**The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Youth Employability in Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo state, Nigeria**

**Abstract**

This study investigates the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education curriculum as a solution to youth unemployment, focusing on Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo. Against the backdrop of rising youth unemployment in Nigeria, where approximately 64 million young people are unemployed according to recent statistics, this research examines how entrepreneurship education can bridge the gap between academic training and employment creation. The study employed a descriptive mixed-method approach , utilizing quantitative approaches. Data was collected through structured questionnaires administered to 100 students, selected through simple random sampling across five faculties of the university. The findings reveal that entrepreneurship education significantly contributes to youth employability through three key mechanisms: practical skill development, mentorship programs, and industry-aligned curriculum content. Specifically, the study found that 85% of respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education contributes to economic development , while 92% confirmed the positive impact of mentorship on their entrepreneurial capabilities. However, several challenges were identified, including financial constraints, insufficient practical training facilities, and limited access to current teaching materials. The research demonstrates that while entrepreneurship education shows promise as a tool for addressing youth unemployment, its effectiveness is contingent upon adequate funding, practical skill development opportunities, and strong industry partnerships. These findings have important implications for curriculum development and educational policy in Nigerian higher institutions, suggesting the need for a more practical, industry-aligned approach to entrepreneurship education. Increased funding allocation for entrepreneurship education programs to address the identified resource constraints. Implementation of structured mentorship programs to support student entrepreneurial development. Regular curriculum review and updates to maintain alignment with current market needs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Youth Unemployment, Curriculum Development, Higher Education, Skills Development.

**INTRODUCTION**

The increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria and indeed most developing economies today is alarming, devastating and this has raised concerns among researchers and policy makers. Unemployment has posed itself as a problematic child that is giving government serious concerns in trying to provide a lasting solution to this devastating problem. Unemployment has been known to be one of major challenges facing several countries for several decades and this has led to increase in crime rate, mortality rate, poverty rate, and unnecessary dependencyon government for paid jobs commonly referred to as white collar jobs (Agwu, 2019). Education is concerned with the transmission of skills, knowledge, vocation and culture and this is usually done through teaching, learning, research and dissemination of the findings for ultimate utilization. Education is the key to national development and this is because it unlocks the economic potentials of the people; and empowers an equips individuals in the society to participate in and benefit from their national economy. It facilitates economic development and provides the basis for transformation. Education is an essential tool for sustainability. The present economic crisis suggests that the entire world is struggling for qualitative education (Aluwong, 2010)

The fundamental purpose of education encompasses the transfer of knowledge, skills, vocational training, and cultural understanding through structured processes of teaching, learning, research, and knowledge dissemination for practical application. As a cornerstone of national progress, education serves to unlock human potential and enable individuals to actively engage in and reap benefits from their nation's economic system. By fostering economic progress and laying the groundwork for societal transformation, education emerges as a crucial instrument for maintaining sustainable development. In the context of current global economic challenges, there is a widespread struggle to maintain and deliver high-quality educational experiences, as noted in research by Aluwong (2010).

Entrepreneurship has gained prominence, encouraging a growing number of young people to start their own businesses with innovation to improve their livelihoods and achieve economic independence. Youth entrepreneurship also creates jobs and integrates these young entrepreneurs into changing labor markets (Tam et al., 2024). Entrepreneurship education as part of the total educational system is the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for job creation. An entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seeking for employment. Therefore, there is a need to embrace this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make it functional. Quality entrepreneurship education could be used as a tool for fighting the war against poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.

Unemployment has become a major problem bedevilling the lives of Nigerian Youths causing frustration, dejection and depending on family members and friends. The high rate of unemployment among the youths in Nigeria has contributed to the high rate of poverty and insecurity in the country (Ajufo, 2013). More than half of the Nigerian population is under the age of 30 according to the National Population Commission (2013). Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) observed from the excerpt of statistics obtained from the National Manpower Board and Federal Bureau of Statistics that Nigeria has a youth population of eighty (80) million representing 60 percent of the total population of the country. Sixty-four (64) million of them are unemployed while one million, six hundred thousand are underemployed.

Agi and Yellow (2013) asserted that the goals of wealth creation or generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient education system which impacts relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite significant investments in higher education, youth unemployment remains a pressing challenge in Nigeria, with particularly severe implications for recent graduates. While entrepreneurship education has been integrated into university curricula as a potential solution, there is limited empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness in actually preparing students for successful entrepreneurial ventures or self-employment. At Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, like many other Nigerian institutions, substantial resources have been allocated to entrepreneurship education programs, yet questions persist about whether these initiatives are truly equipping students with the practical skills and mindset necessary for entrepreneurial success.

Several critical issues underscore this research problem:

First, there is a noticeable disconnect between the theoretical knowledge provided in entrepreneurship courses and the practical skills required in the real business environment. While students receive classroom instruction about business principles, it remains unclear whether this translates into actionable entrepreneurial capabilities.

Despite the implementation of entrepreneurship education programs, graduate unemployment rates continue to rise, suggesting possible gaps in the curriculum's effectiveness or implementation. The National Bureau of Statistics reports that unemployment among young graduates has increased despite the widespread adoption of entrepreneurship education, raising questions about the program's actual impact on job creation and self-employment.

There is insufficient understanding of how various components of entrepreneurship education - including mentorship, practical training, and theoretical instruction contribute to developing entrepreneurial competencies among students. This knowledge gap hampers efforts to optimize curriculum design and delivery methods.

Furthermore, while considerable research exists on entrepreneurship education in developed nations, there is limited context-specific research examining its effectiveness within the unique socio-economic environment of Nigerian institutions, particularly at Adeyemi Federal University of Education. This lack of localized research makes it difficult to determine whether current entrepreneurship education approaches are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of Nigerian students and the local business environment.

This research therefore seeks to critically examine the role and effectiveness of the entrepreneurship education curriculum at Adeyemi Federal University of Education, with particular focus on its practical impact on students' entrepreneurial capabilities and employment prospects. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing more effective approaches to addressing youth unemployment through education.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Does entrepreneurship education curriculum play any role in the social, political and economic development of Nigeria?
2. What are the techniques used in acquiring entrepreneurship education curriculum for youth employment in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges that hindered entrepreneurship education in youth employment in Nigeria?

**METHODOLOGY**

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research adopted a descriptive mixed research design.

**POPULATION**

The population of the study comprised all students at Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo.

**SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 students each from the five faculties in Adeyemi Federal University of Education making a total of one hundred (100) respondents for the study.

**RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

A questionnaire titled “Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum; A Panacea for Unemployment amongst youths: A Case Study of Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo”, was used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire consists of two major sections: section A and B. Section A elicited responses about the demographic data of the respondents while section B was designed in a four likert scale to seek information about the entrepreneurship education curriculum.

**METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

The questionnaires were distributed with the help, of course, representatives across various faculties and were collected immediately after filling. The data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used for the analysis with a cut of point of 2.50 which was used to determine the acceptability and rejection of each items.

**RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT**

Face and content validation were carried out by experts in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

**RESULTS**

Research question 1: Does entrepreneurship education curriculum play any role in the social, political and economic development of Nigeria?

Table 1: Roles of entrepreneurship education curriculum in social, political and economic development of Nigeria

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **ITEM** | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Std. D** | **Remark** |
| 1. | Entrepreneurship education can have impact on the economic development of Nigeria | 53 | 32 | 15 | 0 | 3.3 | .74 | Accepted |
| 2. | Entrepreneurship education equips individuals with practical skills that contribute to economic growth | 35 | 45 | 20 | 0 | 3.15 | .73 | Accepted |
| 3. | Entrepreneurship education in instrumental in creating job opportunities and reducing unemployment in Nigeria | 32 | 51 | 17 | 0 | 3.15 | .69 | Accepted |
| 4. | Entrepreneurship education plays a role in empowering individuals socially, fostering a sense of independence and self-reliance | 32 | 52 | 16 | 0 | 3.16 | .68 | Accepted |
| 5. | Entrepreneurship education can positively impact and preserve cultural values in Nigeria while fostering modernization. | 52 | 44 | 4 | 0 | 3.48 | .57 | Accepted |

*Key: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree*

*Decision Value for Remark: 0.00 – 2.44 = not accepted, 2.45 – 4.00 = Accepted*

Table 1 shows the role of entrepreneurship education curriculum in the social, political and economic development of Nigeria. The table shows that the respondents agreed to all the items and with a total average mean of 3.04 out of 4.00 shows that it can be inferred that entrepreneurship education curriculum play a role in the social, political and economic development of Nigeria.

Research question 2: what are the techniques used in acquiring the entrepreneurship education curriculum for youth unemployment in Nigeria?

Table 2: Techniques used in Acquiring Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum for Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **ITEM** | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Std. D** | **Remark** |
| 1. | Various entrepreneurship education opportunities are available for youths in Nigeria | 56 | 40 | 4 | 0 | 3.52 | .58 | Accepted |
| 2. | The curriculum incorporates practical and hands-on activities to enhance entrepreneurial skills among the youths | 64 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 3.64 | 57 | Accepted |
| 3. | The entrepreneurship education curriculum aligns with the current and future needs of industries in Nigeria, fostering employability | 52 | 44 | 4 | 0 | 3.48 | .57 | Accepted |
| 4. | The entrepreneurship education programs are inclusive, catering to the diverse needs and background of Nigerian youths | 56 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 3.56 | .49 | Accepted |
| 5. | The entrepreneurship education curriculum focuses on developing an entrepreneurial mindset among youth, encouraging innovation and creativity. | 52 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 3.52 | .50 | Accepted |

*Key: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree*

*Decision Value for Remark: 0.00 – 2.44 = not accepted, 2.45 – 4.00 = Accepted*

Table 2 shows the techniques used in acquiring entrepreneurship education curriculum for youth unemployment in Nigeria. The table shows that the respondents agreed with all the items in the table. Based on the result from this table and mean score acceptance by the decision rule, the techniques used in acquiring entrepreneurship education curriculum for youth unemployment in Nigeria are: availability of entrepreneurship education opportunities for youths in Nigeria, the curriculum incorporates practical and hands-on activities to enhance entrepreneurial skills among the youth, entrepreneurship education curriculum aligns with the current and the future needs of industries in Nigeria, fostering employability, entrepreneurship education programs are inclusive, catering to the diverse needs and backgrounds of Nigerian youths and entrepreneurship education curriculum focuses on developing an entrepreneurial mindset among youths, encouraging innovation of creativity.

Research question 3: What are the challenges that hindered entrepreneurship education in youth employment in Nigeria?

Table 3: Challenges that hindered entrepreneurship education in youth employment in Nigeria

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **ITEM** | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Std. D** | **Remark** |
| 1. | The availability of qualified instructors that positively impact the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. | 44 | 56 | 0 | 0 | 3.44 | .49 | Accepted |
| 2. | Access to relevant and up-to-date teaching materials is a challenge in promoting entrepreneurship education. | 36 | 64 | 0 | 0 | 3.36 | .48 | Accepted |
| 3. | Financial constraints affect the implementation of practical components in entrepreneurship education | 28 | 72 | 0 | 0 | 3.28 | .45 | Accepted |
| 4. | There is insufficient emphasis on practical skills development in entrepreneurship programs | 40 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 3.40 | .49 | Accepted |
| 5. | Gender disparities exist in access to entrepreneurship education opportunities | 48 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 3.48 | .50 | Accepted |

*Key: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree*

*Decision Value for Remark: 0.00 – 2.44 = not accepted, 2.45 – 4.00 = Accepted*

Table 3 shows the challenges that hinder entrepreneurship education in youth employment in Nigeria. The table indicates agreement among the students for all items as challenges. Based on the result from this table and mean score acceptance decision by rule, the challenges that hinder entrepreneurship education in Nigeria are: lack of access to relevant and up-to-date teaching materials, financial constraints affecting the practical components of entrepreneurship education, insufficient emphasis on practical skills development in entrepreneurship programs and gender disparities that exist in access to entrepreneurship education opportunities.

Research question 4: What is the role of mentorship and experiential learning in entrepreneurship education, and how does it contribute to the employability of youths?

Table 4: Role of mentorship and experiential learning in entrepreneurship education?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **ITEM** | **SA** | **A** | **D** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Std. D** | **Remark** |
| 1. | Mentorship in entrepreneurship education enhances practical skills and knowledge. | 40 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 3.40 | .49 | Accepted |
| 2. | Having a mentor has increased my confidence in pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours. | 44 | 56 | 0 | 0 | 3.44 | .48 | Accepted |
| 3. | Mentorship has helped me develop a strategic mindset in entrepreneurship | 36 | 64 | 0 | 0 | 3.36 | .48 | Accepted |
| 4. | Mentorship helps in navigating challenges specific to entrepreneurial journeys | 36 | 60 | 4 | 0 | 3.32 | .55 | Accepted |
| 5. | Mentorship enhances self-confidence and decision-making skills in entrepreneurs. | 56 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 3.56 | .49 | Accepted |

*Key: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree*

*Decision Value for Remark: 0.00 – 2.44 = not accepted, 2.45 – 4.00 = Accepted*

Table 4 above shows the role of mentorship and experiential learning in entrepreneurship education. The table indicates agreement among the students for all items as roles of mentorship and experiential learning. Based on the result from this table and mean score acceptance by decision rule, the role of mentorship and experiential learning in entrepreneurship education and how it contributes to the employability of youths are: mentorship in entrepreneurship education enhances practical knowledge and skills, increases their confidence in pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours, helped to develop a strategic mindset in entrepreneurship, helps in navigating challenges specific to entrepreneurial journeys and enhances self-confidence and decision-making skills in entrepreneurs.

**Discussion**

The finding from the first research question in the present study revealed that entrepreneurship education curriculum plays role in the social, political and economic development of Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education is a type of education that equips its product with the needed skills, knowledge, attitude and motivation to be able to face and address the raging problem of unemployment. There is a dire need for a form of education which fosters self-reliance and also impacts positively on the creative and innovative abilities of the individuals. In the word of Olaide (2019) posited that entrepreneurship education is a needed tool to tackle the problem of unemployment in Nigeria.

Also, entrepreneurship education offers a solution. It seeks to prepare people, particularly youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real-life learning experiences where they can take risks, manage the results and learn from the outcomes. Through entrepreneurship education, young people especially in higher institutions, learn organizational skills, including time management, leadership development and interpersonal skills, all of which are highly transferable skills sought by employers. (Ubogu, 2020)

This study further revealed the challenges that hindered entrepreneurship education in youth employment in Nigeria and this finding is related to Ubogu (2023) who posited that under-funding quality entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is a major problem. The study further noted that enough funds should be allotted for payment of teachers’ salaries, building of new classrooms, renovation of school building, and purchase of equipment and instructional materials. Another major challenge facing entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is the lack of facilities for proper training for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. These facilities include teaching materials, equipment, laboratories and workshops (Ubogu, 2020 & Gyuse, 2019).

**CONCLUSION**

This study has demonstrated that the entrepreneurship education curriculum plays a vital role in addressing youth unemployment at Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo. The findings reveal several significant insights into the effectiveness and challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria's higher education system.

The research established that entrepreneurship education makes substantial contributions to Nigeria's social, political, and economic development through practical skill development, job creation, and fostering self-reliance among youth. This aligns with Olaide's (2019) assertion that entrepreneurship education is an essential tool for tackling unemployment in Nigeria.

The study found that effective techniques for entrepreneurship education include practical hands-on activities, industry-aligned curriculum content, and inclusive programming that caters to diverse student needs. However, several challenges impede the full realization of these educational objectives, including financial constraints, insufficient emphasis on practical skills development, and limited access to up-to-date teaching materials, as similarly noted by Ubogu (2020) and Gyuse (2019).

Notably, the research highlighted the crucial role of mentorship in entrepreneurship education, with findings indicating that mentorship enhances practical knowledge, builds confidence, and develops strategic thinking among students. This mentorship component appears to be particularly valuable in preparing students for real-world entrepreneurial challenges.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Increased funding allocation for entrepreneurship education programs to address the identified resource constraints
2. Enhanced integration of practical, hands-on learning experiences in the curriculum
3. Development of stronger industry partnerships to ensure curriculum relevance
4. Implementation of structured mentorship programs to support student entrepreneurial development
5. Regular curriculum review and updates to maintain alignment with current market needs

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

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1.

2.

3.

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