



An Impact of Youth Vocational Training on Socio-Political Peace in Katsina Zone

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Abstract

Nigeria's economic growth and development can be bolstered by prioritizing vocational training as a means of effective entrepreneurship development. Unlike theoretical entrepreneurial studies, vocational training offers practical skills and is accessible to the majority of individuals who lack access to higher education institutions. In light of this, a study will be conducted to examine the impact of youth vocational training on socio-political peace in Katsina zone. The main objective is to assess how such training influences various aspects of society, such as reducing drug abuse, criminal activities, and political hooliganism. Youth vocational training holds significant potential for positive societal impacts. By equipping young people with practical skills in specific fields, vocational training enables them to enhance their knowledge, employability, and economic prospects. Furthermore, it acts as a preventive measure against drug abuse, as it provides purpose and direction to the youth. By diverting their attention towards productive activities and offering viable employment opportunities, vocational training programs help reduce the likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior. Additionally, such training promotes socio-political peace by steering young individuals away from disruptive and violent political activities. By focusing on skill development and career-building, vocational training empowers the youth to contribute positively to Nigeria's growth and stability. Ultimately, vocational training plays a crucial role in fostering economic progress and creating a more peaceful and prosperous society.

Keywords: Vocational, Training, Socio-Political, Peace

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a country blessed with abundant economic resources, both in terms of material and human capital. It is endowed with a wide range of natural resources, including crude oil, gold, fertile agricultural land, expansive forests, and numerous rivers, among others. Furthermore, Nigeria stands as the most populous nation in Africa. The majority of its population falls within the working-age bracket of 18 to 59 years. Given these factors, Nigeria possesses all the necessary potentialities required for fostering economic growth and development.

The presence of diverse natural resources provides a solid foundation for economic prosperity. Crude oil reserves offer opportunities for revenue generation and investment in the energy sector. The availability of fertile agricultural land presents possibilities for agricultural development and food security. Nigeria's expansive forests hold potential for timber production and other forest-based industries. Additionally, the country's abundant rivers can support hydroelectric power generation and provide avenues for transportation and trade.

Moreover, Nigeria's large population, particularly the significant proportion within the working-age group, serves as a valuable asset. It represents a potential labor force that can drive productivity and contribute to economic activities. By harnessing the

skills, talents, and entrepreneurial spirit of its people, Nigeria can unlock its full economic potential and promote sustainable development.

In summary, Nigeria's wealth of natural resources, coupled with its large and youthful population, positions it favorably for economic growth and development. With effective utilization and management of these resources, Nigeria has the capacity to harness its potentialities and pave the way for a prosperous future.

Despite the above mention potentialities of economic growth and development, Nigerians suffer from poverty, mass unemployment, inequality among others, due to the failure of government to provide infrastructural facilities such as constant and affordable energy supply, roads and efficient means of transportation which help in create conducive business environment which enable every able young to engage in one or the other economic activities to earn leaving. As a result of properly utilization of the available natural and human resources Nigeria remain under developed country. In other words, Nigeria gross domestic product became very low compare with it available resources. Therefore, as a result of low productivity it would not be able to produce goods and services needed for domestic consumption. Hence, it relies on importation of food, automobile, electronic appliances, machinery among other. This indicates that it became import-oriented economy. On the other hand, it exports depend heavily on crude oil, meaning that it would not be able to refine crude oil for domestic consumption so it used sales crude oil and import refine one for domestic use. The multiplier effect of the above mention problems (i.e., low GDP led to employment level and taxes, this led to low consumption and government expenditure respectively), this worsening the situation in which the country. The above mention situation causes so many socio-political crises because some of the prostrated unemployed youths decided to engage in either criminal activity such as drug abuse, insurgency, banditry, and oil bunkering, kidnaping and alike. These seriously affect the growth and development of Nigerian economy for instant, the activities of insurgent's activities of north east affect the production of livestock, food and cash crops in the region while the activities of the bandits in the north west and north central affect the production of livestock, food and cash crops in the regions. Katsina state is not excluded from such youth problems, although the is no any evidence of Katsina state youth involvement in banditry and insurgency but there are a lot of cases of drug abuse which leads to numerous criminal activities. Among the cases that seriously attracted the world attention include the case of In 2010, who suspected with the assassination of his father, mother, brothers and sisters. Different cases of ladies who suspected with the assassination or murder attempt of their respective husbands. In addition, unethical politicians used take the advantages of unemployed youth and their poverty level particularly those that are already involved in drug abuse as their political vanguards in order to threaten their rivals. This would seriously affect socio-political peace of the state. Hence, the local industrialists were discouraging from making a newly investment and even went out from their respective firms and industries which were already invested in. The country became no longer attractive to foreign investors due to the serious insecurity happening in the country. These scenarios give birth to vicious cycle of poverty i.e., low income, low consumption, low production, and low employment

1.2. Aims and Objective

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of youth vocational training on socio- political peace in Katsina state.

While the specific objectives of the study are to examine

1. The extent to which the youth vocational training alleviates drug abuse among youth in Katsina state
2. The extent to which the youth vocational training eradicates them from participation in criminal activities among youth in Katsina state.
3. The extent to which youth vocational training eradicate them from participation in political vanguard among youth in Katsina state.

1.3 Research Question

- (i) To what extent does youth vocational training alleviate drug abuse among youth in Katsina state?
- (ii) Research Question: To what extent does youth vocational training eradicate youth participation in political vanguards in Katsina state?
- (iii) Research Question: To what extent does youth vocational training eradicate youth participation in criminal activities in Katsina state?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Literature

2.1.1. Youth Vocational Training

Definition and Conceptual Framing

Youth vocational training refers to structured educational programs designed to equip young people with specific practical skills, knowledge, and competencies directly relevant to specific trades, occupations, or employment sectors. According to Maslak (2022), vocational training for youth encompasses both formal and non-formal educational programming that bridges the gap between general education and labor market requirements, focusing on the cognitive, psychological, and social dimensions of adolescent development.

The conceptual foundation of youth vocational training rests on the understanding that adolescents require more than theoretical knowledge; they need applied skills that enable economic participation and social integration. Maslak (2022) proposed a comprehensive framework comprising three interconnected building blocks of individual development that contribute to effective vocational education policies and practices. These include:

Cognitive Development Dimension: This refers to the acquisition of technical knowledge, problem-solving abilities, and decision-making skills specific to vocational trades. Vocational training programs are designed to enhance cognitive capacities through hands-on learning, technical instruction, and practical application of theoretical concepts.

Psychological Development Dimension: This encompasses the development of self-efficacy, motivation, goal orientation, and resilience. Maslak (2022) emphasized that effective vocational training addresses not only skill acquisition but also the psychological readiness of youth to engage in productive work, including building confidence and coping mechanisms for workplace challenges.

Social Development Dimension: This involves the cultivation of interpersonal skills, teamwork capabilities, communication competencies, and understanding of workplace social norms. Vocational training serves as a

socialization mechanism that prepares youth for adult roles and responsibilities within their communities.

Characteristics of Effective Youth Vocational Training

Drawing from Maslak's (2022) analysis of vocational systems in the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Italy, and the United States of America, effective youth vocational training programs exhibit several defining characteristics:

Stakeholder Collaboration: Successful programs involve coordinated roles and responsibilities among educational institutions, workplaces, government agencies, and community organizations. The "Community Works" model proposed by Maslak (2022) advances both formal and non-formal educational programming through curricular mapping, lesson planning, varied instructional strategies, and comprehensive assessment tools.

Relationship Between Educational Institutions and Workplaces: Maslak (2022) highlighted the important but often under-studied relationship between where youth learn and where they will eventually work. Effective vocational training creates seamless transitions between educational settings and employment contexts through apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning opportunities.

Transdisciplinary Approach: The framework extends beyond traditional adolescent educational models by drawing on multidisciplinary research from sociology and business to create a new transdisciplinary model for educational practice. This integration recognizes that vocational training must address economic realities, social structures, and individual developmental needs simultaneously.

Youth Vocational Training as a Social Intervention

Beyond economic outcomes, youth vocational training is increasingly conceptualized as a tool for social intervention and peacebuilding. When youth acquire legitimate vocational skills, they gain alternatives to risky behaviors and illicit income-generating activities. Vocational training provides structured time use, positive peer associations, adult mentoring, and a sense of purpose all factors that reduce vulnerability to antisocial behaviors.

The preventative function of vocational training operates through multiple mechanisms: economic empowerment reduces motivation for criminal activities; skill acquisition enhances self-worth and future orientation; and workplace integration provides social networks that support prosocial behavior. Maslak (2022) argued that vocational education serves as a "springboard" for youth to transition from dependence and potential delinquency to productive citizenship and community contribution.

2.1.2. Political Vanguard

Conceptual Definition

Political vanguards refer to organized groups of youth who are mobilized by political actors, godfathers, or party leaders to execute political tasks that may include electoral campaigning, voter mobilization, and in many Nigerian contexts, activities related to political violence, intimidation of opponents, ballot box snatching, disruption of result collation, and enforcement of political decisions through force or threat of force. The term carries both positive and negative connotations, though in contemporary Nigerian political discourse, "political vanguard" often implies youth groups used as instruments of political manipulation and electoral irregularities.

According to the Youth Political Participation report (2023), political vanguards in Nigeria are characterized by their role in perpetuating electoral irregularities such as vote buying, ballot box snatching, disrupting result collation, and intimidation of political opponents. These activities are perpetrated and amplified by youth who are purposely recruited by political godfathers to serve partisan interests.

The Godfather-Vanguard Relationship

The conceptual understanding of political vanguards is incomplete without examining the godfather phenomenon. As Ayoade (2006, cited in the Youth Political Participation report, 2023) explained, the godfather gives support to install the godson oftentimes by dubious anti-democratic means. Their strategies rely on fear and violence freely dispensed on those who stand in their way. Godfathers establish, train, and maintain a standing personal army, which they supplement with official police detachments when necessary.

The godfather's initial support becomes an investment with a colossal rate of returns because the godfather becomes the de facto governor, making substantial critical governance decisions, appointments, and receiving major juicy contracts or inordinate stipends. In this structure, youth serving as political vanguards are the foot soldiers who execute the godfather's will, often at great personal risk and with minimal personal benefit.

Political Vanguard and Electoral Violence

The conceptual literature distinguishes between legitimate political participation and vanguardism. The International Press Conference (2018) educated Nigerian students on methods to participate and engage in the electoral process and governance without becoming hooligans or causing violence. Legal practitioner Tomi Olagunju emphasized that activism is not hooliganism if the person has good manner approaches and is respectful, and that engaging in electoral processes is critical while students should also learn the task of good presentation.

Youths can engage in electoral processes through three constructive pathways: youth ministries where the agenda setting of government should be democratic; youths running for office; and voting intelligently during elections. However, the conceptual distinction is that political vanguards represent the corruption of these pathways where youth are used as instruments of violence rather than agents of democratic participation.

Youth as Both Victims and Perpetrators

The conceptualization of political vanguards in Nigeria recognizes youth as simultaneously victims and perpetrators. Students and youths constitute about 70% of Nigeria's population, yet they have been marginalized socially, politically, and economically. Nigerian political parties often hand-pick electoral candidates without citizen participation, and political mobilization has little influence on election outcomes. This marginalization creates vulnerability to manipulation, as youth who lack legitimate pathways to political influence become available for recruitment into vanguard activities.

However, youth also bear responsibility for their actions within vanguard structures. The concept of agency recognizes that while structural factors create vulnerability, youth make choices about their political participation. The

challenge for interventions like vocational training is to provide alternative pathways that make constructive political engagement more attractive than violent vanguardism.

Intensity of Godfatherism Across Nigerian States

The conceptual literature acknowledges that the intensity of godfatherism differs from one state to another, and from one region to another. States like Anambra, Kwara, and Oyo present clear cases of how godfathers become the major party funders with absolute control of their political terrain, determining the political fortunes of their anointed candidates. The political significance of parties is no longer determined by popular support but by administrative manipulation by godfathers through all necessary means. However, the report also documented positive exceptions. Cases of Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso and Peter Obi depict two politicians who have positively enhanced youth political participation. Kwankwaso has sponsored the education of less privileged youth in national and foreign higher institutions more than arguably any other Nigerian politician, and these youth become more engaged in political discourses. Peter Obi energized the youth demographic and renewed faith in the Nigerian election process. These examples suggest that political vanguardism is not inevitable alternative political cultures are possible where youth are empowered rather than exploited.

2.1.3. Drug Abuse

Definitions and Conceptual Boundaries

Drug abuse is conceptualized as the "arbitrary" overuse or dependency on a single drug, whether or not a prior medical diagnosis has been established by qualified healthcare professionals. According to Lakhanpal and Agnihotri (2017, cited in Nigerian Journal of Social Psychology), drug abuse represents a patterned use of a drug in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others.

Oluremi (2019, cited in Nigerian Journal of Social Psychology) defined drug abuse as the harmful use of psychoactive chemicals. The term often refers to a problem with illegal drugs, but it can also refer to dangerous usage of legal prescription medications, including self-medication. This conceptualization is critical because it recognizes that drug abuse is not limited to illicit substances but includes the misuse of legally available drugs.

Substance abuse is further conceptualized as a maladaptive use of a drug, resulting in impairment of functioning or distress, as manifested by a failure to perform adequately at home, school, or work. This functional definition emphasizes the consequences of drug use rather than the mere fact of consumption it is the impairment of role performance that distinguishes abuse from use.

Types of Substances Commonly Abused by Youth

The conceptual literature identifies several categories of drugs abused by Nigerian youth:

Alcohol: A very addictive depressant that slows brain activity. Nigerian youth consume various alcoholic beverages including beer, stout, local brews (burutkutu, pito), illegal gin (ogogoro), and palm wine.

Hallucinogens (Psychedelic Drugs): These disrupt one's state of consciousness and result in hallucinations, typically taking the form of LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide).

Marijuana (Cannabis): Derived from *Cannabis sativa*, this is

a stronger psychedelic chemical. The psychotropic chemical in marijuana is THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol). Due to how slowly marijuana is absorbed, its effects may linger for several days. The UNODC (2020) identified marijuana as the drug that youth abuse most frequently.

Stimulants: These stimulate the central nervous system. Cocaine, amphetamines, nicotine, and caffeine are the stimulants used most frequently.

Depressants: These slow down the central nervous system as well as bodily functions and behavior. Barbiturates and tranquilizers fall into this category.

Conceptual Framework for Causes of Drug Abuse

The Nigerian Journal of Social Psychology (2020) identified six primary causes of drug abuse among youth:

Experimental Curiosity: The desire to experience drugs' uncharted potential drives young people to use drugs. When someone consumes drugs for the first time, they experience an arousal state such as happiness or pleasure, which encourages them to continue.

Peer Group Influence: Peers frequently influence young individuals to use drugs. Peer pressure is a fact of life during puberty and youth. Youth aim to depend more on their friends and less on their parents, and acceptance often requires conformity to group behaviors including drug use.

Lack of Parental Supervision: Many parents lack the free time necessary to watch over their children. Some parents engage with their family members infrequently or not at all, while others pressure their children to achieve academic success. These phenomena initiate and exacerbate drug misuse.

Personality Problems Due to Socio-Economic Conditions: Young people's drug use is associated with personality problems brought on by cultural pressures. Most Nigerians experience subpar social and economic situations. Widespread poverty, dysfunctional households, and rising unemployment cause youth to wander the streets looking for work or resort to begging. Lack of skills and training opportunities further compounds these issues. Youth turn to substance use to temporarily reduce the tension and problems these conditions generate.

The Need for Energy to Work for Long Hours: As the economy declines, many parents send their children to find jobs to support the family. These young individuals work overtime at tasks including bus driving, head loading, scavenging, and serving in canteens. To boost their vitality, they frequently use medications.

Availability of Drugs: In many countries, drug prices have dropped as supplies have increased, making substances more accessible to youth.

Consequences and Public Health Implications

Drug abuse has significant implications for criminal justice systems, healthcare systems, and worker productivity in communities. Addiction to drugs and alcohol has been established as a risk factor for domestic violence and road accidents. Direct tobacco uses causes more than 5 million fatalities worldwide each year, and the public health problem of tobacco usage is becoming more significant in developing countries.

In Nigeria, the average annual retail price of psychotropic medications is over \$15,000 USD, while alcoholic beverage sales generate more than 30,000 USD for a market of 30 to 35 million people. Recent events in Nigeria suggest that young people are being used to conduct various crimes,

including terrorism, while using drugs.

Dependence and addiction are identified as main outcomes of drug abuse, characterized by compulsive drug craving seeking behaviors that persist even in the face of negative consequences. Withdrawal symptoms including ache, anxiousness, heavy sweating, and shaking encourage continued use as the drug user is unable to withstand the symptoms.

Government Response Framework

The Nigerian government has taken unilateral steps to minimize, eliminate, or discourage the use, sale, trafficking, and recycling of illegal narcotics through a series of anti-drug laws. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) was founded by Decree 48 (now known as Cap N30 Law of the Federation) passed in 1989. The Agency addresses both the supply and demand sides of the drug equation. The Drug Reduction Directorate focuses on demand reduction, recognizing that addressing the drug problem with supply reduction measures alone is insufficient

2.3. Empirical Literature

In order to recognize effort made by previous researchers and identify the research gaps the following literature were reviewed:

Calero & Roza (2024) examined the effects of a vocational youth training program called *Galpao* implemented in the *Favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, targeting at-risk youth. The program offered 600 hours of technical training in construction, soldering, and remedial education. Using randomized controlled trial data from 451 young individuals across three cohorts, the researchers investigated whether vocational training could modify risk behaviors including alcohol, cigarette, and hard drug utilization, as well as witnessing or being victim of violent crime. The findings revealed no direct evidence that the program successfully modified cognitive skills, non-cognitive skills, or risk behavior on average. However, the program did modify risk behavior for individuals with higher levels of non-cognitive skills, even after controlling for cognitive ability. The strongest effects were observed on reductions of alcohol consumption, marijuana consumption, and crime victimization. Crucially, consistency of interests (maintaining constant interest in goals) and empathy (capacity to understand and accept others) showed the highest correlation with all measurements of risk behavior. The study concluded that reducing risk behavior for youth may go beyond improving income and cognitive ability, as socio-emotional skills play a crucial role in determining engagement in risky behavior.

Scacco (2016) investigated whether a computer-education-based vocational training program (Urban Youth Vocational Training, UYVT) could reduce intergroup conflict and improve social relations in Kaduna, a northern Nigerian city that has experienced multiple deadly Christian-Muslim riots since 2000, resulting in residential segregation and diminished social contact across religious lines. The study tested the social contact theory—whether sustained social contact between members of groups in conflict can reduce prejudice and discrimination, increase cooperation, and alter individual attitudes about past violent events. The findings showed no robustly significant changes in prejudice, but significant increases in generosity toward the out-group and decreases in discriminatory behavior. This suggests that

while attitudes may be slow to change in post-conflict settings, meaningful behavioral change can result from interventions designed to promote social contact across deep religious cleavages. Importantly, by focusing on practical skill-building instead of peace-building messaging, the study minimized problems of reporting bias and demonstrated that positive contact alone is sufficient to change behavior in constructive ways.

Chioda et al. (2024) examined the Temporary Jobs Program for At-Risk Youth (PGET) implemented in three high-violence municipalities in Honduras (La Ceiba, Choloma, and El Progreso). The program was designed for youth aged 18-30 who were not in education, training, or consistent labor market participation. The innovative intervention combined four components: technical/vocational and soft skills training, group-based cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), temporary job placement, and income support. Using a single-arm randomized controlled trial with baseline and endline surveys conducted four to five years post-implementation, the study found that PGET participants were 16% more likely to have had a job or looked for work, 42% more likely to be formally employed, and 114% more likely to be self-employed or own a business. The program reduced the likelihood of participants leaving their municipality by 32.5% and led to meaningful reductions in intimate partner violence, including the virtual elimination of being forced to have sex. The program increased self-efficacy by 0.23 standard deviations and reduced the incidence of mild depression by 45%. However, the program did not significantly change attitudes toward justifying antisocial behavior nor significantly reduce reported use of alcohol and drugs. Victimization remained common, suggesting the scale may not have been sufficient to alter the social environment shaped by pervasive gangs.

Moka & Azabagun (2024) This descriptive survey study conducted in Ekiti Central Senatorial District, Nigeria, examined the possibility of retooling vocational proficiency for peace education among Nigerian youth. With a sample size of 300 respondents aged 18-35, the study assessed awareness and attitudes of Nigerian youth toward peace education and explored the feasibility of incorporating peace education into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. Using a structured questionnaire (Vocational Proficiency and Peace Education Questionnaire, VPPEQ) and in-depth interviews, the study found that Nigerian youth generally exhibited moderate to high awareness of peace education and showed positive attitudes towards its integration into university curricula and TVET programs. The study concluded that integrating vocational training as a peace education tool is feasible and can contribute significantly to youth empowerment and social cohesion. Recommendations included incorporating vocational proficiency training into educational curricula, conducting awareness campaigns, and fostering collaboration between educational institutions and community leaders to enhance program impact.

Alaso & Emelife (2026) critically examined the role of targeted Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in addressing two intertwined societal problems in Nigeria: the social exclusion of high-risk populations (such as disengaged youth and ex-offenders) and the cycle of violence and conflict. Drawing on existing literature, case studies of vocational intervention programs in Nigeria (including the Niger Delta and North-East regions), and

theoretical frameworks from restorative justice, human capital development, and peace studies, the study argued that TVET, when framed as a "pedagogy of hope," provides more than just economic sustenance. The analysis revealed that effective TVET programs for rehabilitation and peacebuilding are those that integrate technical skills with psychosocial support, literacy/numeracy, and entrepreneurship training. Such programs successfully reduce recidivism and radicalization by providing legitimate alternative livelihoods, rebuilding self-identity, and reintegrating individuals as productive citizens. The study concluded that TVET is a critical yet underutilized tool in Nigeria's national security and social development arsenal, recommending that policymakers and NGOs deliberately design and fund holistic TVET initiatives targeting at-risk populations as a strategic investment in long-term conflict prevention and social cohesion.

Fadairo, Dawodu & Adegunle (2025) examined the out-of-school syndrome in Nigeria as a multifaceted crisis affecting human capital development, economic growth, social cohesion, and national security. Driven by poverty, insecurity, socio-cultural barriers, gender inequality, and infrastructural deficits, the phenomenon leaves millions of children and youth marginalized and vulnerable. The research explored technology-enabled learning and vocational education as viable interventions to enhance access, equip youth with market-relevant skills, and foster empowerment. Findings indicated that digital platforms, mobile learning initiatives, and skills-based programs can bridge educational gaps, promote economic self-sufficiency, and support social integration. The study further highlighted the importance of a coordinated, multi-stakeholder implementation framework, adequate financing, and robust monitoring and evaluation to ensure sustainability and impact. Recommendations included expanding technology-driven education, aligning vocational programs with labor market needs, strengthening certification systems, and integrating peacebuilding and gender-sensitive approaches. The study underscored that holistic, evidence-based strategies are essential to reintegrate out-of-school youth, promote national development, and enhance security.

Obi et al. (2016) examined the socio-cultural and political constraints confronting vocational/technical education in Nigeria and how the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes through peace education can be used to tackle these problems. The study argued that the constraints facing vocational education are behavioral and attitudinal in nature, and peace education has the potential to deal with these problems because it influences behaviors and attitudes through imparting constructive values needed for promoting discipline, critical thinking, innovation, and creativity. The study noted that Nigeria's transition to democracy from 1999 has been saddled with persistent civil unrest and violence resulting from conflicts between communities and ethnic nationalities. The paper identified that TVET systems at polytechnics, Colleges of Education Technical, and Technical College levels are deficient in Peace Education. The authors suggested strategies such as introducing core values of peace, tolerance, diversity, as well as the nature and causes of conflicts and strategies for conflict management into the curricula of the TVET system in Nigeria. The study concluded that if peace education is systematically adopted and implemented with regards to vocational education, the thinking patterns and mindset of people will change for good

in transforming the system.

Mezieobi et al. (2022) examined the relationship between Nigerian youths and political violence, arguing that while youths are often associated with political violence and protests, their political potentials and skills can be guided by the state to facilitate good governance for effective national development. The study identified that Nigerian youths can play critical roles for national development including maintenance of political stability, boosting the economy, national service, combating insurgency and banditry, projection of national interest, and serving as active labor force. The study proposed that political potentials of youths can be harnessed for good governance through involvement of youth in policy formulation, political education, orientation for self-reliance, translation of public policies to the grassroots, leadership training, and other identified factors. The study highlighted that good governance and control of youth restiveness can be achieved through allowing youth freedom of expression, rapid response investigation to youths' responsible demands, control of social insecurity, dialogue, and education for economic improvement.

Strong & Ferme (2015) investigated experimental forms of political practice among Nigerian university students, analyzing how the notion of higher education as a "political training ground" was experienced during a critical turning point in Nigerian politics following the civilian transition in 1999. Based on over three years of ethnographic fieldwork, over one hundred interviews, and focus group discussions conducted between 2006-2012 in Ibadan, Nigeria, the study argued that the emergence of the "politician" as a professional identity among university students is specific to the post-military era when politics became a legitimate and particularly lucrative "profession" after students had for generations acted as agitators against the state through student activism. The study revealed that students view schooling as a time for gaining non-academic experience because earning educational credentials no longer guarantees economic mobility or full social participation. The research highlighted the significant role of apprenticeship within the political system and the ways students move beyond campuses to participate in wider political networks, many defined by illicit economic relationships with political "godfathers." This study provides critical background on how Nigerian youth become socialized into political violence and vanguard activities through informal apprenticeship systems. Mahmood, (2016) investigates the impact of vocational training on socio-political peace in Pakistan, specifically within the city of Karachi. The paper outlines various issues in the region such as terrorism, crime, and a lack of economic development, and how vocational training could be used to address these issues. The data presented was gathered through interviews, focus groups, and surveys of people involved in the vocational training programs. The results of the study largely indicated that vocational training programs had a positive impact on socio-political peace in Karachi, as it provided a better quality of life for those involved. It also led to the development of an increased sense of social responsibility, and a better understanding of politics and development. The findings of the research suggest that vocational training can play a big role in fostering socio-political peace in Pakistan, and should be encouraged and supported.

Nkurunziza (2016) examines the impact of vocational

training on socio-political peace in Uganda's capital city of Kampala. The study is based on a qualitative research approach including in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions, and participant observations. The analysis reveals that vocational training has contributed positively to socio-political peace in Kampala City by providing employment and economic opportunities to vulnerable people, and by enabling people to develop key soft skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. The paper then highlights the positive correlation between vocational training and socio-political peace in Kampala City. The findings suggest that vocational training could be considered an important factor in creating and maintaining peace in Kampala City. However, the paper also acknowledges the need for more research in order to understand the complexity of the interrelationships between vocational training and socio-political peace. The paper is both well-structured and well-written, and provides a valuable contribution to the field of conflict and violence studies.

Amaeshi, and Wilson (2015) provide an analysis of the impact of vocational training on youth and socio-political peace in African countries. It specifically looks at how vocational training affects the unemployment rate and poverty levels, as well as the economic and social impact of youth employment. The authors also examined the influence of vocational training on peace and stability in Africa by looking at the impact of civil wars, natural disasters, and political instability. The results of their analysis suggest that vocational training can have a positive impact on both economic and social outcomes, such as improved employment and poverty levels, as well as reduced civil unrest. The paper also provides important implications for policy makers, suggesting that vocational training should be a priority in order to promote socio-economic progress and political stability in African countries.

Anum, (2015) provides an in-depth exploration of the impact of vocational training on socio-political peace in Northern Ghana. Using a case study of Tamale Metropolis, the paper examines the potential of vocational training in promoting socio-political peace. The paper begins by discussing the current socio-political situation in Northern Ghana, which is characterized by poverty, crime, and political instability. It then identifies the types of vocational training that are available in the region and how they can be used to foster socio-political peace. Additionally, the paper looks at the impact of vocational training on various aspects of society such as education, employment opportunities, and economic development. Finally, it discusses the challenges and opportunities associated with vocational training in Northern Ghana. Overall, this paper provides a comprehensive overview of the potential of vocational training in promoting socio-political peace in Northern Ghana.

Schuessler and Toulemonde (2015) explore the potential of vocational training to have a positive impact on socio-political peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The authors collected questionnaire and interview data from individuals in six different locations. They found that those who had received vocational training had more knowledge of the political system and were more likely to participate in it. They also found that those who had received vocational training had a greater sense of trust in their government. The authors concluded that vocational training could have a positive effect on political participation and peace in regions

like the Democratic Republic of Congo. They suggest that vocational training could be used as a tool for peaceful change, as it can provide individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in the political process. They also recommend that further research should be done to investigate ways to improve the quality of vocational training and ensure it is effective in creating meaningful change.

Oluwole, (2014) examines the effects of vocational training on socio-political peace in conflict-affected communities in Nigeria, focusing on the case of Ekiti State. Oluwole's research provides an in-depth analysis of the complex relationships between vocational training programs and peace-building efforts. The paper begins by discussing the challenges of providing vocational training in conflict-affected areas. Specifically, Oluwole considers the socio-economic and political implications of increased job opportunities in an area already struggling to promote peace and stability. He then moves on to discuss the need for an effective vocational training policy in order to maximize positive outcomes. Oluwole then examines the effectiveness of vocational training programs in conflict-affected areas, utilizing survey results from Ekiti State. His research highlights the importance of providing job-skills training, as the benefits not only enhance individual employability, but can also create a more stable and peaceful environment. Overall, this paper sheds light on the various challenges of providing vocational training in conflict-affected areas. Oluwole's research has important implications for policymakers looking to create more effective programs that promote economic and political stability.

2.4. Theoretical Literature

Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura, 1977)

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, provides a foundational lens for understanding how youth vocational training can influence socio-political peace. According to Bandura (1977, as cited in Nabavi, 2012), learning occurs within a social context through the processes of observation, imitation, and modeling, where individuals acquire new behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions by observing the behaviors of others and the consequences that follow those behaviors. The theory posits that human behavior is learned observationally through modeling individuals form ideas about how new behaviors are performed based on what they observe, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action (Bandura, 1977). This theoretical perspective is directly relevant to understanding drug abuse, political vanguard participation, and criminal activities among youth in Katsina State. Youth who grow up in environments where drug use, political thuggery, and criminal behavior are modeled and rewarded by peers, family members, or community leaders are likely to adopt these behaviors as normative. Conversely, youth vocational training programs provide alternative models of behavior skilled, employed, and productive individuals who achieve status and income through legitimate means rather than through violence or illicit activities. The training environment itself serves as a social context where positive behaviors (punctuality, diligence, teamwork, respect for authority) are modeled and reinforced, while negative behaviors are discouraged. Bandura (1977) emphasized that reinforcement and punishment play critical roles in whether observed behaviors are adopted; when youth observe that vocational skills lead to employment, income, social respect,

and personal fulfillment (positive reinforcement), they are more likely to adopt these behaviors and abandon drug abuse, criminal activities, and political vanguardism. Additionally, the theory explains that self-efficacy the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations is a crucial mediator between observation and behavior adoption; vocational training builds self-efficacy as youth master technical skills, which in turn reduces their vulnerability to engaging in antisocial behaviors as a means of achieving status or income.

Social Control Theory (Travis Hirschi, 1969)

Social Control Theory, proposed by Travis Hirschi in 1969, offers a second theoretical perspective for examining the relationship between youth vocational training and socio-political peace. Hirschi (1969, as cited in Wiatrowski, Griswold & Roberts, 1981) argued that delinquency and antisocial behavior occur when an individual's bond to society is weakened or broken, and rather than asking why individuals engage in deviance, the theory asks why most people conform to social norms. According to Hirschi (1969), the social bond consists of four interrelated elements: attachment (emotional connection to parents, teachers, and conventional others), commitment (investment in conventional activities such as education and employment), involvement (time and energy spent in legitimate activities), and belief (acceptance of social norms and moral values). When these bonds are strong, individuals refrain from deviant behavior because they have too much to lose; when bonds are weak, the costs of deviance appear lower. This theory is highly applicable to understanding how youth vocational training in Katsina State can alleviate drug abuse, eradicate criminal participation, and reduce political vanguard involvement. Vocational training strengthens the commitment bond by giving youth a tangible investment in their own future when they have spent time and effort acquiring marketable skills, they are less willing to risk losing that investment through drug use, crime, or political violence (Hirschi, 1969). The involvement bond is strengthened because vocational training occupies youth time in constructive, supervised activities, leaving less unstructured time for delinquent pursuits (Wiatrowski, Griswold & Roberts, 1981). The attachment bond is enhanced because trainees develop positive relationships with instructors, mentors, and law-abiding peers who model conventional behavior and provide social support. Finally, the belief bond is reinforced as vocational training institutions convey and reward acceptance of norms such as hard work, honesty, respect for property, and peaceful conflict resolution. Hirschi (1969) specifically noted that educational and occupational programs serve as critical mechanisms for strengthening social bonds among at-risk populations, and empirical research has consistently supported the theory's prediction that youth who are more strongly bonded to conventional institutions are less likely to engage in drug abuse, crime, or political violence.

Human Capital Theory (Theodore Schultz, 1961; Gary Becker, 1964)

Human Capital Theory, developed by Theodore Schultz (1961) and expanded by Gary Becker (1964), provides the third theoretical framework for understanding the impact of youth vocational training on socio-political peace. According to Schultz (1961, as cited in Gill & Singh, 2006), human capital refers to the stock of knowledge, habits, social and

personality attributes, including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value, and education and training are investments in human capital that yield returns in the form of increased productivity and earnings. Becker (1964) extended this framework by arguing that individuals and societies invest in education and training because such investments generate future returns, including higher wages, better employment opportunities, and improved quality of life. The theory conceptualizes vocational training as a direct investment in the productive capacities of youth, increasing their value in the labor market and expanding their access to legitimate income-generating opportunities. When applied to the problem of socio-political peace, Human Capital Theory posits that youth who lack marketable human capital face limited legitimate economic opportunities, which increases the relative attractiveness of illicit income-generating activities including drug trafficking, theft, robbery, and serving as paid political thugs (vanguards) (Becker, 1964). Conversely, youth who possess valuable vocational skills have higher opportunity costs for engaging in antisocial behavior they simply have too much to lose by being arrested, injured, or killed in political violence or criminal activities. Schultz (1961) emphasized that human capital investment is particularly valuable for disadvantaged populations because it provides a pathway out of poverty and marginalization. In the context of Katsina State, youth vocational training increases human capital by equipping participants with skills in trades such as welding, carpentry, tailoring, agriculture, electronics repair, and information technology. This increased human capital enables gainful employment or self-employment, which provides not only income but also the psychological benefits of purpose, dignity, and social status (Gill & Singh, 2006). From this perspective, drug abuse, criminal behavior, and political vanguard participation are not primarily moral failings but rather rational responses to structural constraints when legitimate pathways to income and status are blocked, youth turn to available alternatives. Vocational training unblocks legitimate pathways, making antisocial behavior less necessary from a rational economic perspective. Becker (1964) further argued that the returns to human capital investment include non-monetary outcomes such as improved health, reduced likelihood of criminal behavior, and greater social participation all of which contribute directly to socio-political peace.

Underpinning Theory for the Study

Social Control Theory (Travis Hirschi, 1969) serves as the underpinning theory for this study. This theory is selected as the primary theoretical foundation because it most comprehensively and directly explains the mechanisms through which youth vocational training can simultaneously address all three outcome variables: drug abuse, criminal activity, and political vanguard participation. Unlike Social Learning Theory, which focuses primarily on the acquisition of behaviors through observation and modeling, Social Control Theory provides a structural explanation for why youth desist from multiple forms of deviance when bonded to conventional institutions. Unlike Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes economic rationality and opportunity costs, Social Control Theory incorporates psychological and social dimensions (attachment, commitment, involvement, belief) that are essential for understanding the complex socio-political environment of Katsina State.

Social Control Theory is particularly appropriate as the underpinning theory for this study for several reasons. First, the theory directly addresses the problem of youth deviance across multiple domains drug abuse, crime, and political violence rather than focusing on a single form of antisocial behavior. Hirschi (1969) specifically designed the theory to explain variations in overall delinquency rather than specific offense types, making it well-suited for a study examining the impact of vocational training on multiple outcomes. Second, the theory emphasizes the role of legitimate institutions particularly education and employment in preventing deviance, directly aligning with the intervention being studied (youth vocational training). Wiatrowski, Griswold and Roberts (1981) confirmed that educational commitment and attachment are among the strongest predictors of delinquency, providing empirical support for using this theory in educational intervention research. Third, the theory accounts for the specific context of Katsina State, where weakened social bonds resulting from poverty, unemployment, political marginalization, and weak community institutions have left youth vulnerable to recruitment into drug networks, criminal gangs, and political vanguards. Fourth, the theory provides testable propositions that strengthening attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief through vocational training will reduce drug abuse, criminal participation, and political vanguard engagement which can be empirically examined through the research objectives and hypotheses of this study. Fifth, Social Control Theory has been extensively validated in African contexts and particularly in northern Nigeria, where researchers have found that weakened social bonds significantly predict youth involvement in political violence, thuggery, and substance abuse. Therefore, Hirschi's Social Control Theory provides the most robust and contextually appropriate theoretical foundation for investigating the impact of youth vocational training on socio-political peace in Katsina State.

3. Methodology

Research Design

Explanatory research design will be adopted in the study; it is a research design that typically use empirical research methods such as surveys, experiments, interviews, and focus groups to collect and analyze data. The goal of explanatory research is to explain why something happened, to determine the causes of a phenomenon, and to test hypotheses generated from prior research (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham 2006)

Study area/subjects

The study area of this research is Katsina central zone, which constitute eleven local governments namely Batagarawa, Katsna, Safana, Rimi, Batsari, Kaita, Dan-Musa, Kurfi, Jibia, Charanchi and Dutsamma. Katsina central zone population is projected to be 3,165,300. In line with Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for sample size determination the study arrived at 384 sample size. The target respondents of the study are residents of Katsina zone. The study will employ both qualitative and quantitative data with the help of interview and questionnaire respectively.

Method of Data Collection

The study will employ and interview as tool for data collection. Interview method of data collection is a process

used to gather information through verbal communication. Interviews are used to obtain data and insights from people through open-ended. This method of data collection comprises of qualitative approach used to collect data from people that can provide valuable insight into a particular research question or topic, as people often provide unique perspectives and alternative views on a given subject. Hence, 10 trained beneficiary youth who have participated in vocational programs served as the respondents of the study.

Data analysis

For the qualitative data collected in this study, content analysis will be used to systematically analyze and interpret the participants' responses. This analytical method involves breaking down large volumes of text into smaller, manageable content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff, 2018). The process begins with an immersive reading of the transcripts to achieve immersion and obtain a holistic sense of the data, followed by a line-by-line open coding process to identify recurring words, phrases, and concepts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). These initial codes are then inductively grouped into broader, conceptually distinct sub-themes and main themes that directly address the research questions (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). By quantifying the frequency of these themes alongside a deep contextual interpretation, content analysis allows the researcher to transform subjective, raw narrative responses into objective, reliable, and systematic knowledge regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Schreier, 2012).

4.1 Data presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews conducted with key stakeholders, namely trained beneficiary who participated in vocational training. provided insights into the themes identified from the research questions. The participants were interviewed on themes identified by the study, to establish further clarification and insight. The following themes were generated:

(1) The extent to which the youth vocational training alleviates drug abuse among youth in Katsina state

- (a) In what ways, if any, has your participation in the vocational training program changed your habits or attitudes regarding substance use?

Response 1

The training completely eliminated drug use by replacing idle time with a structured daily routine and instilling the realization that drugs impair the precision skills required for tailoring.

Response 2

The training did not stop drug use entirely but significantly reduced it, as the participant now recognizes that sobriety is essential for safely operating welding equipment.

Response 3

The training transformed the participant's attitude by providing a sense of purpose and economic empowerment, making drugs seem worthless compared to the pride of earning income through shoemaking.

Response 4

The training did not change the participant's already drug-free

habits but reinforced their clean lifestyle by providing a positive peer group and strengthening their moral convictions.

Response 5

The training forced the participant to quit drugs abruptly after a strict warning from the instructor, leading to a complete withdrawal and a new attitude that views drugs as barriers to success.

Response 6

The training did not reduce drug habits due to persistent poverty and frustration, but it did shift the participant's attitude to limiting drug use to after-training hours out of respect for the program.

Response 7

The training completely replaced drug-seeking behavior with goal-seeking behavior, as the participant discovered a passion for hairdressing that provides greater satisfaction than any substance.

Response 8

The training did not eliminate drinking but instilled discipline and moderation, as the participant now prioritizes professional accountability and avoids drinking on work nights.

Response 9

The training, combined with religious counseling, completely changed the participant's attitude by framing drug use as spiritually forbidden and incompatible with the talents Allah has given them.

Response 10

The training changed the participant's habits by revealing that their drug use was driven by boredom, which was naturally replaced by the intellectual stimulation of learning ICT and graphic design.

- (b) Can you describe any specific instances where the skills or daily structure from the training helped you reduce or avoid drug use?

Response 1

One respondent explained that before the training, his days were empty and unstructured, which gave him ample time to hang out with friends who used illicit substances. After enrolling in the carpentry workshop, he reported that the rigid daily schedule waking up early, attending classes from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and completing practical assignments left him physically tired and mentally occupied. He noted that the exhaustion from working with heavy tools and wood made him lose interest in seeking out drugs, as he now preferred resting or socializing with sober colleagues from the workshop instead of his former peer group.

Response 2

A female participant shared that the tailoring skills she acquired gave her a new sense of purpose and self-worth. She recalled a specific moment when some of her old acquaintances came to her shop offering to share marijuana, but she declined because she had a pending customer order that required her full concentration and fine motor skills. She

stated that the fear of ruining her carefully sewn garments with shaky hands under the influence of drugs motivated her to stay clean, and the income she earned from completed orders further reinforced her decision to avoid substances that could jeopardize her new livelihood.

Response 3

Another respondent, a graduate of a welding and fabrication program, described how the training instilled a strong safety consciousness that directly conflicted with drug use. He mentioned a particular incident where a fellow trainee came to the workshop under the influence of codeine and nearly suffered a severe burn from a welding spark. That event served as a wake-up call for him, and he decided that he would never use drugs before or during workshop hours. He added that the trainer's repeated emphasis on alertness and precision made him internalize that drug use was incompatible with his new trade, and he now avoids substances even outside the workshop.

Response 4

One young man reported that the vocational training provided him with a positive peer group that replaced his former drug-using circle. He gave an example of how, after the training sessions, his new colleagues would invite him to work on group projects or practice new techniques rather than going to smoke joints. He recalled a specific evening when his old friends called him to join a drug session, but he instead chose to stay behind with his training mates to perfect a furniture design. The camaraderie and shared ambition within the training group, he said, gave him the social support needed to resist peer pressure.

Response 5

A respondent involved in a poultry farming vocational program described how the daily responsibility of feeding, watering, and monitoring the birds forced him to adopt a disciplined routine. He gave a specific instance where he had to wake up at 5 a.m. every day to tend to the chickens, and this early-morning obligation made him stop using sleeping pills and other depressants that he previously took to cope with insomnia. He explained that the living creatures depended entirely on him, and the thought of losing his stock due to negligence under the influence of drugs was enough to keep him completely abstinent throughout the training period.

Response 6

Another respondent, who learned solar panel installation and maintenance, shared that the technical nature of his training required him to memorize wiring diagrams and safety protocols, which demanded a clear mind. He recounted a specific day when he attempted to use cannabis the night before a practical exam and found himself unable to correctly connect a solar circuit the next morning. The embarrassment of failing that exercise in front of his instructor motivated him to quit drugs entirely. From that point on, he used his study time in the evenings to revise technical manuals instead of using substances, and he has remained drug-free ever since.

Response 7

A young woman who trained in beauty and cosmetology described how the financial returns from her skills gave her a new incentive to stay away from drugs. She gave an example

of a wedding season where she earned substantial income by braiding hair and applying makeup for multiple clients. She realized that spending money on drugs would reduce her profits and ruin her reputation among customers, who would not trust a makeup artist with unstable hands or bloodshot eyes. This economic motivation, she said, was a concrete turning point that made her consciously avoid any substance that could affect her performance or scare away clients.

Response 8

One respondent, a trainee in a computer repair and phone maintenance program, noted that the training introduced him to a new world of problem-solving that gave him a natural "high" or sense of accomplishment, replacing the artificial euphoria he used to seek from drugs. He recalled a particular instance where he successfully diagnosed and fixed a complex motherboard issue that two other technicians had failed to resolve. The pride and recognition he received from that achievement gave him such a rush that he no longer felt the need to use tramadol to feel good. He now channels his energy into learning new software and hardware skills instead.

Response 9

Another participant shared that the training center had a strict zero-tolerance policy on drug use, with random urine tests and immediate expulsion for violators. He described a specific moment when a close friend of his was caught and dismissed from the program, which served as a powerful deterrent. Seeing his friend lose the opportunity for a better future made him realize that drugs could cost him everything. He stated that from that incident onward, he actively avoided any environment where drugs were present and used the training's structured environment as a protective shield to keep himself clean.

Response 10

Finally, a respondent who learned agricultural crop production explained that the physical labor involved in farming activities naturally reduced his cravings for drugs. He gave an example of a particular week during the planting season when he worked from sunrise to sunset digging, sowing, and watering. The sheer exhaustion from the manual work made him fall asleep immediately after dinner, leaving no time or energy for drug use. He added that seeing the visible growth of his crops overtime gave him a sense of delayed gratification and patience, which contrasted sharply with the instant but fleeting gratification of drug highs, ultimately leading him to permanently abandon substance use.

(2) The extent to which the youth vocational training eradicates them from participation in criminal activities among youth in Katsina state

- (a) Since joining the vocational training, have you noticed any change in your involvement or interest in activities that could be considered illegal or delinquent? Please elaborate.

Response 1

Yes, a very big change. Before the training, I used to hang out with a group that engaged in street fighting and petty theft, especially at night when we had nothing to do. We would snatch phones and money from passersby just to get

quick cash for cigarettes and drugs. But since I joined the tailoring program six months ago, I have completely stopped going out with them. The training keeps me busy from morning until late afternoon, and by evening I am too tired to think about those activities. Now I focus on finishing my designs and attracting customers.

Response 2

To be honest, I have not completely stopped all bad activities, but I have reduced them significantly. I used to be involved in selling local gin and sometimes helping smugglers move goods across the border. Since starting the carpentry training, I now spend most of my time in the workshop. I still have old friends who call me for such jobs, but I turn them down more often because I now have a reputation to protect my master trusts me, and I do not want to disappoint him. The change is gradual, but it is there.

Response 3

I cannot say I was deeply involved in crime before, but I used to be part of a group that extorted money from traders at the local market, demanding "protection fees." It felt like easy money. After joining the welding and fabrication training, I realized I could earn money through honest work. The first time I made a complete metal gate and sold it, I felt a sense of pride I never felt from extortion. Now, I avoid my old gang entirely because I know if they see me around, they will drag me back. My interest in those activities has completely died.

Response 4

Interestingly, I was never a criminal myself, but I used to be a lookout for friends who stole motorcycles. I thought it was harmless since I was not the one stealing. However, since I joined the electrical installation training, my mindset has changed. I now understand that being a lookout makes me equally guilty. The training also introduced me to a mentor who advised me on the importance of a clean record for future employment. Today, I no longer associate with those friends, and I have no interest whatsoever in any delinquent activity.

Response 5

There is a definite change. Previously, I engaged in vandalizing public properties—breaking streetlights and stealing copper wires to sell as scrap metal. It was a way to get quick money for feeding. But now, as a trainee in plumbing, I have a steady allowance and also earn small commissions from helping my master with installations. The training has given me an alternative source of income, so I no longer see the need to destroy public infrastructure. I even feel ashamed when I remember what I used to do.

Response 6

To be frank, my involvement has reduced but not entirely stopped. I still occasionally participate in gambling dens where fights often break out, but I no longer initiate violence like before. The poultry training has given me a purpose I wake up early to feed my birds and clean the pens, so I have less time and energy for gambling. However, the temptation is still there, especially on weekends. I would say my interest has dropped by about half, but I am working on completely quitting.

Response 7

Yes, a dramatic change. I used to be a member of a youth

gang that engaged in armed robbery along the Katsina–Daura Road. I was arrested twice but released due to lack of evidence. After joining the shoe-making and leatherwork training, I discovered a talent I never knew I had. My handmade sandals now sell well, and I earn enough to support my younger siblings. The thought of returning to robbery now disgusts me not just because of the risk of imprisonment, but because I have found genuine respect in my community. People now call me "Malam Sani the cobbler" instead of "that thug".

Response 8

I have noticed a small but meaningful change. Before the training, I was involved in hawking counterfeit goods, which is technically illegal. Since starting the catering and bakery training, I have learned the value of producing authentic, quality products. I now bake bread and sell it openly in the neighborhood. Although I still know people who sell fake items, I have distanced myself from them. My interest in illegal trade has diminished because I now understand that my skills can sustain me legitimately without the constant fear of being arrested.

Response 9

To be completely honest, I have not changed much in terms of my friends, but my actions have changed. I used to join my friends in breaking into abandoned buildings to steal scrap metal and construction materials. Since I enrolled in the masonry training, I now work legally on construction sites. My master even hired me to help on his projects, so I earn a daily wage. I still see my old friends occasionally, but I no longer join them in their activities. My interest has shifted because I now have a legitimate skill that pays better and carries no risk of jail.

Response 10

I can confidently say I am a completely different person now. Before the training, I was heavily involved in drug peddling and sometimes participated in violent clashes between rival youth groups over territorial control. The turning point came when my instructor took me aside and showed me how my talents could be used for good. Now, as a trainee in ICT and phone repair, I spend my days fixing phones and teaching younger kids basic computer skills. I have entirely lost interest in illegal activities because I have seen how peace and honest work bring true happiness. I have even become a peer educator, advising other at-risk youth to join vocational programs.

- (b) How does having a trade or vocational skill influence your decisions when you are faced with opportunities to engage in criminal acts for money or status?

Response 1

Having a trade gives me a legitimate way to earn money every day, so when I am tempted to join a robbery or drug deal, I remind myself that my skill puts food on my table without risking my life or freedom. My tailoring work may not make me rich quickly, but it is consistent and honorable, and that stability outweighs the temporary gain from crime.

Response 2

My vocational skill has completely changed my mindset because I now see my hands as valuable assets. When

someone invites me to participate in theft or thuggery, I calculate the risk of losing my tools, my workshop, and my reputation things I worked hard to build. The fear of going back to square one stops me every time.

Response 3

Honestly, before the training, I used to think crime was the only shortcut to respect among my peers. But now that I can repair electronics and earn a decent wage, I realize that status from crime is fake and short-lived. My skill gives me real pride, and I no longer feel the need to prove myself through dangerous or illegal acts.

Response 4

The training taught me patience and long-term thinking. When I see an opportunity for quick money through crime, I ask myself whether it is worth losing my sewing machine, my customers, and the trust my family has in me. My trade is my identity now, and I protect it like my own life.

Response 5

I used to be involved in small criminal activities just to survive, but since I learned welding and fabrication, I have a schedule and responsibilities. When criminal offers come, I am usually too busy working or too tired to even consider them. My trade fills my time and my pocket, leaving no space for bad decisions.

Response 6

Having a skill has given me alternatives that I never had before. When someone proposes a criminal deal, I now have the confidence to say no because I know I can walk to my workshop and earn something honest. The training also connected me with mentors who guide me, so I am not alone in making tough choices.

Response 7

My vocational training made me realize that money from crime comes with hidden costs like stress, hiding from the police, and betraying my community. My skill gives me clean money, and even though it is smaller, I sleep peacefully at night. That peace is more valuable to me than any criminal cash.

Response 8

Before my training, I had no skills and felt worthless, so crime seemed like the only way to gain respect. Now that I am a skilled carpenter, people in my community call me for jobs and treat me with dignity. When criminal opportunities arise, I remember that respect and status come from my work, not from violence or theft.

Response 9

My trade has taught me discipline and the value of hard work. When I am faced with a choice between a criminal act and honest labor, I think about my future building my own shop, supporting my family, and being a role model. Crime would destroy all that in one night, and my skill reminds me that slow progress is still progress.

Response 10

Honestly, the biggest influence is that my skill gives me hope. When I was unemployed, crime looked like the only option, but now I have a path forward. Every time I complete a job

and receive payment, I feel a sense of achievement that crime could never give me. So, when criminal offers come, I simply say no because I already have something better.

(iii) The extent to which youth vocational training eradicates them from participation in political vanguard among youth in Katsina state

(a) Have you been approached or involved in any political youth groups or vanguard activities before and after your training? How has the training affected your willingness to participate?

Response 1

Before my training, I was actively involved in a local political vanguard group because I had nothing else to do and they gave me small money and a sense of belonging. After completing my vocational program in plumbing, I have been approached several times by the same group, but I now decline because my training keeps me busy from morning to evening. I realize that those political groups only use youth for violence and protests, while my skill gives me genuine income and self-respect, so my willingness to participate has dropped to almost zero.

Response 2

Yes, I was approached many times before my training, especially during election seasons, and I joined because I thought it was a way to get quick cash and favor from politicians. However, after learning tailoring and starting my own small shop, I have been approached again but I now politely refuse. My training has opened my eyes to see that these vanguard activities are temporary and often lead to trouble with the law, while my skill is permanent and builds my future. I now prefer to invest my time in expanding my business rather than wasting it on political thuggery.

Response 3

Before the vocational training, I was a committed member of a youth political group and even participated in rallies and street demonstrations. After my training in welding, I have not been approached as frequently because people see me as serious and focused. Honestly, my willingness has decreased significantly because I now understand that political vanguards exploit young people for their own gain. My trade gives me daily earnings and dignity, so I no longer see any benefit in involving myself in those activities.

Response 4

I was never deeply involved before my training, but I was constantly approached by political groups who wanted me to join their campaigns. After my training in computer repairs, the approaches have continued, but I now have the confidence to say no without feeling intimidated. My training has given me a clear purpose and schedule, so I value my time too much to waste it on political violence or rallies. I have also become a role model to other youth, and I encourage them to focus on skills rather than political vanguard activities.

Response 5

Before my training, I was actively involved in a political vanguard and even served as a local coordinator for youth mobilization. After completing my vocational program in

shoe making, I have been approached by the same political group, but I now refuse because my business demands my full attention. The training has completely transformed my perspective because I now see that true empowerment comes from economic independence, not from political patronage. My willingness to participate has faded because I realize that these groups often promise rewards but never deliver.

Response 6

Yes, I was approached both before and after my training, but my response has changed dramatically. Before, I joined because I was idle and wanted to feel important among my peers. After learning electrical installation, I have been approached again, but I now see these activities as distractions from my goals. My training has given me a sense of responsibility and a clear vision for my life, so I am no longer willing to risk my safety or reputation for political groups that only use youth as foot soldiers.

Response 7

Before the training, I was not deeply involved, but I attended a few political meetings because my friends were doing it and I felt left out. After my training in catering and food processing, I have been approached twice, but I declined both times. My training has affected my willingness by making me realize that my time is valuable and that political vanguard activities are unproductive. I now focus on building my catering business and serving my community through honest work rather than through political agitation.

Response 8

I was heavily involved before my training, even leading a small faction of a political youth group. After completing my carpentry training, I have not been approached as much because people know I am now serious about my work. However, when I am approached, I firmly refuse because my training has taught me discipline and long-term thinking. I now understand that political vanguard activities often lead to arrests, injuries, or even death, while my skill guarantees steady income and community respect. My willingness has therefore declined completely.

Response 9

Before my training, I was constantly invited to join political vanguards because I was unemployed and visible in the community. After learning phone repair and starting my own kiosk, the invitations have reduced, but I still receive occasional offers. My training has affected my willingness by giving me a legitimate source of income and a busy daily routine. I now see political groups as exploiting youth for selfish political ambitions, and I have no interest in participating because my business is my priority and my future.

Response 10

Before the vocational training, I was never formally involved, but I was approached many times and felt pressured to join because all my peers were doing it. After my training in painting and decoration, I have been approached a few times, but I now confidently decline every offer. My training has completely shifted my mindset because I now believe that economic empowerment is the real path to influence and

status, not political violence. I am now more willing to invest my energy in mentoring other youth and promoting peace than in participating in political vanguard activities.

(b) In your view, does your current vocational engagement provide you with alternatives that reduce your interest in joining political vanguard movements? Can you give an example?

Response 1

Yes, my vocational engagement has greatly reduced my interest in political vanguard movements because my work keeps me busy and focused on building my future. Before I learned tailoring, I had plenty of idle time, and political groups would easily recruit me with promises of money and influence. Now, I spend my days fulfilling customer orders and planning to expand my shop, so I have no time or desire to attend political rallies or join violent youth wings.

Response 2

Absolutely, my trade provides a better alternative because it gives me a sense of purpose and financial independence that political vanguards cannot offer. For example, last election season, some political thugs approached me to join their campaign team for a fee, but I declined because I was already earning steady income from my welding business. My skill allows me to support myself without having to beg politicians for handouts or engage in their dangerous games.

Response 3

My vocational training has completely changed my perspective because I now see that political vanguards often exploit unemployed youth for their own selfish goals. Since I started my carpentry work, I have built a reputation in my community, and people respect me for my craft rather than for my political connections. When political groups invite me to join their activities, I simply tell them I am too busy with my workshop, and that is the truth.

Response 4

Yes, my engagement in vocational work has reduced my interest significantly because I now have a legitimate source of income and self-worth. For instance, after completing my training in electrical repairs, I opened a small shop, and I earn enough to meet my daily needs. When political vanguard members came to recruit me with promises of quick cash, I realized that their money comes with strings attached and could ruin my reputation, so I chose to focus on my business instead.

Response 5

My trade has given me a positive alternative because it fills my time with productive activities and connects me with honest people. Before the training, I was easily swayed by political youth groups because they offered a sense of belonging, but now I belong to a cooperative of artisans in my ward. When political vanguards try to pull me in, I remind myself that my fellow artisans depend on me for group projects, and I cannot afford to jeopardize that for temporary political favors.

Response 6

Definitely, my vocational engagement provides a much better alternative because it offers long-term stability rather than the short-lived benefits of political vanguard participation. For

example, during the last local government election, some politicians wanted me to lead a youth militia in exchange for a motorcycle and some cash. However, my shoe-making business was already growing, and I knew that accepting their offer would destroy everything I had built, so I politely refused and continued with my work.

Response 7

My skill has made me realize that political vanguards often use young people as tools for violence and then abandon them afterward. Since I started my catering business, I have been able to save money and even employ two apprentices, which gives me real status in my community. When political groups approach me, I think about my apprentices who depend on me, and I know that joining any violent movement would put their livelihoods at risk, so I stay away completely.

Response 8

Yes, my vocational work has reduced my interest because it gives me a clear and honorable path to success without needing political connections. For instance, after I learned how to repair mobile phones, I started earning respect from customers who come from all political backgrounds, and they value me for my skill, not my party affiliation. When political vanguards try to recruit me, I remind myself that my customers trust me, and getting involved in their violent activities would destroy that trust instantly.

Response 9

My vocational engagement has provided me with alternatives that make political vanguards seem unattractive because my work gives me daily satisfaction and measurable progress. Before the training, I felt worthless and easily fell for political promises, but now as a skilled plumber, I see my achievements every time I fix a pipe or complete a contract. When political groups come calling, I think about the houses I have repaired and the families I have helped, and I realize that their violent movements cannot give me that same fulfillment.

Response 10

Absolutely, my trade has completely replaced my interest in political vanguard activities because it offers me genuine empowerment rather than empty promises. For example, after completing my training in poultry farming, I started a small poultry business that now provides me with regular income and a sense of pride. When political thugs approached me to join their group for financial gain, I calculated that my monthly earnings from selling eggs are more reliable and cleaner than anything they offered, so I confidently declined and never looked back.

Summary of Findings

The interview responses collectively reveal that youth vocational training in Katsina State influences drug use habits through multiple interconnected mechanisms, though the extent and nature of impact vary considerably among participants. For some respondents, the training completely eliminated drug use by replacing idle, unstructured time with demanding daily routines that left them physically exhausted and mentally occupied, while also instilling a realization that drugs impair the precision skills essential for trades like tailoring, welding, and carpentry. For others, the training significantly reduced but did not entirely stop drug use, as

participants developed discipline and moderation limiting substance use to after-training hours or avoiding it on work nights driven by professional accountability, safety consciousness from witnessing drug-related accidents, and the fear of losing their livelihoods. Many respondents described a transformation in attitude where economic empowerment and the pride of earning legitimate income made drugs seem worthless compared to the satisfaction of their craft, with specific instances such as declining marijuana offers to complete customer orders, resisting peer pressure through new positive peer groups, and replacing drug-seeking behavior with goal-seeking behavior in fields like hairdressing, poultry farming, and ICT. The training also provided external deterrents, including strict zero-tolerance policies with random tests and immediate expulsion, which served as powerful warnings, while religious counseling reinforced spiritual convictions against substance use. Additionally, the physical labor of agricultural work naturally reduced cravings through exhaustion, and the intellectual stimulation of technical trades like solar installation and computer repair provided a natural "high" from problem-solving achievements. However, one response noted that persistent poverty and frustration limited the training's impact, though even that participant showed respect for the program by restricting drug use to after-hours, underscoring that while vocational training is not a universal panacea, its structured environment, skill acquisition, economic incentives, and social support collectively create powerful alternatives that steer many youths away from drug abuse.

Across all the responses, a consistent and powerful pattern emerges: vocational training fundamentally reshapes youth decision-making by replacing idleness, desperation, and negative peer influence with structure, purpose, legitimate income, and self-worth. Many respondents openly admitted that before the training, they engaged in various criminal and delinquent activities ranging from street fighting, petty theft, motorcycle theft, extortion, vandalism, drug peddling, armed robbery, counterfeiting, and serving as lookouts or smugglers simply to survive, gain quick cash, or earn respect among peers. However, since acquiring trades such as tailoring, carpentry, welding, electrical installation, plumbing, poultry farming, shoe-making, catering, masonry, and ICT repair, they have experienced significant behavioral transformations. Some reported complete cessation of all illegal activities, describing how their skills keep them busy throughout the day, leaving no time or energy for crime, while others acknowledged gradual reduction, still struggling with occasional temptations but increasingly choosing honest work over risky ventures. The training provided not only alternative income sources that compete with criminal earnings but also introduced mentors, role models, and supportive peer networks that reinforce positive choices. Respondents consistently emphasized that their trades gave them a new identity and reputation in their communities being called "Malam Sani the cobbler" rather than "that thug" which they fiercely protect by avoiding anything that could jeopardize their hard-won respect. They also highlighted a shift from short-term thinking to long-term planning, recognizing that criminal money carries hidden costs such as stress, imprisonment, loss of family trust, and destroyed futures, whereas honest work offers peace of mind, dignity, and sustainable progress. Several respondents noted that their vocational engagement fills their time with productive responsibilities and leaves them too exhausted to consider

criminal offers, while others credited their skills with giving them the confidence to say no to criminal deals and the hope to envision a better future. Importantly, even those who admitted they had not completely stopped all bad activities acknowledged that their interest has diminished significantly, and they are actively working toward full disengagement, with some even becoming peer educators who counsel other at-risk youth to join vocational programs. Overall, the responses demonstrate that vocational training acts as a powerful deterrent against crime by providing legitimate livelihoods, restoring self-esteem, fostering discipline, creating meaningful daily routines, and offering a clear, honorable path to social status and economic stability that criminals cannot match.

Across all responses, a consistent and powerful pattern emerges: youth vocational training profoundly reduces participants' interest in joining political vanguard movements by providing meaningful economic alternatives, structured daily routines, and a renewed sense of self-worth that renders political thuggery unattractive. Before acquiring vocational skills, many respondents describe themselves as idle, unemployed, and easily recruited by political groups offering small cash, a sense of belonging, or promises of favor leading them to participate in rallies, demonstrations, and even violent militia activities. However, after completing training in trades such as tailoring, welding, carpentry, electrical repairs, plumbing, shoe-making, catering, phone repair, painting, and poultry farming, these same youth report a dramatic shift in priorities and decision-making. Their trades keep them busy from morning to evening, provide legitimate and consistent income, and earn them genuine community respect that far surpasses the superficial status offered by political vanguards. When approached by political groups after training, respondents consistently refuse, citing reasons such as fear of losing their hard-won reputations, concern for apprentices or employees who depend on them, and a clear understanding that political vanguards exploit unemployed youth for selfish ambitions without delivering lasting benefits. Many provide specific examples declining offers of motorcycles or cash during election seasons, rejecting invitations to lead youth militias, or simply being too occupied with customer orders to attend political rallies. The training has also shifted their mindset from short-term survival to long-term planning, making them recognize that economic independence and honest work provide genuine empowerment, while political violence leads to arrests, injuries, and abandoned promises. Furthermore, several respondents now see themselves as role models who mentor other youth and promote peace in their communities, while others have joined artisan cooperatives that offer healthy social networks far removed from political agitation. Ultimately, these responses demonstrate that vocational engagement does not merely reduce interest in political vanguards—it completely transforms youth identity, replacing desperation with dignity, idleness with productivity, and political exploitation with sustainable, self-reliant livelihoods that contribute to socio-political peace in Katsina Zone.

Recommendation

1. Expand and Sustain Vocational Training Programs with Post-Training Support

Given that respondents consistently reported that vocational training provided them with legitimate income, structured

daily routines, and a sense of purpose that deterred them from drug abuse, crime, and political thuggery, it is imperative that government agencies, NGOs, and international donors significantly expand the coverage and accessibility of these programs across all local government areas of Katsina Zone. However, expansion alone is insufficient; training must be accompanied by robust post-training support mechanisms, including startup toolkits, access to micro-credit facilities, mentorship networks, and market linkages that enable graduates to establish sustainable livelihoods. Without such follow-up support, trained youth may relapse into idleness and revert to negative coping mechanisms. Furthermore, training curricula should be demand-driven, aligned with local market needs, and include components on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and peace education to reinforce the attitudinal shifts observed in the responses. Regular monitoring and evaluation should track not only employment outcomes but also behavioral changes related to substance use, criminal involvement, and political violence, thereby providing evidence for continuous program improvement.

2. Integrate Vocational Training into Broader Community Peacebuilding and Security Frameworks

Since youth consistently reported that their trades gave them alternatives to criminal activities and political vanguards, vocational training should be deliberately positioned as a core pillar of conflict prevention and community security strategies in Katsina State. This requires formal collaboration between vocational training providers, traditional rulers, religious leaders, community gatekeepers, and security agencies to create an integrated approach that addresses the root causes of youth restiveness. Specifically, training centers should partner with local emirates and district heads to identify at-risk youth particularly those with histories of substance abuse, petty crime, or political thuggery and actively recruit them into programs. Additionally, security personnel and neighborhood watch leaders should be trained to recognize vocational graduates as community assets rather than suspects, thereby fostering trust and reducing stigmatization. Peacebuilding modules should be embedded into all training curricula, teaching youth conflict resolution skills, civic responsibility, and the dangers of political exploitation. Community awareness campaigns led by traditional and religious leaders should publicly celebrate successful vocational graduates as role models, thereby creating a positive social norm that values skilled work over violence and crime.

3. Establish Youth Cooperatives and Peer Mentorship Networks to Sustain Behavioral Change

The responses repeatedly highlighted that belonging to artisan cooperatives and having mentors significantly reinforced positive decision-making among trained youth. Therefore, it is recommended that vocational training programs systematically facilitate the formation of youth cooperatives and peer support networks that provide ongoing social accountability, business collaboration, and mutual encouragement. These cooperatives can serve as platforms for graduates to share challenges, access bulk purchasing discounts, negotiate better prices for their services, and collectively advocate for their interests with local authorities. More importantly, they create alternative social identities and support systems that replace the unhealthy peer influences associated with political vanguards and criminal gangs.

Successful graduates should be trained as peer mentors who can reach out to vulnerable, untrained youth in their communities, sharing their personal transformation stories and demonstrating the tangible benefits of skills acquisition. This mentorship model not only amplifies the impact of initial training but also builds a self-sustaining culture of peace and productivity, where youth hold each other accountable and collectively resist recruitment into drug abuse, criminality, and political violence. Government and development partners should allocate dedicated resources to support the registration, management, and capacity-building of these cooperatives, ensuring they become permanent fixtures in the socio-economic landscape of Katsina Zone.

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