

Entrepreneurship Education in Tertiary Institutions as Tool for Reducing Unemployment

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Abstract

This study explored the role of entrepreneurship education in alleviating unemployment. The research was guided by four key questions, and relevant literature was reviewed to provide context. A descriptive survey research design was employed, focusing on the undergraduate student population at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko. The sample consisted of 300 randomly selected students from six faculties within the university, chosen using a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected via a self-designed questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages. The study's findings revealed that skills such as design, food catering, photography, laundry/dry cleaning, barbering/hairdressing, web design, bead making, music, makeup artistry, and event planning can empower Nigerian graduates to become entrepreneurs and help reduce unemployment. Furthermore, the benefits of entrepreneurship education for Nigerian graduates were found to include self-employment, job creation in rural areas, opportunities to harness personal potential, and enhanced ability to adapt to societal changes. Challenges identified include inadequate funding from both government and non-governmental organizations, a shortage of qualified instructors, insufficient teaching materials, equipment, and infrastructure, lack of capital for starting businesses, and a poor business environment. Suggested solutions to these challenges include creating a supportive business environment, ensuring the availability of qualified teachers, establishing funding sources for entrepreneurs, and providing necessary teaching resources and infrastructure. Based on these findings, the study recommends that Nigerian graduate entrepreneurs acquire skills such as those listed above to help reduce the unemployment rate. It also calls on the government to improve the infrastructure for entrepreneurial activities, provide adequate teaching resources, increase funding for entrepreneurial programs, and create diverse funding opportunities for Nigerian graduate entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Unemployment, Graduates, Business, Job Creation.

Introduction

In Nigeria today, education and training are undergoing a significant transformation as more people are embracing education in its entirety. This shift has led to a surge in the number of graduates from universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and other institutions. The widespread belief that obtaining a university (tertiary institution) degree guarantees employment has put pressure on Nigeria's educational system and contributed to the growing number of unemployed graduates. Unemployment, in fact, has become a widespread economic issue with far-reaching social implications that impact virtually every country and its citizens, either directly or indirectly.

Motta, and Galina, (2023) noted that unemployment is a global issue where the eligible workforce of a nation is disengaged from contributing to the nation's service, while the World Bank (2022) defines unemployment as the proportion of the labor force that is without work but is actively seeking employment. To address the increasing number of graduates in Nigeria who are wandering the streets with certificates but without meaningful employment, the concept of entrepreneurial education was introduced into tertiary education. The goal of entrepreneurial education is to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to start and manage their own businesses, as well as to become successful entrepreneurs. Carpenter, and Wilson, (2022)) views entrepreneurial education as a vital component of the educational system, focusing on the acquisition of skills, ideas, and management capabilities necessary for job creation.

Adeel et al., (2023) defines entrepreneurial education as the process of using individual initiative to transform a business idea into a new venture or to expand and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with significant potential. It is a lifelong process that begins in elementary school and continues through all

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educational levels, including adult education. Entrepreneurial education is seen as a tool that equips individuals to become entrepreneurs (Do and Nguyen, 2023).

Jardim et al., (2023) succinctly describes entrepreneurial education as focusing on developing an understanding and capacity for pursuing entrepreneurial skills and attributes. It fosters the holistic development of the body, mind, and spirit. It involves recognizing opportunities, committing resources, and creating businesses that deliver goods and services of value. Moreland (2006) emphasizes that instilling entrepreneurial education in tertiary students will raise awareness and understanding of socio-economic and environmental issues, promoting sustainable national development. It will also create job opportunities, reducing unemployment among graduates. This approach will contribute to national growth by providing employment options for Nigerian graduates. Entrepreneurial education can lead to the mental, physical, and intellectual capacity building of its beneficiaries, preparing them to acquire, interpret, and apply knowledge for both personal and national development.

Do and Nguyen, (2023) noted that a study by the Federal Ministry of Education from 2005-2010 revealed that 71% of Nigerian university graduates and other tertiary institution students remain unemployed. Furthermore, the Nigerian University Commission (NUC, 2007), as cited in Nwite (2016), stated that entrepreneurial studies aim to encourage students to think creatively about job creation both during and after their university education. As a result, the NUC has been promoting entrepreneurial programs in Nigerian tertiary institutions with the following goals: • Empowering students • Creating employment opportunities • Diversifying business activities • Building individual confidence

Similarly, Miço, and Cungu, (2023) argued that entrepreneurial education aims to equip students to start their own businesses after completing their studies. The objectives of entrepreneurial education are to: • Provide students with the opportunity to learn about entrepreneurial orientation • Increase awareness of entrepreneurship as a career option • Boost students' self-efficacy

These goals aim to reduce unemployment and strengthen the national economy. However, Lv et al., (2021) contended that in practice, some universities only offer one or two entrepreneurial courses, often taught by instructors without practical entrepreneurial experience, with students taking these courses as graduation requirements. In contrast to Uzoagulu's view, Tiberius, and Weyland, (2023) regard entrepreneurial education as a structured teaching process that informs, trains, and educates individuals interested in business creation or small business development. Uzo-Okonkwo (2013) argued that entrepreneurial education is the process of equipping individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills, and self-esteem to act on them. In discussing the importance of promoting entrepreneurial education in tertiary institutions, Ademiluyi (2007) affirmed that it helps address socio-psychological issues and delinquency arising from unemployment among university graduates.

Osolor (2013) opined that entrepreneurial education will lead to opportunities for individuals and collective development of latent potentialities for self-fulfillment and actualization of set goals as entrepreneurs. According to Sullivan (2016) defines an entrepreneur as a person who has possession of a new enterprise, venture or idea and is accountable for the inherent risks and the outcome of a product. The term was originally a loanword from French language and was first defined by the Irish-French economist Richard in 1755. Entrepreneur in English is a term applied to a person who is willing to help launch a new venture or enterprise and accept full responsibility for the outcome. Say (1834), a French economist, is believed to have coined the word “entrepreneur” in the 19th century – who defines an entrepreneur as one who undertakes an enterprise, especially a contractor, acting as intermediary between capital and labour (Tim, 2004).

A broader definition by Say (1834) as adopted in Agu, Anidiobu and Ezinwa (2016) states that the entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of lower and into higher. An entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seeking for an employment. Therefore, there is a need to embrace this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make functional. Entrepreneurial education equips future entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to meet the need to accelerate economic development

through generating new ideas and converting those ideas into viable and profitable ventures (Tucker & Selcuk, 2009).

Statement of Problem

The high rate of unemployment among Nigerian graduates represents a serious challenge to the country's economy, as universities continue to produce large numbers of graduates each year, yet there are insufficient job opportunities to match this output. A significant portion of the unemployed population consists of graduates from universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics, many of whom remain jobless due to a lack of entrepreneurial skills. The educational system has historically focused on liberal education rather than vocational training, which has left graduates ill-equipped with the practical skills necessary for better job prospects. Despite government efforts to create millions of jobs annually, many university graduates still struggle to find employment, with some remaining jobless for years after graduation. This situation raises concerns about the potential role of entrepreneurial education in reducing the unemployment rate among Nigerian graduates.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the role of entrepreneurship education in alleviating unemployment among graduates of Ondo State University. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Identify the skills that can empower Ondo State University graduates to become entrepreneurs and help reduce the unemployment rate.
2. Investigate the benefits of entrepreneurship education for Ondo State University graduates.
3. Examine the challenges faced by Ondo State University graduates in engaging with entrepreneurship education.
4. Propose solutions to address the challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in the field of entrepreneurship education.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. What skills can empower graduates of Ondo State University to become entrepreneurs and help reduce the unemployment rate?
2. What are the benefits of entrepreneurial education for graduates of Ondo State University?
3. What challenges do Ondo State University graduates encounter in entrepreneurial education?
4. What solutions can address the challenges Ondo State University graduates face in entrepreneurial education?

Significance of the Study

This study aims to investigate the role of entrepreneurship education in reducing unemployment, with a specific focus on Ondo State. It will assess how entrepreneurship education can help mitigate unemployment and provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing entrepreneurial activities in the region. The findings will offer valuable insights into the dynamics of entrepreneurship in Ondo, contributing to the existing body of research with statistical data.

Entrepreneurs play a crucial role in benefiting society, and this study will examine the traits, skills, attitudes, and conditions that support entrepreneurial development. Learning about entrepreneurship will help undergraduates identify business opportunities and effectively manage business ventures.

Additionally, the research will promote entrepreneurial activities and assist individuals in organizing their businesses by fostering a risk-taking mindset through awareness programs and support initiatives. These initiatives will offer essential resources such as information, financing, technology, and skills to start businesses. Efforts to sustain these businesses will focus on strategies that encourage growth and long-term survival, including expansion, modernization, diversification, technological innovation, and creating a conducive environment for the success of small-scale enterprises.

Scope of the Study

This study explores the role of entrepreneurial education in the development of Ondo State, focusing on its contribution to reducing unemployment in the region. It also compares universities that offer para-entrepreneurship educational programs. The research targets undergraduates currently enrolled in the university system, specifically those from the first year to the final year, who have been admitted in the last five years. This time frame is considered significant due to its potential impact on Nigeria's future, offering insights into whether the current role of education will support national development. The study uses Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba, and the Federal University of Technology, Akure as case study institutions.

LITERATURE

Concept of Entrepreneurship

No single, universally accepted entrepreneurship theory spans various fields, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, regional science, and economics. These disciplines provide different approaches, but no unified theoretical framework integrates them. While some efforts have been made to create a multidimensional approach to studying entrepreneurship, they often focus mainly on perspectives from well-established academic fields.

Significant methodological issues arise when combining economic and social contexts into a single multidimensional model. Many studies treat all entrepreneurs, whether small business owners or leaders of high-growth, innovative ventures, as essentially the same. However, the broad range of entrepreneurial activities and new ventures requires a more nuanced approach. A single classification system cannot capture all the variables that differentiate various types of entrepreneurship. A more refined categorization allows for integrating different theories and traditions, providing a better understanding of this complex phenomenon.

Unemployment remains a significant challenge for many economies in the 21st century. International data shows that industrial and service workers in developing regions represent approximately two-thirds of the unemployed (Patterson, 2006). Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, its economy has undergone significant structural changes, but these have not resulted in sustained economic growth and development. While the economy grew substantially in the 1970s due to the oil boom, the massive profits from the oil sector led to excessive public spending, labour market disruptions, and distortions in revenue generation, all of which impacted policy planning. These issues, among others, led to implementing the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1986 and the ongoing economic reforms. The primary goal of these reforms is to restructure Nigeria's economy in response to rapid population growth (Jardim et al., 2023).

An entrepreneur innovates and establishes a business where there was previously none. According to Martínez et al. (2021), an entrepreneur is an individual or group able to identify and assess business opportunities, gather the required resources to capitalize on them, and take the necessary steps to ensure success. Entrepreneurs continuously identify new markets, strategize on how to serve them efficiently and

generate profit. They actively seek change, adapt to it, and leverage it by turning it into a business opportunity.

There are three types of entrepreneurs: social, serial, and lifestyle. Social entrepreneurs are driven by a deep desire to address social, environmental, and economic challenges. They focus on creating innovative solutions to global issues like poverty and educational inequality. Their goal is not profit but creating social value and improving the well-being of communities. They often operate within markets but prioritize social impact over financial gain, aiming for scalable solutions that others can replicate (Eikington, 2011; Zahra, 2009). A serial entrepreneur continuously creates and launches new businesses. Known for their higher risk tolerance, innovation, and resilience, they are more likely to succeed in multiple ventures. They embrace risks and often recover quickly from failures, driven by the excitement of building and innovating (Wall Street Journal, 2011). On the other hand, lifestyle entrepreneurs prioritize passion over profit when starting a business. They align their personal interests and skills with their business to achieve sustainable success. Their primary motivation is personal freedom, family time, and pursuing projects that inspire them rather than maximizing profits (Harahap et al., 2023).

The objectives of Entrepreneurial education are to enable youth to be self-employed and self-reliant, foster creativity and innovation in identifying business opportunities, serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development, provide training in risk management, reduce poverty in communities and countries, generate employment opportunities, mitigate rural-urban migration, support the establishment of small and medium-sized businesses, instil perseverance to help individuals succeed in business ventures, facilitate the transition to a modern industrial economy (Lv, et al, 2021).

Unemployment in Nigeria

Unemployment in Nigeria refers to individuals willing to work but cannot find employment at prevailing wage rates. Several factors, including economic downturns and poor implementation of policies, influence the rate. Even educated individuals face challenges in securing jobs. Despite efforts to reduce unemployment, the government's programs have been underwhelming. Employment generation remains a crucial strategy for poverty reduction, as it stimulates economic activity and helps curb social vices (Mico and Cungu, 2023).

Improving Nigeria's employment rate and realizing its demographic potential could boost its economy significantly, lifting millions out of poverty. Achieving this requires investments in human capital, including education, health, and gender equality.

Higher education plays a critical role in economic development, which includes creating a skilled workforce, supporting existing businesses and industries, enhancing educational opportunities at all levels, promoting regional initiatives and technology transfer, improving technology infrastructure, contributing to livable communities and employing a diverse workforce (NUC, 2022).

It is impossible to address economic development or unemployment reduction in Nigeria without first considering the underlying factors contributing to these issues. At the heart of this challenge lie the curriculum, teaching methods, and practical learning strategies, which indicate that Nigerian graduates may be prepared for employment but are not necessarily equipped to innovate or create. Many Nigerian university programs, particularly in the sciences and arts, emphasize the technical aspects of subjects rather than their practical application in business management, development, and entrepreneurship.

Economic growth, competitiveness, and innovation depend on cultivating future leaders with the skills, mindset, and behaviours necessary for entrepreneurship and social responsibility. Entrepreneurship is more than just developing business plans or launching new ventures; it involves nurturing creativity, innovation, and a growth-oriented mindset applicable across all economic and societal sectors.

This relationship involves both institutional frameworks and environmental factors that define viable entrepreneurial opportunities, shaping how entrepreneurs and stakeholders interact with their

surroundings. For entrepreneurship education to be effective, it should be integrated as early as possible at all formal and informal education levels primary, secondary, and tertiary. It is essential that curricula remain consistent and coordinated over time, with entrepreneurship education continuing through higher education. Entrepreneurship programs should serve several purposes, including a) raising awareness and motivating the development of an entrepreneurial drive, b) teaching the ability to identify and capitalize on opportunities, and c) equipping students with the skills to start and manage businesses (European Commission, 2008).

Without the inclusion of entrepreneurship education, tackling unemployment in Nigeria would remain difficult. Encouraging students to think and act in entrepreneurial, ethical, and socially responsible ways is crucial. Despite the growing importance of higher education in Nigeria, as seen in the expansion of private institutions, the impact on unemployment has been minimal. If education were addressing this issue effectively, we would expect to see a reduction in unemployment. Nigeria's educational system, which still largely follows colonial-era models, lacks local relevance and practical connections to the nation's economic development.

Harahap (2023) notes that globalization, technological progress, and reduced travel costs have significantly changed the nature of work. Students, as part of the future workforce, must navigate a complex and uncertain world shaped by rapid economic, social, and technological shifts. These changes such as the rise of service and knowledge-based economies, emerging markets, and challenges like environmental sustainability and aging populations demand that higher education institutions prepare students for an entrepreneurial and globalized environment.

In this context, universities, particularly technical ones, can play a pivotal role in promoting high-growth entrepreneurship. Universities are centers of scientific innovation and technological advancement, where entrepreneurship acts as a crucial vehicle for transforming discoveries into innovative products and services. These institutions not only generate knowledge but also cultivate graduates and researchers with high potential.

To foster entrepreneurship, universities must create environments that nurture entrepreneurial mindsets, skills, and behaviors. They have the capacity to teach students how to launch and grow businesses that benefit society. Technical universities, in particular, are ideal environments for developing high-tech, high-growth companies, and can play a central role in Nigeria's entrepreneurial development by connecting researchers, students, entrepreneurs, businesses, and other stakeholders.

Engaging stakeholders both within and outside higher education institutions is essential. Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial leaders should serve as role models in entrepreneurship programs, as their insights help students to bridge the gap between academic education and the business world. Universities can also support academic start-ups, which often have the potential to grow faster than other ventures. Promoting regional business activities and international networking is vital, and experiential learning should replace traditional teaching methods by offering practical, real-world applications. Entrepreneurship education in universities can provide invaluable real-life experience, cultivating high-growth entrepreneurs who could become influential leaders and role models in the future.

Global Perspective on Entrepreneurship and Higher Education

Research on both successful and unsuccessful new and emerging businesses provides valuable insights into growth processes and the barriers to expansion. Studies that focus on how the growth of new enterprises can be better supported, especially through education at universities and colleges, are of great importance. This has led to an increasing global interest in the role of university education in fostering high-growth enterprises. For example, research shows that high-growth entrepreneurs in Europe tend to be more educated than their peers and the general population, with most founders of technology-based companies holding a university degree. In Germany, studies suggest that businesses founded by individuals with university degrees tend to grow faster compared to those started by non-academics (Egeln, 2000 and Adeel, 2023). Tiberius, and Weyland, (2023) emphasizes the need for research that motivates and supports female

students, who may traditionally be less inclined to start and manage high-growth, innovation-driven companies. Another important focus is on ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs, who, while initially less innovative, can introduce new business practices and eventually drive product and service innovations within their communities.

Identifying universal factors that influence start-up behavior across various societal groups and pinpointing the success factors for high-growth businesses is challenging due to the diversity of technology sectors and individual development paths. However, the strength of entrepreneurship education lies in its ability to shape individuals' attitudes toward entrepreneurship and their potential to become growth-oriented entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial activities of university students are largely influenced by their perceptions of the barriers and support available for new ventures. Common reasons students and recent graduates cite for not pursuing entrepreneurship include a perceived lack of relevant experience and low self-confidence (European Commission, 2008; Carpenter & Wilson, 2022). Furthermore, how graduates view the personal and social desirability of starting their own business also influences their entrepreneurial engagement (Krueger, 2000).

Raising students' awareness of entrepreneurial thinking and guiding them in the right direction is crucial. One important strategy is to show students that starting a new venture can be a viable alternative to traditional employment. Motivating students to explore entrepreneurship is key. Two target groups can be addressed strategically: entrepreneurship education in a broader sense and in a more focused manner (Koch, 2003; Carpenter & Wilson, 2022). The broader approach involves offering courses to students who will, in the future, help promote entrepreneurship in their careers. Understanding the specific needs of their country and sector, such as venture capital and market acceptance of innovation, will be essential. The narrower approach, however, focuses on developing students' entrepreneurial competencies and their intention to start a business as a career option. Specific modules or events can be offered to students who want to deepen their knowledge in various entrepreneurial areas.

It is important to equip students with the skills necessary for creating business ideas, identifying opportunities, starting a business, and managing its growth. Students must be prepared for a world that is increasingly uncertain and complex, with frequent career changes, job instability, and a higher likelihood of self-employment and expanded family and social responsibilities (Gibb, 2006; Adeel et al., 2023).

A supportive learning environment is crucial for effective entrepreneurial education. Business ventures do not always emerge immediately after graduation, as many graduates prefer to gain practical experience before launching their businesses. Establishing alumni networks to stay in touch with graduates is important for keeping entrepreneurship a viable career option in their minds. A significant challenge is addressing the opportunity costs of becoming an entrepreneur, particularly for high-potential university graduates with excellent job prospects (Wiklund, 2004; Do & Nguyen, 2023).

Summary of Literature Reviewed

In Nigeria, education and training are undergoing a transformative shift, with increasing numbers of individuals embracing education in its entirety. This change has led to a notable rise in the number of graduates from universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and other institutions. However, the widespread belief that obtaining a university degree guarantees employment has placed significant pressure on the education system, resulting in a growing number of unemployed graduates. Unemployment, a prevalent global issue, carries profound social and economic impacts that affect nearly every nation. Olubukola (2013) noted that unemployment presents a global challenge, where a country's capable workforce is excluded from contributing to national growth. According to the World Bank (2022), unemployment refers to the portion of the labor force that is without work but actively seeking employment.

To tackle the increasing number of graduates without viable career opportunities, Nigeria has incorporated entrepreneurial education into tertiary institutions. The goal of entrepreneurial education is to equip students with the knowledge and skills required to initiate and sustain businesses, fostering entrepreneurial

success. Maina (2013) and Do et al. (2023) describe entrepreneurial education as a crucial component of the broader educational system, providing students with the skills, ideas, and management capabilities needed for job creation.

Gibson (2001) and Lv et al. (2021) explain that entrepreneurial education involves leveraging private initiative to transform a business idea into a new venture or expand and diversify an existing enterprise with high growth potential. Entrepreneurial education is a lifelong process that begins as early as elementary school and extends throughout all levels of education, including adult education. Antoncic and Hisrich (2003) view it as a tool that helps individuals become entrepreneurs. As Emaikwu (2011) and Mico and Cungu (2023) emphasize, entrepreneurial education focuses on enhancing an individual's understanding and ability to pursue entrepreneurial skills and qualities, fostering overall development of the body, mind, and spirit. It entails recognizing opportunities, committing resources, and creating businesses that deliver valuable goods and services.

Moreland (2006) and Tiberius and Weyland (2023) stress that integrating entrepreneurial education into tertiary institutions will increase awareness and understanding of socio-economic and environmental challenges, contributing to sustainable national development. It will also stimulate job creation to reduce graduate unemployment and encourage stable national growth by generating more employment opportunities. Entrepreneurial education can empower students mentally, physically, and intellectually, enabling them to acquire, interpret, and apply knowledge, which will benefit both personal growth and national advancement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study consisted all undergraduate students of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko. The sample of the study comprised of three hundred (300) students randomly selected across the six (6) faculties in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, through the use of simple random sampling technique as analyzed below:

S/N	FACULTIES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
1.	Agricultural Science	50
2.	Art	50
3.	Education	50
4.	Law	50
5.	Science	50

6.	Social and Management Science	50
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Research Instrument

A self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit relevant information from the respondents. It is titled “Entrepreneurship Education as a Tool for Reducing Unemployment” (EETRU) was used to collect data. The instrument was sub-divided into two parts. Part A deals with the demographic data of the respondents including the status, age and sex of the respondent while part B contains set of items that ask for the opinion of the respondents on the subject matter, on a four point likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD).

Validity of the Instrument

In order to ensure face and content validity, the drafted copy of the questionnaire was given to expert in the faculty of education, for necessary corrections and suggestions. The suggestions and corrections made were incorporated into the final copies of the instrument after which it was used to collect relevant data for the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined using split half method in which the odd and even numbered items form the two halves. The two halves were administered to a sample of students from a university not selected for the main study.

Administration of the Instruments

The researcher personally went to administer the questionnaire to the selected undergraduate students in each faculty with the permission from the school authority, the respondents were assured of confidentiality of the information provided and that it will only be used for academic purpose. The questionnaires were collected back after completion on the spot.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were subjected to analysis by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software of the computer unit version 17. The research questions were analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics of frequency counts and simple percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collated data via questionnaires were analyzed, summarized and interpreted. Frequency count and simple percentage were used to answer the research questions. The results were presented in tables below.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by GENDER

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
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MALE	135	45
FEMALE	165	55
TOTAL	300	100

Table 1 above showed the distribution of the sex of respondents. It revealed that 135 (45%) of the respondents were male undergraduate students while 165 (55%) were female students which implies that female students are more than the male students.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by AGE

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
10-14	51	17
15-19	56	18.7
20 AND ABOVE	193	64.3
TOTAL	300	100

Table 2 above showed the distribution of the age of respondents. The table showed that 51 (17%) of the respondents were between 10 - 14 years, 56 (19%) of the respondents were between 15 - 19 years of age while 193 (64%) of the respondents were 20 years of age and above. It showed that majority of the respondents were 20 years of age and above.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question 1: What are the skills that can make Nigerian graduates entrepreneurs reduce unemployment rate?

Table 3: Skills that can make Nigerian graduates entrepreneurs reduce unemployment rate

S/N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

1.	Fashion Designing	189	63	86	28.7	14	4.6	11	3.6
2.	Food and Catering Services	149	49.7	126	42	21	7	4	1.3
3.	Photography	158	52.7	112	37.3	20	6.7	10	3.3
4.	Laundry/Dry Cleaning Services	134	44.6	119	39.6	33	11	14	4.6
5.	Barbing/Hair Dressing	169	56.3	100	33.3	15	5	16	5.3
6.	Web designing	144	48	123	41	23	7.7	10	3.3
7.	Bead making	108	36	133	44.3	50	16.7	9	3
8.	Musician	126	42	115	38.3	35	11.7	24	8
9.	Makeup Artist	138	46	115	38.3	32	10.7	15	5
10	Event planning	134	44.7	112	37.3	36	12	18	6

Table 4 shows students' response to skills that can make Nigerian graduates entrepreneurs reduce unemployment rate. Majority (189 (63%)) of the respondents strongly agreed that fashion designing is one of the skills, 86 (28%) agreed as well, 14 (5%) disagreed while 11 (4%) strongly disagreed. For item 2, 149 (50%) strongly agreed that food and catering services is one of the skills, 126 (42%) agreed, 21 (7%) disagreed while 4 (1%) strongly disagreed. For item 3, 158 (53%) strongly agreed that photography is one of the skills, 112 (37%) agreed to this, 37 (7%) disagreed while 10 (3%) strongly disagreed. For item 4, 134 (45%) of the respondents strongly agreed that laundry/dry cleaning services is one of the skills, 119 (40%) agreed to this as well, 33 (11%) disagreed while 14 (7%) strongly disagreed. For item 5, 169 (56%) of the respondents strongly agreed that barbing/hair dressing is one of the skills, 100 (33%) agreed to this, 15 (5%) disagreed while 16 (5%) strongly disagreed.

For item 6, 144 (48%) strongly agreed that web designing is one of the skills, 123 (41%) agreed, 23 (8%) disagreed while 10 (3%) strongly disagreed. For item 7, 108 (36%) strongly agreed that bead making is one of the skills, 133 (44%) agreed to this, 50 (17%) disagreed while 9 (3%) strongly disagreed. For item 8, 126 (42%) of the respondents strongly agreed that musician is one of the skills, 115 (38%) agreed to this as well, 35 (12%) disagreed while 84 (7%) strongly disagreed. For item 9, 138 (46%) of the respondents strongly agreed that makeup artist is one of the skills, 115 (38%) agreed to this, 32 (11%) disagreed while 15 (5%) strongly disagreed. For item 10, 134 (5%) strongly agreed that event planning is one of the skills, 112 (37%) agreed, 36 (12%) disagreed while 18 (6%) strongly disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents agreed that all the skills listed above can make Nigerian graduates entrepreneurs reduce unemployment rate.

Research Question 2: What are the benefits of entrepreneurial education to Nigerian graduates?

Table 4: Benefits of entrepreneurial education to Nigerian graduates

S/N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
11.	Entrepreneurial education creates job for self-employment.	157	52.3	108	36	25	8.3	9	3
12.	Entrepreneurial education provides skills to manage businesses	136	45.3	136	45.3	20	6.7	9	3
13.	It provides job opportunities to rural dwellers.	118	39.3	131	43.7	40	13.3	11	3.7
14.	It improves individual living standard	147	49	120	40	20	6.7	11	3.7
15.	Provision of opportunity to utilize ones potentials	145	48.3	120	40	20	6.7	15	5
16.	It develops one's financial literacy and money management skills.	119	39.7	153	51	22	7.3	6	2
17.	It ensures social justice, instills confidence and stimulates the economy.	109	36.3	152	50.7	23	7.7	16	5.3
18.	Entrepreneurial education produces champions of innovation	116	38.7	128	42.7	40	20	14	4.7
19.	It equips individuals with the ability to seek investment opportunities and maximize returns from that investment.	108	36	147	49	42	14	3	1
20.	It increases one's ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes.	143	47.7	134	44.7	13	4.3	10	3.3

Table 4 shows students' response to benefits of entrepreneurial education to Nigerian graduates. Majority (157 (52%)) of the respondents strongly agreed that entrepreneurial education creates job for self-employment, 108 (36%) agreed as well, 25 (8%) disagreed while 9 (3%) strongly disagreed. For item 2, 136 (45%) strongly agreed that entrepreneurial education provides skills to manage businesses, 136 (45%) agreed, 20 (7%) disagreed while 9 (3%) strongly disagreed. For item 3, 118 (39%) strongly agreed that it

provides job opportunities to rural dwellers, 131 (44%) agreed to this, 40 (13%) disagreed while 11 (4%) strongly disagreed. For item 4, 147 (49%) of the respondents strongly agreed that it improves individual living standard, 120 (40%) agreed to this as well, 20 (7%) disagreed while 11 (4%) strongly disagreed. For item 5, 145 (48%) of the respondents strongly agreed that it provide opportunity to utilize ones potentials, 120 (40%) agreed to this, 20 (7%) disagreed while 15 (5%) strongly disagreed.

For item 6, 119 (40%) strongly agreed that it develops one's financial literacy and money management skills, 153 (51%) agreed, 22 (7%) disagreed while 6 (2%) strongly disagreed. For item 7, 109 (36%) strongly agreed that it ensures social justice, instills confidence and stimulates the economy, 152 (51%) agreed to this, 23 (8%) disagreed while 16 (5%) strongly disagreed. For item 8, 116 (39%) of the respondents strongly agreed that entrepreneurial education produces champions of innovation, 128 (43%) agreed to this as well, 40 (20%) disagreed while 14 (8%) strongly disagreed. For item 9, 108 (36%) of the respondents strongly agreed that it equips individuals with the ability to seek investment opportunities and maximize returns from that investment, 147 (49%) agreed to this, 42 (14%) disagreed while 3 (1%) strongly disagreed. For item 10, 143 (48%) strongly agreed that it increases one's ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes, 135 (45%) agreed, 13 (4%) disagreed while 10 (3%) strongly disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents agreed that all the items raised above are benefits of entrepreneurial education to Nigerian graduates.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in entrepreneurial education?

Table 5: Challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in entrepreneurial education

S/N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
21	Poor funding by government and non-governmental organizations.	89	29.7	148	49.3	34	11.3	29	9.7
22	Inadequate qualified teachers and instructors	110	36.7	118	39.3	50	16.7	22	7.3
23	Inadequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructural facilities	124	41.3	135	45	20	6.7	21	7
24	Lack of fund to starter pack for a skill/business	154	51.3	112	37.3	22	7.3	12	4
25	Poor enabling business environment	147	49	100	33.3	53	17.7	0	0

Table 5 shows students' response to benefits of entrepreneurial education to Nigerian graduates. 89 (30%) of the respondents strongly agreed that poor funding by government and non-governmental organizations is a challenge, 148 (49%) agreed as well, 34 (11%) disagreed while 29 (10%) strongly disagreed. For item 2, 110 (37%) strongly agreed that inadequate qualified teachers and instructors is a challenge, 118 (39%) agreed, 50 (17%) disagreed while 22 (7%) strongly disagreed. For item 3, 124 (41%) strongly agreed that inadequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructural facilities is a challenge, 135 (45%) agreed to

this, 20 (7%) disagreed while 21 (7%) strongly disagreed. For item 4, 154 (51%) of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of fund to starter pack for a skill/business is a challenge, 112 (37%) agreed to this as well, 22 (7%) disagreed while 12 (4%) strongly disagreed. For item 5, 147 (49%) of the respondents strongly agreed that poor enabling business environment is a challenge, 100 (33%) agreed to this, 53 (17%) disagreed while 0 (0%) strongly disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents agreed that all the items raised above are challenges faced by Nigerian graduates.

Research Question 4: What are the solutions to the challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in entrepreneurship education?

Table 6: Solutions to the challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in entrepreneurship education

S/ N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
26.	Creating enabling environment for the survival of business activities.	144	48	126	42	22	7.3	8	2.7
27.	Adequate provision of qualified and efficient teachers/ instructors.	136	45.3	133	44.3	24	8	7	2.3
28.	Establishing different sources of capital/funds for entrepreneurs by government.	88	29.3	176	58.7	35	11.7	1	0.3
29.	Provision of adequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructural facilities.	114	38	130	43.3	50	16.7	6	2
30.	Proper budgeting and planning to improve cash flow.	140	46.7	131	43.7	22	7.3	7	2.3

Table 6 shows students' response to benefits of entrepreneurial education to Nigerian graduates. Majority (144 (48%)) of the respondents strongly agreed that creating enabling environment for the survival of business activities is a solution, 126 (42%) agreed as well, 22 (7%) disagreed while 8 (3%) strongly disagreed. For item 2, 136 (45%) strongly agreed that adequate provision of qualified and efficient teachers/ instructors is a solution, 133 (44%) agreed, 24 (8%) disagreed while 7 (2%) strongly disagreed. For item 3, 88 (29%) strongly agreed that establishing different sources of capital/funds for entrepreneurs by government is a solution, 176 (59%) agreed to this, 35 (12%) disagreed while 1 (0%) strongly disagreed. For item 4, 114 (38%) of the respondents strongly agreed that provision of adequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructural facilities is a solution, 130 (43%) agreed to this as well, 50 (17%) disagreed while 6 (2%) strongly disagreed. For item 5, 140 (47%) of the respondents strongly agreed that proper budgeting and planning to improve cash flow is a solution, 131 (44%) agreed to this, 22 (7%) disagreed while 7 (2%) strongly disagreed. In summary, majority of the respondents agreed that all the items raised above are solutions to the challenges faced by Nigerian graduates.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study revealed the skills that can make Nigerian graduates entrepreneurs reduce unemployment. The result showed that fashion designing, food catering services, photography, laundry/dry cleaning services, barbing/hair dressing, web designing, bead making, musician, makeup artist, and event planning are skills that can make Nigerian graduates entrepreneurs reduce unemployment rate. The findings is in agreement with the view of Zahra (2009) and Miço, and Cungu, (2023), who argued that social entrepreneurs make significant and diverse contribution to their communities and societies, adopting business models to offer creative solution to complex and persistent economic problems.

The second finding revealed that majority of the students strongly agreed that the benefits of entrepreneurial education to Nigeria graduates includes: creation of job for self-employment, provision of job opportunity to rural dwellers, provision of opportunity to utilize ones potentials, increase in one's ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. The findings agreed with the view of Stoner and Freeman (2012), and Do and Nguyen, (2023) who asserted that a person who gets entrepreneurship education right will enjoy the following benefits: increase in productivity, creativity, fostering of economic growth and development amongst others.

The third finding of this study revealed the challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in entrepreneurial education. The result showed that poor funding by government and non-governmental organisations, inadequate qualified teachers and instructors, inadequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructural facilities, lack of fund to starter pack for a skill/business and poor enabling business environment are challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in entrepreneurial education. The findings agreed with the view of Tiberius, and Weyland (2023), whose study investigated and revealed the major challenges faced by undergraduates in Nigeria which are lack of enabling environment for entrepreneurs to thrive, lack of access to funding, high interest rates on loan from banks amongst others.

The fourth finding revealed that majority of the students strongly agreed that the solutions to the challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in entrepreneurship education are creating enabling environment for the survival of business activities; adequate provision of qualified and efficient teachers/instructors; establishing different sources of capital/funds for entrepreneurs by government; provision of adequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructural facilities; proper budgeting and planning to improve cash flow are solutions to the challenges faced by Nigerian graduates. This findings agreed with the view of Mico and Cungu, (2023) and Lv et al, (2021), who posited that the provision of meaningful infrastructural facilities and creating of enabling environment for entrepreneurs is a panacea to the numerous challenges faced by entrepreneurs in Nigeria; as this will make Nigeria undergraduates self-reliance and subsequently encourage them to be self-dependent.

Summary

This study investigated the role of entrepreneurship education in reducing unemployment. It was guided by four research questions and reviewed various literature on topics such as the definition of entrepreneurship, types of entrepreneurs, objectives of entrepreneurial education, unemployment in Nigeria, and the impact of entrepreneurship education on the Nigerian economy. A descriptive survey research design was used, with the population consisting of undergraduate students from Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko. A random sample of 300 students from the six university faculties participated in the study. Data were collected using a self-developed, well-constructed questionnaire that was approved by the researcher's supervisor before distribution. The data were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages.

Key findings include:

1. Skills such as food catering, photography, laundry services, hairdressing, web design, bead making, music, makeup artistry, and event planning can help Nigerian graduates become entrepreneurs, thus reducing unemployment.

2. Benefits of entrepreneurship education for Nigerian graduates include job creation for self-employment, job opportunities for rural residents, the ability to utilize one's potential, and enhanced skills to respond to societal changes.
3. Challenges faced by graduates in entrepreneurship education include poor funding, lack of qualified teachers, insufficient teaching materials, inadequate infrastructure, lack of funding for start-up businesses, and a poor business environment.
4. Solutions to these challenges involve creating a supportive business environment, improving teacher quality, establishing capital sources for entrepreneurs, providing necessary materials and infrastructure, and proper budgeting to improve financial stability.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Nigerian graduates can reduce unemployment by acquiring various entrepreneurial skills such as design, food catering, photography, laundry/dry cleaning, hairdressing, web design, bead making, music, makeup artistry, and event planning. Additionally, entrepreneurial education offers significant benefits, including job creation for self-employment, job opportunities for rural dwellers, the chance to fully utilize one's potential, and an increased ability to anticipate and adapt to societal changes. The study also concluded that Nigerian graduates face numerous challenges in entrepreneurship education. To address these challenges, it is crucial to create a supportive environment for business activities, provide qualified and efficient instructors, establish diverse funding sources for entrepreneurs, ensure access to necessary teaching materials and infrastructure, and implement proper budgeting and planning to improve financial stability.

Recommendations

1. **Promote Entrepreneurial Skill Development:** Nigerian universities should incorporate a diverse range of practical entrepreneurial skills into their curricula, such as food catering, photography, web design, makeup artistry, and event planning, to equip graduates with the tools to reduce unemployment.
2. **Enhance Entrepreneurial Education Benefits:** Government and educational institutions should emphasize the importance of entrepreneurial education in fostering self-employment, creating job opportunities in rural areas, and helping graduates utilize their potential, while also enhancing their ability to adapt to societal changes.
3. **Improve Funding for Entrepreneurship Education:** Government and private sector stakeholders should increase funding for entrepreneurial education programs, ensuring that they are adequately resourced with teaching materials, equipment, and infrastructure to support effective learning and skill development.
4. **Develop a Supportive Business Environment:** Efforts should be made to create an enabling environment that facilitates business activities, such as improving access to capital, ensuring legal and regulatory support, and fostering a culture that encourages entrepreneurship.
5. **Invest in Qualified Instructors and Proper Planning:** Educational institutions should prioritize the recruitment and training of qualified entrepreneurship instructors. Additionally, they should focus on strategic planning and budgeting to improve the sustainability and financial viability of entrepreneurial education programs.

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