Assessment Of Construction Industry Skills Needs For Curbing Cyber-Crime Activities Amongst Youths In Rivers State.

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Abstract

Cybercrimes among youths have increased significantly in various parts of the world and in Nigeria it occurs on a daily basis. To curb this ugly menace in Rivers State, the researcher embarked on a study to determine the extent technical skills and project management skills are needed in curbing cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 20 building technology lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State and 50 building contractors. The census sampling was used for the study since the population was of a manageable size. A structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire titled Assessment of Construction Industry Skills in Curbing Cyber-Crime Activities Amongst Youths in Rivers State (ACISNCCAYRS) was used for the study. The validity of the instrument was carried out by three building technology lecturers. The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering the instrument to 10 Building technology lecturers in Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Port Harcourt. Thereafter, the internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that carpentry and joinery, brick and block laying, concreting work, plumbing, amongst others are technical skills are very highly needed for curbing cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The study also revealed budget and cost management, risk management, quality management, etc. are highly needed project management skills in curbing cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The study recommended that Government through the ministry of labour, employment and productivity should regularly organize training on technical skills and project management skills for all Rivers State youths as this will make them employable and self-reliant thus curbing cybercrime activities.

Keywords: *Construction Industry, Skills, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Cybercrime.*

I.   Introduction

One of the main engines of a country's socioeconomic development is its construction sector.
The construction sector is a major factor in raising the standard of the built environment (Ibrahim, 2016).

A commonality is the increasing demand for construction projects due to urbanization and rising living standards, particularly in emerging countries like Nigeria, and the corresponding necessity to provide housing for their population (Babatunde, 2012).

Bilau, et al., (2015) observed that those who skilfully use their hands to contribute to the practical implementation of a project in the construction sector are known as construction workers.

The greatest challenges currently facing the construction industry in Nigeria, is the current average age of trained craftsmen and artisans in the sector is between 45-60 years and fewer skilled workers are available to replace the aging workforce (Iro, 2011).

Often times employers in the construction industry may report shortages of particular skilled workers or difficulties in filling vacancies, either because there are not enough of them or else those who are available do not possess skills deemed necessary by construction industry employers, such as technical skills and project management (Ajagbe, et al., 2012). The construction industry seeks competent and qualified individuals to join its workforce to achieve productivity and remain competitive and innovative (Okoroma, 2017).

Skills are abilities and competences needed to perform a task adequately, skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to work environmental demands. A skill is an ability to perform a productive task at certain level of competence. Darren, et al., (2012) posit that as a skill is associated with a particular task, a person who does not possess such a skill is unlikely to be able to carry out such task or will be less productive than somebody who does possess this skill.

They added that skills are often associated with a qualification and its acquisition through formal and informal training and on the job experience.

Skill acquisition can be defined as a form of training an individual or group of individuals that leads to the acquisition of knowledge for self-sustenance (Idoko, 2014).

Okwelle and Owo (2017) posited that skill acquisition is pre-eminently the cultivation of overt employable skills which tend towards self-reliance in different kinds of occupation. For skills acquisition to be implemented, there must exist some type of learning/education, whether formal or informal to pass the needed knowledge and dexterities. This is where Technical vocational education and training (TVET) comes in, to ensure standards and regulations are met during instructions.

TVET is globally recognized for its role in preparing people for dynamic engagement in occupations of functional value and effective source of skilled workforce. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in National Policy of Education (2013) has it that TVET is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of educational process involving, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life in addition to general education.

In Nigeria today, digital internet technology has enabled the daily commission of various cybercrimes, such as advanced fee fraud 419 (Yahoo-yahoo), stealing/selling of personal information (identity theft), illegal hacking, electronic phishing, denial of service (DOS), credit card fraud, etc.

Crimes performed using computers, smartphones and communication devices via the cyber-space and internet are referred to as CYBER-CRIMES.

Cybercrime encompasses a wide range of illegal activities, from electronic cracking to denial of service (DOS) attacks, where computers or computer networks are used as a tool, a target, or a location for criminal conduct. Cybercrime includes any illegal activity where computer or internet is either a tool or target or both (Akinyetun, 2021).

According to Financial Derivatives Company FDC (2020), cybercrime in Nigeria is predicted to have cost the country ₦250 billion naira ($649 million dollars) in 2017 and ₦288 billion naira ($800 million dollars) in 2018.

Furthermore, Queen's (2022) report highlights the exponential rise in cybercrime incidents, with over 2,000 and about 3,000 convictions recorded in 2021 and 2022, respectively. These data show the need for self-reliance and the importance of skills acquisition.

Self-reliance as defined by Chijioke, et al., (2017) is that skill which promotes achieving autonomy and independence without needlessly turning to begging or crimes (cybercrime).

Relying on one's own abilities and efforts is the essence of self-reliance (Fonchingong & Lotsmart 2013).

Bhurtel (2015) asserts that when someone gains expertise in any field or discipline, they are able to fend for themselves, start their own company and even hire others, demonstrating true independence.

The present technological strategies to combat cybercrime are ineffective at halting its growth, and cybercrime is on the rise. This suggests that additional preventive measures are necessary to lower cybercrime. Given the foregoing, it became essential to provide TVET in order to significantly lessen its disastrous consequences throughout the nation.

This study shall focus briefly on the following Construction Industry skills, they include; Technical Skills and Project Management Skills.

Technical Skills

Carpentry and Joinery: is the application of technological principles and processes to design, create, and construct wood products, such as furniture, cabinets, and other wooden items. Onyia (2022) stated that carpentry and joinery involves the use of various tools, machines, and techniques to shape, join, and finish wood materials.

Brick/Block Laying: according to Amobi (2015) is the art or science of erecting or constructing shelters or place or habitations for man or animal.

Concreting Works: entails the batching of cement, aggregate, and water in the production, placement, and curing of concrete to build sturdy and long-lasting structures (foundations, columns, beams, slabs, and other load-bearing components), completely mixing them, putting the mixture in a formwork, compacting it to eliminate air, and curing it to enable the chemical process of hydration to harden the concrete to its ultimate strength are all steps in this skill set.

Plumbing: is the process of installing, fixing, and maintaining plumbing fixtures, pipelines, and other equipment used in residential, commercial, and industrial structures for the distribution of water and the disposal of waste.

Tiling: is the ability to calculate tile requirements, prepare surfaces, cut and lay different types of tiles, mix mortar and glue, plan and design, lay out and install, and finish the work satisfactorily.

Painting: is a type of building finishing, that involves the application of paint on the surface of a building or structure to give the it a good, appreciable, durable and final appearance (Otu, 2021).

Building Design: is the art of representing the building to be constructed on a paper or computer using computer aided design (CAD), by following a systematic process and standards, that will serve as a guide to the builder.

Surveying: it is employed to delineate and chart the contours of the terrain and existing features on the earth's surface or marginally above or below it, such as trees, buildings, manholes, retaining walls, utility poles, etc. (Mpiti, 2017).

Operating Equipment: the expertise in manipulating heavy-duty vehicles and equipment used in structural and infrastructure projects to carry out duties including materials handling, site preparations, and earthmoving operations (excavators, bulldozers, compactors, concrete mixers, graders, etc.).

Use of CAD software: CAD skill is the use of a computer to display graphic images of technical and engineering concepts, which enable research and design work to be transformed into finished products with higher quality, greater precision and at lower cost (G2 Crowd Incorporation, 2019).

Project Management Skills

Budget and Cost Management: develop your ability to create and manage budgets, estimate costs, and keep track of expenditures.

Risk Management: create plans for locating, evaluating, and reducing possible risks.

Quality Management: discover how to uphold high standards during a project by learning about quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) procedures.

Safety Measures: learn about OSHA rules and recommended measures for ensuring a safe workplace.

Technical and Industry Skills: learn industry-specific software, comprehend various construction techniques, and stay current with building codes and regulations.

Communication Skills: practice active listening, develop clear and concise communication, learn to give and receive feedback.

Leadership Skills: master the art of delegation, cultivate emotional intelligence, develop conflict resolution skills and master team coordination.

Innovation Adaptability: explore new technologies, use building information modeling, embrace mobile technology, and keep up with sustainable building techniques.

Learning Mindset: establish objectives for your own growth, look for educational opportunities, accept criticism, pick up tips from your peers, and always offer to take the initiative.

Problem Solving Skills: cultivate a proactive problem-solving culture, engage in scenario planning, gain knowledge from previous projects, establish a methodical approach to risk assessment, and draft comprehensive backup plans.

Statement of the Problem

The world has changed to the point where it is reasonable to say that it is now a complete online community due to the ease of communication and unrestricted access to information. Nevertheless, there are drawbacks to this unrestricted internet access, besides other threats to human life, it has given rise to cybercrime that can be perpetrated anywhere in the world from the touch of button.

Nigeria has seen a cataclysmic eruption of cybercrime as many young people use, misuse, and abuse their access to the internet network, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, cyberextortion, phishing, and other forms of cybercrime have a significant impact on the country's socioeconomic affairs, and unless something is done to prevent the dangers arising from cybercrime, it is likely to destroy a nation's peace and security as well as undermine the economy (Bhawna, 2016).

Despite all the steps taken by the Nigerian government to address this menace of cybercrimes, their results have not yet been clearly seen. When taking into account the aims and objectives of TVET, it has shown that if properly utilized, it has the capacity to improve people's productive skills/abilities, assisting them in generating revenue and wealth to escape the temptation that comes from financial dependence, begging and crimes - CYBERCRIME.

Thus, industry skills, specifically construction industry skills is playing a bigger part in maintaining competitive levels that are acceptable for self-reliance and employability, while reducing cybercrimes in Rivers State.

Aims and Objective of the Study

The aim of this study was to assess the construction industry skills in curbing cyber-crime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to assess the extent;

1. Technical skills needed for curbing cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.
2. Project management skills needed for curbing cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to elicit responses of the respondents.

1. To what extent are technical skills needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State?
2. To what extent are project management skills needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses was tested at .05 level of confidence

H_{O1}: There is no significant between mean responses Building Technology lecturers and Building Contractors on the extent technical skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.

H_{O2}**:** There is no significant between mean responses Building Technology lecturers and Building Contractors on the extent project management skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.

II.   Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design was appropriate for the research because survey design according to Ogundu (2018) is a type of descriptive survey research whose purpose is to collect data from a large or manageable sample of a population so as to determine the distribution, occurrence and interaction of educational and sociological phenomena. The population of the study consisted of 20 building technology lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State and 50 building' contractors. The census sampling was used for the study since the population was of a manageable size. A structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire of very high extent (VHE), high extent (HE), undecided (U), low extent (LE) and very low extent (VLE) was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Construction Industry Skills Needs to Curb Cyber-Crime Activities Amongst Youths in Rivers State (ACISNCCAYRS)", with a corresponding numerical value of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned to the response scale for each item as represented below with real limits (VHE) = 5, (HE) = 4, (U) = 3, (LE) = 2, VLE = 1. The validity of the instrument was carried out by three building technology lecturers in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Federal College of Education Technical (Omoku) who carried out a face and content validity of the questionnaire items. The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering the instrument to 10 Building technology lecturers in Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Port Harcourt. Thereafter, the internal consistency of both instruments was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient and the reliability of the instruments stood at .87, indicating good internal consistency of the instrument. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. For answering the research questions, a criterion mean of 3.5 was established. Mean responses of 3.5 and above were high extent (HE), while mean responses below 3.5 were low extent (LE). For testing the null hypotheses, if the significant value at two tailed is equal or greater than the .05 the null hypotheses were accepted. If the significant value at two tailed was less than .05 the null was be rejected.

The cut off mean for the Likert scale was based on the rating scale: 4.50–5.00 = *Very Highly Needed (VHN)*, 3.50–4.49 = *Highly Needed (HN)*, 2.50–3.49 = *Needed (N)*, 1.50–2.49 = *Not Needed (NN), 1.00*–1.49 = *Highly Not Needed (HNN)*.

III.   Results

Research Question 1: To what extent are technical skills needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for Technical Skills Needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst Youths in Rivers State

S/N	Items	Building Lecturers =20			Building Contractors =50		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	RMK	$\bar{x}$	SD	RMK
1.	Carpentry and joinery	4.18	.65	HN	4.29	.58	HN
2.	Brick and block laying	4.26	.68	HN	4.29	.59	HN
3.	Concreting work	4.19	.75	HN	4.18	.63	HN
4.	Plumbing	4.32	.62	HN	4.27	.62	HN
5.	Tiling	4.44	.60	HN	4.25	.70	HN
6.	Painting	4.47	.61	VHN	4.36	.57	HN

7.	Building Design	4.55	.51	VHN	4.42	.56	HN
8.	Surveying	4.39	.70	HN	4.25	.76	HN
9.	Operating equipment	4.53	.54	VHN	4.45	.68	VHN
10.	Use of CAD software	4.58	.57	VHN	4.39	.73	HN
	Grand Mean/Standard Deviation	**4.39**	**.64**		**4.46**	**.66**	

Source: Field Survey 2025.

Table 1 is the result of the Mean and Standard Deviation for technical skills needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The respondents agreed on the ten items. The mean scores of the items ranged from 4.18-4.58. The criterion mean of the respondents is 4.39 and 4.46. Since the mean scores exceeded the criterion mean of 3.5 it indicates that all the technical skills are needed to curb Cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: To what extent are project management skills needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for project management skills needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst Youths in Rivers State

S/N	Items	Building Lecturers = (20)			Building Contractors = (50)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	RMK	$\bar{x}$	SD	RMK
11	Budget and Cost Management Skill	4.00	.64	HN	4.10	.69	HN
12	Risk Management Skill	4.20	.82	HN	4.31	.78	HN
13	Quality Management Skill	4.25	.44	HN	4.27	.45	HN
14	Safety Measures Skill	4.55	.50	VHN	4.48	.51	VHN
15	Technical and Industry Skills	4.40	.49	HN	4.46	.50	VHN
16	Communication Skills	4.65	.48	VHN	4.63	.53	VHN
17	Leadership Skills	4.60	.49	VHN	4.63	.53	VHN
18	Innovation Adaptability	4.40	.59	HN	4.44	.61	HN
19	Learning Mindset	3.95	.68	HN	4.06	.67	HN
20	Problem Solving Skill	4.55	.75	VHN	4.65	.52	VHN
	Grand Mean/Standard Deviation	**4.36**	**.59**		**4.40**	**.58**	

Source: Field Survey 2025.

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation for technical skills needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The mean score of building lecturers ranged from 3.95 to 4.65 the mean values exceeded the criterion mean of 3.50 indicating that the building lecturers agreed on the items in the instrument. The mean score of builders' contractors ranged from 4.06 to 4.65 the mean values exceeded the criterion mean of 3.50 indicating that the builders agreed on the items in the instrument. The grand mean of the building teachers and building contractors are 4.36 and 4.40 respectively. The respondents were homogeneous in their responses as the grand standard deviation was .59 and .58 for building teachers and building contractors.

Hypotheses

H$_{O1}$: There is no significant between mean responses Building Technology lecturers and Building Contractors on the extent technical skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.

Table 3: Z-test on the extent technical skills is needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.

Respondents	No	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	z-calc	P	z-crit	Decision
Building Lectures	20	4.39	.64					
Builders Contractors	50	4.46	.66	68	.34	.05	2.01	Accept

Source: Field survey 2025.

Table 3 shows the result of the z-test on the extent technical skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The table revealed the mean of building lecturers is 4.39 with a standard deviation of .64 while the mean and standard deviation of building contractors is 4.46 and .66 respectively. The calculated z-score was .34 which is less than the table value of 2.01 hence the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 level of significance.

H$_{O2}$: There is no significant between mean responses Building Technology lecturers and Building Contractors on the extent project management skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-test State project management skills is needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State.

Respondents	No	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	Z-Calc	P	Z-crit	Decision
Building Lectures	20	4.36	.58					
Builders Contractors	50	4.40	.59	68	.105	.05	2.01	Accept

Source: Field survey 2025.

Table 3 shows the result of the z-test on the extent project management skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The table revealed the mean of building lecturers is 4.36 with a standard deviation of .58 while the mean and standard deviation of building contractors is 4.40 and .59 respectively. The calculated z-score was .105 which is less than the table value of 2.01 hence the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 level of significance.

IV.   Discussion Of Findings

Research question 1 examined the extent technical skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The findings of the study revealed that carpentry and joinery, brick and block laying, concreting work, plumbing, tiling, painting, building design, surveying, operating equipment and use of CAD software are technical skills that are very highly needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The study also revealed that there is no significant between mean responses Building Technology lecturers and Building Contractors on the extent technical skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the view Maduabuchukwu, et al., (2019) who maintained that automobile, welding and fabrication, forging and foundry, carpentry, furniture making, plumbing and pipefitting, phone repairs, masonry, fishery, electrical installation and maintenance are skills that are capable to transform the trainee to becoming self-employed and to contribute to the development of his/her society.

Research question 2 examined the extent project management skills are needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The findings of the study revealed that budget and cost management, risk management, quality management, safety measure, technical and industry, communication skills, leadership, innovation adaptability, learning mindset and problem-solving skills are highly needed project management skills in curbing cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. The findings of the study corroborate Chijioke, et al., (2021) who maintained that by creating at least one skill acquisition center in every local government area, will compel youths to seek and access the opportunity of learning a skill. These skills if learned by the youth will go a long way in making them self-reliant, in turn reducing cybercrime in Nigeria.

V.   Conclusion

Acquisition of construction industry skills are very highly needed to curb cybercrime activities amongst youths in Rivers State. Technical skills and project management skills are highly needed as they enable youths to build infrastructure and maintain structures which supports their individual needs, societal needs and economic stability of Nigeria.

VI.   Recommendations

The following recommendation were made based on the findings of the study
1. Government at all levels should provide adequate funding to establish functional and well-equipped training centers in both urban and rural places for effective acquisition of the various technical skills as this will keep the youths engaged thereby curbing cybercrime activities.
2. Government through the ministry of labour, employment and productivity should organize trainings on project management skills for all Rivers State youths as this will make them employable and self-reliant thus curbing cyber activities.

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