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NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AS A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY EMANCIPATION AMONG THE WAKRIKE PEOPLE OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined non-formal education programmes as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. Three research objectives, three research questions, and three null hypotheses were used for the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 699 community members comprising 594 members of registered community-based organisations and 105 CDC members in the study area. The sample size of the study was 406 respondents comprising 301 registered members of community-based organisations and 105 CDC Members. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted in selecting 301 (50%) of the members from each of the registered community-based organisations, while all the CDC members were taken as census without sampling due to their manageable size. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled, “Non-Formal Education Programmes as a Tool for Sustainable Community Emancipation Questionnaire”. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Adult Education and Community Development, and Measurement and Evaluation from Rivers State University. The reliability of the instrument was established through a test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha method. Since the reliability was done for each cluster of items in the instrument, the reliability coefficient of 0.85, 0.82 and 0.89 were obtained for the three clusters. Thus, a composite reliability index of 0.71 was established for the instrument. The responses from the seven research questions were analysed with mean and standard deviation, while the seven null hypotheses were tested with t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the study revealed among others that non-formal education programmes which include vocational training programme, basic literacy programme, entrepreneurship training programme, environmental education programme, health education

programme, civic education programme, and digital literacy programme served as tools for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakirike People of Rivers State to a high extent. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that Rivers State Ministry of Education and Vocational Training Agencies should establish community-based vocational training centres in Wakirike communities in partnership with CBOs and CDC members, offering competency-based training in demand-driven trades by certified master craftsmen, with starter toolkits and apprenticeship linkages to foster self-employment and reduce external dependency.

KEYWORDS: Non-Formal Education, Sustainable Community, Emancipation,

INTRODUCTION

Non-formal education has emerged as a vital tool for sustainable community emancipation, particularly in marginalised communities like the Wakirike people of Rivers State, Nigeria. This approach to education provides flexible learning pathways that addresses the unique needs and challenges of communities and its inhabitants. Sustainable community emancipation refers to the process of empowering communities to take charge of their own development, leveraging local resources and knowledge to achieve long-term prosperity. This approach prioritises community engagement, social justice, and environmental sustainability (Kobani, 2018). By fostering autonomy and self-determinance, communities can break free from dependency on external aid and drive their own development agendas. Asiyai (2018) noted that community-based initiatives are crucial for promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty.

Undoubtedly, effective sustainable community emancipation requires inclusive and equitable approaches, ensuring marginalised groups have a voice in decision-making processes (Wami & Deekor, 2020). This can involve leveraging non-formal education programmes to enhance livelihoods and promote entrepreneurship. According to Kalio and Kobani (2024), sustainable community emancipation is critical for achieving lasting impact in development initiatives, particularly in marginalised areas.

According to Zabbey, Uyi, and Sam (2016), by harnessing locally relevant knowledge and skills, non-formal education can catalyse autonomy and self-determination among community members. The significance of non-formal education lies in its ability to empower individuals and communities, fostering economic, social, and cultural development. Kobani (2023) acknowledged that non-formal adult education is concerned with helping adults live

more successfully as useful and acceptable members of their societies. This perspective underscores the importance of non-formal education in promoting community development and emancipation.

Sustainable community emancipation refers to the process of empowering communities to take charge of their own development, leveraging local resources and knowledge to achieve long-term prosperity. This approach prioritizes community engagement, social justice, and environmental sustainability (Kobani, 2018). By fostering autonomy and self-determination, communities can break free from dependency on external aid and drive their own development agendas. As Asiyai (2018) notes, community-based initiatives are crucial for promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty.

However, the Wakirike people of Rivers State, Nigeria, whose identity is historically centered on Okrika Island in the Niger Delta, embody a complex socio-cultural tapestry woven through centuries of migration, federation, and adaptation. Archaeological evidence suggests settlement in the region dates back to between 860 and 1515 AD, with foundational narratives pointing not to a single ancestor but to a confluence of migrations from the Central Niger Delta, leading to the establishment of distinct towns like Kirike and Ogoloma. This plural origin culminated in a strategic federation, solidified by a sacred covenant known as the Oboku, which bound autonomous communities together for mutual defence and collective identity under the overarching leadership of the Kirike settlement. Traditionally organized into a resilient social structure of co-equal War-Canoe houses (*Omuaru-wari*), a system of kinship-based units historically focused on defence and resource management, the Wakirike developed an economy and culture intimately linked to their aquatic environment. Their history as a significant pre-colonial trading kingdom, engaged first in the slave trade and later in palm oil export, was fundamentally anchored in the bounty of their marine ecosystems. However, this deep environmental interdependence has rendered them profoundly vulnerable in the modern era, as the very resources that sustained their ancestral livelihoods have become sources of contemporary crisis.

The pursuit of sustainable community emancipation in this context necessitates a liberation that is simultaneously social, economic, and ecological a form of eco-emancipation that seeks to free both people and their environment from exploitative systems. This concept moves beyond traditional development paradigms to argue for new political and social communities that incorporate the well-being of the non-human world as fundamental to human freedom. For the Wakirike, such emancipation would involve reclaiming agency over their development trajectory, restoring the health of their ecosystems, and building an economy

that provides dignity without destruction. It requires a deliberate move toward what can be termed self-sustainable communities: localized groups that strive to meet basic needs like food, water, and energy through closed-loop systems that minimize waste and external dependency while building social cohesion and resilience. Achieving this vision is not merely a technical challenge but an educational one, demanding the cultivation of critical consciousness, relevant skills, and participatory leadership within the community itself. It is at this critical juncture between entrenched challenge and transformative vision that non-formal education emerges as a potentially indispensable tool, offering flexible, context-sensitive learning pathways to catalyze change from within.

Non-formal education, encompassing all organized, systematic educational activities outside the formal school system designed to deliver specific learning to particular groups, holds unique promise for communities like the Wakirike. Its inherent flexibility allows it to be tailored to local realities, schedules, and cultural contexts, addressing the immediate and practical needs of adults and youth who may have been failed by or excluded from formal schooling. The curriculum for such emancipation-focused education could be multifaceted, integrating practical skills in sustainable aquaculture, organic farming, and water management to restore environmental productivity; training in renewable energy technologies and waste-to-resource innovations to build local infrastructure; and fostering entrepreneurship and cooperative management to diversify the local economy beyond fossil fuel dependency. Crucially, this model aligns with global frameworks for sustainable development, particularly the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which explicitly call for quality education (SDG 4), climate action (SDG 13), life below water (SDG 14), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17). By embedding these global goals into local learning practices, non-formal education can help communities like the Wakirike articulate their struggles and solutions within a broader narrative of global justice and sustainable development.

However, the transformative potential of non-formal education in Rivers State faces significant impediments, as evidenced in the assertion of Emenike and Okorie (2022). that poverty and low self-esteem are primary obstacles, with participants and facilitators alike recognising these as major constraints. Poverty creates a direct material barrier, where individuals cannot afford even modest costs or must prioritise immediate income-generating labour over educational investment. Concurrently, low self-esteem often born from prolonged economic marginalisation, educational exclusion, and the psychological impacts of environmental dispossession erodes the confidence needed to engage in new learning. This

creates a vicious cycle where disempowerment prevents educational engagement, and a lack of education perpetuates disempowerment. For Wakirike communities grappling with the legacy of pollution and economic shift, these barriers are likely amplified. Therefore, any initiative aiming to deploy non-formal education for emancipation must first be designed as an empowering intervention that actively builds agency and self-worth, perhaps by centering indigenous knowledge, celebrating local expertise in traditional ecology, and linking learning directly to visible, community-controlled projects that restore both land and pride.

The philosophical underpinning for such an educational project finds resonance in the Wakirike's own historical social architecture. The traditional War-Canoe house system, with its emphasis on kinship, collective responsibility, and shared allocation of community assets, provides a cultural template for cooperative action and mutual upliftment. A non-formal education programme for sustainable emancipation could consciously revive and adapt these principles for contemporary challenges, framing learning not as an individualistic pursuit but as a communal capacity-building exercise for the entire community. Furthermore, the ancient Oboku covenant, which bound disparate settlements into a single nation for mutual defence, symbolizes the profound unity and shared destiny possible within Wakirike society. This historical precedent of federation for survival can be invoked to mobilise participation in educational programmes aimed at a new kind of mutual defence: against environmental collapse, economic irrelevance, and cultural erosion. In this way, education becomes not an external import but a modern manifestation of deep cultural values, leveraging social capital and shared history as foundational resources for learning and collective action.

The practical design of this educational intervention must be participatory and holistic, actively involving community members in planning sessions to define needs and co-create curricula, thereby fostering ownership and ensuring relevance. Learning modules should intertwine technical skills with critical pedagogy, enabling learners to analyse the root causes of their community's challenges from global oil politics to local environmental governance while acquiring the skills to build alternatives. This aligns with broader empowerment strategies that advocate for combining skills acquisition with advocacy training and support for community representation in decision-making forums. For instance, education on sustainable fishing practices would be paired with modules on environmental rights and monitoring, empowering citizens to document pollution and advocate for accountability. Vocational training in solar panel maintenance would connect to lessons on energy justice and the political economy of fossil fuels. This approach transforms non-formal education from simple skills training into a liberatory praxis, where reflection and action are continuously

linked, driving a cycle of consciousness-raising, practical application, and community transformation.

In this regard, one of the goals of non-formal education is to foster the emergence of a self-sustainable community that is economically viable, socially cohesive, and ecologically restorative. This entails building local capacity to establish circular systems where waste is minimised, resources are regenerated, and wealth is recirculated within the community. Emenike, and Okorie (2022) noted that education would support the establishment of community-managed micro-utilities for renewable energy, cooperative ventures for sustainable agriculture and aquaculture, and local enterprises for upcycling and repair. Such economic diversification is vital to reduce dependency on a single, volatile, and destructive industry. Moreover, by anchoring development in local resources and knowledge, this path enhances resilience against external shocks. Importantly, as argued in frameworks for eco-emancipation, true freedom for the community is inseparable from the freedom of its environment.

Effective sustainable community emancipation requires inclusive and equitable approaches, ensuring marginalised groups have a voice in decision-making processes (Wami & Deekor, 2020). This can involve leveraging non-formal education and vocational training to enhance livelihoods and promote entrepreneurship. According to Kalio and Kobani (2024), sustainable community emancipation is critical for achieving lasting impact in development initiatives, particularly in marginalized areas.

Emancipating communities through non-formal adult education is a potent strategy for sustainable development. By providing accessible and relevant learning opportunities, adults can acquire skills and knowledge to improve their livelihoods and contribute to community growth (Asiyai, 2018). This approach fosters autonomy, self-confidence, and social cohesion, ultimately leading to more resilient communities. Non-formal adult education can also promote environmental sustainability by empowering communities to manage natural resources effectively (Kobani, 2018). Effective non-formal adult education programmes prioritise community engagement, needs-based learning, and inclusive approaches (Wami & Deekor, 2020). By addressing specific community challenges and leveraging local knowledge, these programmes can drive meaningful change. As Kalio and Kobani (2024) noted, non-formal education is critical for promoting sustainable community development, particularly in marginalised areas. By investing in non-formal adult education, governments and development agencies can empower communities to take charge of their own development.

Non-formal education programmes in this regard have to do with planned diverse educational activities that are geared towards educating and empowering members of communities with functional skills, and knowledge required to earn a better living, and to integrate communities into non-violent approach to life. It is aimed at empowering and encouraging peaceful coexistence of people in communities to promote community development. Amirize in Deekor (2018), acknowledged that the most important aim of non-formal education is to prepare and equip people for wages employment or for self-employment, improve the knowledge and skills of those already in employments, improvement of peoples political, cultural, social and spiritual awareness through conscientisation; and stimulate industrial output, provide citizenship and leadership training opportunities for people, He furthered that non-formal education promote health and responsible uses of leisure through joyful activities, fosters entrepreneurship and generates employment opportunities for youthful members of communities.

However, some of the non-formal adult education programmes that can enhance the emancipation of individuals and communities as identified by Owede (2020), includes; vocational training programme, basic literacy programme, entrepreneurship training programme, environmental education programme, health education programme, civic education programme, and digital literacy programme,

Vocational training programme empower individuals with practical skills, enhancing employability and entrepreneurship opportunities, contributing to sustainable community emancipation. According to Kobani (2018), vocational training is critical for equipping communities with skills needed for economic independence. Similarly, Asiyai (2020) noted that vocational education fosters self-reliance and job creation. Moreso, Basic literacy programme lay the foundation for lifelong learning, enabling individuals to access information and participate fully in community development. Wami and Deekor (2020) highlight the impact of literacy programs on women's empowerment and community engagement. Kalio and Kobani (2024) also emphasise that literacy is key to unlocking community potential and driving sustainable development.

Entrepreneurship training programme foster innovation and job creation, driving economic growth and community emancipation. Kobani (2018) notes that entrepreneurship education equips individuals with skills to start and manage businesses. Asiyai (2020) also highlighted the role of entrepreneurship training in promoting self-employment and economic independence. Furthermore, Environmental education programme raise awareness on sustainable practices, promoting community-led conservation and management of natural

resources. According to Zabbey et al. (2016), environmental education is critical for mitigating the impacts of pollution and climate change. Ordinioha and Brusaferro (2017) also emphasised the importance of environmental education for community health and well-being. It is believed that if these specific non-formal education programmes are properly adopted and implemented by Government, development agencies, adult educators, Non-governmental organisations, and other organisations interested in development of communities, the would be a rapid sustainable community emancipation. It is against this background that this study is designed to examine non-formal education as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike people of Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The Wakrike people of Rivers State, Nigeria, face significant development challenges, including limited access to formal education, poverty, and environmental degradation. These issues are exacerbated by the community's geographical location and socio-economic circumstances, which hinder their ability to participate in mainstream economic activities. The lack of access to quality education has resulted in low literacy levels, limited skills, and a dearth of opportunities for economic empowerment, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. Furthermore, the Wakrike people's traditional livelihoods, such as fishing and farming, are threatened by environmental degradation and climate change, underscoring the need for alternative livelihood strategies and sustainable development approaches. Non-formal education has been recognised as a critical tool for promoting national development. Though, there is a dearth of research on the impact of non-formal education on the emancipation of Wakrike people 'for sustainable community development

However, there are different kinds of non-formal education programmes that can be used as a tool for sustainable community emancipation, such as vocational training programme, basic literacy programme, entrepreneurship training programme, environmental education programme, health education programme, civic education programme, and digital literacy programme, but could these programmes lead to sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State? Providing answer to this question therefore, warranted a study of this nature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine non-formal education programmes as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. In specific terms, the study sought to:

- investigate the extent to which vocational training programme serves as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State
- find out the extent to which basic literacy programme serves as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State
- examine the extent to which entrepreneurship training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent to which vocational training programme serves as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent to which basic literacy programme serves as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent to which entrepreneurship training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 699 community members comprising 594 members of registered community-based organisations and 105 CDC members in the study area. The sample size of the study was 406 respondents comprising 301 registered members of community-based organisations and 105 CDC Members. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted in selecting 301 (50%) of the members from each of the registered community-based organisations, while all the CDC members were taken as census without sampling due to their manageable size. The

instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled, “Non-Formal Education Programmes as a Tool for Sustainable Community Emancipation Questionnaire”. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Adult Education and Community Development, and Measurement and Evaluation from Rivers State University. The reliability of the instrument was established through a test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha method. Since the reliability was done for each cluster of items in the instrument, the reliability coefficient of 0.85, 0.82 and 0.89 were obtained for the three clusters. Thus, a composite reliability index of 0.71 was established for the instrument. The responses from the seven research questions were analysed with mean and standard deviation, while the seven null hypotheses were tested with t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does vocational training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean Rating of Members of Community-Based Organisations and CDC Members on Extent Vocational Training Programme Serve as a Tool for Sustainable Community Emancipation Among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

S/N	Items	Members of CBOs (281)			(N = 380) CDC Members workers (99)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks
1	Vocational training in trades like carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work enhances community self-sufficiency.	2.79	0.89	HE	2.81	0.69	HE
2	Skills acquired through vocational training programmes are relevant to local community needs.	2.87	0.78	HE	2.79	0.72	HE
3	Vocational training empowers individuals to create jobs, reducing reliance on external employment.	2.62	0.64	HE	2.78	0.82	HE
4	Community-based vocational training fosters social cohesion and cooperation among members.	2.65	0.57	HE	2.76	0.75	HE
5	Vocational training programmes improve technical skills, leading to increased productivity in local industries.	2.68	0.65	HE	2.70	0.69	HE
6	Vocational training enhances the ability of community members to innovate and	2.71	0.72	HE	2.94	0.95	HE

	adapt to new technologies.						
7	Training in vocational skills like tailoring, agriculture, and food processing contributes to community economic growth.	2.69	0.73	HE	2.75	0.68	HE
8	Vocational training programmes address specific community challenges, such as youth unemployment.	2.74	0.83	HE	2.72	0.67	HE
9	Vocational skills acquired through training programmes are transferable, allowing individuals to relocate for work.	2.64	0.76	HE	2.90	0.89	HE
10	Overall, vocational training programmes are effective tools for achieving sustainable community emancipation.	2.66	0.69	HE	2.66	0.69	HE
	Grand Mean	2.71	0.73	HE	2.78	0.69	HE

Table 1 above for research question one, showed the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent that vocational training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. Item 1 had mean scores of 2.79 and 2.81, with a standard deviation of 0.89 and 0.69. Item 2 had mean scores of 2.87 and 2.79, with standard deviation of 0.78 and 0.72. Item 3 had mean scores of 2.62 and 2.78, with a standard deviation of 0.64 and 0.82. Item 4 recorded mean scores of 2.65 and 2.76, with standard deviation of 0.57 and 0.75. Item 5 had mean scores of 2.68 and 2.70, with standard deviations of 0.65 and 0.69. Item 6, recorded a mean score of 2.71 and 2.94, with standard deviation of 0.72 and 0.95. Item 7 had a mean score of 2.69 and 2.75, with a standard deviation of 0.73 and 0.68. Item 8, recorded mean scores of 2.74 and 2.72, with standard deviation of 0.83 and 0.67. Item 9 had mean scores of 2.64 and 2.90 with standard deviations of 0.76 and 0.89 while Item 10 had mean scores of 2.64 and 2.66 with the standard deviations of 0.69 and 0.69 respectively. The grand mean of 2.71 and 2.78 for both groups of respondents was recorded. The result revealed that both members of community-based organisations and community development committee members agreed that vocational training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State to a high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does basic literacy programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Rating of Members of Community-Based Organisations and CDC Members on Extent on the extent Basic Literacy Programme Serve as a Tool for Sustainable Community Emancipation Among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

S/N	Items	(N = 380)					
		Members of CBOs (281)			CDC Members (99)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks
11	Writing skills training enhances the ability of community members to complete official forms, documents. access and utilise government services.	2.69	0.88	HE	2.81	0.59	HE
12	Acquisition of reading comprehension skills enables community members to access information. required to participate in local decision-making processes.	2.77	0.72	HE	2.57	0.62	HE
13	Basic literacy programmes improve health outcomes by enabling community members to read and understand health information.	2.62	0.62	HE	2.74	0.61	HE
14	Numeracy training improves community members' ability to manage their finances effectively thereby promoting economic stability.	2.65	0.66	HE	2.76	0.55	HE
15	Reading and writing skills improve community members' self-confidence and self-esteem.	2.62	0.62	HE	2.60	0.63	HE
16	Literacy programmes enhance the ability of community members to engage with and benefit from economic opportunities.	2.80	0.52	HE	2.94	0.64	HE
17	Basic literacy programmes contribute to the preservation of Wakrike cultural heritage and traditions.	2.64	0.73	HE	2.65	0.66	HE
18	Literacy skills acquired through programmes enable community members to support their children's education.	2.74	0.75	HE	2.82	0.72	HE
19	Basic literacy programmes address specific community challenges, such as poverty and social exclusion.	2.64	0.73	HE	2.90	0.61	HE
20	Basic literacy programmes promote awareness of community rights and responsibilities.	2.54	0.67	HE	2.73	0.59	HE
	Grand Mean	2.67	0.69	HE	2.75	0.62	HE

Table 2 above for research question two, showed the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent that basic literacy programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. Item 11 had mean scores of 2.69 and 2.81, with a

standard deviation of 0.88 and 0.59. Item 12 had mean scores of 2.77 and 2.57, with standard deviation of 0.72 and 0.62. Item 13 had mean scores of 2.62 and 2.74, with a standard deviation of 0.62 and 0.61. Item 14 recorded mean scores of 2.65 and 2.76, with standard deviation of 0.66 and 0.55. Item 15 had mean scores of 2.62 and 2.60, with standard deviations of 0.62 and 0.63. Item 16, recorded a mean score of 2.80 and 2.94, with standard deviation of 0.52 and 0.64. Item 17 had a mean score of 2.64 and 2.65, with a standard deviation of 0.73 and 0.66. Item 18, recorded mean scores of 2.74 and 2.82, with standard deviation of 0.75 and 0.72. Item 19 had mean scores of 2.64 and 2.90 with standard deviations of 0.73 and 0.61, while Item 20 had mean scores of 2.54 and 2.73 with the standard deviations of 0.67 and 0.59 respectively. The grand mean of 2.67 and 2.75 for both groups of respondents was recorded. The result revealed that members of community-based organisations and community development committee members accepted that basic literacy programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State to a high extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent does entrepreneurship training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean Rating of Members of Community-Based Organisations and CDC Members on Extent Entrepreneurship Training Programme Serve as a Tool for Sustainable Community Emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

S/N	Items	(N = 380)					
		Members of CBOs (281)			CDC Members (99)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks
21	Business plan development training enhances the ability of Wakrike entrepreneurs to access funding.	2.59	0.68	HE	2.71	0.73	HE
22	Marketing and sales training increases the competitiveness of local businesses in the Wakrike community.	2.67	0.58	HE	2.97	0.83	HE
23	Financial management training improves the sustainability of Wakrike-based enterprises.	2.72	0.62	HE	2.75	0.81	HE
24	Vocational skills training (e.g., crafts, tailoring) empowers community members to start small businesses.	2.55	0.63	HE	2.67	0.75	HE
25	Entrepreneurship mindset training fosters innovation and risk-taking among Wakrike youth.	2.86	0.51	HE	2.70	0.53	HE

26	Access to microfinance and loan schemes supports the launch and growth of Wakrike enterprises.	2.57	0.72	HE	2.94	0.64	HE
27	Mentorship and coaching programmes provide valuable guidance for Wakrike entrepreneurs.	2.59	0.73	HE	2.57	0.65	HE
28	Networking and partnership-building training expands market opportunities for Wakrike businesses.	2.64	0.63	HE	2.72	0.52	HE
29	Entrepreneurship training in renewable energy and sustainable practices promotes eco-friendly businesses in Wakrike.	2.71	0.56	HE	2.80	0.69	HE
30	Supply chain management training enhances the efficiency and profitability of Wakrike businesses.	2.54	0.57	HE	2.76	0.59	HE
	Grand Mean	2.64	0.62	HE	2.76	0.67	HE

Table 3 above for research question three, showed the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent that entrepreneurship training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. Item 21 had mean scores of 2.59 and 2.71, with a standard deviation of 0.68 and 0.73. Item 22 had mean scores of 2.67 and 2.97, with standard deviation of 0.58 and 0.83. Item 23 had mean scores of 2.72 and 2.75, with a standard deviation of 0.62 and 0.81. Item 24 recorded mean scores of 2.55 and 2.67, with standard deviation of 0.63 and 0.75. Item 25 had mean scores of 2.86 and 2.70, with standard deviations of 0.51 and 0.53. Item 26, recorded a mean score of 2.57 and 2.94, with standard deviation of 0.72 and 0.64. Item 27 had a mean score of 2.59 and 2.57, with a standard deviation of 0.73 and 0.65. Item 28, recorded mean scores of 2.64 and 2.72, with standard deviation of 0.63 and 0.52. Item 29 had mean scores of 2.71 and 2.80 with standard deviations of 0.56 and 0.69, while item 30 had mean scores of 2.54 and 2.76 with the standard deviations of 0.57 and 0.59 respectively. The grand mean of 2.64 and 2.76 for both groups of the respondents were recorded. The result revealed that members of community-based organisations and community development committee firmly agreed that entrepreneurship training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State to a high extent.

Test of Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent to which

vocational training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

Table 4: T-test Analysis of Difference Between Members of Community Based Youth Organisations and CDC Members on the Extent that Vocational Training Programme Serve as a Tool for Sustainable Community Emancipation Among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	t-cal	P-Value	Level of Sign.	Decision
CBOs, Members,	281	2.71	0.73	378	1.61	0.59	0.05	Accepted
CDC, Members	99	2.78	0.69					

See details of analysis in appendices

Table 4 above, shows that p-value (0.59) is greater than 0.05 level of significance at 378 degree of freedom indicating that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent that vocational training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. This therefore means that the null hypothesis is accepted.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community based organisations and community development committee members on the extent to which basic literacy programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

Table 5: T-test t-test Analysis of Difference Between Members of Community Based Youth Organisations and CDC Members on the Extent that Basic Literacy Programme Serve as a Tool for Sustainable Community Emancipation Among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	t-cal	P-value	Level of Sign.	Decision
Members CBOs,	281	2.67	0.69	378	0.90	0.68	0.05	Accepted
CDC Members	99	2.75	0.62					

See details of analysis in appendices

Table 5 above, shows that p-value (0.68) is greater than 0.05 level of significance at 378 degree of freedom indicating that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of members of community-based youth organisations and community development committee members on the extent that basic literacy programme serve as a tool for sustainable

community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. This therefore means that the null hypothesis is accepted

3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent to which entrepreneurship training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

Table 6: T-test Analysis of Difference Between Members of Community Based Organisations and CDC Members on the Extent that Entrepreneurship Training Programme Serve as a Tool for Sustainable Community Emancipation Among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	p-value	Level of Sign.	Decision
CBOs, Members	281	2.64	0.62	378	0.58	0.55	0.05	Accepted
CDC Members	99	2.76	0.67					

See details of analysis in appendices

Table 6 above, showed that p-value of 0.57 is greater than 0.05 level of significance at 378 degree of freedom indicating that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community based organisations and community development committee members on the extent that entrepreneurship training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. This therefore means that the null hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in research question 1 revealed that members of Community-Based Organisations and CDC members agreed to a high extent that vocational training in trades such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, tailoring, agriculture, and food processing serves as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike people. With grand means of 2.71 and 2.78, respondents affirmed that these programmes enhance self-sufficiency, address youth unemployment, improve technical skills and productivity, and foster innovation and adaptability to new technologies. The corresponding hypotheses 1 affirmed that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent that basic literacy programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State.

The consensus that skills acquired are relevant to local needs and transferable for job creation aligns with the notion that vocational education reduces dependence on external employment and builds community resilience from within. The high rating on social cohesion further indicated that community-based delivery creates collective ownership, which is critical for emancipation. This outcome corroborates existing literature on the emancipatory power of vocational education in resource-dependent communities. The finding in this research question one is in line with the position of Okoye and Okwelle (2018) who found that vocational training in trades relevant to Niger Delta communities significantly reduced youth restiveness and increased self-employment rates by equipping beneficiaries with market-driven skills. Similarly, Egun and Tibi (2019) established that community-based vocational programmes improved productivity in local industries and enhanced technical adaptability, particularly when curriculum was aligned with community needs. More recently, Nwachukwu and Ordu (2023) argued that vocational skills acquisition fosters social cohesion and cooperative enterprise among rural groups in Rivers State, as collective training builds trust and shared economic goals. The Wakrike findings therefore extend this scholarship by confirming that both CBO and CDC stakeholders perceive vocational training as a high-impact emancipation tool. The findings confirm that vocational training is a critical pathway for sustainable community emancipation' By equipping members with relevant, market-driven skills, these programmes reduce unemployment, build self-reliance, and strengthen collective ownership of development. Therefore, prioritising community-based vocational education is essential for fostering resilience and long-term independence in the communities. The data Table 2 for research question 2 showed a high level of agreement among the respondents with grand means of 2.67 and 2.75 which revealed that basic literacy programme emancipate the Wakrike community. Respondents rated writing skills for accessing government services, reading comprehension for decision-making, numeracy for financial management, and literacy for improving health outcomes and self-esteem as critical emancipation pathways. High scores on items relating to supporting children's education and preserving cultural heritage suggest that literacy operates intergenerationally and culturally, not just economically. The corresponding hypotheses 2 also confirmed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent to which basic literacy programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. The agreement that literacy addresses poverty and social exclusion imply that reading and numeracy skills are foundational to breaking cycles of marginalisation

in Wakrike. These findings resonate with scholarship linking literacy to community empowerment. Adu and Galloway (2015) demonstrated that basic literacy programmes in rural communities improve beneficiaries' ability to engage with government services and local governance, thereby reducing exclusion. Obi and Joshua (2020) further reported that numeracy and reading skills enhance financial management and economic participation among low-income households, directly promoting stability. Olatunbosun (2022) added that literacy interventions improve health-seeking behaviour and maternal outcomes by enabling comprehension of health information, which aligns with the Wakrike respondents' rating on health outcomes. Collectively, these studies validate the perception that literacy is a core emancipation tool for Wakrike people. The findings established that basic literacy programmes are fundamental to sustainable emancipation of people. This implies that by improving access to government services, financial management, health information, and support for children's education, literacy breaks cycles of poverty and social exclusion. Thus, investing in community-based literacy initiatives is crucial for empowering individuals and preserving cultural heritage across generations in communities.

Table 3 for research question 3 revealed that respondents strongly agreed with grand means of 2.64 and 2.76 that entrepreneurship training programme emancipates the Wakrike community. The high ratings on business plan development, marketing, financial management, and access to microfinance indicated that the programme builds capacity for enterprise creation and sustainability. The top-rated item on fostering innovation and risk-taking among youth suggests that mindset training is as critical as technical skills. Additionally, strong agreement on mentorship, networking, and eco-friendly entrepreneurship reflects recognition that sustainable emancipation requires both market linkages and environmental responsibility. The corresponding hypotheses 3 affirmed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of members of community-based organisations and community development committee members on the extent to which entrepreneurship training programme serve as a tool for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakrike People of Rivers State. The findings imply that entrepreneurship training transforms Wakrike members from job seekers to job creators.

This is consistent with recent studies on entrepreneurship education in the Niger Delta. Igwe et al. (2017) found that training in business planning and financial management significantly improve survival rates of rural enterprises by enhancing access to credit. Adebisi (2021) reported that entrepreneurship mindset training increased innovation and risk tolerance among Nigerian youth, leading to higher rates of venture initiation. Furthermore, Umeh and

Nwosu (2024) showed that integrating sustainability practices into entrepreneurship training promote eco-friendly business models and expand market opportunities for coastal communities. The Wakrike results therefore reinforce and extend this body of knowledge by demonstrating community-level consensus on entrepreneurship training as an emancipation strategy. the findings showed that entrepreneurship training is a key driver of sustainable emancipation in communities. By equipping members with business, financial, and innovation skills, alongside access to mentorship and microfinance, the programme shifts people from job seeking to job creation. Therefore, embedding entrepreneurship training with sustainability and market linkages is vital for building resilient, self-reliant enterprises in communities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that non-formal education programmes which include vocational training programme, basic literacy programme and entrepreneurship training programme, served as tools for sustainable community emancipation among the Wakirike People of Rivers State to a high extent. The study therefore implies that sustainable emancipation for the Wakrike people is not achieved through a single educational intervention but through an integrated framework of non-formal programmes that align with local needs and challenges. Vocational and entrepreneurship training provide pathways to economic independence; literacy and digital literacy enable access to information, services, and markets. The convergence of views between grassroots community structures further indicated that non-formal education is recognised at the community level as a legitimate and effective mechanism for dismantling structures of dependence and exclusion. This positions non-formal education as not merely a complementary educational model, but as a foundational strategy for achieving sustainable emancipation and resilience among the Wakrike people of Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

- The Rivers State Ministry of Education and Vocational Training Agencies should establish community-based vocational training centres in Wakrike communities in partnership with CBOs and CDC members, offering competency-based training in demand-driven trades by certified master craftsmen, with starter toolkits and apprenticeship linkages to foster self-employment and reduce external dependency.

- Rivers State Adult and Non-Formal Education Board and Local Government Education Authorities should establish integrated basic literacy centres in Wakrike communities by deploying trained facilitators and developing bilingual instructional materials in Wakrike language and English. This can be implemented through evening and weekend classes that combine reading, writing, and numeracy with modules on accessing government forms, health information, and financial records, to strengthen civic participation and economic stability
- Cooperatives and SME Development: Create entrepreneurship training and incubation hubs for Wakrike youth and women via CDC structures. Implement by delivering modular training on business planning, financial management, marketing, digital entrepreneurship, and access to microfinance, with mentorship from successful local entrepreneurs and quarterly business clinics, to foster innovation, risk-taking, and sustainable enterprise development.

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