

Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Employment Creation by University Undergraduates in South-West Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of entrepreneurship education on employment creation of undergraduate students from South-West of Nigeria. The states were Lagos State, Ogun and Oyo States respectively. The study was carried out on 3082 final year students in 9 Federal, State and Private universities comprising of University of Lagos, Lagos State University and Caleb University (Lagos State); Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Tai Solarin University of Education and Covenant University, Otta (Ogun State); University of Ibadan, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology and Ajayi Crowther University (Oyo State). The study was mixed method in nature; data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive analysis used were frequency tables, mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient; the inferential statistics adopted was multiple regression model to test the hypotheses. The results from the hypotheses showed that there exists a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education (CP, TM and EIA) and employment creation of university graduates in Nigeria: $F(3078) = 3455.633$; $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.771$, and $\Delta R^2 = 0.771$. The analysis showed that CP significantly predicted the EC of university graduates in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.442$, $t(3081) = 25.147$, $p < 0.001$); TM significantly predicted EC of university graduates' in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.414$, $t(3081) = 19.223$, $p < 0.001$); and EIA significantly predicted the EC of university graduates' in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.043$, $t(3081) = 3.732$, $p < 0.001$). This implied that CP, TM and EIA accounted for 77.1% of the variance in Employment Creation (EC) of university graduates in Nigeria. The study revealed that EE have a significant impact on EC of university graduates in Nigeria. The study thus recommended that EE at the universities should be the core action to be taken in respect of EC, this simply implies that there should be a direct linkage between EE and EC. Also, skills appropriate for EC should be emphasized more in the curriculum.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship Curriculum, Entrepreneurship Teaching Methodologies, Entrepreneurship Industrial Attachment and Employment Creation.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a pivotal driver of both economic growth and social progress in contemporary economies. Research and educators worldwide have widely acknowledged the importance of fostering innovation, promoting employment and influencing market dynamics (Ayo-sobowale, 2021; Berguer et al., 2021; Gill et al., 2021). In the last decades, the concept of entrepreneurship has become vital as a result of constant and increasing economic problems especially unemployment (Garcia-Rodriguez, Guttierrez-Tano and Ruiz-Rusa, 2017) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). According to research, entrepreneurship is a particular type of planned and intentional act that can promote efficiency in the economy by providing employment through job creation, innovation and economic growth (Karimi, Biemans, Lans, Chizari & Mulder, 2016 and Ayo-sobowale, 2021). Entrepreneurship is considered an important mechanism that generates inclusive and sustainable development through employment, innovation, competitiveness and welfare (Zoltan, Szerb & Lloyd, 2017; Abdlessalam, Bonnet, Renou-Maissant & Aubry, 2018; Herman, 2018). Kimmitt et al., (2020), sees

entrepreneurship as a catalyst for driving entrepreneurial qualities, facilitating employment, and enhancing living standards. The world needs to create jobs in order to reduce unemployment rate, especially among young people.

Today, 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 (Ayodele, 2015) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). The Global Student Entrepreneurship Report (2018), placed special emphasis on the crucial impact of student entrepreneurship, both economically and socially. It is at the university stage that students define their future perspectives in short and medium terms, with entrepreneurship becoming a job option that is increasingly valued by the students (Ofedal, Iakovleva & Foss, 2018). Universities are increasingly functioning as entrepreneurial ecosystem connecting academic resources with industry networks to drive innovation (Wang et al., 2021). Also, the World Economic Forum (WEF) suggested that in developing skills and attitudes as well as generating an entrepreneurial mindset, it becomes clear that entrepreneurship education (EE) is crucial; EE encompasses a range of educational options that foster the development of entrepreneurial attitudes, actions, and competences. Its goal, according to Ayo-sobowale (2022) and Okieruoro et al., (2024), is to provide individuals the tools they need to see possibilities, take initiative and be creative in order to start and manage successful enterprises. Furthermore, Igbongidi (2022), maintained that EE assumes a pivotal role in furnishing students with the requisite skills for self-reliance and employment opportunities (Ayo-sobowale, 2021). The objective and the introduction of EE were to address graduate unemployment, reduce dependence on salaried jobs, and promote self-employment as a pathway to national development (Adeyemi, 2021 and Ayo-sobowale, 2022). The importance of equipping students with entrepreneurial skills has gained prominence due to the changing dynamics of the job market and the increasing emphasis on self-employment and innovation (Ahiauodzi & Du, 2023).

For the integration of EE to Higher Education, Barba-Sanchez & Atienza- Sahuquillo (2018) stressed the importance of entrepreneurship education so that 21st Century universities can become important engines of technology development and economic. Universities in Nigeria have recognized the necessity of integrating EE into their curricula to prepare students for the challenges of the contemporary economy and towards the 21st century work place demands. The proactive approach not only aims to foster a spirit of innovation but also to empower graduates to create their own employment opportunities (Amit & Muller, 2022). The National Policy of Education, for instance, emphasizes the inclusion of EE in tertiary institutions curriculum in order to foster graduates' self-reliance (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019).

The need for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria becomes more imperative as a solution to unemployment and poverty, making it mandatory for undergraduates. This aligns with the global perspectives that positions entrepreneurship education as critical for building economic adaptability. Presently, Nigeria has a total of 274 universities comprising of 62 Federal Universities, 63 State Universities and 149 Private Universities (Statista, 2024). Every year the universities turn out over 500,000 /600,000 graduates (Owolabi & Adeosun, 2023; Olowokere, 2025) which lead to the increase in entrance to the labour market without corresponding job creation. The unemployment situation in Nigeria is rising at a geometrical proportion largely due to unfriendly environment which repels investment.

Statement of the problem

In recent years, Nigeria, like many other developing countries, has faced and still facing growing youth unemployment crisis, highlighting the urgency for effective interventions such as EE (Bozward et al., 2022). Unemployment is a major socio-economic virus militating against the economy and well being of Nigeria, particularly for young citizens. According to the Nigerian Labour Force Survey (NLFS), the national unemployment rate was 5.3% in the 1st quarter of 2024 (National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, 2024). The rate

significantly improved in the 2nd quarter of 2024, falling to 4.3% (NBS). This alarming trend highlighted the pressing need for efficient measures to address unemployment among university graduates in Nigeria. Nigeria has one of the largest youth cohorts in the world with over 35% of the country's population falling within the age group of 15-34 who are unemployed. An examination of the unemployment rate by level of education shows that 41% of the labour population with a bachelors' degree are without employment. Some of the factors that account for the rise in the unemployment and underemployment rates include accelerated growth in population, the low level of industrialization in the country, slow economic growth, low employability and quality of the labour force, slow implementation of national labour policies at the sub-national level.

One of the major weaknesses of Nigeria's education system is its strong theoretical orientation, with little emphasis on practical and hands-on training. The Nigerian university curricula for decades have failed to provide for functional skills and competencies that would enable the recipients to be self-sustaining and independent outside a white collar job (Muogbo & John-Akamelu, 2018 and Ayo-sobowale, 2021). Many university graduates lack vocational and entrepreneurial skills, which has contributed to the high unemployment rate among young people. Also, the teaching methods in our universities are largely theoretical, non-cognitive skills relating to individual's capacity to collaborate, innovate, self-direct and solve problems are often underplayed or not considered at all (Afolabi, 2016 and Ayo-sobowale, 2024). Consequently, students who would have been able to make a difference in a world of work and self-employment with their creativity and innovativeness remains unemployed, underemployed or unemployable in the labour market.

To douse the rising wave of mediocrity in the country, there is the need for good and quality entrepreneurship education to reduce the risk of unemployment, entrepreneurship education represents a dynamic pedagogical process aimed at nurturing individuals' ability to identify and exploit opportunities effectively (Ayo-sobowale, 2021 and Ratten & Usmani, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the human capital theory propounded by Gary Becker 1964. This theory suggested that entrepreneurs who invest heavily in human capital often strive for businesses. The notion posits that education in business acumen, inventiveness and managerial skills empowers individuals to establish and maintain firms, thereby fostering job creation. In the context of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, Human Capital Theory serves as a pertinent framework for assessing how entrepreneurship programmes equip graduates with essential skills relevant to starting and managing business ventures, human capital is vital for entrepreneurial success and employment creation. More so, this theory assumes that if youths, are given EE it might generate new concepts and information to them and expose them to business knowledge and creativity, preparing them for long-term sustainable growth (Agbonna et al., 2022).

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been discussed since the 15th Century (Schumpeter, 1912) and it remains topical till today (Kirchhoff, Linton & Walsh, 2013). Entrepreneurship has been studied from multiple perspectives, yet it remains elusive because it is multi-faceted (Ayo-sobowale, 2021), which has resulted in the complexity involved in defining entrepreneurship (Audretsch, Kuratko & Link, 2015) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). Entrepreneurship is seen as an activity and career choice that involves "the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities

to introduce new goods, services and processes to the market (Shane, 2004) cited in Dobra-Constantinescu et al., (2024). It requires individuals to assume personal and economic risks and to use their creativity in an environment of ambiguity with limited resources (Zhang et al., 2022). Entrepreneurship encompasses the creation of innovative products or businesses, resource optimization, and risk management (Priyadi & Mulyani, 2024). Entrepreneurship has also been described by attitudes such as commitment, creativity, and perseverance, as it is continually refined in pursuit of a universally accepted definition (McMullen et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship can thus be identified as a highly complex phenomenon characterized by extraordinary uncertainty and embedded into and shaped by multiple social context.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education is multidimensional in nature, with many peculiarities that researchers are still trying to understand (Dobra-Constantinescu et al., 2024). Entrepreneurship Education is widely acknowledged as a driving force behind economic development, empowering students with creative thinking, the tenacity to innovate and pursue self-employment (Azuka, 2017). EE refers to the different courses and curricula that providers of training, including universities, should deliver to enable participants to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies in entrepreneurship. Such competencies could include identifying opportunities, integrating resources, and developing ventures (Zhang et al., 2024). EE plays a crucial role in fostering self-reliance among students, equipping them with the necessary skills and mindset to create their own opportunities and contribute to economic growth (Ofor & Gougla, 2024). Entrepreneurship Education is a learning process that prepares people to be responsible and enterprising individuals. It helps people develop the skills, knowledge, and attitude necessary to achieve goals they set out for themselves (IGI Global, 2022). These individuals become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. Previous research found that EE has an influence on students' entrepreneurship interest and entrepreneurship skills (Faulina et al., 2021; Srianggareni et al., 2020; and Abdi et al., 2021). EE refers to education that provides students with the knowledge and skills to develop positive attitudes towards creating their own new business ventures and self-employment as a viable career (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). Recently, scholars have suggested that there is an important relationship between EE and the tendency of graduates to become entrepreneurs by launching start-ups (Davey, Hannon & Penaluna, 2016 and Ayo-sobowale, 2021& 2022). It has been argued that "... entrepreneurship education can influence the thinking and acting of the academic or students (Davey et al., 2016). Rudhumba, Sivotwa et al., 2016) in their study of 250 students showed that most students have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education and would prefer to be entrepreneurs at the end of their studies.

The Objectives of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is to empower graduates irrespective of their course of study with skills that will provide them the opportunity to engage in income yielding businesses, whether they are able or not able to secure paid employment, whether in public and private sector. Its objectives span from knowledge dissemination to the cultivation of practical skills, often through innovative curriculum designs and experiential learning methodologies (Ghafar, 2020, Ayo-sobowale, 2021& 2024). Entrepreneurship Education has the mandate to equip the youth with functional knowledge and skills to build up character (attitude and vision). Entrepreneurship Education consists of all activities with the objective of fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, attitude and skills covering a range of areas such as idea generation, start-up, growth and innovation. This educational endeavour plays a pivotal role in equipping individuals with competencies for entrepreneurship, fostering enterprising behaviour, and augmenting employability prospects (Pardo-Garcia & Barac, 2020).

Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum

Curriculum is the core element of school education and the quality of talent training (Wang et al., 2022). Entrepreneurship education curriculum is a dynamic, ever-changing series of planned learning experiences

related to an entrepreneurial development of learners (Gafar et al., 2013). It is the key carrier, core channel and main form of EE in universities. It has key relevance as the “observation point” of EE (Hassan et al., 2017). Entrepreneurship education curriculum in the universities has been demonstrated as a critical factor in providing not only knowledge but skills, training and best learning models for university students (Oyingi, 2014) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). A good EE curriculum must go beyond theoretical knowledge and focus on practical skills (Ayo-sobowale, 2021&Dumbuya, 2024). Integrating entrepreneurship-related topics, activities, or projects into the curriculum is instrumental in cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset (Kaya-Capocci et al., 2022). The entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigerian institutions has two unique components: vocational training, which emphasizes the hands-on skills necessary to start and run a business, and EE, which emphasizes the academic understanding of entrepreneurship (Onwughalu, 2023). Both of these endeavours are geared towards equipping students with the theoretical and practical understanding and skill sets essential to running a successful enterprise. One of the most significant elements of entrepreneurship education curriculum design is the teaching-learning methods which plays a key role in studies and researches related to such a curriculum.

Pedagogy and Teaching Methodologies in Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education pedagogy is the study of the methods and styles of teaching. Pedagogy is a means to achieve objectives, as soon as the objectives have been agreed upon, the right teaching methods can be selected (Fayolle & Gailly, 2011) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2024). Pedagogy is not only about what occurs in the classroom, it necessitates understanding the interactions among instructors, students, and the learning environment, and the rest of the world (Shah & Campus, 2021). Moses et al., (2015), defined entrepreneurship pedagogy as a combination of knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship pedagogy involves different innovative strategies and approaches in the teaching of entrepreneurship (Ayo-sobowale, 2024). Some of these approaches include the following: i) problem-based learning approach; b) action-based learning approach; and c) experiential learning approach (Ayo-sobowale, 2024). Different approaches are involved and these have to do with different models that are used in teaching and communicating entrepreneurship education in the institutions. Teaching of EE is associated with higher levels of interest in starting businesses among students because it equips them with necessary knowledge and abilities, inspiring them to pursue entrepreneurial paths (Boldureau et al., 2020). Teaching methods according to Nian, Baker & Islam (2014), are an important factor in determining the effectiveness and outcome of entrepreneurship education.

With regards to EE teaching methodologies, there is little consensus about the best practices for teaching entrepreneurship in universities (Collins et al., 2013) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021& 2024). EE should have a teaching approach at the university that will help students gain practical experience. This notion will allow them to increase their thinking about entrepreneurship (Ndu et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2019) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2024). An overview of literatures on entrepreneurship education confirmed a change from conventional teaching of entrepreneurship to modern methods based on “**action learning**”. Oyetola (2013) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021; 2024) offered process-oriented teaching instead of content-oriented; problem-based teaching instead of introducing concepts and methods such as group project, writing business plans, practical experience in producing and selling products and services, and learning from mistakes. Arasti et al., (2012) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021;2024) mentioned group project, case study, individual projects, developing a new investment project, problem solving, guiding young entrepreneurs by supporting them in their projects, training in investment, group discussion, official speech, interviewing entrepreneurs, simulations and scientific visits as the most important methods of teaching entrepreneurship. Other authors categorized teaching methods into two groups, which were termed **traditional methods / passive methods** (comprising of normal lectures) this comprises of lectures, case studies, group discussions and these methodologies are less effective in influencing

entrepreneurial attributes and the **innovative methods / active methods** (which are more action-based), Mwasalwiba (2010) & Tasnim (2012) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021;2024). The “active” methodologies are said to be more appropriate for nurturing entrepreneurial attributes. These active / innovative teaching methods seek to improve students’ creativity and analytical way of problem solving. The innovative classroom approach can be done through integrating technology into the teaching and learning (Wu et al., 2022). Technology offers a multitude of opportunities to enrich the learning process, rendering it more interactive, captivating and easily accessible (Jennifer et al., 2020). Innovative teaching methods include computer simulations that can provide students with experiences of simulated new venture decision making and develop their skills in complex decision-making. Entrepreneurship education is considered more effective if it includes blended and experiential methods; this is where students acquire real-world experiences through practical projects, business start-up exercises, internships and simulations (Woolfolk-Ruiz& Acosta-Alvarado, 2016; Arogundade, 2021& Ayo-sobowale, 2024). Instead of emphasizing passive learning, it emphasizes active engagement and introspection (Adebisi and Arogundade, 2021). Many university students learn about entrepreneurship either through blended-experiential, Nigerian universities, for instance expose students to authentic business settings through the Students’ Industrial Work Experience Schemes (SIWES), studies showed that when students are exposed to real-world scenarios through mentoring programmes, internships, and incubators, they are more likely to transform their entrepreneurial dreams into profitable enterprises (Hammoda, 2024& Ayo-sobowale, 2024).

Entrepreneurial Industrial Attachment

There has been an increasing consideration of new approaches to curriculum pedagogy in the universities, particularly in the form of work integrated learning opportunities that aim to incorporate the workplace setting as a component of higher education (Wan et al.,2013 & Ayo-sobowale, 2024). One of the important aspects of an EE is the implementation of an industrial attachment programme. An industrial attachment works like an internship. The industrial attachment programme provide a way to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge and provide authentic work place exposure (Abdullahi & Othman, 2022: Ayo-sobowale,2024). Additionally, this experience is designed to help students to easily transition into employment by giving them the skills and attitudes required for work (Dondofema et al., 2020). Industrial attachment provides a structured learning experience where students apply theoretical knowledge in real work environments, build industry connection, and develop key skills that increase their employability. Industrial attachment is a structured and career relevant work in an external organization occurring in a controlled experiential environment, where a student receives academic credit and / or applicable knowledge. Some studies have observed that experiential attachment programmes can have an effect on students’ understanding, attitudes, perceptions and intentions with regards to entrepreneurship and small businesses (Vanghese et al.,2012; Volery et al.,2013) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021 & 2024). Universities and Colleges have been using attachments as a means of providing business students with practical experiences and preparing them for their future careers (Moghaddam,2011; Viviers et al., 2013) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). Students with industrial attachment experiences gain career advantages in the form of more job offers, less time spent looking for the right job after graduation and increased monetary compensation (Gault, Leach & Duey, 2010) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). Thus, industrial attachment programme provides a bridge between theory and practice and enhances chances of gainful employment as institutions are able to produce career-focused graduates with relevant skills for industry (Amankwah, 2011) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021&2024). Nyandoro and Musekiwa (2016) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021) in their study using 87 participants comprising of lecturers, students and parents, concurred that the students’ industrial attachment programme helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Despite the importance of industrial attachment, many graduates still struggle with unemployment (Budhrani et al., 2017) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021&2024). The lack of strong collaboration between universities and industries further limits students’ opportunities for practical skill development (Amponsah & Enninful, 2020).

Entrepreneurship Education and Employment

Entrepreneurship is directly linked to employment because it is a unique process that creates opportunities of employment. Tretyakova et al., (2020) revealed that optimizing entrepreneurship education could resolve socio-economic problems such as graduates' unemployment and mismatched issues between labour market requirement and education offering. The inclusion of EE is intended to shift students' perspectives towards self-employment, providing them with the creative and innovative mindset necessary to identify business opportunities and contribute meaningfully to economic growth (Temerge et al., 2020 and Khali et al., 2021). Employment is crucial to successful and sustainable development.

Multiple researchers (Efe, 2014; Kareem, 2015; Moses et al, 2015) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021), have shown that entrepreneurship education is the key to solving unemployment amongst college graduates and alleviating poverty in Nigeria. Further, studies have been carried out on the effect of entrepreneurship on the problem of high unemployment rate, high level of poverty and slow economic growth (Oyelola et al.,2013; Salami, 2013) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). Adetayo, Oke and Aderounmu (2015) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021) in their survey study of 72 graduates found that 82.6% of the respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education empowered them to start a business of their own. Also, Onuma (2016) examined the impact of exposing undergraduate students to entrepreneurship education and the ability to create jobs after graduation using 200 final year students from Ebonyi State University. The findings showed that entrepreneurship education is relevant to students as it equips them with skills for post-graduation job creation ability rather than job seekers.

Employment Creation

Employment creation is the creation and provision of new jobs especially for people who are unemployed. It is the process of providing own-jobs and making more paid jobs available to the job seekers (Muhammad, 2011) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). According to Umar (2021) job creation is the process of providing new jobs especially for people who are unemployed, the process of providing own job or the process of making jobs available to others. Employment creation can occur when the unemployed become ambitious and start their own business in easy entry industries and markets. These new businesses create jobs simply by innovating and implementing the ideas that were ignored. The most difficult but the effective way to create long-term employments is to create industries/ enterprises (Ayo-sobowale, 2022). Taiwo (2014) cited in Ayo-sobowale(2021), successfully conducted empirical research on entrepreneurship education on job creation in Nigeria. He discovered that in any giving economy entrepreneurship development always lead to job creation which will improve their lives and the country as a whole. Uju et al., (2022), highlighted the role of EE on employment creation among economics graduates from Anambra State, the study found that EE equipped the graduates with the practical skills necessary to launch their own companies and reduce unemployment rates. Also, Kenneth et al., (2024), found that EE equipped youngsters with information, creative skills, business concepts, and managerial competencies that improve employability and ability to create jobs.

Employment creation has been found to promote economic growth in developed countries such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan and many others which are significantly generated by Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) activities. SMEs are seen as the primary vehicles by which new entrepreneurs provide the economy with continuous supply of ideas, skills and innovations. According to the report of Central Bank of Nigeria (2015) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021), SMEs have the potential to create employment, "upgrade social technologies, development of local businesses and forward integration with large firms". Also, Abubakar & Yahya (2013) sees the SMEs sector in its ability to create jobs. In Nigeria, 96% of the businesses are SMEs (Oyeyinka, 2013), also Afolabi (2014) cited in Ayo-sobowale(2021), found that MSMEs accounted for about 99.6% of the registered businesses in Nigeria by which 65% of the labour force earn a living. Therefore, vibrant SMEs are considered crucial in solving multi-

variant socio-economic problems in developing economies including unemployment, low growth and poverty. Although, majority of the micro and small enterprises are informal (note that medium-sized enterprises are also known to operate partly informally), they are responsible for most job creation in both low-and-middle countries (Ayyagari et al., 2014) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021)..

Employment Creation Programmes

Successive governments and private enterprises in Nigeria have contributed to assist citizens who are willing to go into entrepreneurship through various interventions and financial contributions to the cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises in order to reduce unemployment crisis in Nigeria (Durowaju, 2018 & Ayo-sobowale, 2021). Notable amongst these intervention programmes are the establishment of **National Directorate of Employment (NDE)** in 1986 with emphasis on skills acquisition programmes to combat mass unemployment in Nigeria. The creation of **National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)** in 2001, aimed at poverty reduction through vocational training programmes for youths and creation of employment opportunities in the automobile industry (Odeh and Okoye, 2014). **Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)** was established in 2003. The agency has the mandate to stimulate, monitor and coordinate the development of (MSMEs) for MSMEs account for 96% of all firms and contribute to 75% 2017 of jobs in the country (SMEDAN). The **Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative Rural Development Bank (NACRDB)** was formed in 2001 with a function of providing easy-to-access credit facilities and agricultural inputs to rural farmers, cooperative societies and small business. Micro Finance Bank was formed in 2005 and revised in 2011 for the provision of affordable financial services to small scale businesses and active. More intervention programmes included, the creation of **Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)** in 2012, with components such as Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) saddled with the responsibility of creating opportunities for the Nigerian graduates attached to reputable public / private firms / organizations, for training and mentorship for a period of one year on a monthly Federal Government stipend of N18,000 (Asaju, Arome & Anyio, 2014). The **Youth Enterprise With Innovation (YOU-WIN)**, established in 2014, is one of such recent government intervention programmes targeted at curbing unemployment, by encouraging and supporting aspiring entrepreneurial youths in Nigeria to develop and execute business ideas, that will lead to creation of employment opportunities (Oseni, Oyetunji, Ogunlade & Sanni, 2012; Odeh & Okoye, 2014) cited in Ayo-sobowale (2021). These intervention programmes and many more were created by the government of Nigeria to help unemployed youths particularly graduates of universities to acquire entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and technical know-how geared at making them become self-employed and have venture creation (Oriarewo & Owocho, 2013). Incorporating such activities into official entrepreneurship programmes enhanced graduates' employment creating potentials by reducing obstacles to entrance into the corporate sphere as well (Wong, 2022). A study by Ojukwu et al., (2024), found a substantial relationship between job creation, EE, and skill development, indicating that initiatives that supported EE contributed to employment creation.

Despite these laudable and positive initiatives embarked upon by the Federal Government of Nigeria at different dispensations, barriers such as inadequate funding, infrastructures, implementation etc still prevented EE from reaching its full potential as a driver of employment creation. These barriers hindered the translation of theoretical knowledge into tangible commercial consequences (Abah & Abah (2023), these programmes have not sufficiently produced positive results due to inadequate funding, incompetence of personnel and poor implementation (Agba, Chukwurah & Achumugu, 2014).

Research Method

This study was descriptive survey research. The study took place in the South-West of Nigeria, comprising of six states namely: Oyo, Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Lagos and Ogun States. The population of this study consisted of all

final year undergraduate students who must have taken Entrepreneurship Education as a course or GST in the 48 universities in the zone. The sample study size was three thousand, one hundred and sixty (3160) respondents (Table 1). The universities were University of Lagos (Federal), Lagos State University, Ojo (State) and Caleb University, Ikorodu (Private) all in Lagos State; Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (Federal), Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu (State) and Covenant University, Otta (Private) all in Ogun State; and University of Ibadan, Ibadan (Federal), Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho (State) and Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo (Private) all in Oyo State.

Table 1: Population and Sample of the Study

| State | University | Population | Sample |
|-------------|------------|------------|--------|
| Lagos State | UNILAG | 14, 522 | 375 |
| | LASU | 19, 791 | 377 |
| | CALEB | 1, 926 | 322 |
| Oyo State | UI | 12, 236 | 375 |
| | LAUTECH | 10, 456 | 370 |
| | ACU | 1, 433 | 306 |
| Ogun State | FUNAAB | 15, 847 | 377 |
| | TASUED | 2, 661 | 338 |
| | CU | 1, 868 | 320 |
| Total | | 80740 | 3160 |

*The above table was computed using Krejcie, R. V.& Morgan, D. W. (1970).

The research instrument used in this work was the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: Section A which elicited responses on the personal profile and section B elicited information on employment creation which was a 9-item questionnaire structured on a 7-point Likert-Scale. A total of 3160 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 78 (2.5%) questionnaires were incompletely filled and lost due to one error or the other. Therefore, a total of 3082 questionnaires were used in the study.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential methods of analysis were employed for this study. The descriptive method was interpreted by calculating averages, means, standard deviations, frequency distributions, percentages and finally summarizing the data. The inferential data analysis in this study was the Linear Regression; the study went further by using the Multiple Regression Analysis. The data analysis was carried out using IBM/SPSS version 23 software. The multiple regression analysis was applied to test the hypotheses. All tests were carried out at 5% level of significance.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the basic feature of the data in the study: it provided a simple summary about the sample, measures and simple analysis.

Table 2: Response to employment creation it (items 1-9)

| | SD % | D % | TD % | N % | TA % | A % | SA % | M | SD |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|------|-------|
| My goal is to create employment in the future | 212 6.9% | 148 4.8% | 108 3.5% | 123 4.0% | 641 20.8% | 973 31.6% | 877 28.5% | 5.36 | 1.744 |
| I often think about what it would look like in creating employment. | 56 1.8% | 214 6.9% | 167 5.4% | 171 5.5% | 527 17.1% | 1164 37.8% | 783 25.4% | 5.44 | 1.545 |
| To create my own business gives pleasant feeling. | 93 3.0% | 144 4.7% | 219 7.1% | 138 4.5% | 579 18.8% | 1054 34.2% | 855 27.7% | 5.45 | 1.576 |
| I want to create employment to provide ample employment opportunities for others. | 93 3.0% | 227 7.4% | 153 5.0% | 183 5.9% | 658 21.3% | 939 30.5% | 829 26.9% | 5.34 | 1.633 |
| I am motivated to create employment towards the welfare of the society. | 151 4.9% | 109 3.5% | 184 6.0% | 173 5.6% | 672 21.8% | 985 32.0% | 808 26.2% | 5.37 | 1.622 |
| I am creating employment to reduce unemployment. | 95 3.1% | 207 6.7% | 179 5.8% | 150 4.9% | 661 21.4% | 1024 33.2% | 766 24.9% | 5.34 | 1.610 |
| I am strongly influenced by my families to create employment. | 127 4.1% | 165 5.4% | 184 6.0% | 174 5.6% | 710 23.0% | 905 29.4% | 817 26.5% | 5.32 | 1.639 |
| Important people in my surroundings are self-employed. | 110 3.6% | 237 7.7% | 162 5.3% | 164 5.3% | 584 18.9% | 1002 32.5% | 823 26.7% | 5.33 | 1.677 |
| Being self-employed would give me satisfaction. | 186 6.0% | 151 4.9% | 179 5.8% | 114 3.7% | 631 20.5% | 914 29.7% | 907 29.4% | 5.34 | 1.741 |

The result from Table 2 above which measured the responses of the respondents to employment creation showed that 212 (6.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the item 1: **“My goal is to create employment in the future”**, 148 (4.8%) further disagreed, 108 (3.5%) totally disagreed, and 123 (4.0%) were neutral. However, 641 (20.8%) totally agreed, 973 (31.6%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed, while 877 (28.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 1. Therefore, the item 1 was not rejected as the mean (M =5.36, SD=1.74) was greater than the cut off mean (M=4.0) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point Likert scale. Since majority of the respondents accepted item 1, therefore their goal is to create employment in the future.

Also, 56 (1.8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with item 2, **“I often think about what it would look like in creating employment?”**. 214 (6.9%) further disagreed, 167 (5.4%) totally disagreed, and 171 (5.5%) were neutral. However, 527 (17.1%) totally agreed, 1164 (37.8%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed, while 783 (25.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 2. Therefore, item 2 was not rejected as the mean (M =5.44, SD=1.55) was greater than the cut off mean (M=4.0) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point Likert scale. Hence, item 2 was accepted by majority of the respondents.

Also, 93 (3.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with item 3: **“To create my own business gives pleasant feeling”**. 144 (4.7%) further disagreed, 219 (7.1%) totally disagreed, and 138 (4.5%) were neutral. However, 579 (18.8%) totally agreed, 1054 (34.2%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed, while 855 (27.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 3. Therefore, item 3 was not rejected as the mean (M =5.45, SD=1.58) was greater than the cut off mean (M=4.0) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point Likert

scale. Since majority of the respondents accepted item 3, therefore creating their own business would give pleasant feelings.

Many as 93 (3.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with item 4: **“I want to create employment to provide ample employment opportunities for others”**. 227 (7.4%) further disagreed, 153 (5.0%) totally disagreed, and 183 (5.9%) were neutral. However, 658 (21.3%) totally agreed, 939 (30.5%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed, while 829 (26.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 4. Therefore, item 4 was not rejected as the mean ($M=5.34$, $SD=1.63$) was greater than the cut off mean ($M=4.0$) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point Likert scale. Hence, item 4 was accepted by majority of the respondents, therefore willingness to create employment will provide ample employment opportunities for others.

A total of 151 (4.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with item 5: **“I am motivated to create employment towards the welfare of the society”**, 109 (3.5%) further disagreed, 184 (6.0%) totally disagreed, and 173 (5.6%) were neutral. However, 672 (21.8%) totally agreed, 985 (32.0%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed, while 808 (26.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 5. Therefore, item 5 was not rejected as the mean ($M=5.37$, $SD=1.62$) was greater than the cut off mean ($M=4.0$) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point Likert scale. The acceptance of item 5 by majority of the respondents showed that they are motivated to creating employment towards the welfare of the society.

A total of 95 (3.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with item 6: **“I am creating employment to reduce unemployment”**. 207 (6.7%) further disagreed, 179 (5.8%) totally disagreed, and 150 (4.9%) were neutral. However, 661 (21.4%) totally agreed, 1024 (33.2%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed, while 766 (24.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 6. Therefore, item 6 was not rejected as the mean ($M=5.34$, $SD=1.61$) was greater than the cut off mean ($M=4.0$) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point Likert scale. Hence, majority of the respondents in accepting item 6 shows their willingness in creating employment to reduce unemployment.

Out of the respondents a total of 127 (4.1%) strongly disagreed with item 7, **“I am strongly influenced by my families to create employment”**, 165 (5.4%) further disagreed, 184 (6.0%) totally disagreed, and 174 (5.6%) were neutral. However, 710 (23.0%) totally agreed, 905 (29.4%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed, while 817 (26.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 7. Therefore, item 7, was not rejected as the mean ($M=5.32$, $SD=1.64$) was greater than the cut off mean ($M=4.0$) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point Likert scale. Hence, item 7 was accepted, therefore, majority of the respondents are strongly influenced by their families to create employment.

A total of 110 (3.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with item 8: **“Important people in my surroundings are self-employed”** 237 (7.7%) further disagreed, 162 (5.3%) totally disagreed, and 164 (5.3%) were neutral. However, 584 (18.9%) totally agreed, 1002 (32.5%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed, while 823 (26.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 8. Therefore, item 8 was not rejected as the mean ($M=5.33$, $SD=1.68$) was greater than the cut off mean ($M=4.0$) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point Likert scale. Since, item 8 was acceptable, it thus showed that majority of the respondents agreed that important people in their surroundings are self-employed.

Lastly, 186 (6.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with item 9: **“Being self-employed would give me satisfaction”**. 151 (4.9%) further disagreed, 179 (5.8%) totally disagreed, and 114 (3.7%) were neutral. However, 631 (20.5%) totally agreed, 914 (29.7%) were the majority of the respondents that agreed while 907 (29.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed with item 9. Therefore, item 9 was not rejected as the mean ($M=5.34$, $SD=1.74$) was greater than the cut off mean ($M=4.0$) for acceptance or rejection of items on a seven-point

Likert scale. Majority of the respondents accepted item 9, hence being self-employed would give majority of the respondents' satisfaction.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of entrepreneurship education and employment Creation

| | M | SD | N | R | | | | P |
|-----|-------|--------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| | | | | EC | CP | TM | EIA | |
| EC | 48.33 | 12.807 | 3082 | 1.000 | .857 | .855 | .676 | .000 |
| CP | 48.38 | 13.030 | 3082 | .857 | 1.000 | .604 | .611 | .000 |
| TM | 49.04 | 12.748 | 3082 | .855 | .604 | 1.000 | .646 | .000 |
| EIA | 46.11 | 14.471 | 3082 | .676 | .611 | .646 | 1.000 | .000 |

Table 3 showed descriptive statistics of linear regression which was carried out to investigate effect of entrepreneurship education on employment creation of university graduates' in Nigeria. The scatter plot (diagram 1) showed that there existed a relationship between Employment Creation (EC) (M=48.33, SD=12.81), Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum Practices (CP) (M=48.38, SD=13.03), Entrepreneurship Education Teaching Methodology (TM) (M=49.04, SD=12.75) and Entrepreneurial Industrial Attachment (EIA) (M=46.11, SD=14.47).

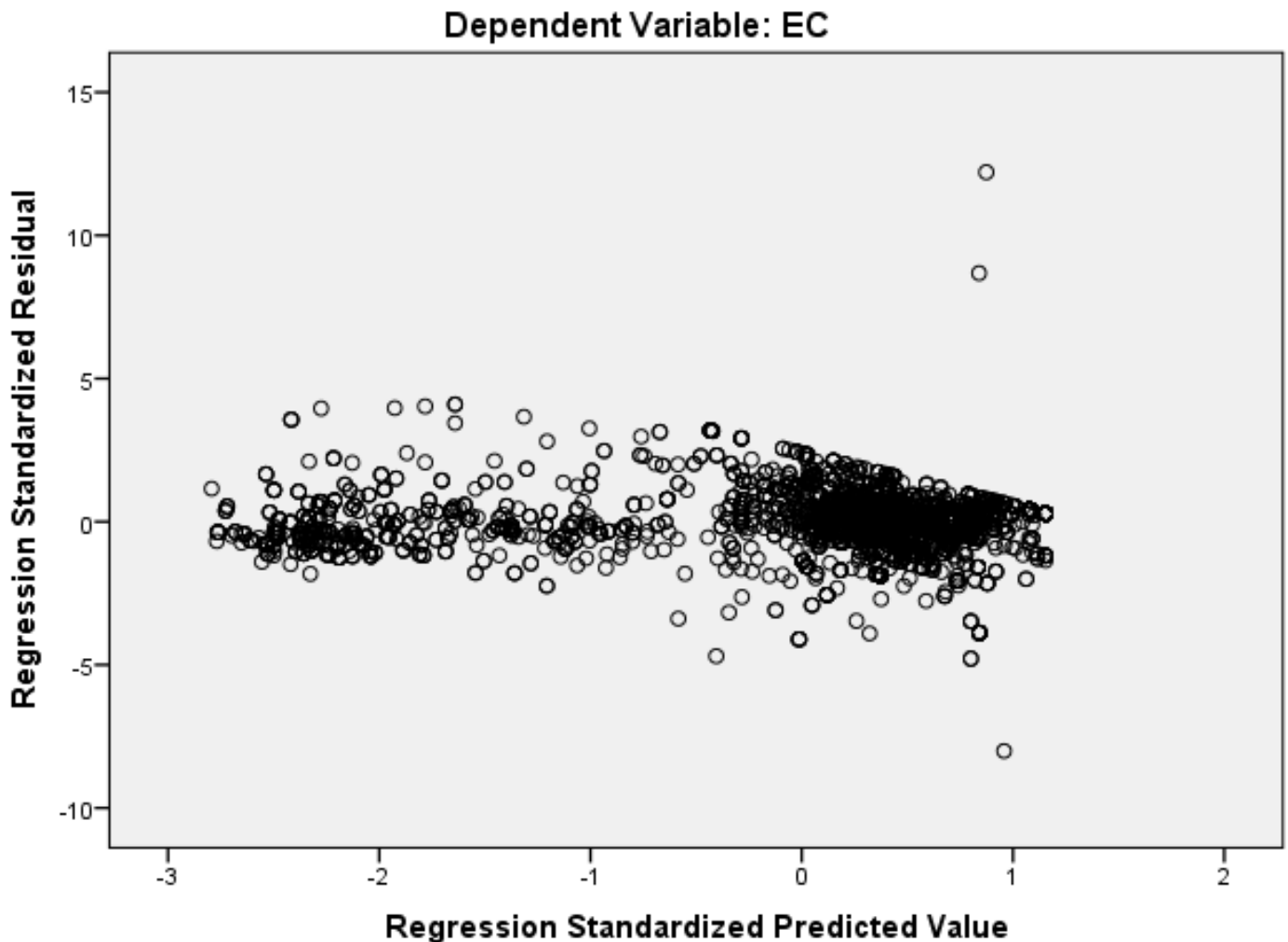


Diagram 1: Scatter plot for Employment creation

Table 3 above showed the descriptive statistics of linear regression which was carried out to investigate the impact of entrepreneurship education on employment creation of university graduates in Nigeria. The scatter plot (diagram 1) showed that there existed a significant relationship between Employment Creation (EC) (M = 48.33, SD = 12.81), Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum Practices (CP) (M = 48.38, SD = 13.03), Entrepreneurship Education Teaching Methodology (TM) (M = 49.04, SD = 12.75) and Entrepreneurial Industrial Attachment (EIA) (M = 46.11, SD = 14.47).

Survey Data Analysis

Regression analysis was used for modeling and analyzing the variables, when the focus was on the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables.

Research Hypotheses: Main Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment creation of university graduates’ in South-West of Nigeria.

Sub-Hypotheses: i) There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education curriculum and employment creation of university students’ in Nigeria. ii) There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education teaching methodologies and employment creation of university graduates’ in Nigeria. iii) There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education industrial attachment and employment creation of university graduates in Nigeria.

Table 4: Regression of entrepreneurship education and employment creation

| | B | SE | B | T | P | F | P | R² | ΔR² |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| (Constant) | 4.644 | .445 | | 10.424 | .000 | 3455.633 | .000 ^b | .771 | .771 |
| CP | .442 | .020 | .450 | 22.147 | .000 | | | | |
| TM | .414 | .022 | .412 | 19.223 | .000 | | | | |
| EIA | .043 | .012 | .049 | 3.732 | .000 | | | | |

Table 4 showed that a multiple linear regression was conducted to determine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment creation of university graduates’ in Nigeria. Using the enter mode, it was found that there exists a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education (CP, TM and EIA) on employment creation of university students in Nigeria; $F(3, 3078) = 3455.633$; $\rho < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.771$, and $\Delta R^2 = 0.771$. The analysis showed that entrepreneurship education curriculum practices (CP) significantly predicted Employment Creation (EC) of university graduates’ in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.442$, $t(3081) = 25.147$, $\rho < 0.001$); Entrepreneurship Education Teaching Methodologies (TM) significantly predicted the Employment Creation (EC) of university graduates’ in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.414$, $t(3081) = 19.223$, $\rho < 0.001$); and Entrepreneurial Industrial Attachment (EIA) significantly predicted the Employment Creation (EC) of university graduates’ in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.043$, $t(3081) = 3.732$, $\rho < 0.001$). This implies that Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum Practices (CP), Entrepreneurship Education Teaching Methodologies (TM) and Entrepreneurial Industrial Attachment (EIA) accounted for 77.1 % of the variance in Employment Creation (EC) of university graduates in Nigeria.

Discussion: From the above analysis entrepreneurship education curriculum practices (CP), Entrepreneurship Education Teaching Methodologies (TM) and Entrepreneurial Industrial Attachment (EIA) has a significant influence on Employment Creation (EC) of university graduates in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that there exists no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment creation of university graduates in Nigeria was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The findings are in line with the studies Dumbuya, 2024; Ayo-sobowale, 2021; Mwasalwiba, 2010; Rudhumbu et al., (2016); Dohse and Walter (2012); Volery et al., (2013); Herman and Stefnescu (2017); Abdullahi & Othman,2022; and Ayo-sobowale, 2024.

In summary, there exists a significant positive relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Creation which is also in line with the studies of Adetayo et al., 2015; Onuma, 2016; Kareem,2015;

and Khali et al.,2021. Therefore, the regression equation is as follows: $EC = 4.644 + 0.442 (CP) + 0.414 (TP) + 0.043 (EIA)$.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The study investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education on employment creation of university graduates in South-West of Nigeria. The multivariate regression model was used to test the hypotheses in the study. The results showed that there exists a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment creation of university graduates in Nigeria. Also, the results showed that CP, TM and EIA significantly predicted the EC of university graduates in South-West of Nigeria. Furthermore, the result implies that CP, TM and EIA accounted for 77.1% of the variance in EC of university graduates in Nigeria. In conclusion, the findings from the study showed that EE has a positive direct significant relationship with EC of university graduates in Nigeria. Therefore, it is recommended that EE should be taken seriously in the universities with the teaching of appropriate skills that would enhance employment creation. Also, the university should emphasize the relevance of EE in employment creation in an attempt to curb unemployment in Nigeria.

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