

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: PANACEA FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA.

Abstract

This study investigated Entrepreneurship Education as Panacea for unemployment and poverty among Business Education graduates in South-South, Nigeria. It adopted the descriptive survey design, two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The target population which served as sample comprised 217 Business Education Lecturers in universities south-south, Nigeria. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire had two parts: part A contained 4 items of demographic variables of respondents – name of university, sex, university type (Federal or State), mode of entry. Part B contained 10 items based on the two research questions: Research Question One contained 5 items and Research Question Two contained 5 items. The questionnaire was structured on a 4 – point scale of responses: Very High Extent 4 – points, High Extent 3 – points, Low Extent 2 – points, Very Low Extent 1 – point. There was face and content validity of the instrument. The instrument was validated by experts in Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation at the Delta State University, Abraka. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through Cronbach Alpha and the results of the two research questions are – $r = 0.87$ and $r = 0.88$ respectively. A total of 217 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 217 Business Education Lecturers in all the universities offering Business Education Programmes in South- south, Nigeria. 202 copies were fully completed and returned indicating a return rate of 93.09 %. The Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviations. The findings showed the respondents affirming to a high extent that Entrepreneurship Education can help in eradicating unemployment and poverty by sustaining Entrepreneurship and creating wealth. It was therefore recommended among others that Entrepreneurship Education should be integrated in the education curriculum and government should establish Enterprise Development centres to promote Entrepreneurship Education.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Unemployment, Poverty and Graduates.

Introduction

Unemployment refers to a situation in which a person, even though qualified and ready to work, searches for a payable job, but is unable to get one. Unemployment is one of the major yardsticks for measuring how healthy the economy of a nation is. Over the years, unemployment has remained a recurrent phenomenon across the nations of the world.

In both developed and developing countries, the challenge of employment has been persistent, with the statistics often higher in developing economies. The international labour organization defines unemployed persons as those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work and have actively searched from work.

According to Oner (2010), the number of people at work is generally closely related to whether an economy is growing at a reasonable rate. Oner (2010) also expatiates that at the peak of the worldwidercession that began in 2008, the international labour office announced that global unemployment reached the highest level on record with over 200 million people, 7 percent of the global work force looking for jobs in 2009. It was not a coincidence that the global economy experienced the most severe case of unemployment during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Unemployment is highly dependent on economic activity. Economic growth and unemployment can be described as two sides of the same coin. This is because when economic activity is high, overall production increases and more workers are needed to produce the higher quality of goods and services. In the same vein, when economic activity falls low, firms and establishments reduce their workforce and unemployment figures surge.

Nigeria, like many other developing countries across the globe, has a high rate of unemployment which is even getting worse with each year that passes. According to Lewis (1967), unemployment seems to grow more rapidly in the countries which are developing most rapidly, and at first glance, it looks like a by-product of development itself. In Nigeria, unemployment has been categorized as one of the serious impediments to social progress. A part from representing an enormous waste of the country's manpower resources, it generates welfare loss in terms lower output thereby leading to lower income and well-being (Njoku and Ihugba, 2011). A recent report by the National Bureau of statistics showed that Nigeria's unemployment rate averaged 4.16 percent between 1991 and 2023, reaching an all time high or 6.00 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020. The report specified that unemployment rate in Nigeria increased from 4.10 percent in the first quarter of 2023 to 4.20 percent in the second quarter of 2023.

There is no gain saying the fact that poverty is a concomitance of unemployment. According to Ogungbemi (2001), poverty alleviation is one of the most difficult challenges facing any developing country where a huge percentage of the workforce is unemployed and has remained poor. Graduates of tertiary institutions seem to be badly hit by the unemployment situation as they made up about 20 percent of unemployed persons in Nigeria between 2008 and 2012 and often remaining unemployed for upward of five years after graduation (NISER Nigeria, 2013). This alarming rate of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria clearly necessitates the involvement of undergraduates and graduates from different institutions of higher learning in the country in entrepreneurship education that will enable them to be self employed. It is in order tackle this employment problem that

the federal government of Nigeria directed in 2020 that the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National and Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National Universities Commission (NUC) should ensure the establishment of entrepreneurship studies in tertiary institutions across the nation. It is worthy of note that most federal, state and private tertiary institutions have already keyed into this innovation as a means of inculcating the required creativity and employability skills before graduates come out to face the labour world.

According to Wikipedia, entrepreneurship education seeks to equip students with the required knowledge, motivation and skills to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Entrepreneurship education is concerned with the process of equipping individuals with the ability to utilize commercial opportunities for improved and profitable living (Adeola and Bolarinwa, 2010). Entrepreneurship education is directed at producing potential entrepreneurs who can confidently start and successfully manage their own businesses (Eboma 2006). Osuala (2004) also explains that entrepreneurship education is needed by prospective entrepreneurs to guard against failure in their ventures.

Entrepreneurship education has been described as education focusing on learning skills needed by entrepreneurs in order to deal with the risks and uncertainties associated with establishing and managing a business venture (Inegbenebor, 2006). Furthermore, entrepreneurship education can be described as the process of inculcating the relevant knowledge and teaching skills in would-be entrepreneurs on how to start a business that may be very small and be able to work dexterously towards the growth and sustainability of the business (Aminu, 2009). Kurato (2003) opines that entrepreneurship education is education that embraces skills building programmes, creative productivity marketing negotiation, leadership training and wealth generation. Okoro (2010) sums it up when he observes that entrepreneurship education is all about making individuals to be job creators rather than job seekers. Entrepreneurship education is designed essentially to equip its recipients with the relevant skills that will enable them set up their own businesses and operate them successfully.

Entrepreneurship education simply indicates the education that gives an individual the opportunity to be fully equipped with the necessary skills for self-reliance. Entrepreneurship education, according to Osuala (2004) is a specialized training offered to students of vocational and technical education with the aim of inculcating in them the skills, knowledge and managerial competencies for self employment rather than pursuing paid employment. It is in this same vein that Okoro (2010) affirms that involving students in school-owned enterprises and initiatives will build their entrepreneurial potentialities, thereby opening up their chances of becoming self-reliant and Okonkwo (2015) states that entrepreneurship education is aimed at developing understanding and capacity for manifestation of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes in widely different contexts.

Entrepreneurship education is a skill acquisition programme which equips its recipients to be self employed, innovative and resourceful. It is aimed at equipping graduates with the relevant knowledge to spot, create, establish and manage business enterprises. It is a very significant agent of growth and development of any economy. Akpomi (2010) maintains that entrepreneurship education creates a platform for individuals to manage innovations and develop their potentials as managers of fields of endeavours. This explains why Mar (2013) sees entrepreneurship education as a strategy of business sustainability that prioritizes the

long term revival of a business and connected socio-cultural and ecological systems. Entrepreneurship education does not only enable you to set up your business but also gives you ability to sustain the business.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing search for white collar jobs which are not readily available has worsened the rate of unemployment resulting in increased in poverty. It is as a result of unemployment that the federal government directed the National Universities commission (NUC), National Commission for College of Education (NCCE) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) to introduce entrepreneurship education in all levels of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The major aim of the government is to equip individual graduates with the relevant skills that will enable them to engage in their own business enterprises after graduation.

The graduates may start small, depending on the financial strength and their ability to manage the business after undergoing adequate acquisition of skills through entrepreneurship education.

Unemployment is the inability to get a job despite being ready to work. As a way of contributing towards the process of flushing unemployment and poverty out of the nation of Nigeria, the researcher deems it necessary to embark on this research.

The problem of this study therefore is Entrepreneurship Education: Panacea for unemployment and poverty among Business education graduates in South-South, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine entrepreneurship education as a panacea for unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. The purpose is broken down thus: To examine whether entrepreneurship education is relevant as a tool for eradicating unemployment and poverty.

To examine if entrepreneurship education is a relevant tool for creating employment.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide study:

1. Is entrepreneurship education relevant in eradicating unemployment and poverty?
2. How relevant is entrepreneurship education as a tool for creating employment?

Research Hypotheses

1. Entrepreneurship education is not significantly relevant in eradicating unemployment and poverty.
2. Entrepreneurship education is not significantly relevant in creating employment.

Review of Related Literature

Entrepreneurship Education

According to Arnaut (2020) Entrepreneurship education has been characterized as a set of institutionalized teachings that inform, train and educate anybody interested in contributing to socio-economic development through a project to encourage entrepreneurship awareness, firm formation or small business development. Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004) see entrepreneurship education as the education of teaching the mindset to have the willingness to take calculated risks in terms of time, equity, or career; the ability to formulate an effective venture team; the creative skill to marshal needed resources; and fundamental skills of building solid business plan and finally, the vision to recognize opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion.

Relationship between Education and Entrepreneurship

It is established that entrepreneurs are not born rather they become through the experience of their lives. Through effective entrepreneurship education, an individual can access the skills and knowledge needed to start and grow up a new business.

Raposo and Paco (2011) both of the University of Beira Interior investigated into Entrepreneurship education: Relationship between education and entrepreneurial activity. The study was able to establish a very important link between education, venture creation and entrepreneurial performance, as well as between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial activity. They stated categorically that entrepreneurship education is first and foremost provided in business-related courses in an institution of learning. The study therefore concluded that two fundamental issues should be analyzed in an independent way in providing a link between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial performance. These are the role of educators and teachers and the role of the nuclear family.

Ndofirepi (2020) also conducted a research into the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial goal intentions using psychological traits as mediator. The study used a cross-sectional survey of a sample of 308 vocational education students in Zimbabwe. The results showed that the effects of entrepreneurship education variable had a positive and statistically significant relationship with need for achievements, risk-taking propensity, internal locus of control and entrepreneurial goal intentions. The study stated clearly that in Zimbabwe, a low-income country with poorly performing economy, there is a concerted drive by the government through the Ministry Higher and Tertiary Education to re-orientate the country's higher education system towards equipping students with entrepreneurial skills and attitude as a means to curb youth unemployment.

The result of the study demonstrated that entrepreneurial education directly affected entrepreneurial goal intentions and other entrepreneurial traits. Hence it was suggested that the exposure of students to entrepreneurship education has ramifications on their psychological development.

Nafziger (1970) also studied the relationship between education and entrepreneurship in Nigeria. He stated that the rate of economic growth is dependent upon the rate of technical change and that economists have shifted the emphasis away from the growth of physical capital to the growth of high-level manpower, with entrepreneurship as the major determinant of the rate of economic growth. He further specified that a number of variables seem to influence the supply and success of entrepreneurs, including the socio-economic class, socio-ethnic community, family

structure, other politico-socio-cultural attachments, time perspective, education, training and work experience of the entrepreneurs.

Mbiewa (2011) also focused a study on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian education institutions. The study set out to examine how entrepreneurship education can increase employment, productivity and create wealth through implementation of entrepreneurship education in all education institutions of learning in Nigeria. The study posited that Nigeria has good philosophies, beautifications of education, excellent education plans, aims and objectives of education; however, these philosophies, plans, aims or objectives of education are often without practical implementation, financial supports and sustainability, unlike nations such as Britain, America, Germany, Japan and Russia which have records of implementation of entrepreneurship education in institutions of learning with proven sustainability.

The study concluded that it is entrepreneurship education that will confront unemployment, reduce poverty, create wealth, develop self reliance and create employment. It was therefore recommended that Nigeria should ensure the implement of entrepreneurship education in all education institutions of learning.

Entrepreneurship education as a tool against unemployment and poverty.

Entrepreneurship development contributes to poverty reduction when it creates employment through the startup of new entrepreneurship and/or the expansion of existing ones. Buhari and Maguru (2019) conducted a study on Entrepreneurship Education and Poverty Alleviation. The study focused on the population of Polytechnic graduating students in North-Western Nigeria, out of which a sample of 750 graduating students of 5 polytechnics were drawn from 7 states in the region. The study noted that the idea of infusing entrepreneurship into Education has spurred much enthusiasm in the last few decades and that the development of entrepreneurship is very low in this region of the country, specifically among graduates. The study however asserted that the development of entrepreneurship education is an essential of human resource development. It placed emphasis on the study of the opportunities entrepreneurship education provide for the North-West graduates in the present times and the relevant support this could give towards development of the Nigerian economy and unemployment reduction.

The study concluded very affirmatively that Entrepreneurship education has the potential to develop students' competencies, knowledge and skills to confidently act on opportunities, address issues and solve problems of unemployment that have arisen in various states of Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions at large requires urgent attention and focus to support and enable young people to understand how they can adapt to a changing environment.

Olalekan and Gbeminiyi (2018) in their study, examined entrepreneurship education as a Catalyst for Poverty Reduction and National Security in Nigeria, using time series data over the period of 1995 to 2015. While entrepreneurship education served as independent variable, GDP growth rate, poverty rate and government expenditure served as explanatory variables. Using ordinary least square multiple regression analysis, the study revealed that GDP growth rate is positively related to index of industrial production while the poverty rate and government expenditure on national security have negative signs which is an indication of the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria as many able bodied youth and graduates are not

employed and as such, depend on the working population for survival which increases the rate of abject poverty.

The paper then recommended that government should not only integrate entrepreneurship education as an integral part of the curriculum across all level of education but should also establish skills acquisition centres across the country to reduce youth unemployment, stem down the rate of poverty and insecurity in the country.

Focusing on the effect of entrepreneurship education on poverty alleviation among graduates of Ramat Polytechnic, Maiduguri, Goniri (2020) emphasized that the emergence of entrepreneurship education has taken an unprecedented growth, because of its unflinching contribution to economic development of the nation, Nigeria. He maintained that the evolution of entrepreneurship education as a course of study in tertiary institutions by government is the right step in a right direction as entrepreneurship businesses have for long been recognized as engines of economic growth and industrialization. The study which used a sample of 132 respondents was carried out on Maiduguri Metropolis, which constitutes Maiduguri Metropolitan council and some parts of Jere and Mafa Local Government Areas in Bornu State, Nigeria. The study concluded that entrepreneurship education is one of the veritable tools used by government through agencies collaboration to promote potential entrepreneur with a view of generating employment opportunities, creating wealth to our new and existing business owners, creating business opportunities through acquisition of modern technologies. It was therefore recommended that apart from integrating entrepreneurship education into the education curriculum at all levels, government should speedily establish Enterprise Development Agency and Entrepreneurship Centre at every local government to promote entrepreneurship education.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Max Weber's (1908) Sociological Entrepreneurship Theory. The SET theory explores the social aspects of entrepreneurship. It emphasizes that an entrepreneur who intends to have a well-established business that will be up to mark with consumer's expectation must consider all the social aspects of society such as social taboos, customs, culture and other religious beliefs. In this vein, Weber maintains that entrepreneurs should accept the system of a society for development of themselves as well as their startup. This theory is considered very apt to this study because it provides an expanded and expatiated perspective of entrepreneurship education as it relates to employment generation and poverty eradication.

The theory brings to understanding the fact that the entrepreneurship education that produces successful entrepreneurs must not be limited to acquisition of skills and knowledge in business; rather, it must operate from a wider scope, touching aspects of social taboos, customs, culture and other religious beliefs that make the business easily integrated in the society by gaining consumer's reception.

Methodology

This study assessed entrepreneurship education as panacea for unemployment and poverty among Business Education graduates in South-South Nigeria. It adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population which served as sample of the study comprised 217 Business Education lecturers in Universities South-South,

Nigeria that offer Business Education Programmes, namely–Delta State University, Abraka; University of Uyo, Uyo; University of Calabar, Calabar; University of Benin, Benin city; River State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt; Niger Delta University, Yenagoa and Cross River State University of Technology, Calabar.

There was no sampling since the population was manageable. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire had two parts: part A contained 4 items of demographic variables of respondents – name of university, sex, university type (Federal or State), mode of entry. Part B contained 10 items based on the two research questions: Research Question one contained 5 items and Research Question Two contained 5 items. The questionnaire was structured on a 4- point scale of responses: Very High Extent 4 – points, High Extent 3-points, Low Extent 2-points, Very Low Extent 1 – point. There was face and content validity of the instrument. The questionnaire constructed was given to three experts in Business Education and three in Measurement and Evaluation at the Delta State University, Abraka. The experts made appropriate corrections which were effected before the final copy of the questionnaire was printed out. To ensure internal consistency of the instrument, 67 copies of the questionnaire were administered to Business Education lecturers at Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki who were not part of the sample of the study. The data collected were subjected to Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability coefficient results: Research Question one ($r = 0.87$), Research Question Two ($r = 0.88$).

A total of 217 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 217 Business Education lecturers in all the universities offering Business Education programmes in South-south, Nigeria. With the help of three research assistants in each of the universities, a total of 202 copies were fully completed and returned within a period of four weeks. The return rate was 93.09%.

The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviations. In decision rule, any items with mean score of 2.5 and above is regarded as High Extent while any item below 2.5 is regarded as Low Extent. In Hypotheses testing, if t – calculated is below T – critical, hypothesis is retained or accepted; if t – calculated is above T – critical, hypothesis is rejected.

Results

The results of the study are presented as follows:

Research Question One:

What are the ways in which entrepreneurship education can eradicate unemployment and poverty?

Ways in which entrepreneurship education can eradicate unemployment and poverty?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviations Ratings of Respondents on ways in which entrepreneurship education can eradicate unemployment and poverty. N=202

S/N	Items on ways in which entrepreneurship education can eradicate unemployment and poverty	VHE	HE	LE	SD	Mean	Std.
1.	Entrepreneurship education can help graduates to become self-employed	38	18	2	2	3.53	0.72
2.	Entrepreneurship education can help graduates to acquire relevant skills thereby making them employable	37	17	4	2	3.48	0.77
3.	Entrepreneurship education can help graduates to develop the ability to prepare feasibility studies for small and medium entrepreneurs' start up.	40	15	2	3	3.52	0.79
4.	Entrepreneurship education can enable graduates to acquire self development skills	42	14	2	2	3.60	0.72
5.	Entrepreneurship education knowledge can help graduates to explore available business opportunities	38	16	4	2	3.50	0.77
	Total Mean					3.53	0.04

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 1 shows that the data collected and analyzed recorded highest mean value 3.60, and standard deviations 0.72 and lowest mean value 3.48, standard deviations 0.77. Furthermore, the table reveals that the respondents affirmed to high extent that knowledge from entrepreneurship education can help graduate to become self employed and to acquire relevant skills that will make them employable, develop the ability to prepare feasibility studies for small and medium entrepreneurs' start up, acquire self development skills and also explore available business opportunities that will help them to eradicate unemployment and poverty. All respondents also affirmed to a high extent that there are possible ways in which entrepreneurship education can eradicate unemployment and poverty since the grand mean value of 3.53 ± 0.04 is greater than that the standard mean value of 2.50 (i.e $P > 2.50$; $3.53 > 2.50$).

Research Question Two:

What are the ways in which entrepreneurship education can sustain employment?

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations Ratings of Respondents on Ways in which entrepreneurship education can sustain employment

N = 202

S/N	Items on ways in which entrepreneurship education can sustain employment	VHE	HE	LE	SD	Mean	Std.
1.	The knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship education will create in the graduates the awareness of new business ventures, innovation and creativity.	40	15	3	2	3.55	0.75
2.	The knowledge gained from entrepreneurship education can help graduates to manage and sustain established businesses.	41	15	2	2	3.58	0.72
3.	The knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship education can help graduates to introduce new ideas into their businesses for expansion.	41	15	2	2	3.58	0.72
4.	Entrepreneurship education can help graduates to be conversant with obtaining bank loans for setting up their own businesses	36	17	4	3	3.43	0.83
5.	Knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship education can help graduates to set up their own businesses and improved on them.	40	15	3	2	3.55	0.75
	Total Mean					3.54	0.06

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 shows that the data collected and analyzed recorded highest mean value 3.58 ± 0.72 and lowest 3.43 ± 0.83 respectively. The table further reveals that the respondents affirmed to a high extent that knowledge gained from entrepreneurship education can help create in the graduates the awareness of new business ventures, innovation and creativity; it can help graduates to manage and sustain established businesses and introduce new ideas into them for expansion; it can help them to be conversant with obtaining bank loans for starting up on their own. They also affirmed that entrepreneurship education can help graduates to set up their businesses and improve on them by way of maximizing profits and minimizing losses. All respondents affirmed to a high extent that there are possible ways in which entrepreneurship education can sustain employment since the grand mean value of 3.54 ± 0.60 is greater than standard mean value of 2.50 (i.e $P > 2.50$; $3.54 > 2.50$).

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

Ho₁: Entrepreneurship education is not significantly relevant in eradicating unemployment and poverty.

Table 3: Chi – Square (X²) Analysis Summary table for hypothesis 1

S/N	VHE	HE	LE	SD	N	DF	X ² Cal	X ² Crit.	P. Value	Decision
38	18	2	2	38	60	12	81.87	21.03	0.05	Reject
37	17	4	2	37						
40	15	2	3	40						
42	14	2	2	42						
38	16	4	2	38						

Hypothesis 1, table 3, shows the summary of chi-square analysis tested for the relevance of entrepreneurship education in eradicating unemployment and poverty. From the above table of hypothesis 1, X² calculated is 81.87 and the X²critical is 21.03 with 12 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The computed chi-square is greater than the X² critical value of that chi-square. The decision is to reject the null hypothesis of no significance as stated. It therefore, means Entrepreneurship education is significantly relevant in eradicating unemployment and poverty.

Hypothesis Two (2)

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: Entrepreneurship education is not significantly relevant in creating employment.

Table 4: Chi – Square (X²) Analysis Summary table for hypothesis 2

S/N	VHE	HE	LE	SD	N	DF	X ² Cal	X ² Crit.	P. Value	Decision
40	15	3	2	40	60	12	81.20	21.03	0.05	Reject
41	15	2	2	41						
41	15	2	2	41						
36	17	4	3	36						
40	15	3	2	40						

Hypothesis 2, table 4, shows the summary of chi-square analysis tested for the relevance of entrepreneurship education in creating employment. X² calculated is 81.20 and the X² critical and the X² critical is 21.03 with 12 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The computed chi-square is greater than the X² critical value of the chi-square. The decision is to reject the null hypothesis of no significance as stated. It therefore, means that Entrepreneurship education is significantly relevant for creating employment.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that entrepreneurship education is a remedy for equipping graduates with the relevant skills, new ideas, innovations and creativity to set up their own businesses, improve and expand on them rather than waste time seeking white collar jobs which are not forth coming. The findings of Research Question One show respondents affirming to a high extent that there are ways in which entrepreneurship education can help in poverty eradication. These ways include self employment, acquisition of relevant skills, ability to prepare feasibility studies and to explore available business opportunities. The null hypothesis one on

entrepreneurship education not being significantly relevant in eradication of unemployment and poverty was rejected, thereby establishing the fact that entrepreneurship education is very much needed in a country like Nigeria where unemployment and poverty statistics have gone astronomical. This finding is in consonance with the study of Mbiewa (2011) which emphasized that it is entrepreneurship education that will confront unemployment, reduce poverty, create wealth, develop self reliance and create employment.

The findings of Research Question Two show that entrepreneurship education is needed also to sustain employment. The respondents affirm to a high extent that the knowledge of entrepreneurship education will create awareness of new business ventures and innovations. It will also help in effective management and sustenance of already established businesses. The null hypothesis two on entrepreneurship education not being significantly relevant in creating employment was also rejected. One of the factors behind the high rate of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria is lack of viable sustainability programme for small scale businesses.

According to Okoro (2010), most small scale enterprises in Nigeria collapse within a short span of time because the entrepreneurs do not have adequate knowledge and skills to nurture the businesses to stability.

The high rate of unemployment and poverty has exacerbated into a menace with its offshoot of insecurity which has engulfed almost every part of the country in recent times. This finding corroborates the earlier study of Olalekan and Gbeminiyi (2018) which maintained that entrepreneurship education is a catalyst for poverty reduction and national security in Nigeria. The finding also agrees with the study of Goniri (2020) which spelt out that for Nigeria to tackle unemployment and poverty, it is not enough to entrench entrepreneurship education in the education curriculum at all levels rather, there is the need to speedily establish Enterprise Development Agency and Entrepreneurship Development Centres all over the country.

Conclusion

The study examined entrepreneurship education as panacea for unemployment and poverty among business education graduates in South-South, Nigeria. It drew participants from the seven universities offering business education programme in South-South, Nigeria. The findings revealed most of the participants affirming that entrepreneurship education is a remedy for equipping graduates with the relevant skills, ideas, innovations and creativity to set up their own businesses and manage them effectively. The respondents affirmed to a high extent that entrepreneurship education is needed in Nigeria with its weak economy to control to control unemployment and poverty.

The implication is that if entrepreneurship education is not strengthened and made more purposeful towards the demands of the Nigerian economy, economics growth will be elusive for a long time as small scale businesses will continue to be managed by entrepreneurs without skills. This study contributes to literature by bringing to limelight and emphasizing the interdependence among entrepreneurship education, small scale enterprises and economic growth and stability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Entrepreneurship education should be integrated in the education curriculum at all levels to enable students graduate with the necessary skills to succeed as entrepreneurs.

2. Government should establish Enterprise Development Agency and Entrepreneurship Development Centers at every local government to promote entrepreneurship education.
3. Government should provide adequate facilities to schools, especially areas where entrepreneurship education is taught for actualization of the aims and objectives of the curriculum.

UNDER PEER REVIEW

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