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Acquisition of Digital Skills and Its Impact on Unemployment Reduction among Nigerian Youth

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of digital skills acquisition on reducing unemployment among Nigerian youth, with a specific focus on youths in Ido Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State. Youth unemployment remains a persistent socio-economic challenge in Nigeria, exacerbated by a skills mismatch between educational outcomes and labour market demands. The paper employs a quantitative research design, utilizing primary data collected through structured, closed-ended questionnaires administered to 100 respondents, as determined by Taro Yamane's sample size formula. The research examines the impact of digital skill acquisition on job creation, employability, and the mitigation of employment barriers among Nigerian youth. A multiple linear regression model was employed to analyze the relationship between digital skills acquisition, socio-economic and individual benefits, and barriers to digital training, and their collective impact on unemployment reduction. Findings revealed a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.554$) and a statistically significant regression result ($p < 0.001$), indicating that digital skills acquisition significantly enhances employment prospects. These findings align with previous research by Mohammed et al. (2021), which emphasized the role of practical skills in achieving sustainable development and self-reliance. The study concludes that equipping young people with relevant digital competencies is crucial to addressing unemployment, enhancing productivity, and promoting socio-economic development in Nigeria. Recommendations include increased investment in digital training programs and policy support for skill-driven employment initiatives.

Introduction

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria, demanding urgent and sustained policy attention. Although Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of over 160 million people and is ranked as the continent's second-largest economy, the country continues to struggle with persistent unemployment, particularly among young people. The paradox of abundant human and material resources coexisting with high unemployment is largely attributed to long-standing issues such as corruption, poor governance, mismanagement, infrastructural decay, and

inefficient utilization of national resources (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). These structural weaknesses have hindered inclusive growth, prevented economic diversification, and limited the country's capacity to generate sufficient employment opportunities for its rapidly expanding young population.

The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) reports that 74.6 million young people, or 12.6% of the world's labour force, are unemployed, which is a serious global issue. However, the situation is far worse in Nigeria. The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) reports that the youth unemployment rate in the nation is an astounding 53.40 per cent. This figure represents millions of young adults, including graduates from universities, polytechnics, and other higher education institutions. Their credentials do not meet the demands of contemporary labour markets, making it difficult for them to obtain gainful employment. Economic hardship, poverty rates, and societal repercussions, including higher crime rates, increasing dependency, and talented people migrating abroad in pursuit of better chances, have all been exacerbated by this high unemployment rate.

It is impossible to overestimate the societal cost of long-term unemployment on youth. People who are unemployed have lower self-esteem, less social cohesiveness, and are more susceptible to exploitation. Due to financial desperation, many young people without jobs turn to low-paying petty trade, unofficial enterprises, smuggling, or become victims of human trafficking and child labour. The nation's human capital base is severely diminished because of others leaving. Together, these results hinder the country's progress and underscore the pressing need for practical solutions that enhance the employability and productivity of young Nigerians.

Developing digital skills is one of the successful strategies that has garnered interest worldwide. As economies shift increasingly toward technology-driven institutions, digital competency has become a fundamental requirement for participation in modern labour markets. The advent of digital technologies, which have transformed production, communication, commerce, and service delivery, has created new opportunities in various fields, including software development, digital marketing, data analysis, cybersecurity, and online entrepreneurship. In terms of economics, gaining digital skills expands markets, promotes productivity, and provides unemployed youth with additional opportunities to create small and medium-sized enterprises. It promotes social innovation, adaptability, and empowerment by letting individuals participate in the digital economy (United Nations, 2020). The Federal Government of Nigeria (2014) acknowledges these opportunities and emphasizes that digital skills assist young people in developing self-reliance, enhancing entrepreneurial capacity, and successfully adapting to changing labour market trends.

Despite these recognized advantages, several obstacles prevent Nigerians from effectively acquiring digital skills. These include a lack of organized training programs catered to the requirements of youth, restricted access to training facilities, expensive digital

equipment, insufficient electrical supply, and poor internet connectivity. As a result, a significant number of young Nigerians remain unable to capitalize on the opportunities offered by the digital economy. Few studies have explicitly examined the connection between acquiring digital skills and reducing youth unemployment, despite research on skill development, entrepreneurship, and unemployment. This discrepancy necessitates further investigation to determine whether providing young people with digital skills could greatly improve their employment prospects. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between youth unemployment in Nigeria and the acquisition of digital skills, with a particular focus on the Ido Local Government Area in Ibadan, Oyo State. The study examines the relationship between digital skills and youngsters' ability to capitalize on new digital opportunities, employment prospects, and socioeconomic well-being. To guide the investigation, the following hypotheses were developed:

H_{0 1} : There is no significant relationship between the acquisition of digital skills and employment prospects among Nigerian youth.

H_{0 2} : The acquisition of digital skills does not significantly enhance the socio-economic and individual benefits of Nigerian youth.

H_{0 3} : Barriers and challenges to digital skills acquisition do not have a significant effect on the ability of Nigerian youth to benefit from digital opportunities.

Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework

To understand how the expansion of digital capabilities affects young unemployment in Nigeria, a solid theoretical framework is required. The four main ideas that serve as the foundation for this research are the Resource-Based View (RBV), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Human Capital Theory, and the Theory of Economic Survival. When taken as a whole, these theories offer a thorough explanation of the motivations behind young people's pursuit of digital skills, the way these competencies impact employment, and the circumstances that either support or obstruct digital integration.

Theory of Economic Survival

The Theory of Economic Survival explains why people embrace digital skills as a means of restoring their livelihood, especially those who are experiencing socioeconomic distress. According to the hypothesis, people who lose their jobs due to discrimination, organizational downsizing, political unpredictability, or marginalization frequently turn to other sources of income to survive. In places like Nigeria, where underemployment and unemployment rates are consistently high, people are increasingly turning to learning digital skills out of necessity rather than choice. The idea highlights four groups of people who are more likely to acquire digital skills because of survival pressures:

People who are suppressed by systematic discrimination

People who are oppressed by socioeconomic marginalization

People who are harmed by adverse conditions

Individuals impacted by economic or political unrest.

These individuals acquire digital skills, including coding, internet marketing, freelancing, and virtual services, to secure income streams and re-enter the economy. As a result, digital upskilling serves as a coping mechanism and a means of reintegrating into the economy.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory suggests that investments in knowledge, education, and skills can significantly enhance a person's productivity and employability. The theory states that, within the context of digital transformation, digital literacy, technical proficiency, and ICT skills are forms of human capital that increase young people's competitiveness in the labour market. Since skill-job mismatches are a contributing factor to unemployment in Nigeria, increasing digital competency puts young people in a better position to take advantage of new job opportunities in the information, communication, and online service sectors. Young people who acquire digital skills develop human capital that enhances job outcomes and promotes economic mobility.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The adoption and use of digital products are clarified by the Technology Acceptance Model. It argues that technology adoption is significantly influenced by perceived utility and perceived simplicity of use. In relation to gaining digital skills, TAM explores the reasons why young Nigerians use digital platforms for learning, job searching, remote work, online business, and creativity. When young people think that using digital tools might help them obtain employment or earn money, adoption increases. However, low knowledge, limited access, or inadequate training could hinder uptake. TAM thus contributes to the explanation of the behavioral patterns that underlie young people without jobs' adoption of digital skills.

Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View claims that digital skills are strategic, intangible assets that boost both individual and national competitiveness. In today's knowledge-driven economy, digital skills including data literacy, software operation, online communication, and digital content creation are unique, valuable, and non-replaceable resources. Young Nigerians who acquire these skills are better equipped to meet the demands of the labor market, stand out from the competition, and provide value. As a result, RBV provides a strategic perspective for understanding how digital skills enhance company performance and employment competitiveness.

Concept of Digital Skills

Academic literature has extensively examined the idea of "digital skills," with definitions changing in tandem with advances in technology. One of the fundamental categories was provided by Van Dijk (2019), who defined digital skills as a collection of abilities required to use computers, navigate online networks, conduct information searches, and strategically employ digital technology to accomplish personal or professional objectives. Three main elements are outlined in his framework:

- i. Technical abilities
- ii. Information-seeking abilities
- iii. The ability to think strategically or solve problems.

Information literacy, ICT proficiency, communication, collaboration, digital content creation, research, and decision-making skills are among the digital skills most commonly associated with modern digital competence, according to additional empirical evidence from Tinmaz (2022), which was based on a text mining analysis of 1,037 academic articles. In a similar vein, Van Laar (2017) highlighted the multifaceted nature of digital skills by categorizing them into technical, communication, cooperation, critical thinking, creativity, information management, and problem-solving skills. Research conducted in Nigeria by May (2019), Asogwa and Diogu (2021), Yang (2020), Oranu (2021), and Ojimba (2022) identifies enduring obstacles, such as insufficient funding for ICT infrastructure, insufficient training capacity, restricted access to digital tools, and socioeconomic limitations impacting digital integration. These difficulties underscore the importance of promoting digital literacy to enhance young people's employability and productivity.

Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment refers to a condition where individuals who are willing and able to work actively seek employment but are unable to secure a job. As Samuel (2019) notes, unemployment is a key indicator of economic performance, influencing social stability and national development. The unemployment rate is typically measured by dividing the number of unemployed people by the total labour force. Governments often implement employment schemes to cushion joblessness and stimulate economic recovery (David, 2019). In Nigeria, unemployment persists due to structural and socio-economic challenges, which create labour-market pressure and reduce opportunities for productive engagement among young people. Major causes include:

- i. **Rapid population growth**
- ii. **Limited access to high-quality education**
- iii. **Poor infrastructure**
- iv. **An unstable or corruption-prone political environment.**

Digital Skills as an Antidote to Unemployment in Nigeria

The role of digital skills in reducing unemployment has gained attention in recent years. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria recorded an unemployment rate of **27.1% in Q2 2020**, up from **23.1% in Q3 2018**, with underemployment rising to **28.6%**, culminating in a combined rate of **55.7%**. Youth were disproportionately affected, with more than **13.9 million** unemployed young people compared to **13.1 million in 2018**. Longe (2017) attributes this trend to outdated educational curricula, inadequate teacher training, and insufficient exposure to industry-relevant competencies. Consequently, many graduates lack the practical skills required in modern workplaces.

Employers increasingly demand digital literacy, communication competence, analytical skills, and adaptability, rather than merely theoretical knowledge. Digital transformation across Africa, driven largely by smartphone penetration and internet connectivity, creates new opportunities for remote work, online entrepreneurship, digital marketing, fintech, and creative digital services. Studies by Tyfting (2019), Backon and Mackinnon (2017), and Kande and Sönmez (2020) emphasise that digital interventions can significantly reduce unemployment through:

- i. Digital training and upskilling,
- ii. Employment matching platforms,
- iii. Workforce reskilling, and
- iv. Innovation-driven job creation.

Thus, digital skills serve as a transformative tool for improving youth employability, fostering entrepreneurial ventures, and enhancing socio-economic resilience. Beyond providing technical competence, digital skills empower young people to participate effectively in an increasingly digitized economy, opening access to new job opportunities, remote work platforms, and technology-driven industries. They enable youths to create innovative solutions, establish online businesses, and leverage digital markets for income generation. Moreover, digital proficiency enhances adaptability, problem-solving capacity, and long-term competitiveness, helping individuals withstand economic shocks. Consequently, digital skills function as a catalyst for sustainable development, poverty reduction, and improved socio-economic inclusion among Nigerian youth.

Research Methods

Research Design and Source of Data

This study employed a quantitative research design, which is suitable for survey research that aims to examine the relationships between variables through statistical analysis. Quantitative research allows for the collection of measurable data and the application of inferential statistics

to test hypotheses (Creswell, 2014). Primary data were collected using a **structured, closed-ended questionnaire** designed by the researcher to capture respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding digital skills acquisition and its impact on reducing unemployment. The questionnaire included items addressing digital skills, socioeconomic benefits, and barriers to acquiring digital skills.

Population

The population for this study comprised **youths residing in Ido Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria**, aged between 18 and 35 years. The population included individuals who were either currently engaged in digital skills training or had knowledge of digital technology relevant to employment. This population was targeted because these youths are the primary stakeholders likely to benefit from digital skills interventions.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination, which is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = required sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error % 9.5%. (0.095)

For this study: Estimated population size of youth in Ido Local Government Area, Ibadan = 1,000

Margin of error (e) = 0.095

Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{1000}{1 + 1 + 1000 (0.095)^2}$$

n = 99.75

n = 100

Rounding up, the sample size becomes approximately 100. The sample size was approximately a total of 100 respondents.

Model Specification

Based on the stated hypotheses, the following multiple linear regression model was developed to evaluate the effect of digital skills acquisition on unemployment reduction:

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$$

Where:

Y = Unemployment Reduction

A = Intercept (value of Y when X_1 is zero)

β_1 = Effect of Acquisition of Digital Skills

β_2 = Effect of Socio-Economic and Individual Benefits

β_3 = Effect of Barriers and Challenges to Digital Skills Acquisition

X_1 = Digital Skills Acquisition

X_2 = Socio-Economic and Individual Benefits

X_3 = Barriers to Acquisition

e = Error Term (random disturbance)

Operational Definitions and Measurement of Variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Measurement Scale	Sample Items
Digital Skills Acquisition (X_1)	Refers to the level of knowledge, competence, and practical ability in using digital tools for employment or entrepreneurship	4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Strongly Agree)	“I am proficient in using digital tools for work or business.” “I can create digital content for professional purposes.”
Socio-Economic and Individual Benefits (X_2)	Refers to personal and economic improvements experienced because of acquiring digital skills, including income generation and employability	4-point Likert scale	“Acquiring digital skills has improved my job prospects.” “Digital skills have enhanced my income-earning potential.”
Barriers to Digital Skills Acquisition (X_3)	Refers to factors that hinder access to digital training or use of digital tools, such as cost, lack of infrastructure, and poor internet connectivity	4-point Likert scale	“High cost of devices limits my digital skill acquisition.” “Lack of stable electricity affects my ability to practice digital skills.”
Unemployment Reduction (Y)	Refers to the perceived or actual decrease in unemployment status or underemployment due to digital skills	4-point Likert scale	“Digital skills have increased my chances of employment.” “My digital competencies have enabled me to secure a job or freelance work.”

Source; Field Survey, 2025

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, an internal consistency metric. Pilot research with 15 individuals showed good dependability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82. The questionnaire items were reviewed by three academic experts in labor economics and digital skills to make sure they appropriately assessed the intended variables—a procedure known as content validity. Construct validity was enhanced by comparing each question with theoretical

and empirical studies on digital skills, socioeconomic advantages, challenges, and employment outcomes.

Ethical Considerations

Respondents were made aware that participation in the survey was completely optional and that they might leave at any time without facing any repercussions. Prior to data collection, each participant gave their informed consent, attesting to their understanding of the objectives of the study, the nature of their participation, and the intended use of the data they supplied. In order to preserve their privacy, all personal identifiers were eliminated from the data and respondents were guaranteed anonymity and secrecy. Responses were handled with integrity and decency, and the information gathered was only used for scholarly purposes. Additionally, the study minimized any possible psychological or social danger by adhering to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Items	Responses	Percentage
18–24	56	56.0
25–29	36	36.0
30–35	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data indicate that most respondents (56%) are aged 18–24, followed by 36% aged 25–29, with only 8% aged 30–35. This reflects that youth engagement in digital skills programs is primarily concentrated among younger adults, aligning with Nigeria’s demographic profile (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). This age distribution is significant because younger adults are typically more receptive to digital technologies.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Items	Responses	Percentage
Male	34	34.0
Female	66	66.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Females represent a larger proportion of respondents (66%) than males (34%). This suggests that female youths may have greater participation or availability in digital skills programs in Ido LGA. The finding aligns with Aremu and Udofia (2025), who note an increase in female engagement in digital literacy initiatives across Nigeria.

Table 3: Educational Level of Respondents

	Items	Responses	Percentages
S	SSCE	6	6.0
	NCE/ND	40	40.0
	HND/B.Sc	47	47.0
	M.Sc.	7	7.0
	Total	100	100.0

Source; Field Survey, 2025

The table above shows that most respondents hold tertiary qualifications (NCE/ND: 40%, HND/B.Sc.: 47%). Only a small proportion hold SSCE (6%) or M.Sc. degrees (7%). Higher educational attainment facilitates the adoption of digital tools and posits that education enhances the rate at which innovations (like digital tools) are adopted (Bello, Bello, & Aliyu, 2024).

Table 4: Acquisition of Digital Skills of Respondents

	Items	Responses	Percentage
	Yes	54	54.0
	No	46	46.0
	Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above shows that just over half of the respondents (54%) reported having acquired digital skills, demonstrating a moderate uptake of digital competencies among youths in Ido LGA. This aligns with Oladimeji and Aminat (2024), who emphasize that infrastructural and socio-economic barriers limit access to digital training in Nigeria.

Regression Result

Hypothesis 1

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between the acquisition of digital skills and employment prospects among Nigerian youth.

Table 5: Model Summary of whether the acquisition of digital skills has a significant relationship with employment prospects among Nigerian youth

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.554 ^a	.307	.270	.803

Source: Field Survey, 2025

a. Predictors: (Constant), Digital skills acquisition, Employer's preference, Securing future employment., Internship opportunities, freelance jobs, or part-time employment., Competitive in the labour market.

Table 6: ANOVA on whether the acquisition of digital skills has a significant relationship on employment prospects among Nigerian youth

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.654	5	5.331	8.258	.000 ^b
	Residual	60.033	93	.646		
	Total	86.687	98			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

a. Dependent Variable: Acquisition of digital skills.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Digital skills acquisition, Employers preference, Securing future employment., Internship opportunities, Competitive in the labour market.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.745	.688		1.084	.281
	Digital skills acquisition.	.223	.118	.198	1.885	.063
	Employers' preference.	.082	.127	.059	.646	.520
	Securing future employment.	.370	.135	.278	2.742	.007
	Internships opportunities	.239	.095	.260	2.519	.013
	Entrepreneurial opportunities	-.088	.117	-.080	-.756	.451

a. Dependent Variable: Acquisition of digital skills.

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The coefficients table illustrates the relationship between several variables affecting career chances among young Nigerians and the development of digital skills. Securing future work and internship opportunities is statistically significant among the factors, suggesting that these aspects of utilizing digital skills have a major influence on enhancing job outcomes. This implies that rather than being merely learned, digital skills are most practically useful when applied through concrete channels, such as internships or landing a job.

Securing future employment ($\beta = 0.278$) and internship opportunities ($\beta = 0.260$) have moderate benefits for employment prospects, as indicated by the standardized Beta values. This suggests that initiatives aimed at achieving these specific goals will likely result in real and quantifiable improvements in young people's employability. Entrepreneurial prospects and other non-significant factors imply that not all digital skill applications improve immediate employment outcomes in the study.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02} : The acquisition of digital skills does not significantly enhance the socio-economic and individual benefits of Nigerian youth.

Table 8: Model Summary on whether the acquisition of digital skills significantly enhances the socio-economic and individual benefits of Nigerian youth

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.264 ^a	.070	.020	.920

Source: Field Survey, 2025

a. Predictors: (Constant), Digital skills acquisition, Reduction in unemployment, Financial and social liberation, Economic growth. Standard of living.

Table 9: ANOVA on whether the acquisition of digital skills significantly enhances the socio-economic and individual benefits of Nigerian youth

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.913	5	1.183	1.396	.233 ^b
	Residual	78.774	93	.847		
	Total	84.687	98			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

a. Dependent Variable: Acquiring digital skills can significantly reduce youth unemployment rates in Nigeria.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Innovation and creativity, Reduction in unemployment, Digital skills empower youth financially and socially, Financial and social liberation, Economic growth., Standard of living.

Table 10: Coefficients ANOVA on whether the acquisition of digital skills significantly enhances the socio-economic and individual benefits of Nigerian youth						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.761	.725		3.806	.000
	Standard of living.	.072	.113	.080	.642	.522
	Economic growth.	.028	.121	.029	.233	.817
	Financial and social liberation	.198	.128	.182	1.553	.124
	Reduction in unemployment	.073	.112	.069	.651	.517
	Innovation and creativity	-.011	.124	-.010	-.086	.932
a. Dependent Variable: Acquisition of digital skills						

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The acquisition of digital skills is not statistically substantially impacted by the determinants of socioeconomic and personal gains in this model, including "standard of living, economic growth, financial and social liberation, unemployment reduction, and innovation/creativity" (all p-values > 0.05). Practically speaking, this suggests that possessing digital skills does not guarantee measurable improvements in the socioeconomic well-being of young people in this group. The moderate standardized coefficients (Beta) indicate low effect sizes. According to the Human Capital Theory, this means that without an enabling environment (such as access to employment, mentorship, and infrastructure), digital talents by themselves cannot yield financial rewards. This finding is consistent with the empirical research of Aremu & Udofia (2025), who discovered that although digital literacy improves academic achievement, institutional constraints may limit its broader socio-economic benefits. In a similar vein, Ezeoha, Etim, and Ndukwe (2025) contend that acquiring digital skills is a viable tactic for reducing poverty, but success hinges on having access to opportunities and favourable economic circumstances.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03} : Barriers and challenges to digital skills acquisition do not have a significant effect on the ability of Nigerian youth to benefit from digital opportunities.

Table 11: Model Summary on whether barriers and challenges to digital skills acquisition a significant effect on the ability of Nigerian youth must benefit from digital opportunities

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.571 ^a	.326	.274	.825

Source: Field Survey, 2025

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lack of mentorship and guidance, financial constraints, Lack of awareness, Cultural attitudes, High cost of internet, Poor electricity supply, Limited opportunities.

Table 12: ANOVA on whether barriers and challenges to digital skills acquisition a significant effect on the ability of Nigerian youth must benefit from digital opportunities

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.998	7	4.285	6.290	.000 ^b
	Residual	62.002	91	.681		
	Total	92.000	98			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

a. Dependent Variable: Lack of access to digital devices.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Lack of mentorship and guidance, financial constraints, Lack of awareness, Cultural attitudes, High cost of internet, Poor electricity supply, Limited opportunities.

Table 13: Coefficients on whether barriers and challenges to digital skills acquisition have a significant effect on the ability of Nigerian youth has to benefit from digital opportunities

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.174	.519		2.263	.026
	High cost of internet services.	.247	.084	.285	2.952	.004
	Limited opportunities	.294	.084	.340	3.485	.001
	Lack of awareness	.070	.080	.082	.877	.383
	Poor electricity supply	.011	.088	.012	.127	.899
	Financial constraints	.017	.027	.056	.635	.527
	Cultural attitudes	.088	.076	.104	1.152	.252

	Lack of mentorship and guidance	8.619E-5	.091	.000	.001	.999
a. Dependent Variable: Lack of access to digital devices.						

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The model has a moderate effect, explaining around 32.6% of the variance in access to digital possibilities ($R^2 = 0.326$). The model's statistical significance is confirmed by the ANOVA, indicating that access results are influenced by barriers taken together. High internet service costs ($\beta = 0.285$, $p = 0.004$) and few options for reasonably priced digital training ($\beta = 0.340$, $p = 0.001$) were among the predictors. additional variables in our sample that were not statistically significant. From the standpoint of human capital theory, these results suggest that although digital skills may improve socioeconomic prospects and employability, institutional and infrastructure impediments may prevent capabilities from converting into concrete advantages. From a practical standpoint, the findings underscore the need for legislative changes that expand training facilities and provide affordable internet connections. The moderate R^2 suggests that removing these obstacles might significantly increase young people's access to digital possibilities and lower unemployment, highlighting the vital role that resources and the environment play in optimizing the benefits of acquiring digital skills.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide important insights into the relationship between digital skills acquisition, socio- economic outcomes, and the structural constraints that youth face in leveraging these competencies. The study found a positive and statistically significant relationship between the career prospects of young Nigerians and their development of digital skills, particularly in securing internships and future employment opportunities. This study supports the Human Capital Theory, which holds that investing in skills raises an individual's economic value and employability. In practical terms, digital literacy not only helps young people get ready for the workforce, but it also opens non-traditional career alternatives (including internships and freelancing) that would not be accessible to those without these skills. This result aligns with research by Egunjobi (2023), who found that online training programs, e-commerce, and ICT have a significant impact on job creation in Lagos. Additionally, by showing how ICT entrepreneurship training fosters job creation in post-COVID-19 Lagos, Eneanya (2023) demonstrated the transformative potential of digital entrepreneurship as a link between skill learning and employment. These findings show that digital skills are not just important but also lucrative forms of human capital in Nigeria's evolving labour market.

Contrary to expectations, the study found that learning digital skills did not significantly predict improved socioeconomic and individual outcomes (such as economic growth, living

standards, or creative innovation). This suggests that more than just digital skills may be needed for adolescents to achieve higher socioeconomic advancement. From the perspective of the Theory of Economic Survival, this may indicate that many young people acquire digital skills not as a long-term strategy for enrichment but to survive in a challenging employment market. Without adequate finance, infrastructure, or stable market opportunities, the potential benefits of these skills are reduced. This observation aligns with findings from Ismail and Diala (2025), who studied youth employability in Ibadan North, Oyo State, and identified major barriers like inadequate training and digital infrastructure limiting the impact of digitalization on youth outcomes. Moreover, Abubakar (2024) emphasizes the importance of digital literacy for youth development but notes that socio-cultural norms, gender, and access disparities undermine the conversion of digital skills into real economic opportunities. Together, these studies suggest that without complementary support, digital skills may not fully translate into socio-economic gains.

The regression results indicate that the youth's capacity to leverage digital opportunities is significantly hindered by structural constraints, particularly high internet fees and limited access to digital training options. These obstacles highlight the fact that competence alone is insufficient by explaining a significant amount of the variation in access. This research supports the Human Capital Theory by demonstrating how the enabling environment is crucial to the returns on skill investment: young people cannot fully utilize their digital competencies in the absence of reasonably priced infrastructure and training platforms. It also relates to the Theory of Economic Survival since many young people may learn skills necessary for economic survival but are prevented from putting them into practice by structural limitations. These difficulties are empirically similar to those documented in other Nigerian investigations. Similar issues with access and infrastructure were noted in Ibadan North by Ismail & Diala (2025). Adewole (2024) contends that digital and entrepreneurial skills are necessary to combat youth unemployment, but for such interventions to be successful, concerns regarding cost and accessibility must be addressed. Additionally, Okegbe (2025) demonstrates that to overcome institutional constraints, youth empowerment through digital entrepreneurship necessitates subsidized internet access, community tech hubs, and innovation support. Together, these results show that while digital skills are a powerful tool for enhancing job opportunities, their wider socioeconomic benefits are constrained by structural limitations. This is explained by the simultaneous application of Human Capital Theory and Theory of Economic Survival: skills improve capacity and flexibility, but their practical advantages rely on institutional support, affordability, and accessibility.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

With an emphasis on young individuals in Ido Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, this study examined the connection between the rise in digital skills and the drop in unemployment among young Nigerians. The results offer significant new insights into how developing digital skills can improve young people's employment. The findings of Hypothesis 1 demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship ($R = 0.554$; $p < 0.001$) between employment opportunities and the development of digital skills. This suggests that young people who learn digital skills are more likely to find employment, internships, freelance work, and launch their own companies. These findings are consistent with those of Aremu and Udofia (2025, p. 34), who discovered that digital literacy significantly improves Nigerian students' performance and employability. The Human Capital Theory, which maintains that skill development boosts productivity and marketability, is likewise supported by the findings. However, Hypothesis 2 demonstrated that acquiring digital skills had no appreciable effect on broader socioeconomic and individual benefits ($R = 0.264$; $p = 0.233$). This suggests that although digital skills improve a person's employability, they might not instantly result in socioeconomic advancement at the local level.

This conclusion is supported by Ismail and Diala (2025, p. 112), who noted that while digitalization increases employability, institutional barriers prevent widespread socioeconomic impact. Hypothesis 3 states that barriers such as costly internet, limited training alternatives, and inadequate infrastructure significantly hinder children's ability to acquire digital skills ($R = 0.571$; $p < 0.001$). The scarcity of reliable and affordable digital resources continues to be one of the main challenges. This is supported by Ezeoha, Etim, and Ndukwe (2025, p. 12), who noted that infrastructure and budgetary limitations limit the effectiveness of digital skill programs in lowering poverty. The Resource-Based View (RBV), which demonstrates that while digital skills are significant intangible assets, access constraints restrict their capacity to provide an advantage over rivals, lends more weight to this view. The study's overall findings show that while developing digital skills is crucial for young people to find work, it is insufficient to ensure significant socioeconomic change. Infrastructure improvements and regulatory adjustments are necessary to maximize the benefits of acquiring digital skills.

Recommendations

The study recommends that policymakers establish accessible and affordable digital training centers, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, through sustainable public-private partnerships. It further suggests that the government should subsidize broadband services and improve electricity supply to support youths undergoing digital training. Awareness campaigns should also be intensified through social media, educational institutions, religious centers, and community platforms so that more young people can learn about available digital skills

programmes. The study encourages secondary and tertiary institutions to integrate digital competencies such as coding, data analysis, digital marketing, and content creation into their curriculum to promote early skill development. Lastly, it recommends that all digital skill programmes be continuously monitored and evaluated to determine their effectiveness in improving employment opportunities and socio-economic outcomes for Nigerian youths.

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