

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS ACQUISITION AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

ABSTRACT

Skill acquisition is the art of knowledge to do something in order to earn a living and or to stay alive. The concern for better livelihood has always been the concern of past and present government of Nigeria, this was why several youth empowerment programmes like sure-p and N-power was initiated by the Government of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and Muhammodu Buhari to occupy the youth in active and productive activities that will better their lives and enable them contribute importantly to the Country economy. However, these schemes are yet to achieve the purposes for which it was established for, the better or rather sure bet to achieving these set goals was the integration of entrepreneurship skill acquisition programmes to help eliminate poverty and improve standard of living for rural dwellers in the Country. Hence, this study was carried out to examine entrepreneurship skills acquisition and youth unemployment of selected communities in Owo local government area in Ondo state, Nigeria. a total of 110 samples size was adopted, while the Chi-square (χ^2) contained in the statistical package for social sciences version 26 (SPSS) was used to test the formulated hypotheses for the study, the findings from the study discovered Entrepreneurial skill acquisition has been considered very important in this research as a necessary antidote to the evidence problem of youth and graduate unemployment in Owo local government of Ondo state and the study is of the opinion that the introduction of entrepreneurial skill acquisition programmes will help the youth more especially in job and employment generation, create further opportunities for the young people to develop their enterprising skills and make them to be job creators and not job seekers. Therefore, the study recommended the government should as a matter of its civic responsibility, provide soft loans, fertilizer subsidy and mechanized materials and machineries to farmers in the rural area, through the bank of industry to enable them improve from their traditional ways of farming into a more mechanized ways.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Skill Acquisition, Social Security, Youth Unemployment, Income, Communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth development and empowerment are vital stages in life for building the human capital that allows young people to avoid poverty and lead better, and possibly have a more fulfilling life. The human capital formed in youth is thus an important determinant of long term growth that a nation can invest on. Hence, making sure that youths are well prepared for their future is enormously important to the course of poverty reduction and growth. Africa is a continent with a massive population of young people. More than half of Africa's population is aged less than 21 years and two-thirds less than 30 years. In all African countries, the median age of the population is 20 years or less, that is, half or more of the population are under 21 years of age and up to one fifth between 15 and 24. Countries vary considerably in their definition of youth and childhood. The UN considers individuals under the age group of 15-24 as youths. In Uganda, for example, youth is from 12 to 30 years, while in Nigeria, it is between 18 and 35 years (ILO publication, 2015). In general, over 200 million Africans are now officially designated as youths (that is, aged 15 to 24). This group makes up 40% of Africa's working age population, unfortunately 60% are unemployed. Despite the yearly increase in the number of children attending school and those completing tertiary education (Longe Report, 2022), millions of the young people face bleak employment opportunities.

Entrepreneurship skill acquisition has been described as the bedrock to economic development in view of its impact on job creation. It has been argued that entrepreneurship skill acquisition is the quickest way to create new jobs for the unemployed youths and graduates. These arguments have informed the introduction of vocational training and entrepreneurial skills acquisitions programs in school of higher learning across the country. Undoubtedly these programs will reduce or end the problem of youth and graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The problem of youth and graduate unemployment had become a serious cankerworm in the recent time across all states and local government of the federation. The problem of youth unemployment has been lightened since the recent economic meltdown in Nigeria, hence the government had been in search of the best policy to tackle the high rate of youth and graduate unemployment. It is believed that average Nigerian youth is confronted with this problem of unemployment which had undoubtedly put them on a hopeless future with highest fear of sustainability (Nwana, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

How has entrepreneurial skill acquisition make laudable contributions towards job and employment creation in Owo local government area of Ondo State. It is argued that the Ondo State has not made reasonable efforts to provide entrepreneurship skill acquisition programs in Owo local government Area towards alleviating the problem. It is believed that to harness the full potential input of entrepreneur skill acquisition programs in Owo local government Area, there should be combined efforts of higher institutions, state governments and local governments to formulate economic entrepreneurship policies to increase job creation at local government levels as it is believed that employment/job creation can be linked to entrepreneurial skill

acquisition and vocational training programs. Thus, this study investigated the impact of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on job creation in Owo local government Area of Ondo State.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to determine the impact of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on job creation in Owo local government Area of Ondo State. However, the study will focus on the following specifics;

- i.** To investigate the importance of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on job creation to the youths and graduates in Owo local government Area.
- ii.** To ascertain the causes of unemployment among youths and graduates of Owo local government Area of Ondo State.
- iii.** To determine the effects of youths and graduates unemployment in Owo local government Area.
- iv.** To find out the efforts of Ondo State government to end or reduce youths and graduates unemployment

Research Questions

- i.** What are the importance of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on job creation to youths and graduates in Owo local government Area of Ondo State?
- ii.** What are the causes of unemployment among youths and graduates of Owo local government Area of Ondo State?
- iii.** What are the effects of youths and graduates unemployment in Owo local government Area of Ondo State?'
- iv.** What are the efforts of Ondo State government to end or reduce youths and graduates unemployment?

Hypotheses

The study developed the following hypothesis to achieve the objective of the study and answer the research questions.

- i.** **H₀₁:** Entrepreneurship skill acquisition is not important to job creation to the youths and graduates in Owo local government Area of Ondo State.
- ii.** **H₀₂:** Lack of vocational training, entrepreneurship skill acquisition and financial accessibility are not some of the identified causes of unemployment among the youths and graduates in Owo local government Area of Ondo State.
- iii.** **H₀₃:** Cultism, smoking of Indian hemp, armed robbery and kidnapping are not among the consequences of unemployment in Owo local government Area of Ondo State.

Significance of the Study

- i.** The importance of this research to Owo local government, the youths and the society cannot be overemphasized.
- ii.** The significance of this study focuses under two perspectives-the empirical and theoretical.
- iii.** From the empirical point of view, the study will be a guide to the Nigerian governments at national, state and local levels.

- iv. The theoretical foundation findings and recommendation of the study will provide sound basics as regards formulating policies to the solution of the problems of unemployment in the country:
- v. The study will benefit policy makers championing the war against unemployment in Nigeria especially the minister and commissioners involved in the search for the solution to end youth unemployment in Nigeria.
- vi. The study will also benefit the masses including youths to understand their various roles to end youth unemployment in Nigeria. It will also help Nigerians investing abroad that investment in entrepreneurial skill acquisition at home will help to create more jobs and end unemployment.

Theoretically, the study will add to existing body of quantitative and qualitative knowledge on the issue of youth and graduate unemployment. It will serve as a source of knowledge reference and building block for future researchers in the subject area of this study. Above all, the study will be of immense significance to the researchers of this work as it will accord them a sense of accomplishment and serve as their contribution towards ending the current youth and graduate unemployment in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study is concerned with entrepreneurial skill acquisition and youth unemployment in Owo local government Area. There are many variables associated with this topic, but the major areas to be addressed here include the importance of entrepreneurial skill acquisition to job creation to unemployed youth and graduates, causes of unemployment and its consequences to unemployed youths and graduates in Owo local government Area of Ondo State.

This study covers the six (6) villages/communities in Owo local government area. The period covered by the study is 2024. The researcher believed that the findings discovered during this period could help us to understand the impact of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on job creation on the youth and graduate in Owo local government area.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition

Entrepreneurial skills acquisition are said to be the necessary set of skills required to be an entrepreneur. In other words, entrepreneurial skills acquisition are those necessary skills an entrepreneur needs to successfully run a business or add value to work. Agu, Chiaha and Ikeme (2023) argued that acquisition skills must be nurtured through proper education so that it can be directed to responsible and enriching small business endeavours that will benefit the individuals and the communities in which the entrepreneurs live. Formal descriptions/definitions characterize entrepreneurial skills acquisition as ability to have self-belief, boldness, tenacity, passionate, empathy, readiness to take expert advice, desire for immediate result, visionary and ability to recognize opportunity (Salgado-banda, 2015). Skill acquisition as basic ability is the means by which man adjusts to life (Adeyemo, 2023). Skill therefore is the rapidity, precision, expertise, dexterity and proficiency exhibited through mental and manual repetition of

performance of an operation. Etonyeaku, Kanu, Ezeji and Chukwuma (2014) opine that skill is the capacity of a person to accomplish a task within desired precision and certainty. Skill involves a practical knowledge in combination with clearness, expertise, dexterity and ability to perform a function which could be acquired or learnt in the school or training centres through learning, experience. Various types of skills are required for the students to be successful entrepreneurs. The inclusion of these skills into education program will reduce the rate of dependence on government for job, instill in the students the right mindset, the ability to be creative, and innovative, and be able to create job out of their chosen career. Moemeke(2023) stated that innovative skills in science singularly can not only produce individuals with useable skills but also without the necessary initiative and impetus for utilizing them at the functional level enough to create wealth.

2.1.2 Entrepreneurial Skills needed to be acquired by Youth Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurial skills encompass a large range of both soft and hard skills. Because of the many business roles entrepreneurs may take on, they may also develop a variety of different skill sets to accommodate the growth of their businesses and brands. As identified by Adendorff, Emuze, and Vilakazi (2013) they include:

Business Management Skills: Entrepreneurs will most often rely on their business skills to manage and run a business or brand. Developing business management skills can mean building up ability to multitask, delegate responsibilities to subordinates and making decisions regarding the health and profitability of business.

Teamwork and Leadership Skills: Becoming a successful entrepreneur can also mean taking on leadership roles and working as part of a team. Being a business owner means acting as both a supervisor and as part of a team, and relying on effective leadership skills to help motivate team.

Communication and Listening Skills: Business owners and entrepreneurs must develop effective communication skills. From active listening to discussions during meetings, being able to communicate effectively can help working with others to build business. Likewise, effective communication can also translate to promoting awareness of brand.

Customer Service Skills: No matter the industry an entrepreneur venture into, effective customer service skills is very important. From talking with potential clients to discussing opening partnerships, effective customer service skills can help in connecting with customer.

Financial Skills: Owning a business can also mean taking care of the financial aspects of organization. Entrepreneur can develop financial skills by learning from a financial planner, reading financial guidebooks and using financial software to help in organizing and keep track of the financial processes in business.

Analytical and Problem-solving Skills: Successful entrepreneurs may also have exceptional analytical and problem-solving skills. This is because there can be many aspects of building a brand or business that can require difficult decisions, finding solutions to obstacles and using creative thinking to develop plans and strategies that will help in achieving business goals.

Critical Thinking Skills: Critical thinking skills, like analytical skills, can be necessary for developing overall entrepreneurial skills. Being able to look at problems, situations, projects and

operations from different perspectives can help in decision-making and problem solving. Critical thinking skills can also be necessary for strategic planning and evaluating the approaches using in making changes or improve business strategies as needed.

Technical Skills: Because of the availability of software programs for financial analysis, planning, marketing and other business processes, it can be extremely beneficial to develop technical skills. Entrepreneurs with efficient technological skills can use software and other digital approaches for managing projects, tracking sales and revenue and measuring the performance of business growth.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This section of literature review examines the theoretical explanation of the subject of the study. It reviews the relevant theories of the study. The following are the major theoretical basis of the study. This study is anchored on the theory of empowerment. The theory was first formulated by Zimmerman (2015) and later popularized by the same author Zimmerman (2000). The empowerment theory was modified thereafter by Sazama and Young (2016) and Reischl et al (2021). The theory views that empowerment and entrepreneurship development is based on service of actions that makes youths to participate in entrepreneurial activities, improve their quality control of decision and bring about opportunities where learning practice and skills of youth could be enhanced. It also stressed that making youths to be involved in pro-social, worthwhile and community based activities established and controlled by the youths and that it enable them to acquire important skills, abilities and confidence that would help them to be more productive, healthy and independent (Reichl et al, 2021). This theory forms the theoretical underpinning of this study and it has very important implications for the study on the following grounds:

One, from this theory, it would be understood that creating and implementing empowerment programs with regard to entrepreneurship development would enhance youth development and raise their entrepreneurial skills, and assets and motivate them to effectively apply the skills and knowledge so acquired to become positive agents of change in their communities and country at large (Leadford & Lucas, 2023).

Two, it would make the youth to build more assets through their entrepreneurial activities and as such engage in community development service that lead to speedy growth and development of the Nigerian economy. Finally, it will make the youths to be gainfully employed based on the entrepreneurial skills acquired.

2.3 Empirical Review

The empirical review of this research is derived from the previous studies supporting the subject of this study.

Ekpe (2017) investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial skill acquisition, self-motivation, social influence and self-employment practice among Malaysian university graduates to inquire whether self-motivation and social influence could be possible reasons; the study adopted a survey method and a proportionate stratified random sampling method to collect data from 600 entrepreneurship graduates. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and

correlation method. One of the findings indicated that self-motivation had higher influence on self-employment than social influence; though both had significant positive relationships. It was also found that most Malaysian youth graduates had low risk-taking propensity. The study recommended that parents, government, universities and youth organizations should place more emphasize on ability to create value to the society, as learning outcome, rather than on grades (As).

Yusuf (2019) examined the problems of skills acquisition and entrepreneurship empowerment program in Nigeria. He analyzed the theoretical underpinning unemployment, skills acquisitions and entrepreneur empowerment program. The findings from the study revealed that contrary to the theoretical arguments, unemployment heavily rely on skill acquisition which requires tacit knowledge. The study suggests that unemployment reduction in Nigeria requires improvements in entrepreneurship empowerment program through various government interventions.

3. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design method was adopted in the course of the study. A population of 120 rural dwellers involved in petty trading, crop farming, fish farming and artisans from the eight (8) towns in the Owo local government was co-opted for the study. However, these towns included Owo, Uso, Emure-ile, Ipele, Isuada and Iyere. A structured questionnaire was used for the collection of data. However, the questionnaire was divided into two sections vis A and B. Section A contained demographic data of the respondents, while Section B contained data relating to the research questions.

The measurement construct for Entrepreneurship skill acquisition (self-employment and time management) were raised from the extant literature of (Eagle flight, 2022) while the measurement construct for Poverty eradication (social security and income level) was gotten from (Onwuka, 2022). The research questions were structured in a Likert-style scale pattern ranging from 5-strongly agree to 1-strongly disagree. Hypotheses were tested using Chi-square technique (χ^2) contained in the statistical package for social sciences (IBM SPSS, Version 26).

Table 1: Communities in Owo LGA

S/N	Communities	Petty Trade	Crop Farming	Artisans	Total
1	Owo	6	5	10	21
2	Uso	7	4	7	18
3	Emure-Ile	8	7	6	21
4	Ipele	3	6	9	18
5	Isuada	4	5	8	17
6	Iyere	4	3	8	15
	Total	32	30	48	110

Sources: Author Compilation, 2024

The table one above showed those communities captured in this research work base on the types of business and entrepreneurship involved, 21 (19.1%) are from Owo town, 18 (16.4%) are from Uso, 21 (19.1%) are from Emure-Ile, 18 (16.4%) are from Ipele and 15 (13.6%) are Iyere.

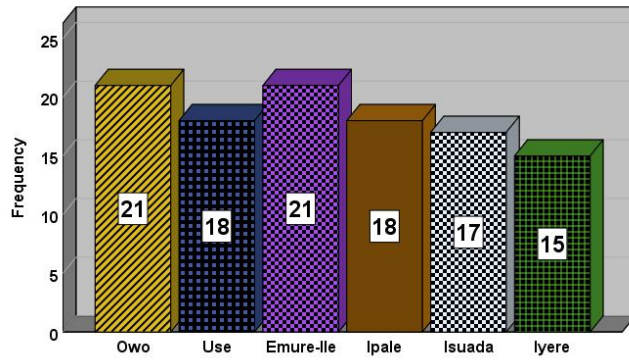


Fig 1. Communities of Respondents

Table 2: Age of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 21-30	27	24.5	24.5	24.5
31-40	35	31.8	31.8	56.4
41-50	48	43.6	43.6	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Author Compilation, 2024

The age structure of respondents has shown in the table 2 above, 27 (24.5%) are within 21-30 years of age, 35 (31.8%) are within age (31-40%) while 48 (43.6%) are within age 41-50 years that are being trading in one entrepreneurship skills and the others on these age bracket.

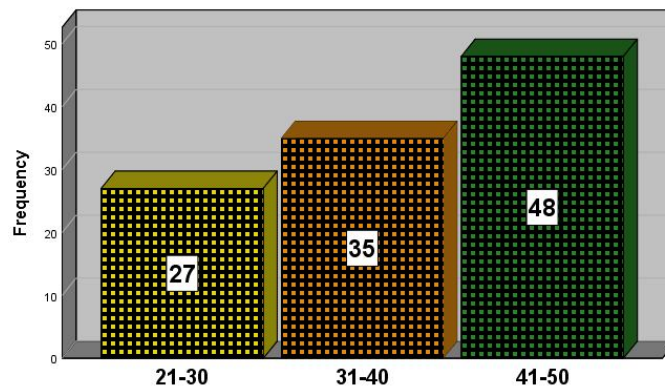


Fig 2. Age of Respondents

Table 3: Gender of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	55	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Female	55	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total		110	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Author Compilation, 2024

The gender structure of graduate that involve in entrepreneurship businesses are presented in the table 3 above, 55 (50%) was both for male and female

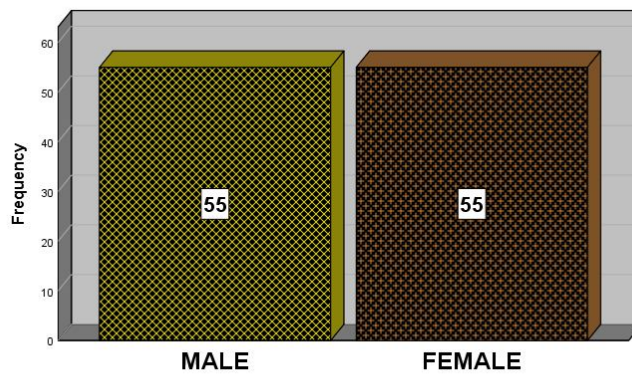


Fig 3. Gender of Respondents

Table 4: Education Status for Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No formal Education	24	21.8	21.8	21.8
	Primary Education	35	31.8	31.8	53.6
	Post-Primary Education	41	37.3	37.3	90.9
	Tertiary Education	10	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total		110	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Author Compilation, 2024

The educational structure of respondents are presented in the table 4 above, 24 (21.8%) had no formal education, 35 (31.8%) were primary education and 41 (37.3%) are post-primary education

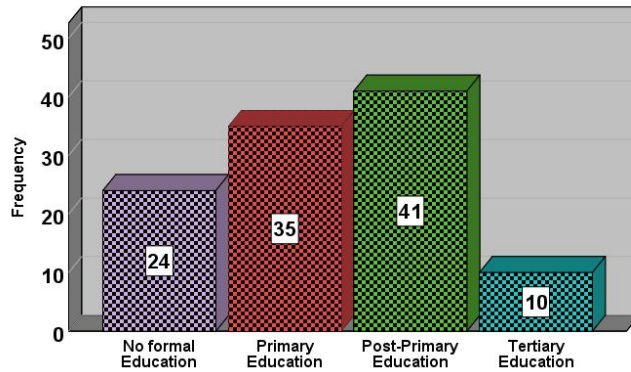


Fig 4. Education Status of Respondents

Table 5: Occupation of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Petty Trade	50	45.5	45.5	45.5
Crop Farming	42	38.2	38.2	83.6
Artisans	18	16.4	16.4	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Author Compilation, 2024

The business involved by those respondents are placed in the table 5 above, 50 (45.5%) do trade on petty business, 42 (38.2%) involve in crop farming while 18 (16.4%) do hand work and service rendering. From the table, it is cleared that much people involve in petty trading business than other things.

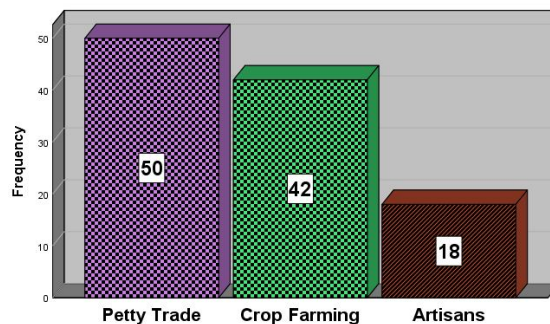


Fig 5. Occupation of Respondents

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: Entrepreneurship skill acquisition is not important to job creation to the youths and graduates in Owo local government Area of Ondo State.

Table 6: Chi-Square Tests for Hypothesis One

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.990 ^a	6	.012
Likelihood Ratio	4.641	6	.864
Linear-by-Linear Association	.137	1	.712
N of Valid Cases	110		

Sources: Author Compilation, 2024

As shown in Table 6, a chi-square (x^2) of independence was performed to examine the significant of entrepreneurship skill acquisition on job creation of youths and graduates in Owo local government area of Ondo state. The table discovered that the relationship between entrepreneurship skill acquisition on job creation to the youths and graduates in Owo local government Area of Ondo State was significant since calculated x^2 (18.990) was greater than the critical x^2 (12.592) at the 0.05 level of significance ($x^2 = 18.990$, $df=6$, $p<.05$). This implies that there is a significant entrepreneurship skill acquisition in bringing job creation to youths and graduates in Owo local government area of Ondo State, hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

H₀₂: Lack of vocational training, entrepreneurship skill acquisition and financial accessibility are not some of the identified causes of unemployment among the youths and graduates in Owo local government area of Ondo State.

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests for Hypothesis Two

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.752 ^a	9	.005
Likelihood Ratio	5.298	9	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	.006	1	.008
N of Valid Cases	110		

Sources: Author Compilation, 2024

As shown in Table 7, a chi-square (x^2) of independence was performed to examine the significant of lack of vocational training, entrepreneurship skill acquisition and financial accessibility of some of the identified causes of unemployment among the youths and graduates in Owo local government area of Ondo State. The table discovered that lack of vocational training, entrepreneurship skill acquisition and financial accessibility are identified causes of

unemployment among the youths and graduates in Owo local government area of Ondo state since calculated χ^2 (24.752) was greater than the critical χ^2 (16.919) at the 0.05 level of significance ($\chi^2 = 24.752$, $df=9$, $p<.05$). This implies that there is a significant lack of vocational training, entrepreneurship skill acquisition and financial accessibility of some of the identified causes of unemployment among the youths and graduates in Owo local government area, hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

H₀₃: Cultism, smoking of Indian hemp, armed robbery and kidnapping are not among the consequences of unemployment in Owo local government area of Ondo State.

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests for Hypothesis Three

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.730 ^a	9	.007
Likelihood Ratio	6.115	9	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.434	1	.021
N of Valid Cases	110		

Sources: Author Compilation, 2024

As shown in Table 8, a chi-square (χ^2) of independence was performed the effect of cultism, smoking of indian hemp, armed robbery and kidnapping among youths and graduates in Owo local government area of Ondo State. The table exposed that effect of cultism, smoking of indian hemp, armed robbery and kidnapping are identified causes of unemployment among the youths and graduates in Owo local government area of Ondo state since calculated χ^2 (24.730) was greater than the critical χ^2 (16.919) at the 0.05 level of significance ($\chi^2 = 24.730$, $df=9$, $p<.05$). This implies that there is a significant negative effect of cultism, smoking of indian hemp, armed robbery and kidnapping lack on vocational training, entrepreneurship skill acquisition and financial accessibility of some of the identified causes of unemployment among the youths and graduates in Owo local government area, hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Entrepreneurial skill acquisition has been considered very important in this research as a necessary antidote to the evidence problem of youth and graduate unemployment in Owo local government of Ondo state. The study argued that following the introduction of entrepreneurial skill acquisition programmes into our universities, polytechnics and other higher institutions the youths in Owo local government are trained and explored the various opportunities in Owo environment instead of staying idle and wait for white collar jobs that are nowhere to be found.

The study is of the opinion that the introduction of entrepreneurial skill acquisition programmes will help the youth more especially in job and employment generation, create further opportunities for the young people to develop their enterprising skills and make them to be job creators and not job seekers.

The study believed that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skill will equip youths and graduate the critical skills and knowledge to increase outputs in the various Owo localities, and also generate income and wealth to themselves and the community at large.

Conclusion

From the above study, the importance of entrepreneurial skill acquisition to the solution of the unemployment among our youths and young graduates in the rural communities like Owo Local Government Area of Ondo state cannot be over-emphasized. The benefits of equipping laudable entrepreneurial skills and /or vocational training programmes to our youths to prevent them from engaging on all forms of social ills that are inimical to development and progress to our communities has been emphasized. The way forward is that the government should be more proactive in sponsoring entrepreneurship and vocational training programmes in our schools and NGOs should also venture into these areas in collaboration with the government.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- i.** the government should as a matter of its civic responsibility, provide softloans, fertilizer subsidy and mechanized materials and machineries to farmers in the rural area, through the bank of industry to enable them improve from their traditional ways of farming into a more mechanized ways.
- ii.** Youths should be encouraged to acquire relevant entrepreneurial skills that will make them self-reliant and employers of labour.
- iii.** Acquisition of entrepreneurial skill should be made compulsory at primary and post-primary institutions.
- iv.** The government should provide a conducive businesses environment that empowers the youths into business enterprising activities after school.
- v.** Separate private individual, companies, and non-governmental organizations should key into the sponsorship of entrepreneurial skill acquisition in our schools as a mark of social responsibilities.

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