

EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN REDUCING GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the effect of entrepreneurship education in reducing graduate unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria. The specific objectives examined the extent to which entrepreneurship education is integrated into the curriculum, assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' mindset and skills development, evaluate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates and lastly, addressing unemployment and insecurity through skill acquisition and vocational education in Nigeria. To achieve these research objectives, the study adopted quantitative research design. Four hundred (400) sample size was used from Yaba College of Technology Students, Lagos State. Two hundred (200) students were selected, each from Higher National Diploma (HND) and National Diploma (ND) programme. Convenience sampling technique was adopted. Pearson analysis was used as the statistical tool for testing the formulated research hypotheses. The hypothesis findings revealed that there is positive significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and academic curriculum. Also, that entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills development. Lastly, the findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates. The study recommended that entrepreneurship education should be made more practical and skill-based, incorporating real-life business simulations, internships, and start-up incubation programmes. Government and institutional stakeholders should provide access to seed funding, grants, or low-interest loans to enable students to launch their business ideas.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, unemployment, insecurity, entrepreneurial mindset, skills development, self-employment

Introduction

Various administrations in Nigeria attempt to establish workable policies for the betterment of Nigeria to become a great nation in Africa and the world at large. Unfortunately, insignificant status was attached to entrepreneurship education. Employment generation has been seen as a means of alleviating poverty, increasing economic activities that translate into economic growth. The situation of unemployment in Nigeria, Africa has been on the increase resulting in the increase in social vices among other negativity. Although the Nigerian Government put in place various programmes to address unemployment and poverty rate in the country, the effort end in vain due to improper implementation (Tambuwal & Abdullahi, 2020).

Education in reality does not only mean qualification or certificates obtained but Education either in the school or outside formal school setting should make individuals sensible to the status of his/her environment and its variable (Halilu & Hussaini, 2017). Nigeria has adopted policies and embarked on education programmes intended to ensure acquisition of the right type of Education to promote economic activities, enhance income and improve employment opportunities for Nigerians Halilu and Hussaini (2017) opines that Entrepreneurship education is an aspect of Education related to production through the development of human manipulative skills.

As a result of this Kabiru, Luba and Safina (2017) state, the need to reduce the unemployment rate to the barest level has been the major concern in Nigeria. This is because unemployment is dehumanizing and threat to economic, social and political stability of the nation. It also lead to poverty and promotes various crimes in the society. Sanusi et al., (2019) supported this assertion where he lamented that the National Economics' continued deterioration is a clear signal to every Nigerian to work hard for a reliable and independent means to survive. This can only be realized through improved Entrepreneurship education.

According to Oduma (2022), entrepreneurship education is instruction that attempts to improve young people's abilities, knowledge, and character traits so they can recognise, seize, and effectively direct personal, social, and professional possibilities, including working for them. The purpose of entrepreneurship education, according to Ashmore, who was mentioned in Oduma (2022), is to equip people especially young people to be responsible, entrepreneurial thinkers who would support economic development and communal sustainability. Not only should you impart business knowledge, but you should also promote imaginative thinking, a strong feeling of self-worth, and accountability. The entrepreneurship curriculum teaches students how to launch a firm. The process of creating money by combining a unique mix of financial resources to take advantage of a business opportunity is called entrepreneurship; it is a force that mobilises extra resources to address unmet demands.

Statement of the Problem

Education in Nigeria is not addressing how to avert the surging rate of unemployment in the country. Unfortunately, it psychological dependence on direct access to money. Entrepreneurial development through education will advance the economy of the nation; much credence should be given to it and ingrained with focus on profitable personal development. Unemployment in the country, encourages the growth of violence, poverty and segregation among citizens, because the educational system itself fails to empower the ones passing through it.

This should be the core message of the evolving educational policy of Nigeria which is devoid of a system of education that emphasizes on the need to trained the country's youths through the knowledge of rudimentary entrepreneurial development, common cultural heritage, and identification of exploitable strengths of structures, systems and cultures of others. This paper investigates the role of entrepreneurship education in reducing graduate unemployment in Nigeria: a study of Yaba College of Technology Students, Lagos State.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate effect of entrepreneurship education in reducing graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The specific objectives include to:

- i. Examine the extent to which entrepreneurship education is integrated into the curriculum.
- ii. Assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills development.
- iii. Evaluate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates.
- iv. Addressing unemployment and insecurity through skill acquisition and vocational education in Nigeria

Research Questions

Arising from the objectives of the study, the following research questions was raised

1. To what extent is entrepreneurship education integrated into the curriculum?
2. How does entrepreneurship education impact students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills development?
3. What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates?
4. How can unemployment and insecurity be addressed through skill acquisition and vocational education in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and academic curriculum
- H₀₂:** Entrepreneurship education has no significant impact on students'

entrepreneurial mindset and skills development.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides empirical evidence on the role of entrepreneurship education in addressing the persistent challenges of graduate unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria. The study will be beneficial to policymakers, particularly the Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, and other government agencies, by providing insights that can inform the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at strengthening entrepreneurship education and youth employment programmes. Higher education institutions is also expected to benefit from the findings by identifying areas for improving entrepreneurship curricula, teaching methods, and practical training to better equip graduates with entrepreneurial competencies.

Furthermore, the study will be valuable to students and graduates by demonstrating the importance of entrepreneurship education in promoting self-reliance, innovation, and business creation as viable alternatives to paid employment. It will also assist entrepreneurship development agencies, financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations in designing programmes that support graduate entrepreneurs through training, mentorship, and access to funding.

Besides, the study will contribute to national development by highlighting entrepreneurship education as a strategic tool for reducing unemployment, discouraging youth involvement in criminal activities, promoting economic growth, enhancing social stability, and strengthening national security. It will also serve as a useful reference for future researchers interested in entrepreneurship education, employment generation, and security studies.

Scope of the Study

The study is focused on effect of entrepreneurship education in reducing graduate

unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria with reference to Yaba College of Technology Students in Lagos State. The choice of this entrepreneurship education was informed by the role the institution plays in ensuring employment among undergraduate students in Lagos State.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is based on human capital theory. The human capital theory advocates education as a tool for improving human capital, stimulating labour productivity and boosting the levels of technology across the globe (Robert, 1991). Human capital theorist encourages spending on nation's workforce (people working with public and private sector organisations) because expenditure on training and development is a productive investment like investment on physical assets (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). Besides, human capital enhancement through quality education is a critical factor that propels economic growth and sustainable development in East Africa, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan.

Schumpeter (1934) views entrepreneurship training as responsible for creative destruction, that is, education act as an impetus for creating new ideas, improved techniques, new technologies and new products. In addition, Van-Den-Berg (2001) establishes a correlation between the level of education and new product development in knowledge-based economies that invested massively in education, technology and related growth elements.

Conceptual Review

The Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been defined by various authors to mean many things since the middle age (Igbo, 2016). The entrepreneur has been seen as an actor, innovator or a developer of technology. However, the summary of what entrepreneurship means will reflect the individual definer's point of view. For Inegbebor (1987), in Akanwa and Akpanabia (2022), entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an Enterprise successfully. It is also the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and copying them with management and

organizational skill in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby creating wealth.

Stevenson, Roberts, and Grousbeck (1989) in Morris, (2021) define entrepreneurship as “the process of creating value by bringing together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity.” The process itself includes the set of activities necessary to identify an opportunity, define a business concept, assess the needed resources, acquire those resources, and manage and harvest the venture. The concept of entrepreneurship is a sum of seizing an opportunity, identifying a business idea, finding the required resources, putting these activities into operation and getting the results (Müftüoğlu *et al.*, 2015). Entrepreneurship is the ability to recognize opportunities, creatively transform them into viable business ventures, and sustain them through innovation, effective management, and calculated risk-taking. It goes beyond merely establishing a business; it involves creating value for society by providing solutions to existing problems, generating employment, and contributing to economic growth. Entrepreneurship also requires resilience, adaptability, vision, and a commitment to continuous learning in response to changing market conditions. Therefore, entrepreneurship is both a mindset and a process that empowers individuals to create wealth, improve living standards, and drive sustainable national development through innovation and enterprise.

Entrepreneurship Education

According to Business Dictionary (2016) “Entrepreneurship Education is the capacity and willingness to develop, organize, and manage a business venture and risk taking to make profit.” The most common example of entrepreneurship is starting a new business. Entrepreneurial Education is that aspect of Education that can develop the insight needed by its recipients to discover and create business opportunities and the expertise to successfully start and manage their own business and take advantage of these opportunities.

Hauwa (2017) opined that Entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. It

goes beyond business creation. It is about increasing students' ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. It is Education and training which allows individuals to develop and use their creativity and initiatives to establish a business ventures.

An Overview of the Concept of Employment and Unemployment

Unemployment is undoubtedly one of the major problems facing Nigeria today. “Unemployment leads to wastage of human resources and a slowdown in economic development since individuals forming a section of the labour force are not given the much needed knowledge and skills to contribute to the nation's productivity and economic growth” (Sanusi 2017). He further observed that, our leaders tend to ignore the fact that the productive role of entrepreneurship education is to strengthen the finances of a nation by working with business and industry to increase workers' productivity.

According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2015), a person is considered employed if he or she is engaged in the production of goods and services, thereby contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in legitimate manner, which is a component of the national account and receives any form or amount of money for that activity. The Bureau goes further to state that for a person to be considered employed; he or she must work full time, i.e. at least, 40 hours, on average, a week.

Conversely, Amupitan (2011), sees unemployment as a state where able-bodied, qualified men and women are available for and willing to work but get no job to do. Amupitan (2011) also believes that unemployment occurs when people are looking for jobs but cannot find one. In the words of Njoku and Okezie (2011) unemployment in Nigeria is defined as the proportion of the labour force that was available for work but did not work in the week preceding the survey period by, at least, 39 hours. In line with this, the International Labour Organization (ILO) defined the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work but are available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012).

Unemployment and Poverty remains key developmental challenges in Nigeria over a very long time (Akwara et al, 2013). According to Udu and Agu (2005), unemployment is “a situation in which persons capable and willing to work are unable to find suitable paid employment”. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2007), unemployed workers are those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work and have actively searched for work. Hornby (2010) defines unemployment as “the facts of a number of people not having a job; the number of people without a job; the state of not having a job”.

Role of Entrepreneurship Education towards Unemployment Reduction in Nigeria

Several programmes have been put in place to reduce the problems of Unemployment rate in Nigeria, examples. National Directorate of Employment (NDE) programmes is one of the unemployment reduction programmes in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship training is the key components of NDE cardinal objectives, Kabiru et al (2017) Further observed that, the Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and Better life family support programmes play essential role in enhancing entrepreneurship education in Nigeria . For instance NDE has 74 functional skills acquisition centres across Nigeria, providing skills training ranging from technical, domestic, agricultural, ICT-based, and other Entrepreneurship programmes (NDE 2016).

In a patriotic resolve at making the Nigeria's education creative, innovative and meeting the needs of the industries, the National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) were mandated by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) to introduce entrepreneurship education into the curricula of Nigerian tertiary institutions. This became expedient in order to offers a realistic approach to solving the endemic problem of unemployment facing the nation. It has since been made a compulsory course for all undergraduate students in the three levels of tertiary education irrespective of students' areas of specialization (Yahya, 2011).

Insecurity

Insecurity refers to a condition in which individuals, communities, or nations are exposed to threats that endanger lives, property, and socioeconomic well-being. It is characterized by the absence of safety, peace, and protection from physical, psychological, economic, political, or environmental dangers. Insecurity creates fear and uncertainty, limiting people's ability to pursue productive activities and enjoy their fundamental rights. According to Beland (2005), insecurity is the state of being vulnerable to harm or danger due to the inability of institutions to provide adequate protection. Similarly, Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Obaro (2013) describe insecurity as a situation where citizens lack confidence in the ability of government and security agencies to protect lives, property, and national interests.

In Nigeria, insecurity has become one of the country's most pressing developmental challenges. The rise of insurgency in the North-East, banditry in the North-West, farmer-herder conflicts in the Middle Belt, kidnapping across various regions, militancy in the Niger Delta, cultism, cybercrime, and urban armed robbery have significantly affected national security. These challenges have disrupted business activities, displaced communities, increased unemployment, and reduced foreign investment (Onifade, Imhonopi, & Urim, 2013).

Effect of Entrepreneurship Education in Reducing Graduate Unemployment and Insecurity in Nigeria

One of the most significant effects of entrepreneurship education is its ability to reduce graduate unemployment. Graduates equipped with entrepreneurial knowledge are more likely to establish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) rather than relying solely on paid employment. This shift from job seeking to job creation increases employment opportunities not only for entrepreneurs but also for others they employ. Oviawe (2010) argues that entrepreneurship education encourages graduates to utilize available resources creatively and develop sustainable businesses capable of contributing to national economic growth.

Entrepreneurship education further contributes to reducing insecurity by addressing one of its major root causes—youth unemployment. Gainfully employed graduates are less likely to participate in kidnapping, armed robbery, cyber-crime, cultism, terrorism, political violence, and other criminal activities. Economic empowerment enhances social inclusion and provides legitimate means of livelihood, thereby reducing the attraction of criminal networks. This aligns with the argument of Anyadike, Emeh, and Ukah (2012) that employment generation through entrepreneurship is essential for promoting national security and social stability.

Despite these benefits, several challenges hinder the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. These include inadequate practical training, insufficient funding for start-up businesses, poor access to credit facilities, weak infrastructure, unstable electricity supply, multiple taxation, policy inconsistencies, insecurity, and limited mentorship opportunities. In many institutions, entrepreneurship courses remain largely theoretical, limiting students' exposure to practical business experiences.

Research Methodology

The descriptive method of research was useful for the study. One of the major goals of science is description, others include prediction and explanation. Descriptive research methods are pretty much as they sound as they describe situations. The population for this study is Yaba College of Technology Students, Lagos State.

Yaba College of Technology reports a current total student population of 30,671, all at the undergraduate level, as of March 31, 2025 (yabatech.edu.ng). The researcher will presume that this category of students in the tertiary institution can conveniently discuss issues relating to the role of entrepreneurship education in reducing graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The sample size was four hundreds (400) Yaba College of Technology Students, Lagos State, picking two hundred (200) students each from Higher National Diploma (HND) and Ordinary National Diploma (OND) programme.

The instruments for this study were a adapted structured questionnaire. The frequency distribution table was used to analyse the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the responses of the respondents to the research question while the PPMCC Analysis on the other hand will be used in testing the formulated hypotheses

Findings Result

Four Hypotheses were formulated for the study sequel to the research questions generated. The hypotheses were tested using the result of the Pearson's' product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMCC). Therefore, the decision rule is to reject the null hypothesis if p-value is less than 5% (0.05) significant level, however, if p-value is greater than 5% (0.05) significant level, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and academic curriculum

Table 4.1 Correlation I

		Entrepreneurship Education	Academic Curriculum
Entrepreneurship Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.145**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	382	382
Academic Curriculum	Pearson Correlation	.145**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	382	382

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the Pearson's' product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMCC) showed the correlation between entrepreneurship education and academic curriculum. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it is suggested that there is positive significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and academic curriculum.

H₀: Entrepreneurship education has no significant impact on students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills development.

Table 4.2 Correlation II

		Entrepreneurship Education	Entrepreneurial Mindset and Skills Development
Entrepreneurship Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.421**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	382	382
Entrepreneurial Mindset and Skills Development	Pearson Correlation	.421**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	382	382

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the Pearson's' product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMCC) showed the correlation between entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills development. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level above. Therefore, it is suggested that entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills development.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates.

Table 4.3 Correlation III

		Entrepreneurship Education	Self-Employment
Entrepreneurship Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.111*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031
	N	382	382
Self-Employment	Pearson Correlation	.111*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	
	N	382	382

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of the Pearson's' product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMCC) showed the correlation between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it is suggested that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates.

The results of the tests indicated that there is positive significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and academic curriculum, entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills development and lastly, the findings also revealed that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment among graduates.

Recommendations

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

- i. Entrepreneurship education should be made more practical and skill-based, incorporating real-life business simulations, internships, and start-up incubation programmes.
- ii. Government and institutional stakeholders should provide access to seed funding, grants, or low-interest loans to enable students to launch their business ideas.
- iii. Governments at various levels should establish partnerships with successful entrepreneurs and industry experts to mentor students and offer real-world guidance.
- iv. The Federal Government through the education ministries should integrate entrepreneurship education into national employment strategies and ensure that policies support student-led start-ups.

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