Re-skilling for the future Innovative approach in the Nigerian SMEs for Sustainable Development in the era of AI

by

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Abstract

The rapid advancements in automation and technology have significantly transformed the job landscape in Nigeria, creating an urgent need for innovative approaches to SMEs. This paper, "Re-skilling for the Future: An Innovative Approach in Nigerian SMEs for Sustainable Development in the Era of AI," investigates the urgent need for re-skilling among in Nigeria due to the rapid advancements in AI and technology. The study focuses on a population of adult learners, utilizing a sample size of 256 individuals across various regions in Kano state. The research addressed four primary questions related to skill gaps, challenges in Implementing Re-skilling Programs, barriers to education, and the effectiveness of current Adults education programs. Data was analyzed using structured surveys and focus group discussions, with statistical tools such as Cronbach's alpha for reliability testing, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.85. The findings revealed a significant skills gap among Nigerian adults, with deficiencies in digital literacy, technical skills, and soft skills. Barriers such as economic hardship, limited access to quality educational resources, and cultural perceptions further exacerbate the challenges faced by SMEs in accessing re-skilling opportunities. The study highlighted the crucial role of adult education facilitators in aligning training programs with labor market demands, fostering a culture of lifelong learning, and leveraging technology to improve access and engagement. Learner-centric and flexible learning approaches were identified as essential in empowering adult learners and preparing them for the changing job landscape. Three key findings emerged from the study: 1) the urgent need to address the skills gap through collaborative efforts between educational institutions, government, and the private sector; 2) the importance of integrating technology-enabled learning methods to enhance access and flexibility for adult learners; and 3) the critical role of AI education facilitators in designing and implementing learner-centric programs that respond to the evolving workforce demands. Based on these findings, the study recommends the development of comprehensive policies to support

adult re-skilling, the expansion of technology-enhanced learning platforms, and the investment in the professional development of adult education facilitators.

Keywords: Re-skilling, AI and SMEs Innovative education, Sustainable development,