

THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION ON UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG NIGERIAN GRADUATES SERVING IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract:

The rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has persistently been on the increase despite the enormous endowment of the country with human and natural resources. This study therefore examined the impact of entrepreneurial education on unemployment among Nigerian graduates serving in Lagos State. This study adopted the survey research design. A sample size of 250 youth corpsers was selected through the simple random sampling technique from the population of youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria. Data were collected using Demographic Data Inventory (DDI) and “Reducing Unemployment among Nigerian Graduates through Entrepreneurial Education Questionnaire” (RUNGEEQ). Demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency distributions and percentages) and hypotheses were tested by means of the simple linear regression analysis at .05 level of significance. Findings revealed that entrepreneurship education significantly contributes to unemployment reduction ($\beta = .228$, $t = 10.105$, $p < .05$), graduate entrepreneurs’ skills have a significant influence on unemployment reduction ($\beta = .273$, $t = 13.186$, $p < .05$), entrepreneurship skills training curriculum contents had no significant impact on critical thinking and business idea generation ($\beta = .074$, $t = 1.492$, $p > .05$), and entrepreneurship pedagogy significantly affects graduate shared-vision and identification of business opportunities among youth corpsers ($\beta = .214$, $t = 9.052$, $p < .05$) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study concluded among others that, there were significant individual contributions of entrepreneurship education and graduate entrepreneurs’ skills to unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria. It was recommended, among others, that policy makers, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), universities, and other stakeholders in Nigeria should design and integrate a general entrepreneurship curriculum into all their programmes and activities.

Key words: Entrepreneurial education, Unemployment, Nigerian graduates, Youth corpsers.

Introduction:

The rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has persistently been on the increase despite the enormous endowment of the country with human and natural resources. However, graduate unemployment is not peculiar to Nigeria or developing nations; it is indeed a long standing global phenomenon hence it has been a common trend in many countries to find graduates of universities not able to secure jobs several years after graduation (Kuratko,2003). In tackling the global crisis of graduate unemployment, policy makers and stakeholders in developed countries such as England, USA, and Germany, advocated a refocus of educational systems towards

acquisition of vocational and technical skills to enhance smooth transition into jobs for school leavers particularly graduates of universities.

This owes to the fact that education is important to the development of any society particularly because the goals of wealth creation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient educational system which impacts relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values into individuals (Agi & Yellowe, 2013).

In the same vein, governments and educators of developing nations such as Kenya, Tanzania, Columbia, and Trinidad and Tobago re-aligned their educational systems towards the popular national and international support for vocational education as a viable option to tackle the growing concern of graduate unemployment. Thus various models of vocational education programmes were introduced to combat unemployment and tackle other socio-economic challenges (Abrokwa, 1995; Asiyai, 2013). In line with global trends, vocational and technical education policy was implemented in the educational system of Nigeria through the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education (six year primary school, three year junior secondary school, three year senior secondary school and four year higher institution) in 1982 aimed at providing training and impartations of necessary skills geared towards the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skillful youths who will possess enterprise skills and also have understanding of the increasing dynamism of technology (Federal Ministry of Education, 1992). One of the goals of the policy was to train youths to be selfreliant and to separate students with academic competencies from abilities those with technical (technical colleges) with the aim that the technically inclined individuals, will create jobs for themselves after school. However, the major challenges of the vocational and technical education policy include inadequacy of infrastructure, unfavourable conditions of service for teachers, inadequate funding for tertiary institutions, lack of adequate support for Student Industrial Work Experience (SIWES), unstable academic calendar due to strike actions, and inadequate collaboration between tertiary institutions and the organized private sector, hence the policy was ineffective (Asiyai, 2013). In an attempt to redress the challenges regarding acquisition of vocational skills and aptitudes presented by the 6-3-3-4 system of education, the National Policy on Education was again revised in 1998 with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education programme (UBE) which ushered in the 9-3-4 system of education primarily targeted at using education as a tool for national unity as well as enhancing the development of knowledge and skill acquisition for adaptation into the world of work and the larger society. Although, the dictates of the policy implied that basic education should be made compulsory, the implementation was not enforced thus the aim of the policy was defeated (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006).

University education has been acknowledged as a primary mechanism for the creation of a knowledge economy and the development of human capital all over the world, thus considering the pivotal role of university education to human development. Another revision was carried out on the National Policy on Education in 2004 to accommodate global trends in education as a result of technological development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Consequently, the policy proposed that admission into Nigerian universities should be based on a 60-40 per cent ratio for science and humanities programmes respectively. This informed the establishment of Institutes of Technology in an attempt to usher in Nigeria into technological and industrial development. However, the policy failed in the achievement of its goals probably because

universities were unable to meet the stipulated admission for programmes ratio owing to the fact that programmes in social sciences continue to attract more candidates based on societal demands (Ravi, 2009). The emergence of entrepreneurs is considered favourably as key policy strategy in many developed nations, and entrepreneurship is given the center stage particularly on issues of graduate unemployment and economic development. This owes to the fact that it contributes to nation's wealth by creating employment opportunities, opening new markets, driving industrialisation, as well as increase in productivity leading to equitable distribution of income and higher standard of living for the populace (Jahanshahi, Nawaser, Khaksar, & Kamalian, 2011). In light of the above, several entrepreneurship development programmes such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) and more recently Youth With Innovation (YOUWIN) and many others have been embarked upon in Nigeria over the years. Many of these initiatives failed due to poor implementation and the inability to appreciably reduce the rising rate of unemployment particularly youth and graduate unemployment. Specifically, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was created in 1986 saddled with the responsibility of designing and implementing programmes to tackle mass unemployment in Nigeria through vocational skill training, employment counseling, job linkages, as well as entrepreneurial training and enterprise creation. Nevertheless, the major demerit of the NDE was the inability of the programme to provide post training resources for job creation as a consequence of lack of commitment by government at various levels leading to low survival rates of businesses established (Mno, 2007).

Entrepreneurship education in universities has attracted the attention of researchers all over the world and one main research focus is students' intentions for an entrepreneurial career. This is consequent upon the fact that intentions provide ample evidence of the outcome of an entrepreneurship training programme and because intentions are good predictors of future behaviour (Dirk, Benson, & Bruce, 2013). This implies that intentions could provide a reliable lead to future entrepreneurial behaviour and expression of actions. However, entrepreneurial implementation intentions as theorised in this study suggest that intentions can be expressed through certain observable actions and behavioural responses to show commitment towards the achievement of entrepreneurial goals and aspirations. Nevertheless, perceptions play a critical role in entrepreneurship education. If a student or an educator has a positive perception towards entrepreneurship education, it is likely that such an individual will actively engage in the activities involved in the programme. Individuals with positive perception of an entrepreneurship programme will perceive themselves as having what it takes to achieve the goals of the programme as it relates to the teaching and learning outcomes (Moy, Luk, & Wright, 2003). Therefore the perception of a student or an educator about various aspects of an entrepreneurship programme will largely determine the goals the individual sets for him/herself and the expected outcome of actions taken.

Entrepreneurship education has continued to feature as a captivating theme in local summits and international conferences because of its potency as tool for mitigating unemployment and other social-economic challenges inhibiting sustainable development in all parts of the globe. Inclusion of entrepreneurship education into curricula of tertiary institutions started in the United States of America as far back as 1947 (Kuratko, 2003) unlike Nigeria where it is a recent development that dated back to 2006 (Yahya, 2011; Gabadeen & Raimi, 2012). Within a few decades (1947-

1980s), over 300 universities had introduced entrepreneurship education into their array of courses. By early 1990s the number tertiary institutions running entrepreneurship programmes increased to 1,050 schools (Solomon, Weaver, & Fernald., 1994; Kuratko, 2003). Nigeria adopted entrepreneurship education to accelerate economic growth and development. This reflect in Nigeria's national policy on education which states that education is the most important instrument for propelling change, as no fundamental change can occur in any society except through educational revolution that impact on the intellects (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1998).This study is examine the role entrepreneurship education of the reduction of unemployment: a case study of Lagos state, Nigeria.Hence the following hypotheses were raised:

H01: Entrepreneurship education does not significantly reduce unemployment among youth corpors in Lagos State, Nigeria.

H02: Graduate entrepreneurs' skills have no significant influence on unemployment reduction among youth corpors in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Methodology:

Research Design

The study made use of survey research design. This is so because the study is a field study where opinion of the respondents was harnessed for a successful outcome of the study to be achieved.

Sources of Data

The data used for the analysis was primary data such as questionnaire. The essence was to arrive at an objective result of providing true, valid and first-hand information from the respondents about their opinion on the role entrepreneurship education of the reduction of unemployment. Other materials sorted for the study were journals, textbooks, newspapers, internet sources and past projects.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was made up of Batch B, Stream A, 2019 corps members in National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) orientation camp in Iyana Ipaja, Agege, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Sample Technique and Sample Size

The study made use of simple random sampling technique to select 250 corps members deployed to serve in Lagos, purposively, for this study.

The sample size for the study will be 250 NYSC corps members deployed to Lagos.

Research Instrument

Research instrument is considered the tool in the hand of a researcher used to generate data from the respondents. In this regards, a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Reducing Unemployment among Nigerian Graduates through Entrepreneurial Education Questionnaire" (RUNGEEQ).

This aided the researcher in gathering first-hand data. The RUNGEEQ will sections A, B and C. Sections A to C consisted of relevant items for answering research questions posed in the study. The response format of RUNGEEQ will be a 5 - point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Undecided, with corresponding values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

Validity of Research Instrument

To ascertain the validity of the research instrument, the researcher submitted the questionnaire to the supervisor and other experts in the department to assess and ensure that items contained there-in are relevant for the purpose of the research. This is to also ensure that face and content validity of the instrument is followed.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection involved the administration and retrieval of questionnaire for the purpose of achieving desired outcome. Primary data collection was carried out through the administration of questionnaire to NYSC corps members deployed to Lagos by the researcher and with the help of research assistance if the need arises.

Method of Data Analysis

This research is quantitative in nature; where the responses are analyzed according to the objectives using descriptive statistics like frequency distribution and percentage point and inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Regression analysis using computer software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) to test for the relationship between the variables at 0.05 level of significance.

Results:

Hypothesis One

H01: Entrepreneurship education does not significantly contribute to unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Coefficients of the Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Unemployment Reduction

	B	Std Error	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.528	9.046		20.693	.000
Entrepreneurship Education	.069	.037	.228	10.105	.000

Dependent Variable: Unemployment Reduction

Table 1 revealed significant results ($\beta = .228$, $t = 10.105$, $p < .05$) leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis which stated that entrepreneurship education does not significantly contribute to unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria, and the upholding of the

alternative hypothesis. It is subsequently concluded that entrepreneurship education significantly contributes to unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

H02: Graduate entrepreneurs' skills have no significant influence on unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Coefficients of the Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the Influence of Graduate Entrepreneurs' Skills on Unemployment Reduction

	B	Std Error	B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	8.036	7.005		20.693	.000
Graduate entrepreneurs' skills	.097	.316	.273	13.186	.000

Dependent Variable: Unemployment Reduction

Table 2 revealed significant results ($\beta = .273$, $t = 13.186$, $p < .05$) leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis which stated that graduate entrepreneurs' skills have no significant influence on unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria, and the upholding of the alternative hypothesis. It is subsequently concluded that graduate entrepreneurs' skills have a significant influence on unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Discussion:

This study examined the impact of entrepreneurial education on unemployment among Nigerian graduates serving in Lagos State. Four null hypotheses were formulated and tested using the simple regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings were discussed hypothesis – by – hypothesis below.

The first null hypothesis stated that entrepreneurship education does not significantly contribute to unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results of the analysis of this hypothesis were significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the upholding of the alternative hypothesis. The conclusion reached was that graduate entrepreneurs' skills have a significant influence on unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria. This finding was in line with Nasiru, Keat & Bhatti (2015) whose finding acknowledged that experiential learning activities to motivate the development of creative problem solving abilities can be used to enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions and employability. This finding also corroborated Olorundare&Kayode (2014) who found that universities are duty-bound to encourage economic growth through research and development, teaching and transfer of technology and therefore reduce graduate unemployment, and that this can be attained through inculcating entrepreneurship skills in the students.

The second null hypothesis stated that graduate entrepreneurs' skills have no significant influence on unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was subjected to appropriate test of significance and found to be unsupported by the data collected and therefore untenable. It was subsequently rejected in favour of the alternative

hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that graduate entrepreneurs' skills have a significant influence on unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria. This finding was in line with the study of Amalia (2012) which was based on a survey of 51 students and explored the role of the university support systems and development of student entrepreneurship. The result showed that 26 students were sufficiently supported by faculty through seminars, training, mentoring entrepreneurs, business incubators, and similar activities. By extension, the implication of this was that graduate entrepreneurship skills could attract university support systems and enhance innovative business building by students thereby reducing the unemployment rate. This finding also supported Shirokova, Tsukanova, and Bogatyreva (2015) who assessed different types of entrepreneurial capital provided by universities and their impact on student involvement in entrepreneurship and noticed that increase in entrepreneurship is associated with reduction in unemployment.

Conclusion:

Summary of Findings

The summary of the major findings from this study is highlighted below:

- (i) Entrepreneurship education significantly contributes to unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria.
- (ii) Graduate entrepreneurs' skills have a significant influence on unemployment reduction among youth corpsers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Recommendation:

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Policy makers, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), universities, and other stakeholders in Nigeria should design and integrate a general entrepreneurship curriculum into all their programmes and activities. This can go a long way in facilitating the development of viable business ideas by corpsers serving in Lagos State, Nigeria.
- (ii) University managements should encourage the formulation of innovative and creative ideas on the part of their undergraduate students as such could lead to the development of sound entrepreneurship practices when these students eventually leave the universities. This can go a long way in reducing graduate unemployment while also enhancing productivity and national development.

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