

# Retired But Not Tired: Insights for Global Application from Skill Acquisition among Retirees in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Retirement presents economic, social, and psychological challenges, particularly in regions with weak social welfare systems. It is therefore necessary to identify practical strategies that ensure sustainable post-employment living. This study examines the role of skill acquisition in promoting sustainable living among retirees in Ondo West Local Government Area, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was employed, with data collected from 38 purposively selected retirees through a structured questionnaire comprising 40 items. The instrument contained sections on demographic characteristics, engagement in skill acquisition, perceived benefits and barriers, and strategies for enhancement. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, variance, and t-tests, were used for analysis. Findings reveal that retirees recognize skill acquisition as a viable strategy for ensuring financial independence, social engagement, and personal fulfillment, with notable gender differences in skill preferences. However, barriers such as financial constraints, lack of awareness, and insufficient institutional support were identified. The study recommends early pre-retirement training, increased financial support, and community-driven interventions to enhance retirees' economic stability. Although localized in Ondo West, the study provides insights with wider relevance for sustainable retirement planning in developing economies.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurial training, financial independence, retirement, skill acquisition, sustainable living

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Retirement represents a major transition in an individual's life, often signaling the end of formal employment and the beginning of a new phase characterized by shifts in financial stability, social engagement, and overall well-being. While some retirees experience this phase as a period of relaxation and exploration, others may face economic difficulties, psychological distress, and a sense of reduced purpose. These challenges appear to be more pronounced in regions with weak social welfare systems, where pension schemes are inconsistent and often inadequate. According to the United Nations (2019), the global population of individuals aged 65 and above was approximately 703 million in 2019, with projections indicating an increase to 1.5 billion by 2050. Given this rapid demographic shift, it is likely that a growing number of retirees will require sustainable strategies to ensure financial stability and overall well-being, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria, where formal retirement support structures remain underdeveloped.

Retirement has been broadly conceptualized as a withdrawal from professional engagement due to age, health conditions, or other personal factors (Garba & Mamman, 2014). Ideally, this transition should be smooth, supported by financial security and a strong social support system. However, evidence suggests that many retirees, particularly in developing economies, may struggle with delayed pension payments, reduced economic opportunities, and social isolation. Research indicates that retirees who lack sufficient preparation may be at higher risk of experiencing financial distress, mental health issues, and lower life satisfaction (Odone et al., 2021). Agah and Ikenga (2019) suggest that weak institutional frameworks in developing nations may exacerbate these challenges, leaving retirees with limited options for economic and social engagement. These findings raise important questions about the extent to which proactive retirement planning, particularly skill acquisition, can mitigate these potential difficulties.

The Nigerian context presents a particularly uncertain landscape for retirees. Available reports suggest that many retirees struggle to maintain their standard of living, partly due to irregular pension payments and limited economic opportunities. Abiolu (2015) found that retirees in Nigeria frequently report financial difficulties, health complications, and social disengagement, possibly due to inadequate pre-retirement planning. While this situation is likely prevalent across different regions of the country, the specific experiences of retirees in Ondo West Local Government Area remain underexplored. Ondo West Local Government Area, with its blend of urban and rural contexts, reflects these broader national realities, making it an appropriate location to investigate retirees' experiences. Given reports of economic instability and limited post-retirement job prospects in the area, it is reasonable to hypothesize that many retirees in Ondo West may face significant challenges in sustaining their livelihoods. However, the extent to which these challenges manifest and the role of skill acquisition in alleviating them remain empirical questions.

Skill acquisition has been identified in previous studies as a potential strategy for promoting financial and psychological well-being in retirement. Research suggests that individuals who engage in entrepreneurial activities tend to exhibit higher levels of financial stability and life satisfaction post-retirement (Petters & Uwe, 2015). Skills such as tailoring, farming, culinary arts, and small-scale business management may offer avenues for retirees to generate income and remain engaged in meaningful activities. However, whether retirees in Ondo West actively pursue such opportunities and to what extent these skills translate into sustainable livelihoods remain unclear. Additionally, while some studies (e.g., Amaike, 2016) suggest that skill acquisition could positively influence retirees' social and emotional well-being, further investigation is needed to determine whether these effects are consistent across different contexts.

There is increasing recognition of skill acquisition as a possible component of sustainable retirement planning. In developed countries, structured retirement programs and pension systems provide retirees with a level of financial security. However, even in these contexts, some evidence suggests that retirees who engage in entrepreneurial activities or skill-based work may experience enhanced financial and psychological well-being (Stancanelli & Soest, 2016). This raises important questions about whether similar benefits can be observed in a developing country like Nigeria, where retirement support structures are less reliable.

Nigeria presents a unique case, as retirement planning appears to be largely informal, with many retirees relying on personal savings, family support, or small-scale businesses for sustenance. Unlike developed nations with well-defined institutional frameworks, Nigeria's retirement system is characterized by inconsistencies and potential inefficiencies. Anecdotal reports suggest that many retirees in Ondo West, for instance, struggle to sustain themselves due to the irregularity of pension payments and the absence of structured economic opportunities. However, the extent of this issue and the effectiveness of skill acquisition as a coping strategy remain open to empirical examination. While some studies (e.g., Petters & Uwe, 2015) indicate that skill acquisition could help retirees remain economically active, the specific conditions under which these benefits materialize, and whether they are accessible to most retirees, warrant further investigation.

Despite its potential advantages, several factors may limit retirees' ability to engage in skill acquisition programs. One possible challenge is a lack of awareness and orientation. Research by Garba and Mamman (2014) suggests that many employees do not actively prepare for retirement, often due to insufficient information about post-retirement opportunities. However, the degree to which this lack of awareness impacts skill acquisition in Ondo West has yet to be fully explored. Another potential barrier is financial constraints. Previous studies (e.g., Agah & Ikenga, 2019) suggest that retirees in Nigeria often struggle with financial instability, which may

limit their ability to invest in acquiring new skills. However, it remains uncertain whether access to low-cost or subsidized training programs could improve participation rates among retirees. Additionally, there is a possibility that multiple work and family responsibilities during employees' active years prevent them from pursuing skill acquisition. The extent to which these factors influence participation in skill acquisition programs among retirees in Ondo West is yet to be determined. Cultural perceptions may also play a role in shaping retirees' attitudes toward skill acquisition. In some communities, retirement is perceived as a period of rest rather than continued economic activity. Additionally, gender norms may influence the types of skills that male and female retirees are willing to pursue. While Amaike (2016) highlights how traditional gender roles impact skill preferences, the degree to which such perceptions influence retirees' participation in skill acquisition programs in Ondo West remains an empirical question. A final consideration is the availability of institutional support. While developed countries have structured programs to assist retirees in transitioning to post-employment life, the Nigerian system is reportedly less organized. Abiolu (2015) suggests that a lack of well-organized retirement training programs may leave retirees unprepared for life after work. However, whether this is a widespread issue in Ondo West and how it affects retirees' decisions to engage in skill acquisition remains to be investigated.

Given the potential barriers to skill acquisition, various strategies may help improve participation among retirees. One possibility is integrating retirement planning into workplace training programs. Some studies (e.g., Agah & Ikenga, 2019) suggest that early exposure to financial and skill-based training could improve retirees' ability to sustain themselves post-employment. However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of such interventions remains limited. Another potential strategy involves financial incentives, such as subsidized training programs or small business grants for retirees. If financial constraints are indeed a significant barrier, as some studies suggest, targeted financial support could improve skill acquisition rates. However, the extent to which such initiatives would be embraced by retirees in Ondo West is uncertain. Additionally, flexible training models could be explored to accommodate retirees' schedules and learning capacities. Online programs or weekend training sessions may increase participation, particularly among those with prior commitments. However, further research is needed to determine whether retirees in this region have the technological access and motivation to engage in such programs. Community-driven approaches may also hold promise. Religious organizations, NGOs, and local associations could play a role in mobilizing retirees to engage in lifelong learning. While some studies (e.g., Amaike, 2016) suggest that community-based initiatives can be effective, their applicability to retirees in Ondo West has yet to be examined.

Previous research has suggested that skill acquisition has the potential to improve retirees' financial independence and well-being, yet its actual impact remains uncertain, particularly in contexts such as Ondo West. There is a need to empirically investigate the extent to which retirees in this region engage in skill acquisition, the specific benefits they derive, and the challenges they face. Moreover, the effectiveness of various strategies to enhance skill acquisition among retirees requires further exploration.

The problem addressed by this study is not unique to Ondo West; it reflects a broader national issue that requires urgent attention. Addressing these challenges will likely require a multi-faceted approach involving government agencies, private employers, non-profits, and local communities. Therefore, this study has the following objectives:

1. To identify the prospects of skill acquisition for promoting sustainability during retirement based on gender.
2. To highlight the types of skills that are accessible to retirees in Ondo West Local Government Area.

3. To determine the barriers to effective skill acquisition among retirees in the study area
4. To identify the strategies that can be implemented to enhance skill acquisition and pre-retirement preparation.

The methodology adopted for this study was quantitative, and it tested the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant gender difference in the prospects of skill acquisition for promoting sustainability during retirement.
2. There is no significant gender difference in the types of skills accessible to retirees in Ondo West Local Government Area.

## **2. METHOD**

### **2.1 Research Design and Area**

This study employs a descriptive survey research design to explore the role of skill acquisition in promoting sustainable living during retirement. The choice of this design is informed by its suitability for systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data related to retirees' experiences, perceptions, and challenges regarding skill acquisition. A descriptive survey allows for a detailed examination of existing conditions, making it an appropriate approach for understanding the retirement realities in Ondo West Local Government Area (LGA) and the potential impact of skill acquisition on retirees' financial stability, social engagement, and overall well-being.

The study was conducted in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria, a region with a combination of urban and rural settings. The choice of Ondo West as the study area was driven by several factors, including its significant population of retirees, economic diversity, and potential opportunities for skill-based economic engagement. The area is known for its mixed economy, characterized by small-scale businesses, agriculture, and informal entrepreneurial activities, making it an ideal location to assess the role of skill acquisition in retirement sustainability. The study was carried out over a period of three months, allowing sufficient time for data collection, validation, and analysis.

Ondo West LGA, like many regions in Nigeria, faces challenges related to retirement planning and financial security. The irregularity of pension payments, limited job opportunities for retirees, and inadequate retirement preparation programs contribute to economic instability among older adults. By focusing on this area, the study provides insights into how skill acquisition can serve as a coping strategy for retirees in similar socio-economic contexts.

### **2.2 Sampling**

The study targeted a population of 1,050 retirees within Ondo West LGA. Given the constraints of time and resources, a sample size of 38 respondents (3.6% of the population) was drawn using a purposive sampling technique. The sample size was considered adequate for exploratory analysis and provides preliminary insights into the study objectives. Participants were selected based on predefined criteria, including currently residing in Ondo West LGA, having retired for at least one year and possessing experience or awareness of skill acquisition opportunities. Given that the study aimed to capture diverse perspectives on skill acquisition, efforts were made to include retirees from different professional backgrounds.

### **2.3 Measurement**

The primary method of data collection was a structured questionnaire, which was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative information related to the research questions. The questionnaire was self-structured by the researchers. To systematically assess the study variables, different measurement approaches were used:

1. **Demographic Factors** – Variables such as age, gender, education level, and years since retirement were measured using categorical data (e.g., male/female, retired for 1-5 years, etc.).
2. **Skill Acquisition Engagement** – Retirees' involvement in skill acquisition was measured by identifying whether they had engaged in training programs before or after retirement. Responses were recorded as binary variables (Yes/No) and were further classified based on the type of skills acquired.
3. **Perceived Benefits of Skill Acquisition** – The impact of skill acquisition on financial sustainability, mental well-being, and social integration was assessed using a Likert scale. Retirees rated their agreement with statements such as "Skill acquisition has helped me maintain a steady income after retirement."
4. **Barriers to Skill Acquisition** – Respondents identified challenges they faced in acquiring new skills. These challenges were categorized into financial barriers, lack of awareness, age-related difficulties, and institutional shortcomings. Participants rated the severity of these barriers using the Likert scale.

The questionnaire was developed using a 4-point Likert scale format, which allowed respondents to express the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with various statements. The response categories ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree).

To ensure content validity, the instrument was reviewed and validated by experts in Home Economics and Consumer Studies at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, and Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo. Their feedback helped refine the questionnaire by eliminating ambiguous questions and improving clarity.

## 2.4 Data Collection

The data collection process involved face-to-face administration of questionnaires, ensuring high response rates. Trained research assistants assisted in distributing the questionnaires, providing explanations where necessary, and collecting completed forms. To minimize non-response bias, follow-up visits were conducted for respondents who required additional time to complete the survey.

## 2.5 Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

1. **Descriptive Analysis:** Mean and standard deviation were used to summarize the overall responses regarding skill acquisition engagement, benefits, and barriers.
2. **Inferential Analysis:** Independent t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences in the perception of skill acquisition benefits.

All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26, a widely used tool for quantitative data analysis. Responses to Likert-scale items were interpreted using a cut-off mean of **2.50**, representing the midpoint of the 4-point scale. Mean values  $\geq 2.50$  were classified as 'Agreed,' indicating positive affirmation of the item, while values  $< 2.50$  were classified as 'Disagreed.' This cut-off provided a standardized basis for evaluating participants' responses across all constructs. Significance levels were set at  $p < 0.05$ , ensuring that findings were statistically meaningful.

To uphold research integrity and ethical standards, the following measures were taken:

- **Informed Consent** – Participants were provided with clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality assurances. Written consent was obtained before data collection.

- **Confidentiality** – Respondents' identities were anonymized, and collected data were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access.
- **Voluntary Participation** – Participants were informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw at any stage without consequences.
- **Avoidance of Bias** – Efforts were made to reduce researcher bias, including the use of standardized questionnaires and multiple data validation checks

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1

**Research Question 1:** What are the prospects of skill acquisition toward sustainability during retirement based on gender?

**Research Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant gender difference in the prospects of skill acquisition for sustainability during retirement.

Table 1: Mean Rating and t-test Statistics of Male and Female Retirees on the Prospects of Skill Acquisition Towards Sustainability During Retirement

SN	Items	$\bar{x}_t \pm V_t$	Dq	$\bar{x}_m \pm V_m$	$\bar{x}_f \pm V_f$	tcal	Sig	Dh
1	Helps to ensure a continual inflow of income after retirement	$3.82 \pm 0.262$	A	$3.74 \pm 0.427$	$3.89 \pm 0.105$	-0.889	0.380	NS
2	Helps to develop problem-solving orientation and creativity	$2.97 \pm 0.188$	A	$3.05 \pm 0.164$	$2.89 \pm 0.222$	1.136	0.264	NS
3	It Aids social interaction and suppresses boredom	$3.08 \pm 0.237$	A	$3.11 \pm 0.211$	$3.06 \pm 0.291$	0.303	0.764	NS
4	Serves as means of impacting the coming generation through mentoring	$3.11 \pm 0.259$	A	$3.26 \pm 0.316$	$2.94 \pm 0.173$	1.952	0.059	NS
5	Gives a sense of personal fulfillment and satisfaction	$3.13 \pm 0.280$	A	$3.26 \pm 0.205$	$3.00 \pm 0.353$	1.521	0.137	NS
6	Adds to the Gross Domestic Products of the Country	$2.38 \pm 0.853$	D	$2.42 \pm 0.813$	$2.41 \pm 0.882$	0.030	0.976	NS
7	Helps keep the retiree busy	$3.21 \pm 0.225$	A	$3.26 \pm 0.316$	$3.17 \pm 0.147$	0.607	0.548	NS
8	Serves as means of exercise to ensure physical fitness	$3.29 \pm 0.319$	A	$3.37 \pm 0.468$	$3.22 \pm 0.183$	0.774	0.444	NS
9	Serves as a source of leisure	$3.05 \pm 0.159$	A	$3.00 \pm 0.222$	$3.11 \pm 0.105$	-0.831	0.411	NS
10	Reduces fear of uncertainty	$3.16 \pm 0.407$	A	$3.21 \pm 0.398$	$3.11 \pm 0.458$	0.463	0.646	NS

**Key:** A = Agreed, D = Disagreed, NS = Not Significant,  $\bar{x}_t$  = Mean of all respondents,  $V_t$  = Variance of all responses,  $\bar{x}_m$  = Mean of male respondents,  $V_m$  = Variance of male responses,  $\bar{x}_f$  = Mean of female respondents,  $V_f$  = Variance of female responses, tcal = t-test calculated value, S2t = Significance (2-tailed), Dh = Decision based on hypothesis

From Table 1, the average responses of both male and female retirees indicate agreement on the prospects of skill acquisition for sustainability during retirement, with mean values ranging from 2.97 to 3.82. The responses suggest that skill acquisition is beneficial for continuous income, physical fitness, personal fulfillment, social interaction, and reducing uncertainty, among others. However, both male and female retirees disagreed that skill acquisition significantly contributes to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with an average rating of 2.38. The variance in responses ranged from 0.159 to 0.853, suggesting moderate consistency. Notably, the t-test calculations for each item revealed no significant gender differences in the views of male and female retirees on these prospects, as evidenced by the non-significant p-values ( $S2t > 0.05$ ).

### 3.2 Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2

**Research Question 2:** What are the skills accessible to retirees in the study area to ensure sustainable living?

**Research Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant gender difference in the skills accessible to male and female retirees in the study area to ensure sustainable living.

Table 2: Skills Accessible to Retirees in the Study Area to Ensure Sustainable Living in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State

SN	Items	$\bar{x}_t \pm V_t$	Dq	$\bar{x}_m \pm V_m$	$\bar{x}_f \pm V_f$	tcal	Sig	Dh
1	Tailoring, weaving, knitting, and embroidery	3.08 ± 0.299	A	3.11 ± 0.222	3.06 ± 0.408	0.297	0.768	NS
2	Hat and bead making	3.03 ± 0.194	A	3.06 ± 0.056	3.00 ± 0.353	0.369	0.715	NS
3	Textile production (e.g. tie and dye, batik)	3.08 ± 0.243	A	3.11 ± 0.105	3.06 ± 0.408	0.329	0.744	NS
4	Bakery, cookery, and managing eatery	2.84 ± 0.529	A	2.83 ± 0.265	2.83 ± 0.853	0.000	1.000	NS
5	Creche and child care services	3.03 ± 0.527	A	3.17 ± 0.382	2.89 ± 0.693	1.137	0.264	NS
6	Dry cleaning	2.30 ± 1.215	D	2.74 ± 0.982	1.88 ± 1.110	2.507	0.017	S
7	Farming (e.g. poultry, rabbitry, cropping)	3.24 ± 0.245	A	3.37 ± 0.246	3.12 ± 0.235	1.531	0.135	NS
8	Painting and drawing	2.51 ± 0.368	A	2.47 ± 0.263	2.53 ± 0.515	-0.270	0.789	NS
9	Managing real estate	3.00 ± 0.229	A	3.11 ± 0.105	2.88 ± 0.360	1.415	0.166	NS
10	Event planning	2.95 ± 0.330	A	3.00 ± 0.111	2.88 ± 0.610	0.599	0.553	NS
11	Photography	2.73 ± 0.425	A	2.79 ± 0.287	2.65 ± 0.618	0.641	0.526	NS
12	Music	2.94 ± 0.340	A	3.00 ± 0.118	2.88 ± 0.610	0.583	0.564	NS
13	Hairdressing and Barbing	2.78 ± 0.508	A	2.74 ± 0.427	2.82 ± 0.654	-0.355	0.725	NS
14	Bookbinding	2.81 ± 0.547	A	2.79 ± 0.620	2.82 ± 0.529	-0.134	0.894	NS
15	Computer services	2.65 ± 0.456	A	2.58 ± 0.368	2.71 ± 0.596	-0.551	0.585	NS

**Key:** A = Agreed, D = Disagreed, NS = Not Significant,  $\bar{x}_t$  = Mean of all respondents,  $V_t$  = Variance of all responses,  $\bar{x}_m$  = Mean of male respondents,  $V_m$  = Variance of male responses,  $\bar{x}_f$  = Mean of female respondents,  $V_f$  = Variance of female responses, tcal = t-test calculated value, S2t = Significance (2-tailed), Dh = Decision based on hypothesis

The results in Table 2 show that both male and female retirees generally agree on the skills that can be acquired for sustainable living. These skills include tailoring, farming, bakery management, event planning, photography, and more. However, the skill of dry cleaning was identified as a significant difference between the genders, with males expressing more interest in it ( $m = 2.74$ ) compared to females ( $f = 1.88$ ). The t-test indicates that dry cleaning is a significant skill for males ( $S2t = 0.017$ ), but not for females ( $S2t = 1.000$  for other items). The variance in responses ranged from 0.194 to 1.215, suggesting moderate consistency in responses across respondents.

### 3.3 Research Question 3

**Research Question 3:** What are the factors impeding the acquisition of skills by male and female retirees during their active service?

Table 3: Factors Impeding the Acquisition of Skills by Male and Female Retirees During Their Active Service

SN	Items	$\bar{X} \pm V$	Decision
1	Lack of interest	$2.89 \pm 0.321$	Agreed
2	Poor orientation and insufficient information	$3.03 \pm 0.138$	Agreed
3	Multiple engagement during active service	$2.94 \pm 0.225$	Agreed
4	Negligence and carelessness	$2.78 \pm 0.508$	Agreed
5	Lack of time	$2.92 \pm 0.521$	Agreed
6	Insufficient finances to learn new skills	$2.97 \pm 0.360$	Agreed
7	Inability to learn new things because of age	$2.86 \pm 0.409$	Agreed

Key:  $\bar{X}$  = Mean, V = Variance, Cut-off point = 2.50

The table highlights key barriers to skill acquisition among retirees during active service, with no significant gender differences ( $p > 0.05$ ). The most prominent challenges were poor orientation and insufficient information ( $3.03 \pm 0.14$ ) and insufficient finances ( $2.97 \pm 0.36$ ), reflecting a lack of guidance and economic constraints. Other factors included multiple engagements during service ( $2.94 \pm 0.23$ ), lack of time ( $2.92 \pm 0.52$ ), and inability to learn due to age ( $2.86 \pm 0.41$ ). Moderate agreement was observed for lack of interest ( $2.89 \pm 0.32$ ) and negligence ( $2.78 \pm 0.51$ ), with variances indicating consistent responses. These findings emphasize the universal nature of these barriers and the need for improved pre-retirement planning, financial support, and flexible skill acquisition programs to address them effectively.

### 3.4 Research Question 4

**Research Question 4:** What strategies should be put in place to enhance skill acquisition among retirees?

Table 4: Strategies to Enhance Skill Acquisition among Retirees in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State

S/N	Items	$\bar{X} \pm V$	Decision
1	Employees should attend entrepreneurial seminars long before retirement	$3.32 \pm 0.225$	Agreed
2	Funds should be provided to encourage entrepreneurship among retirees.	$3.30 \pm 0.215$	Agreed
3	Government and private employers of labour should organize skill acquisition programmes for all workers	$3.19 \pm 0.158$	Agreed
4	Non-governmental organizations should organize practical skill acquisition programmes for workers	$3.19 \pm 0.158$	Agreed
5	Religious organizations should organize practical skill acquisition programmes for adherents	$3.24 \pm 0.245$	Agreed
6	Employees should develop an interest in skill acquisition	$3.24 \pm 0.189$	Agreed
7	Employees should be disciplined and determined to be an entrepreneur before retirement	$3.14 \pm 0.120$	Agreed
8	Patronage of goods and services produced by the elderly should be encouraged	$3.24 \pm 0.356$	Agreed

Key:  $\bar{X}$  = Mean, V = Variance, Cut-off point = 2.50

Table 4 reveals key strategies to enhance skill acquisition among retirees in Ondo West Local Government. Top strategies include attending entrepreneurial seminars before retirement ( $\bar{X} = 3.32 \pm 0.225$ ), providing funds to support entrepreneurship ( $\bar{X} = 3.30 \pm 0.215$ ), and organizing practical skill acquisition programs by religious organizations ( $\bar{X} = 3.24 \pm 0.245$ ). Encouraging employee interest ( $\bar{X} = 3.24 \pm 0.189$ ) and patronage of elderly-produced goods and services ( $\bar{X} = 3.24 \pm 0.356$ ) were also emphasized. Government, private employers, and NGOs should organize programs ( $\bar{X} = 3.19 \pm$



0.158), while discipline and determination before retirement remain crucial ( $\bar{X} = 3.14 \pm 0.120$ ). Low variances (0.120–0.356) indicate strong agreement among respondents.

## **4. DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1 Prospects of Skill Acquisition for Sustainable Retirement**

This study revealed that retirees in Ondo West Local Government Area perceive skill acquisition as an effective strategy for achieving post-retirement sustainability. Retirees reported multiple personal benefits, including continued income generation, physical and cognitive engagement, reduced boredom, and increased self-worth. However, they expressed limited confidence in their ability to impact broader economic indicators such as national GDP. This finding reflects what Garba and Mamman (2014) described as the prioritization of personal survival over macroeconomic contribution in settings with weak social safety nets. Retirees in such contexts view skill acquisition through the lens of immediate livelihood enhancement rather than systemic economic development.

### **4.2 Gender Differences in Perceived Prospects**

The hypothesis that no significant gender difference exists in retirees' perception of skill acquisition prospects was supported by the data. Both male and female retirees showed strong agreement regarding the value of skill acquisition for financial stability, social engagement, and a sense of fulfillment. These findings contradict assumptions of sharp gender divides in post-retirement planning and support a more inclusive model of skill development. This convergence in perception suggests a shift from traditional gendered economic roles, aligning with the more progressive retirement participation patterns reported by Armstrong-Stassen and Staats (2012).

### **4.3 Types of Acquirable Skills**

A wide array of economically viable skills was identified by the retirees, such as tailoring, culinary services, farming, event planning, and child care. These align with common Home Economics practices and reflect accessible avenues for self-employment. However, gender preferences were evident in some cases. For instance, male retirees showed a significantly higher interest in dry cleaning, consistent with culturally conditioned occupational tendencies. Petters and Uwe (2015) noted that these tendencies are shaped by deep-rooted social constructs that influence post-retirement behavior. Despite this, the general acceptance of diverse skills across gender suggests growing adaptability among retirees.

### **4.4 Gender Differences in Skill Acquisition**

The hypothesis asserting no significant gender difference in skill acquisition was largely affirmed. Apart from dry cleaning—where male retirees showed stronger interest—most skills were equally acceptable across gender lines. This finding supports the argument by Amaike (2016) that retirees are increasingly selecting skills based on practicality and relevance rather than on traditional gender norms. The results thus support the development of skill acquisition programs that are not strictly segmented by gender but rather tailored to individual interests and market needs.

The two hypotheses in these study were intentionally framed as null statements to test for gender-based differences in perceptions and preferences. Statistical analysis confirmed no significant differences across most items, thereby supporting the null hypotheses. However, a notable exception was observed for the skill of dry cleaning, where male retirees showed significantly higher preference, indicating a gender-influenced variation.

#### **4.5 Barriers to Skill Acquisition**

The barriers identified in this study mirror earlier findings by Abiolu (2015) and Odone et al. (2021), who reported that financial limitations, insufficient orientation, and cognitive decline restrict retirees' participation in lifelong learning. Poor institutional frameworks and inadequate pre-retirement preparation further aggravated these challenges. Despite these constraints, retirees demonstrated willingness to engage in productive economic activities if given access to flexible and age-appropriate training. This underscores the need for a paradigm shift in retirement planning—one that recognizes the capacity of older adults to learn and contribute meaningfully, provided the learning environment is enabling.

#### **4.6 Strategic Recommendations for Enhancement**

Retirees proposed several strategies to improve skill acquisition participation, including early entrepreneurial training, financial assistance, and community-based learning. Religious organizations and NGOs were recommended as vehicles for reaching more retirees and fostering inclusive engagement. These insights echo the recommendations of Agah and Ikenga (2019), who emphasized that collaborative intervention—combining institutional, community, and private-sector efforts—is essential for creating sustainable post-retirement pathways. Furthermore, enhancing patronage of retiree-made products could stimulate demand, affirm retiree dignity, and increase motivation to stay economically active.

#### **4.7 Managerial Implication**

The findings carry important managerial implications for government bodies, non-profit organizations, and employers. Institutions must embed retirement preparedness—including skill acquisition and entrepreneurial training—into the employee life cycle. Human resource departments should prioritize retirement transition plans that go beyond pensions, ensuring employees exit the workforce with economically viable competencies. Managers in both public and private sectors should collaborate with vocational institutions to deliver periodic skill enhancement programs for mid- to late-career employees.

#### **4.8 Theoretical Contribution**

This study expands the theoretical discourse on sustainable retirement by empirically validating the role of skill acquisition in ensuring post-retirement well-being. It reinforces the socio-economic theory of aging, which emphasizes the need for continuous productivity and engagement to sustain life satisfaction among older adults. The findings also contribute to life course theory by showing that proactive skill development before and after retirement is essential for mitigating post-employment vulnerabilities.

#### **4.9 Limitations**

The study's scope was restricted to Ondo West LGA with a relatively small sample size ( $n = 38$ ), limiting generalizability. The use of a purposive sampling technique, while appropriate for exploratory insights, may introduce selection bias. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data could affect the reliability of responses due to social desirability bias. Future studies should adopt broader, multi-site investigations using mixed methods to deepen understanding and comparative analysis.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Sustainable retirement is a fundamental goal for every worker, and for retirees in Nigeria, it is crucial to plan effectively for financial stability in the absence of reliable pension schemes. Given the challenges faced by retirees, such as irregular pension payments and limited access to social safety nets, it is essential for prospective retirees to consider skill acquisition as a viable means of supplementing their income. Skill acquisition not only provides retirees with an opportunity for economic independence but also enhances their physical, social, and psychological well-being. Practical skills, particularly in Home Economics-related areas such as cottage farming (e.g., poultry, rabbitry), tailoring, weaving, event planning, bakery, and child care services, are valuable pathways for retirees to remain active, engaged, and financially self-reliant during retirement.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Employees should actively participate in entrepreneurial seminars and workshops well before retirement to enhance their preparedness for post-retirement opportunities.
2. Non-governmental organizations should organize practical skill development programs to empower workers and retirees with the skills needed for financial independence.
3. Religious organizations should take the initiative to offer skill acquisition programs for their members, contributing to the community's economic well-being.
4. Employees should cultivate a disciplined and determined mindset toward entrepreneurship well in advance of retirement, recognizing the importance of preparation for a successful post-retirement life.
5. There should be a concerted effort to encourage the patronage of goods and services produced by retirees, which can contribute to their financial stability and promote intergenerational support.

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