

IMPACT OF ENTREPRENURESHIP EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS AS A SOLUTION TO NIGERIAN YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN ADAMAWA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions on youth unemployment in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Despite the emphasis on training through workshops and skills acquisition, the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education had not been thoroughly measured. The study focused on four local governments from three senatorial districts, collecting data from graduate student entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs, tertiary institution administrators, and parents using simple random sampling. The findings revealed a significant positive impact of entrepreneurship education on addressing youth unemployment, with a high mean score of 3.27 and an SD of 0.88. Development of entrepreneurship skills was crucial for business success (mean score 3.15, SD 0.91) and job creation (83% agreement, mean score 3.23, SD 0.87). These skills also played a role in youth empowerment (73% agreement, mean score 3.01, SD 0.95) and preparation for employment (74% agreement, mean score 3.03, SD 0.94). However, 74% of respondents indicated that the skills provided were insufficient for self-employment (mean score 3.03, SD 0.94). The study concluded that while entrepreneurship education is vital for economic empowerment and job creation, there is a need to better align the skills taught with the demands of self-employment to fully address youth unemployment.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship education, Youth unemployment, Skills acquisition, Adamawa State*

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian modern system of education since inception with the missionary system, the colonial education and indeed the present system of education at all levels has been bedeviled by a curriculum that has not targeted self-employment but, has largely produced professionals like Medical Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Accountants, Teachers and the mass production of administrative clerks for the colonial administration who were no more than white collar seekers and employees. Today's Nigerian youths leave school equipped with the theoretical knowledge they do not need with little or no skill that makes employment seekers.

The new Nigeria methodology defines unemployed labor force as those who did not work at all or worked for less than 20 hours a week. The international definition, instead, include people aged 15 years to 64 years old who were available for work, actively seeking work, but were unable to find work, Varrella, (2021). Therefore, there is need to re-tool, re-skill and re-equip the Nigerian youth with the right skills and competencies to enable them fit in to the realities of the new economic challenges of the emerging world order concerned with employment creation.

The problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria came to light on Saturday, 15th of March 2014 which was a dark day in Nigerian youth unemployment history. About 500,000 young graduates had gathered in five centers across the country to write an aptitude test for just 4,556 available government jobs, Ajijah & Isine, (2014). Sadly, stampedes across the five centers led to the loss of 16 young lives whose bright futures would never be realized, Amuda, Zubairu, Ibrahim & Maitala, (2019). The incidents of that sad day revealed that youth unemployment in Nigeria not only led to social problems but to actual loss of life, (Okoh, (2014); Akanle & Omotayo, 2019)

Despite several efforts by successive governments to address the problem of graduate unemployment, the problem seems to be on the increase, Amuda, et al., (2019). It is against this, this study sought to investigate the "Impact of Entrepreneurship Education in Tertiary Institutions

as a Solution to Nigerian Youth Unemployment in Adamawa State”.

Literature Review

The importance of entrepreneurship education in creating employment, sustained economic growth and improved well-being has been re-echoed over the past decade. Regrettably, Nigeria lags behind from the point of harnessing the economic development impact of entrepreneurship, and the obvious implication is ever increasing unemployment and poverty, Opute, Kalu, Adeola & Iwu, (2021). Entrepreneurship in views of Amuda, Zubairu, Ibrahim and Maitala (2019) refers to the capability to harness the right quantity, quality and integration of resources that are consistent with profit making objectives considering risks and uncertainty connected to the business motives. The Federal government of Nigeria in 2006 mandated all higher educational institutions to run entrepreneurship programme as a mandatory course for all students, irrespective of their disciplines effective from 2007/2008 academic session, Okojie, (2009). Similarly, entrepreneurship education was promoted at tertiary institutions of higher learning for the purpose of making students acquire basic knowledge and develop competences in the area of business development, (Adejimale & Olufunmilayo, 2009).

The re-engineering of the Nigerian economy in the presence of available resources and business opportunities has attracted serious attention in recent times. The colonial mentality in the first generation of graduates in Nigeria was deep-rooted in the Golden Fleece and certificate frenzy, influenced the limited spirit of entrepreneurship. Among the dead and surviving industries in Nigeria, the captains of these industries are semi-literate entrepreneurs, Amuseghan & Tayo-Olajubutu, (2009). The mandatory inclusion of entrepreneurship education into the Nigeria Tertiary Institutions Curriculums is an enabling mechanism to promote self-employment, self-reliance and effort to reduce poverty. This is founded on the belief that with acquisition of relevant skills, competence, mindset and knowledge complemented with suitable practical knowledge/exposure, students, upon graduation are more likely to become self - employed and employers of labor, (Okah & Odelola, 2009), (Chinonso, 2022).

The alarming increase in graduates' unemployment across the globe is disturbing. Graduates' unemployment that leads to brain drain is a complex problem facing developing countries, of which Nigeria is not spared. It is on this premise that Abdulkareem, Olaide and Isiaka, (2021), necessitated the purpose to ameliorate the issue of graduate unemployment through the adoption of Islamic financing instruments as a solution to curb unemployment in Nigeria. Likewise, Jato, (2022), advised youths to seek entrepreneurship education formally or informally. They should also be open to any form of training or mentorship, to aid the start or grow an existing business.

Bulus, Ako, Ezekiel, Dansozon and Muhammed, (2022), proposed entrepreneurship education as a solution to unemployment. Too many people give up on their dreams far too soon, when education and mentoring could lead to success. Aduaka and Ezech, (2022), examined effect of entrepreneurship education on the career intentions and aspirations of students of tertiary education institutions in Enugu State, South-East Nigeria. They found out the effect of curriculum contents on the number of business ideas generated and to ascertain the effect of curriculum content on the number of business opportunities identified. They further investigated the effect of academic qualification on the number of business plans developed and to explore the effect of teaching methods on the number of business startups established by students but never has the impact of these knowledge and skills acquired been taking into consideration, hence the motivation to carry out this research.

METHODOLOGY

The area of study comprises of four (4) selected Local Governments from the three (3) senatorial districts in Adamawa State. The research design is cross-sectional survey with quantitative research approach, which has the ability to broaden the questions raised in the research, collect and collate adequate quantitative data on large population using smaller sample. The population

of the study consists of graduate students' from tertiary institutions, graduates of skills acquisition and training centers, tertiary institutions entrepreneurship education administrators and relevant skills professionals. This research used simple random sampling because every element has an equal chance of getting selected to be part of sample. It is used when we don't have any kind of prior information about the target population. The data collected was subjected to descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1: Response Rate of Questionnaire distributed

No of Questionnaire Distributed	No of Questionnaire Returned	Percentage of Questionnaire Returned (%)	Total No of Questionnaires used for Analysis
200	185	93%	185 (93%)

Source: field survey 2024

The analysis of response rate above indicates a response rate of 93% which was considered adequate for the analysis by checking it against the margin of error index using RAOSOFT Sample size calculator (RAOSOFT, 2004).

Demographic data of the respondents

The figures below described the demographic data provided by the respondents. This data is reported in the order as it appeared in first part of the questionnaire which covered questions relating to the respondents' personal details to show the extent to which the respondents are youths and have employable qualifications among others.

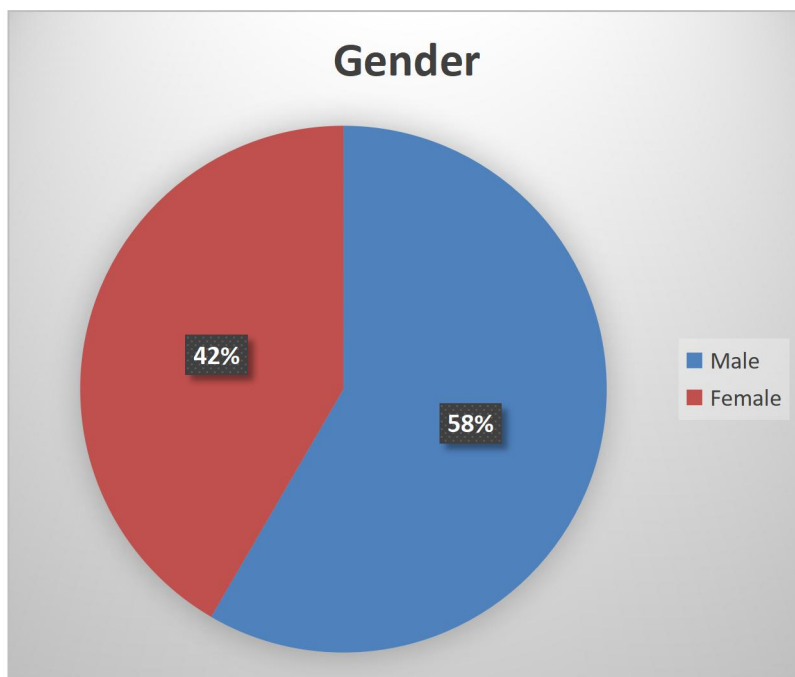


Figure 4.1: Representation of the respondents based on Gender

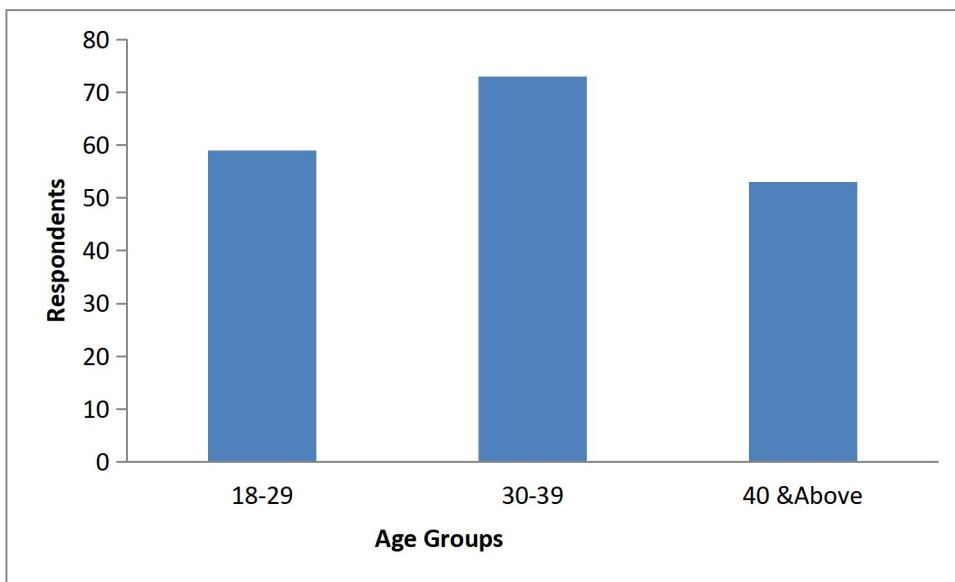


Figure 4.2: Representation of the respondents based on Age Group

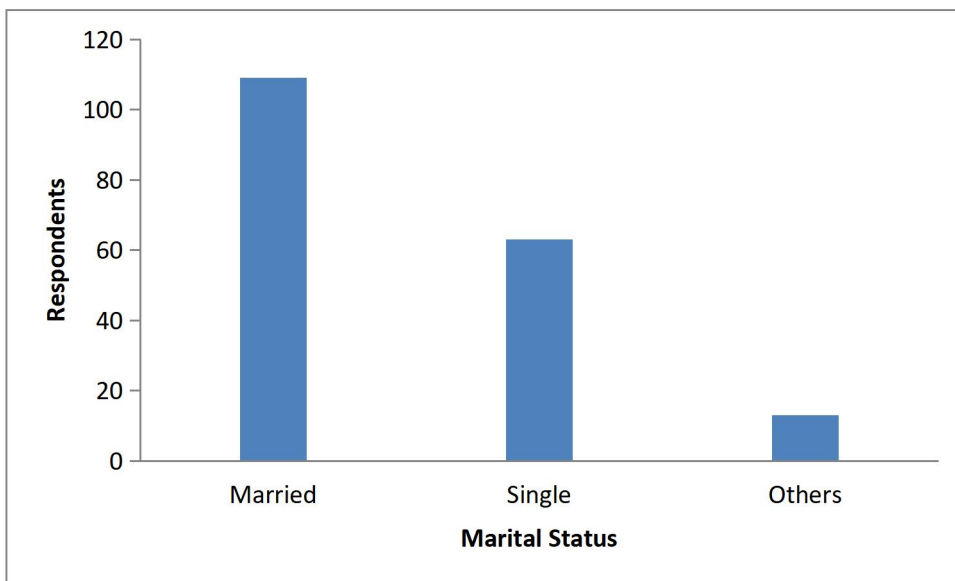


Figure 4.3: Representation of the respondents based on Marital Status

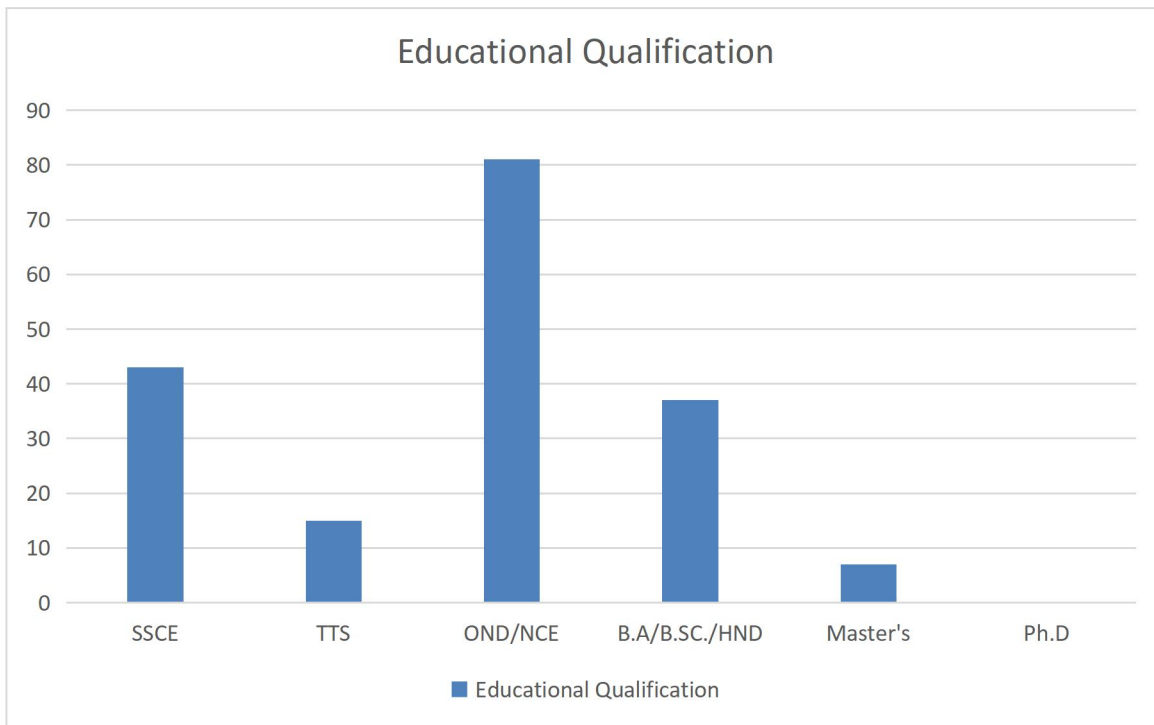


Figure 4.4: Representation of the respondents based on Educational Qualifications

The demographic data of the respondents revealed that males comprised 58% of the respondents, while females made up 42%. In the age groups, the largest age group was 30 to 39 years old, representing 33.8% of respondents. Those aged 18 to 29 years accounted for 31%, and those 40 years and above made up 29%. Married respondents formed the majority at 59%, followed by single respondents at 34%, and others at 7%. Respondents with OND/NCE had the highest percentage at 44%, followed by those with SSCE at 23%. Respondents with B.Sc/B.A/HND constituted 20%, TTS 8%, Master's degrees 4%, and Ph.D. holders represented 1%.

Table 4.2: Extent of the effectiveness of skills acquired/learned in entrepreneurship education offered in tertiary institutions/training centers addressed unemployment among youths in Adamawa State.

S/N	Statement	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	Mean	SD	Rmk
1	Entrepreneurship is any creative, innovative and enterprising human action/activity in pursuit of opportunity	92 (50%)	63 (34%)	18 (10%)	12 (06%)	3.27	0.88	A
2	Entrepreneurship skill development plays vital role in success of business	78 (42%)	71 (38%)	22 (12%)	14 (08%)	3.15	0.91	A
3	Entrepreneurship skills development has the prospect of enhancing job creation.	85 (46%)	68 (37%)	21 (11%)	11 (06%)	3.23	0.87	A
4	Entrepreneurship skill development can stimulate youth empowerment through employment	67 (36%)	69 (37%)	32 (17%)	17 (9%)	3.01	0.95	A

5	Entrepreneurship skill development provides good and adequate preparation for youth employment	69 (37%)	68 (37%)	33 (18%)	15 (08%)	3.03	0.94	A
6	Graduates from tertiary Institutions who have access to entrepreneurship education skills training are better empowered economically	69 (37%)	57 (31%)	36 (20%)	23 (12%)	2.93	1.03	A
7	Entrepreneurship skill development has not provided graduates of training centers the right type of skills for self-employment	69 (37%)	68 (37%)	33 (18%)	15 (08%)	3.03	0.94	A

Note: SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, DA: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree, Rmk: Remark A=Accepted

Table 4.2 presents the results on the effectiveness of skills acquired through entrepreneurship education in addressing youth unemployment. The findings show unanimous agreement among respondents. Entrepreneurship is recognized as any creative, innovative, and enterprising activity in pursuit of opportunities, with a mean score of 3.27 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.88.

The development of entrepreneurship skills plays a vital role in business success, with a mean score of 3.15 and an SD of 0.91. The prospect of entrepreneurship skill development enhancing job creation is supported by 83% of respondents, with a mean score of 3.23 and an SD of 0.87.

Similarly, 83% of respondents agree that entrepreneurship skill development can stimulate youth empowerment, with a mean score of 3.01 and an SD of 0.95. 74% of respondents believe that entrepreneurship skill development provides good and adequate preparation for youth employment, with a mean score of 3.03 and an SD of 0.94. 68% of respondents agree that graduates from tertiary institutions with access to entrepreneurship education skills training are better empowered economically, with a mean score of 2.93 and an SD of 1.03. However, 74% of respondents agree that entrepreneurship skill development has not provided graduates of training centers with the right type of skills for self-employment, with a mean score of 3.03 and an SD of 0.94.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant impact of entrepreneurship education on addressing youth unemployment. The unanimous agreement among respondents underscores the importance of entrepreneurial activities, which are identified as any creative, innovative, and enterprising actions pursued in the face of opportunities. This is reflected in the high mean score of 3.27 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.88. The findings further illustrate that the development of entrepreneurship skills is crucial for business success, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.15 and an SD of 0.91. A substantial 83% of respondents believe that entrepreneurship skill development is essential for job creation, supported by a mean score of 3.23 and an SD of 0.87. This consensus extends to the role of these skills in youth empowerment, with another 73% agreement and a mean score of 3.01 and an SD of 0.95. Moreover, 74% of respondents acknowledge that entrepreneurship skill development provides adequate preparation for youth employment, with a mean score of 3.03 and an SD of 0.94. The economic empowerment of graduates from tertiary institutions who have access to entrepreneurship education is recognized by 68% of respondents, reflected in a mean score of 2.93 and an SD of 1.03. However, there is a notable concern that entrepreneurship skill development has not sufficiently equipped graduates from training centers with the right type of skills for self-employment. This view is shared by 74% of respondents,

indicated by a mean score of 3.03 and an SD of 0.94. In conclusion, while entrepreneurship education is seen as a critical tool for economic empowerment, job creation, and youth empowerment, there remains a gap in aligning the skills provided with the demands of self-employment. Addressing this gap is essential to fully realize the potential of entrepreneurship education in combating youth unemployment.

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