30.4%)	40 (12.8%)	Moderate extent
14	Treatment common sickness in the government health centre	26 (8.3%)	47 (15.0%)	54 (17.3%)	92 (29.4%)	94 (30.0%)	Very high extent
15	Better health services in the government health facility than the private health facilities	68 (21.7%)	79 (25.2%)	136 (43.5%)	17 (5.4%)	13 (4.2%)	Moderate extent
	Cumulative % Average Response	49.5/5 **9.9%**	98.3/5 **19.66%**	145.1/5 **29.02%**	137.8/5 **27.56%**	69.1/5 **13.82%**	Moderate extent

Source: SPSS 26 output from field data, 2025

Summary of Result

Low level :   29.56%

Moderate level: 29.02%

Hgh level: 41.38%

Table 8 showed that the results of the extent of government investment in health in Anambra State. The results are analyzed with five question-items numbering 11 to 15. The results showed that the investment in free health care and benefit from health facilities is high extent while health sensitization programme and quality of health services in government hospitals is moderate extend whereas availability of treatment for common sickness is very high extent. These results tends to posit that government investment is health is satisfactory. The summary of results supported this with 41.38% for high, 29.02% for moderate and 29.56% fr low. This means that majority of the respondents accepted that government investment in health care is high and thus satisfactory.

Table 9: Analysis of Job Creation and Business Support of the Government in Anambra State

SN	Question Items	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Remark

SN	Question items						Remark
16	Government employment	59 (18.8%)	107 (34.2%)	86 (27.5%)	35 (11.2%)	26 (8.3%)	High extent
17	Adequate employment	160 (51.1%)	71 (22.7%)	30 (9.6%)	936 (11.5%)	16 (5.1%)	Very low extent
18	Increased employment	27 (8.6%)	130 (41.5%)	63 (20.1%)	80 (25.6%)	13 (4.2%)	Low extent
19	Youth empowerment (sources of income to the youths)	26 (8.3%)	44 (14.1%)	64 (20.4%)	154 (49.2%)	25 (8.0%)	High extent
20	Financial support to sustain women micro businesses	54 (17.3%)	33 (10.5%)	61 (19.5%)	142 (45.4%)	23 (7.3%)	Moderate extent
	Cumulative % Average Response	104.1/5 **20.82%**	123.0/5 **24.60%**	97.1/5 **19.42%**	142.9/5 **28.58%**	32.9/5 **6.58%**	

Source: SPSS 26 output from field data, 2023 on Appendix 3

Summary of Result

Low level :   45.4%

Moderate level: 19.42%

HIgh level: 35.16

Table 9 is the baseline information on the status of government job creation and youth empowerment. The five question items numbering 16 to 20 was used for the analysis. The results showed that high extent for government employment and youth empowerment (that is support for sources of income to the youth); moderate extent for financial support to sustain women micro businesses; low extent for increased employment and very low extent for adequate employment. The summarized analyses showed that 45.4% of the respondents said that there is a low level of job creation and business support while 19.42% and 35.16% said moderate and high levels, respectively. This means that job creation and business support by the government in Anambra State is on the low, and thus not satisfactory.

Table 10: Analysis of Extent of Poverty Reduction in Anambra State

SN	Question items	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Remark
	Availability of:						
21	Safe drinking water	23 (7.3%)	30 (9.6%)	65 (20.8%)	142 (45.4%)	53 (16.9%)	High extent
22	Sound Health	29 (9.3%)	33 (10.5%)	99 (31.6%)	127 (40.6%)	25 (8.0%)	High extent
23	Adequate Shelter	37 (11.8%)	51 (16.3%)	163 (52.1%)	30 (9.6%)	32 (10.2%)	Moderate extent
24	Food	44 (14.1%)	59 (18.8%)	144 (46.0%)	34 (10.9%)	32 (10.2%)	Moderate extent
25	Healthy environment	35 (11.2%)	99 (31.6%)	120 (38.3%)	26 (8.3%)	33 (10.5%)	Moderate extent
26	Literacy and information	34 (10.9%)	51 (16.3%)	144 (46.0%)	39 (12.5%	45 (14.4%)	Low extent

| Cumulative % Average | 64.6/6 | 103.1/6 | 234.8/6 | 127.3/6 | 59.7/6 | Moderate |
| Response | **10.77%** | **17.18%** | **39.13%** | **21.22%** | **9.95%** | extent |

Source: SPSS 26 output from field data, 2025

Summary of Result

Low level :   27.95%
Moderate level: 39.13%
High level: 31.17%

The analysis of the baseline information on the status of poverty reduction in Anambra State is shown on Table 10. Poverty reduction was measured on six item variables numbering 21 to 26. The results showed that safe drinking water, and sound health had high extent of availability; and adequate shelter, healthy environment and food enjoyed moderate extent of availability while literacy/information had low extent. The summary showed majority indicated moderate level of poverty reduction in Anambra with 39.13 cumulative percentage response rate. Low extent qand high extent had 27.95% and 31.17% respectively. This means that there is a moderate reduction in poverty in Anambra State over the years under study.

Model Estimation

The study had examined and determined the status of the variables of the study from human capital development variables to poverty reduction status in Anambra State. It is now plausible that analyses of the relationship in line with the objectives of the study are done in model estimation. From the analyses, the research questions were answered using the standardized coefficient of regression (beta) while the hypotheses were tested with F-Statistics and t-statistics.

Table 11. The Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression Result of Relationship Between Human Capital Development and Poverty Reduction in Anambra State.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.421	.071		8.190	.000
GIE	.053	.022	.035	1.628	.102
GIVS	.072	.023	.627	21.713	.000
GIH	.344	.006	.056	6.321	.003
JC	.125	.027	.022	21.837	.000

Adjusted Coefficient of Determination (Adj R ^{2}) = 0.712	
F-statistics (P.Value)	= 1421.516 (0.000)
Durbin Watson Statistics	= 2.207

a. Dependent Variable: Poverty Reduction (PR)

Source: SPSS 26 output

Key: Extent of government investment in education (GIE); Extent of skill acquisition programes(GIVS); Extent of government investment in health (GIH); Extent of job creation and youth empowerment (GIH)

The result of the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.712. This indicates about 71% explanatory power of the human capital development programme. This suggests that human capital development has a very huge 71% capacity to determine the extent of poverty reduction in Anambra State of Nigeria. The result of the F-statistics is 1421.516 with a probability value of 0.000. A probability value less than 0.05 is below the rejection point. Thus, the study posit that all the human capital development programme jointly influences about 71%of poverty reduction in Anambra State.

The result of the Dubbin Watson statistics is 2.207, which is approximately 2, indicates absence of autocorrelation in the model. This implies that the model from which this result emanates has a good fit. This justified that the result from the model can be adjudged as reliable. To answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses, the coefficient of regression and t-test are used, respectively.

The plausible equation of the relationship from the estimation is shown as:

PR = 0.421*+ 0.053GIE + 0.072GISA* + 0.344GIH* + 0.125JC*   3

NB: *statistically significant

Hypothesis One:

> Ho$_1$:   Government investment in education has no significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State
>
> H$_{i1:}$ Government investment in education has significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State

The result of the coefficient of regression for government investment in education is0.053GIE. The corresponding t-statistics is 1.628 with a probability value of 0.102.

The result indicate a positive relationship between government investment in education (GIE) and poverty reduction (PR) in Anambra State. It reveals that a unit increase in GIE increased the propensity for poverty reduction in by 5.3%.

Thus, the answer the research question one, the study posit that government investment in education leads to 5.3% positive increase in the propensity for poverty reduction in Anambra State.

The test of null hypothesis one is done using the t-test (1.628; $p > 0.00$). Since the p.value is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the study cannot reject the null hypothesis that "Government investment in education has no significant effect on poverty   reduction in Anambra State".

It therefore conclude that government investment in education has a positive but insignificant (coef = 0.053, t=1.628; $p = 0.102$) influence on poverty reduction in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two:
Ho_2:   The level of skill acquisition programs has no significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State.
Hi_2:   The level of skill acquisition programs has significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State.

The result of the coefficient of regression for skill acquisition programs is 0.072GIVS*. The corresponding t-statistics is 21.713 with a probability value of 0.000.

The result shows that skill acquisition programs (GISA) has a positive relationship with poverty reduction (PR). This means that a unit increases in GISA will lead to about 7.2% increase in the propensity for poverty reduction.

To answer the research question two of the study, the coefficient of regression is used. The answer is that skill acquisition programs leads to about 7.2% positive influence on propensity for poverty reduction in Anambra State.

The test of null hypothesis two from the t-test result (21.713; $p < 0.00$) depicted a p.value less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus the study rejected the null hypothesis two that "The level of skill acquisition programs has no significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State"; and accepted the alternate hypothesis that "The level of skill acquisition programs has significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State".

It therefore conclude that skill acquisition programs has a positive and significant (coef = 0.072, T=21.713; $p = 0.00$) influence on poverty reduction in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Three:
Ho_3:   Government investment in health has no significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State.
Hi_3:   Government investment in health has significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State.

The results for government investment in health are: coefficient of regression = 0.344GIH*; t-statistics = 6.321 with a probability value of 0.003.

The coefficient of regression indicates that government investment in health has a positive relationship with poverty reduction. It means that a unit increase in government investment in health will lead to about 3.4% increase in the propensity for poverty reduction in Anambra State

To answer the research question three, the study posits that government investment in health leads to 3.4% positive increase in the propensity for poverty reduction in Anambra State.

The test of null hypothesis three is done using the t-test (6.321; p < 0.00). Since the p.value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the study rejected the null hypothesis that "Government investment in health has no significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra State: and thus accepted the alternate hypothesis.

It therefore conclude that government investment in health has a positive and significant (coef = 0.344, T=6.321; p = 0.003) influence on poverty reduction in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Four:
Ho₄: Job creation has no significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra.
Hᵢ₄: Job creation has significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra.

The result of the coefficient of regression for job creation is 0.125JC. The corresponding t-statistics is 21.837 with a probability value of 0.000.

The result shows that government job creation and business support has a positive relationship with poverty reduction. This means that a unit increases in government job creation and business support will lead to about 1.3% increase in the propensity for poverty reduction in Anambra State.

To answer the research question two of the study, the coefficient of regression is used. The answer is that government job creation and business support leads to about 1.3% positive influence on propensity for poverty reduction in Anmabra State.

The test of null hypothesis four from the t-test result (21.837; p < 0.00) depicted a p.value less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus the study cannot reject the null hypothesis four that "Job creation has no significant effect on poverty reduction in Anambra".

It therefore conclude that government job creation and business support has a positive and significant (coef = 0.123, T= 21.837; p = 0.000) influence on poverty reduction.

Conclusion
Government investment on human capital development has enormous advantages: for poverty alleviation in Anambra state. Human capital development programme such as health, vocational

studies and job creation is instrumental to poverty reduction in Anambra State. The study therefore, agrees that effective poverty reduction strategy must anchor on government programmes that improve the skills and competences: of the citizens create jobs and support businesses, build, and maintain quality health centers and Medicare.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study were discussed in line with the results of OLS regression analyses for each objective. The discussion was done to bring out the contribution of the core variable in each model.

Influence of government investment in education on poverty reduction

The result on objective one of the study revealed that government investment in education has a positive but insignificant influence on poverty reduction in Anambra State. This means that government human capital development directed towards improvement of education has not significantly bring about reduction in the poverty level of the Anambra. This is in line with the thoughts of Edeh, Obi and Obi, (2018) which posit that education expenditure in does not impact poverty reduction.

The findings of the present study is based on the review and analysis of the immediate past government administration in Anambra State state. The governments have devoted resources in school feeding to attract students to school, free education to remove financial burden on the poor parents, construction of classroom blocks and other infrastructure to create enabling academic environment and efforts that sustained seamless academic programme. Nonetheless, with a positive coefficient, the study showed that all government improvement of education is an expected driver for poverty reduction. This agrees with the findings of God'stime and Uchechi, 2014) that government investment in education has positive effect on poverty reduction in Nigeria. This further agrees with the findings of Mwashila (2017) and Ugochukwu and Ikechukwu, (2018) that government investment in education should have significant influence on poverty reduction.

Influence of skill acquisition programs on poverty reduction

The result showed that skill acquisition programs has a positive and significant influence on poverty reduction in Anambra State. The implication of the findings is that an increase in skill acquisition programs will lead to reduction and eradication of poverty in Anambra state. This agrees with the findings of Mark and Nzulwa (2018) that skill acquisition programs has significant effect on standard of living of average Nigerian citizen. The findings equally agrees with the notion that skills acquisition as examined in Aggreh and Nworie, (2022) and Ugochukwu and Ikechukwu, (2018) has the capacity to significantly influences poverty reduction.

Influence of government investment in health on poverty reduction

Government investment in health has a positive and significant influence on poverty reduction in Anambra State. This suggests that health care is essential for poverty reduction in society. This implies that a unit change in government investment in health will lead to reduction of poverty index by 0.334 units. This has explained that the entire health programme including free health care, facilities and sensitization are capable of reducing the level of poverty in a society. The study supported the modernization theory such that introduction of newer and more modern healthcare faculties will better improve the society and thus reduce poverty among the masses. The extant work of Ugochukwu and Ikechukwu, (2018) concurred with this theory and posit that government expenditure on health and other development projects will inevitably enhance the reduction in poverty in Nigeria**.**

Influence of government job creation and business support on poverty reduction

The result on objective four revealed that government job creation and business support has a positive and significant influence on poverty reduction. This implies that business supports to entrepreneurs will lead to poverty reduction. This aligns with the work of Aggreh and Nworie, (2022) which avers that skill acquisition usage is a booster to poverty reduction among selected SMEs in Anambra. This equally aligns with the theory of modernization. This is why acquisition of new business skills translates to empowerment and hence poverty reduction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:
1. The level of Anambra State government investment in education was not capable of engendering poverty reduction among the masses. It is thus recommended that government should monitor and carry out effective supervision on her educational programme such as free education, feed programme, and curriculum implementation, as these are some of the factors that consolidated quality education.
2. That the state government should establish technical and skill acquisition centers as a form of post secondary education in the state. Efforts should also be made to give attention to trade and vocational subjects in secondary school as this will help build the students for a lifelong learning.
3. This study as well recommends that the government should increased funding of health care centers, employ more healthcare professionals and provide needed drugs.
4. It is thus recommended that government should encourage business start-ups and create enabling environment for businesses and companies to thrive. This will create the needed ground for job creation both by the government and private sector. The ease of doing business should be tailored to assist new firms to establish and grow

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