

RPRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM AND YOUTH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS IN NIGER-DELTAEGION, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focuses on the impact of Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) on Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta of Nigeria. The study used primary data and the population of the study consists of the Eight thousand and sixty-seven (8067) participants of the PAEP in the Niger Delta Region, out of which three hundred and eighty-two (382) participants were randomly selected as the sample size of the study using simple random sampling technique. The theoretical framework of the study is Schumpeter Effect theory. Structured questionnaires were used to gather information from the respondents and the information gathered was presented in tables, pie diagrams and graphs while SSPS was used to test for the impact of PAEP on youth socio-economic status in the Niger-Delta region. The results of the study showed that PAEP has a positive impact on the youth socio-economic status in the Niger-Delta region. The indicators and findings of the study show that PAEP has the socio-economic potentials to improve the wellbeing of the youths in the region and in the country at large. However, the challenges observed are that some delegates were selected, trained

but not employed or empowered. Some did not benefit from the training, employment and empowerment. Therefore, the framework for PAEP should be strengthened by the government by increasing the scope and the capacity of the program to accommodate more delegates, give support and empower all selected delegates for sustainable socio-economic development of the youth in the Niger-Delta Region.

Keywords: Amnesty, Entrepreneurship, Niger Delta, Youth, Social-Economic

Introduction

The Niger Delta is said to be the second largest delta in the world. It comprises nine oil-producing States (Rivers, Ondo, Imo, Delta, Edo, Cross River, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Abia States) in Nigeria. The Niger Delta Region (NDR) has an estimated population of about 36.6 million people which is about 25% of the total Population of Nigeria and over 60% of this population is rural based according to the 2006 Census figures. It encompasses the most extensive freshwater swamp forest recognized as the world's third largest wetland and rich biological diversity with over half of the area with creeks and with small islands, and a lowland rainforest zone (Ajibola, 2015).

The difficult topography in the region encourages people to gather in small communities. These are rural communities which offer very limited economic opportunities for youth in the region. Infrastructure and social services in the region are mostly deplorable and grossly

inadequate for regional population. Meanwhile, the oil wealth gotten from the NDR is largely responsible for the sustenance of Nigeria (UNDP, 2006). In spite of fueling Nigeria's economic growth, the Niger Delta is to some extent marginalized from growth and development in Nigeria. There seems to exist a significant disconnect between the revenue the region generates for Nigeria and the region's socio-economic conditions of the youth (Higgins, 2009).

Additionally, oil spillage by private oil companies has rendered farming activities difficult and high wages of some oil company workers have driven up prices of goods and services. This constrains the purchasing power of rural and ordinary people making it hard to meet the costs of basic needs like feeding, healthcare, housing, education and transportation (UNDP, 2006). As a result of these poor socio-economic conditions and poverty in the Niger Delta, the country now witness anti-social activities and vices such as kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, ritual killings, drug trafficking, political thuggery and assassinations, militancy, vandalism of public and private properties, outright destructions of oil installations, etc. by some youths in the region (Ayuba, 2012).

This phenomenon has left the Niger Delta and the rest of the country highly underdeveloped, economically, technologically and otherwise. Also, it has elevated the rate of graduate unemployment and other social vices stated previously. Although, successive State and Federal government programmes have attempted to eradicate or alleviate poverty in the region, not much success have been recorded as they have not actually impacted much on the people (Ajibola, 2015).

It is within context that the FGN amnesty was announced and introduced on the 25th June, 2009. The amnesty program was as a result of wide consultations with the relevant bodies like the Council of State, Governors, stakeholders and leaders of the NDR. This program was targeted to give entrepreneurial training to the youths in the region in order to improve the socio-economic conditions and reduce social vices in the region. Therefore, the major objective of this study is to examine the impact of the Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) on Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta. To achieve this, the following hypothesis is formulated as:

H₀₁: Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) is not positively related to Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Amnesty is when the highest power in a State restores persons guilty of offence against it to the position of innocence, and it goes beyond pardon as it obliterates all legal implications of the offence. The word amnesty is a Greek word derived from “amnestia.” Also, amnesty is the act of authority by government granting forgiveness to persons for various offences, and releasing them from guilt or penalty of those offences (Ikelegbe and Umokoro, 2014). It is a guarantee of exemption from persecution and pardon from punishment for insurgent, rebel and criminal actions committed against a government and its people

(Ikelegbe, 2010). Furthermore, it guarantees offenders safety and protection from retributions and punitive actions. An amnesty is usually specific and time bound, and offenders must admit the crime and take advantage of the general pardon within the stipulated time frame.

Entrepreneurship could be defined as the ability and willingness of an individual to pursue investment opportunities in a society, and take advantage of it to successfully establish and run an enterprise (Gana, 2001). Although Gana's definition align towards the managerial perspective, the entrepreneur has certain personality characteristics which influences his behaviour (psychologists view) while living in a society (sociologist view) bombarded by the economic opportunities and government incentives (economist view). Thus, the multidimensional views in describing the entrepreneur becomes necessary. Mbaebgu (2008) referred to entrepreneurship as the activities of the entrepreneur as risk bearer, initiator, innovator and organizer in investment or business. Entrepreneurship is also the process of transforming a business concept into a new venture by private initiative or diversifying an existing venture or enterprise with high growth potential (UNDP, 2009). Basically, the entrepreneur's activities create employment and wealth which could be evaluated directly or indirectly through a nation's economic growth and development indices.

Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic transformation in a society (Olabanji and Ese, 2014). It involves changes taking place in the social sphere mostly of an economic nature. Several factors, both exogenous and endogenous, determine

the course and direction of socio-economic development in a nation. Socio-economic development process is determined by indicators like income level, literacy, health care and rates of employment. Variations in less-tangible factors are also considered, like freedom of association, personal dignity, freedom from fear of physical harm, personal safety and the extent of participation in civil society. Some causes of socio-economic developments are changes in laws, new technologies, ecological and physical environmental changes.

The National Youth Policy in Nigeria defines a 'Youth' as a Nigerian citizen between the ages of 18 and 35 years. In this survey, the ages between 15 and 35 was considered. Emeka (2011) said there are things people can do to impact their generation, they can acquire skills. Skill acquisition is not left for the poor and middle class people. Even career women or professional women and men as well as the youths can acquire these skills to make them versatile, self-sustaining and independent. Skills acquisition can also be in areas of making detergents, odor controls used in toilets and bathrooms, soda soaps, basket caps, school bags and a whole lot of skills.

Empirical Review

The empirical studies reviewed is the amnesty program of late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and the contributions it has made in ensuring peace in The Niger Delta region (Ekumaoko, 2013). But for the program to be fully successful, there are few challenges that need to be addressed. For instance, employment should be provided for ex-militants after their rehabilitation and training, and ex-militants who have not been captured should be accommodated in the program to avert return to their old ways.

Ajibola (2015) investigated the role of the amnesty program in sustaining peace and development in post-conflict Niger Delta. He acknowledged that the program had among other strategies introduced vocational skills and educational training of ex-militants as youths, who were previously linked to violence and criminality in the region had embraced education and vocational skills training. The approaches employed by the amnesty program were to a great extent successful in reducing the violence and militancy in the Niger Delta region.

Aigbedion, Anyanwu and Adebayo (2015) using secondary time series data and econometrics tools investigated entrepreneurial education and inclusive growth in Nigeria. The summary of findings is that entrepreneurial education had strong and positive relationship with inclusive growth in Nigeria and entrepreneurial education is a catalyst for inclusive growth through poverty reduction, job and wealth creation in Nigeria.

Aigbedion and Anyanwu (2016) examined the contribution of entrepreneurship, problems and prospects in Abuja, Nigeria. The study adopted primary data in the analysis ,using the entrepreneurs in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) in Nigeria. Structured questionnaires were designed to collect information from the respondents. The information from the respondents were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17.0. From the findings, it was noticed that entrepreneurial activities have positive impact on poverty reduction in Nigeria in terms of job creation, human capital development, income creation, increased standard of living and gender equality.

The empirical review of this study was limited to few because, most reviews are centered on the impact of entrepreneurship on economic growth and entrepreneurship development. This means there is little empirical literature on the impact of Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) on Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta. Therefore, this study has empirically examined the impact of Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) on Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta.

Theoretical Framework

The Schumpeter Effect forms the theoretical framework of the study. The process of entrepreneurship activity reducing unemployment situation and increasing the socio-economic status in the economy is termed “Schumpeter effect”. Audretsch and Fritsch (1994) and Garofoli (1994) found that unemployment has a negative correlation to new-firm start-ups, which means that employability increases and unemployment decreases as new businesses are established. Likewise, Lucas (1978) and Jovanovic (1982) noted that high unemployment rate is linked with lower levels of entrepreneurial activities, in other words, where the tendency to start enterprises is less; unemployment rate would be raised. This implied that, persons who are unemployed tend to remain so, as they possess lower endowments of entrepreneurial talents and human capital required to start and sustain new firms. A lower level of entrepreneurship culture and skills in any society may be a consequence of the low socio-economic development which also reflects higher levels of unemployment (Audretsch, 1995).

Methodolgy

The Design of the Study

The research design of this study is the descriptive survey and has elicited information from the respondents on Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) and Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta. The instrument used for the collection of data in this study is a structured questionnaire which has two sections. The first section comprises the respondent bio-data, such as: age, sex, qualification, and years of experience etc. while the second section comprises the research questions on the impact of Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) and Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta. The respondents are expected to tick the right options from the given options in both sections and provide explanations where necessary.

Population and Sample Size of the Study

The study's population comprises participants of the Presidential Amnesty Programme in the region of about Eight thousand and sixty-seven (8067) delegates. To calculate the sample size a confidence interval of 95% (which is conventionally acceptable) is used in the determination of the sample size for the study.

As such given the formula:

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

Where: n = actual sample size

P = the total population of the study

e = significance level of the study

Substituting the values of the total population and the significant level into the formula, the actual sample size for the study becomes:

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

$$n = \frac{8067}{1 + 8067(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 382$$

Three hundred and eighty two (382) delegates were randomly selected for questioning, interviewing and for focus group discussions using simple random sampling technique. Therefore, the total population in a sample size of this paper is three hundred and eighty two (382) delegates from the Presidential Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta.

Methods of Data Analysis

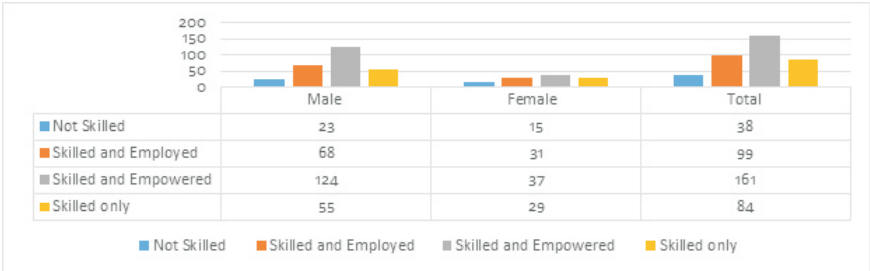
The information of individuals were coded, and later, entered and processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program to get the mean and simple percentages needed for analysis and interpretation of the results. To calculate the frequency of distribution of the study, the different categories of responses were

used. To arrive at the item and section average ratings, responses were scaled as follow: Yes 2 points and No 1 point.

The mean ratings calculated from different categories were used to answer the stated research questions. Where the mean rating of 2 and 1 of the study is 1.50, that will be 50 percent. Therefore, if the mean rating is 1.50 (50 percent) or higher it will be considered as significant in explaining any variation in the element under study. On the other hand, if the mean rating is less than 1.50 (50 percent), it is considered insignificant. Finally, the SPSS 17.0 was used for estimation of the average (mean), standard deviation, and to answer the research questions and the test of hypotheses.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

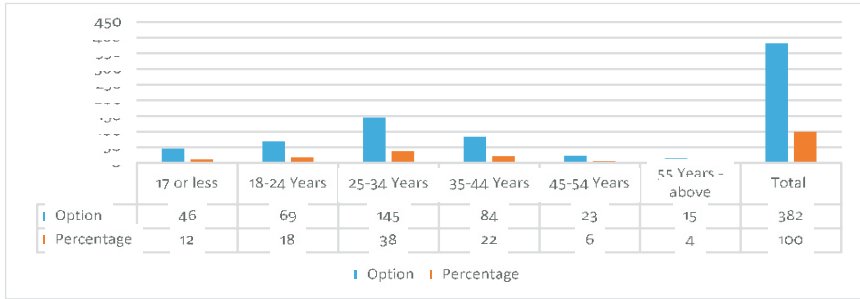
Data Presentation and Discussion



Source: Survey result, 2017

Figure. 4.1: Distribution of Groups of Delegates by Gender

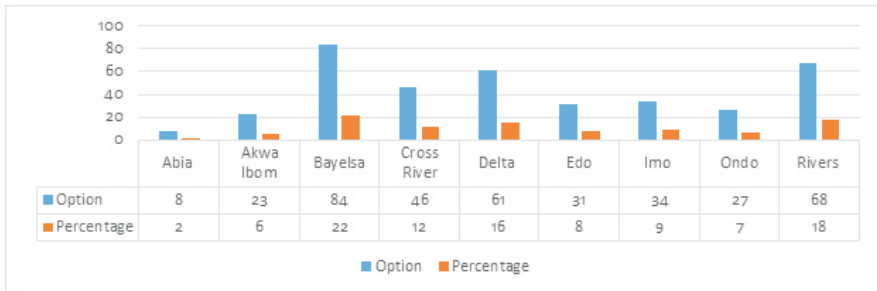
Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of groups of delegates by Gender. 23 male and 15 female were not trained during the amnesty programme, 68 male and 31 female were trained and employed, 124 male and 37 female were trained and empowered while 55 male and 29 female were trained only.



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Figure. 4.2: Distribution of Delegates by Age Group

Figure 4.2 shows the age distribution of the delegates. 12% of the total delegates or respondents falls below 17 years, 18% of the total delegates or respondents falls between ages 18-24, 38% of the total delegates falls between ages 25-34, 22% of the total delegates fall between ages 35-44, 6% of the total delegates falls between ages 45-54 while 4% of the total delegates falls between ages 55 and over.

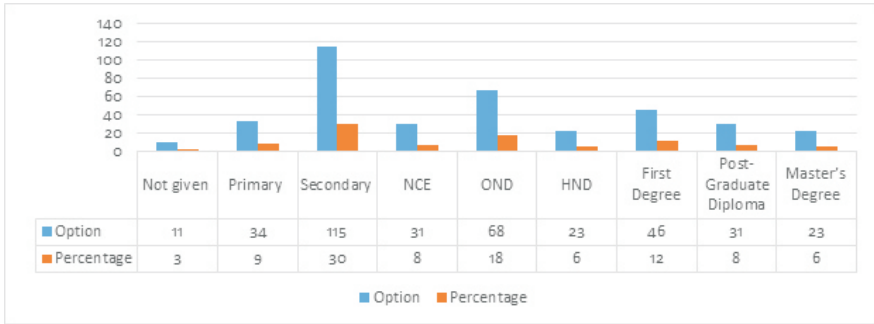


Source: Survey Result, 2017

Figure 4.3: Distribution of Delegates by States of Origin

Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of delegates by States of origin. Eight delegates are from Abia State 23 delegates are from Akwa-Ibom State, 84 delegates are from Bayelsa State, 46 delegates are from Cross River State, 61 delegates are from Delta State, 31 delegates are

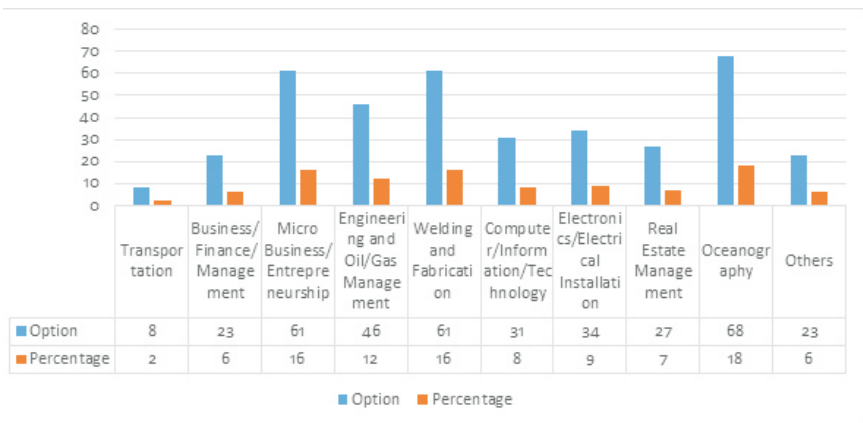
from Edo State, 34 delegates are from Imo State, 27 delegates are from Ondo State while 68 delegates are from Rivers State.



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Figure 4.4: Distribution of Delegates by Highest Level of Education Attained

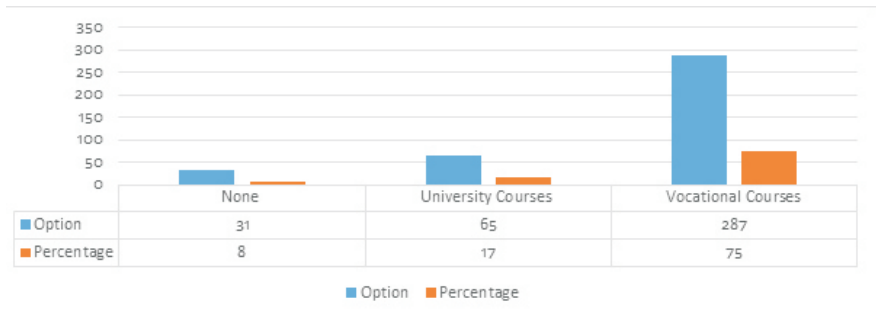
Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of delegates by highest level of education attained. 11 delegates did not indicate their level of education, 34 delegates are primary school holders, 115 of the delegates have secondary education, 31 delegates are NCE holders, 68 delegates are OND holders, 23 delegates are HND holders, 46 delegates are first degree holders, 31 delegates have post-graduate diploma while 23 delegates have master’s degrees.



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Figure 4.5: Distribution of Delegates by Name of Course

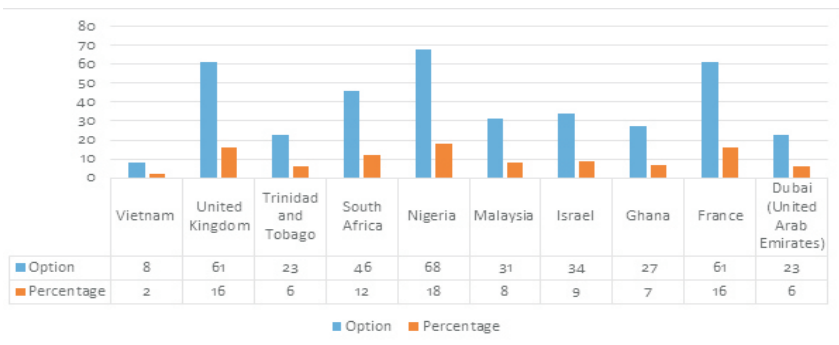
Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of delegates by their courses. Eight delegates did Transportation, 23 delegates did Business/Finance/Management, 61 delegates did Micro Business/Entrepreneurship, 46 delegates did Engineering and Oil/Gas Management, 61 delegates did Welding and Fabrication, 31 delegates did Computer/Information/Technology, 34 delegates did Electronics/Electrical Installation, 27 delegates did Real Estate Management, 68 delegates did Oceanography and 23 delegates did other courses.



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Figure 4.6: Distribution of Delegates by Types of PAP Courses

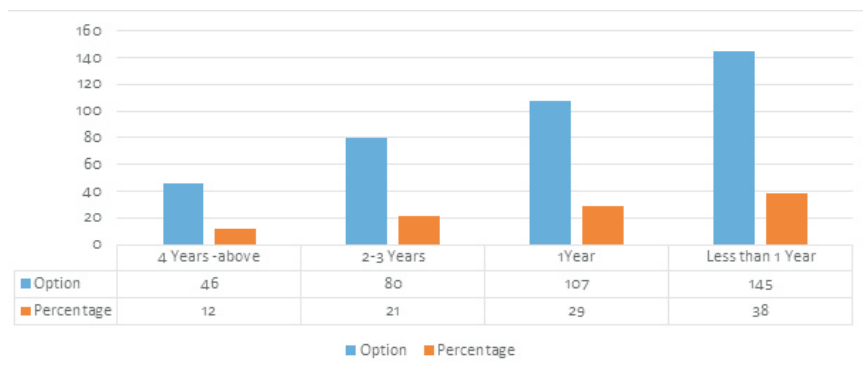
Figure 4.6 shows the distribution of delegates by types of PAP courses. Seventeen percent of the delegates were engaged in university degree courses during the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), 8% of the delegates were not involved in the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), while 75% of the total delegates were engaged in vocational courses during the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP).



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Figure 4.7: Distribution of Delegates by Country of PAP Course.

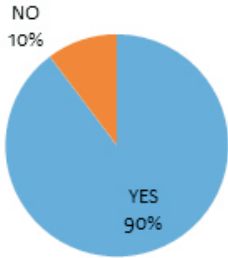
Figure 4.7 shows the distribution of delegates by country of PAP courses. Two percent of the total delegates did their courses in Vietnam, 16% of the total delegates did their courses in United Kingdom, 6% of the total delegates did their courses in Trinidad and Tobago, 12% of the total delegates did their courses in in South Africa, 6% of the total delegates did their courses in Nigeria, 8% of the total delegates did their courses in Malaysia, 9% of the total delegates did their courses in Israel, 7% of the total delegates did their courses in Ghana, 16% of the total delegates did their courses in France and 6% of the total delegates did their courses in Dubai (United Arab Emirates).



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Figure 4.8: Distribution of Delegates by PAP Course Length

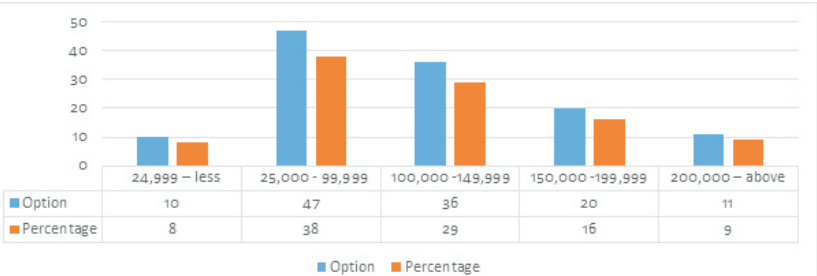
Figure 4.8 shows the distribution of delegates by PAP Course length. Twelve percent of the delegates spent 4 years and above in their programs, 21% of the delegates spent 2 to 3 years in their programs, 29% of the delegates spent 1 year in their programs while 38% of the delegates spent less than 1 year in their programs.



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Fig. 4.9: Did your training and qualification help you to get your current job?

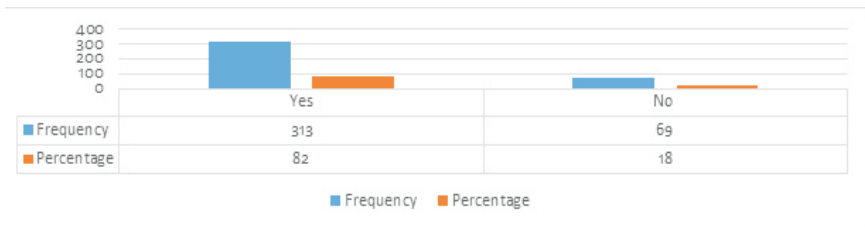
Figure 4.9 shows how the delegates training and qualifications from PAP have helped them to secure their current jobs. Ninety percent of the delegates agreed to the fact that their training has helped them to secure their current jobs while 10% of the delegates said No to the question.



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Fig.4.10: Distribution of Employed Delegates by Monthly Salary

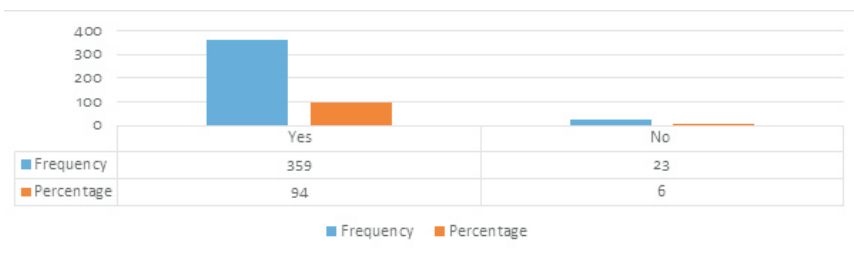
Figure 4.10 shows the monthly income of the delegates. Eight percent out of the total employed delegates earns N24, 000 and less as monthly income, 38% out of the total employed delegates earn N25, 000 to N99, 999 as monthly income, 29% out of the total employed delegates earn N100, 000 to N149, 999 as monthly income, 16% out of the total employed delegates earn N150, 000 to N199, 999 as monthly income while 9% out of the total employed delegates earn N200, 000 and above as monthly income. From the figure, it is clear that majority of the respondents earn 24,999 and less.



Source: Survey result, 2017

Fig. 4.11: Did your training help you to set up and manage your current business?

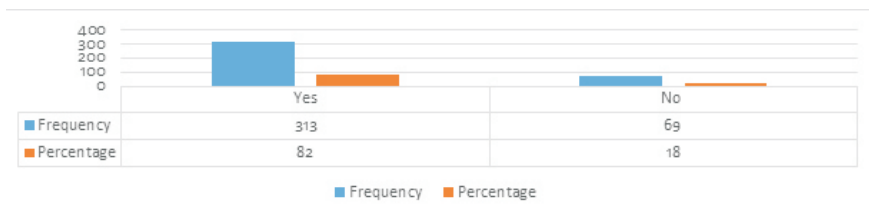
Figure 4.11 shows the respondents opinions on their training and business management. Eighty two percent out of the total delegates said yes to the fact that their training from the PAP have helped them in managing their businesses while 18% out of the total delegates said no to the fact that their training from the PAP has helped them in managing their businesses. This implied that the PAP training have been helpful to delegates in managing their businesses.



Source: Survey result 2017

Fig. 4.12: Distribution of Delegates Financial Ability to meet basic daily needs

Figures 4.12 shows the delegates' ability to meet basic daily needs of their households. Ninety-four percent agreed that they have the financial ability to meet the daily needs of their households while 6% of the total delegates disagreed. This implies that quite a number of the delegates can meet their daily needs of the households.



Source: Survey Result, 2017

Fig. 4.13: Distribution of Delegates by Financial situation better now than 5 years ago

Figure 4.13 shows the delegates' financial situation better now than five years ago. Eighty two percent of out of the total delegates said yes to the fact that their financial situations are better now than five years ago. While 18% said no to the fact that their financial situations are better now than five years ago.

Analysis of the impact of Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) on Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics Results for Positive Relationship between Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) and Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta

	N	Min	Max	Mean (average)		Standard deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Variables	382	0.00	1.00	0.819	0.05	0.386	0.62
Valid Number	382						

Note: If the mean rating is 50% or higher will be considered as significant in explaining any variation in the element under study. On the other hand, if the mean rating is less than 50%, it is considered insignificant.

On Table 4.1, the mean statistic is 82% approximately; this implies that Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) is positively related to Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta. From the result, the calculated percentage of the mean value is greater than 50%. Hence, the **H₁ is accepted**. This shows, that there is a positive relationship between Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) and Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta and **H₀ is rejected** which states that there is no positive relationship between Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) and Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta.

Summary of the Major Findings

The data presented and the results show that Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) has impact on Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta. From the data presented in the figures above, it means that many of the delegates were youths and that the program has helped many delegates to participate in one

entrepreneurship training which has helped them to secure employment or create business opportunities. The PAEP has enabled them to have means of income generation, business opportunities, job creation, training, shelter and provision of major basic needs. Finally, the descriptive result shows that Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) has a positive relationship and impact on Youth Socio-Economic Status in Niger-Delta which in turn has improved their standards of living and other socio-economic conditions in the region.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study has established that Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) can be a useful tool for the improvement of Youth Socio-Economic Status and conditions in Niger-Delta. That is, through improvement in Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) in Niger-Delta, government can increase the level of income generation, business opportunities, job creation, training, shelter and provision of major basic needs in the region. But these can only be achieved if the government can address the problems of Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) in the region which are proper implementation of the Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) policies in the region and increasing the funds and the capacity of the program to accommodate more youths in the region because many that were selected were not trained and many that were trained were not empowered during the program. Therefore, the study recommends the following policies for Presidential Amnesty Entrepreneurship Program (PAEP) in the Niger-Delta region.

- i. government should have a mechanism to adequately train all the selected delegate especially in entrepreneurship programs and activities in the region.
- ii. government should ensure that those that are trained are properly empowered to enable them to start - up businesses and engage in productivity activities.
- iii. government should increase the capacity of the program to enable more youths to benefit from the Entrepreneurship Program in the region.

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