

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN REDUCING GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Every year Nigerian tertiary institutions turned out millions of graduates of which the Nigeria labor market could barely absorb few of them. The hydra-headed problem of graduate unemployment is attributable to the disequilibrium between labor market requirement and lack of essential employable skills by Nigerian graduates. The paper therefore examined the role of entrepreneurship education and training programmes in reducing graduate unemployment in Osun State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Using multistage sampling technique 3,500 unemployed graduates were selected across the 30 local governments in the state. Five research hypotheses were raised for testing. Data were gathered through a researcher's constructed structured questionnaire titled "Role of Entrepreneurship Education and Training Programmes in Reducing Graduate Unemployment Questionnaire (REETPGUQ). The data collected were analyzed using chi-square (χ^2) statistical tool. Findings from the study revealed that entrepreneurship programmes in the state significantly influenced reduction in graduates' unemployment in the state. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that government should ensure that there are school based enterprises where students can identify businesses, plans, create and operate small business by using the school as mini incubator.

Keywords: Role, Entrepreneurship Education, Training Programme, Graduate Unemployment

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Introduction

One of the major concerns of the modern societies is how to stem the ever rising tide of unemployment, create wealth, reduce poverty and foster socio-economic development. In Nigeria it is quite unfortunate that tertiary institutions turn out thousands of graduates yearly out of which the Nigeria labour market could barely absorb small percentage. Stakeholders in education have constantly lamented the unfortunate trend in which Nigerian tertiary institutions annually turn out graduates who roam our streets daily in search of non-existing jobs (Osuala, 2010; Fasina, 2019; Stevenson 2020). The ugly phenomenon is placed at the door step of a dysfunctional education system that has structurally failed to capture the dynamic nature of education as agent of transformation and catalyst for individual and community self reliance.

Unemployment to a greater extent has been a major problem militating against the economy and well being of developing countries in recent times and ironically has resulted to insecurity in such countries. Supporting this fact, Etuk and Mbat (2010), Ajufo (2013), Anho (2014) and Kuratko (2016) in their studies stated that the unavailability of job opportunities among youth especially graduates have been identified as one of the major factors responsible for youth restiveness and political thuggery. In Nigeria, unemployment has been a major factor responsible for youth involvement in assassinating, robbery, kidnapping, prostitution and other vices in the country. Ewuzie (2012), Lans and Hulssink (2014) in their studies opined that in Nigeria and other parts of the world youth represents over 70% of the

population and it has been observed that one of the greatest challenges bedeviling economic development is the issue of unemployment among the most productive sections of the population. Unemployment to an extent in Nigeria has been on tremendous increase and thus causing many social vices such as youth restiveness, kidnapping, Boko-Haram and so on (Dana, 1995; Chingunia, 2001; Neck, and Greene, 2011; Obi (2012; Suleiman 2015).

Dike (2009), Obi (2012), Bae, Qian, and Miao, (2014) in their studies noted that the Federal Government of Nigeria, youth are unemployed and about 10% underemployed. Effort to tackle this menace resulted in the introduction of entrepreneurship education in the tertiary education curricula in Nigeria. In reaction to this development, the Federal Government in 2007 under President Olusegun Obasanjo revised the curricula of tertiary education to include entrepreneurship education in order to equip the Nigeria graduates with entrepreneurship skills so as to reduce the ever increasing unemployment and to create more jobs and wealth among our people. This study therefore examined the role of entrepreneurship education and training programmes in reducing graduate unemployment in Osun state, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education Etuk and Mbat (2010) in their study defined it as a process through which individuals and government either on their own or jointly exploit available economic opportunities without being scared by associated risks or inadequate resources under their control. In the same vein Gem Global Entrepreneurship and Monitor (2020) in its report defined entrepreneurship as the pursuit of opportunity without regarding to resources currently controlled. Emphasizing, the role of entrepreneurship education in economic development Lans, and Hullssink (2014), Anho (2014) perceived entrepreneurship as playing a key role in the process of economic development through creation of employment, increasing investment and consumption of a nation. It is an acquisition of skills and ideas for the sake of creating employment for one's self and also for others. Entrepreneurship in this sense remains the solution to unemployment in the modern world. It often used for developing enterprising people and inculcating an attitude of self reliance using appropriate learning process.

Entrepreneurship education is a type of education that focuses on teaching individuals the skills, mindset, and knowledge needed to start and run a successful business. It encompasses business planning and management, innovation and creativity, risk management, marketing and sales, finance and accounting, leadership and team management, adaptability and resilience, networking and collaboration, opportunities and development. The objective of entrepreneurship education basically is to develop in its clientels entrepreneurial mindset and skills, foster innovation and creativity, encourage risk-taking and experimentation, build confidence and self-efficacy, provide practical knowledge and tools, support entrepreneurship and startup creation and thereafter foster economic growth and development (Etuk and Mbat 2010; Anho 2014; Suleiman 2015).

Deductively entrepreneurship education is a tool for job creation and empowerment thus, making its beneficiaries job creators and employers of labour. Overall, entrepreneurship education aims to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to succeed in today's fast-paced and ever-changing business environment. More so, with the rise of digital technology and the need for innovation, there has been a growing demand for

individuals who possess entrepreneurship skills and mindset to produce jobs for unemployed graduates and to a greater extent this will turn our economy around.

Statement of the Problem

It is no longer a narrative that there is problem of unemployment in Nigeria. It has been established that the number of graduates being turned around on yearly basis cannot be absorbed by the Nigerian labor market then the need to look inward on how to create employment for the teaming graduates from our tertiary institutions. Thus entrepreneurship education and training programme become very necessary to provide job for our graduates without waiting for the government. It is now mandatory to make these graduates employers of labor rather than looking for jobs that are not available. The Osun state government has embarked on so many entrepreneurship programmes and training to equip these graduates with skills that would enable them become self reliant and jobs providers. This study therefore focuses on the role of entrepreneurship education and training programmes in solving graduate unemployment with special attention to employment programmes implemented by the government of Osun State.

Objective of the study

The general objective of the study is to examine the role of entrepreneurship education and training programmes in reducing graduate unemployment in Osun State. The specific objectives are,

1. Examine various empowerment programme implemented by Osun State government.
2. Find out the impact of the empowerment programmes in the state on the beneficiaries
3. Access the rate at which these programmes reduced graduate unemployment in the state.

Research Hypotheses

- Ho₁: Entrepreneurship programme will not significantly reduce graduate unemployment in Osun State.
- Ho₂: Osun Youth Employment Scheme (O-YES) will not significantly reduce graduate unemployment in Osun State.
- Ho₃: Rural Enterprise and Agricultural Development Programme (O-REAP) will not significantly reduce graduate unemployment in Osun State.
- Ho₄: Osun State Empowerment Scheme Technology (O-YESTECH) will not significantly reduce graduate unemployment in Osun State.
- Ho₅: Osun Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme (O-MEAL) will not significantly reduce graduate unemployment in Osun State.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study is the descriptive survey design which aimed at describing in details the characteristics of a large and heterogeneous population of the study. The population consists of the entire beneficiaries of entrepreneurship programmes implemented by Osun State government under the administration of Governor Rauf Aregbesola government. The study used multistage sampling technique in picking the sample population. In the first instance the stratified sampling technique was used to pick four entrepreneurship programmes embarked upon by the government and more so, the simple random sampling technique was adopted to pick 3,500 respondents which were purposively

selected across Osun State. The sample selected were beneficiaries of the entrepreneurship programmes in the state.

The instrument used for data collection is the self developed questionnaire titled “Entrepreneurship Programme Survey” (EPS) which has section A and B. Section A contained personal information of the respondents while section B consist question items aimed at testing the five research hypotheses raised for the study. The validity of the instrument was determined through experts and colleagues in the field of entrepreneurship education while the reliability was established through test-re-test survey of the empowerment programme different from the ones used for the study. The Pearson coefficient correlation ‘r’ was used to find the reliability. The reliability coefficient obtained is 0.83 and this was considered adequate to make the instrument reliable for data collection. Data collection was done with the assistance of selected trained assistants. The researcher and the assistants distributed 3,500 questionnaires to the selected respondents. At the end of the exercise 3,300 questionnaires were retrieved and used for data analysis. The data collected were analyzed using chi-square statistical tool.

Data Analysis

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Perception of Participants about the roles of Empowerment and Training Programmes

Participants Remark	Role of Entrepreneurship Programme		Total	df	X ² Calculated Value	Critical value	level of significant
	Significant Role	NO					
Male	1,650	150	1,800	9	42.40	21.54	0.05
Female	1,400	100	1,500				
Total	3,050	250	3,300				

In the table above it was revealed that the calculated value 42.40 is greater than the table value 21.54 at 0.05 level of significance. This signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected. The implication is that there is significant relationship between the role of entrepreneurship programme and reduction in graduate unemployment in Osun State. The findings could be said to be in line with the observation of Wilson et al (2007) in their study whereby they established that entrepreneurship programme increases student’s interest in entrepreneurship as a career. Through entrepreneurship education and programmes students are exposed to the necessary skills that could make them develop interest in entrepreneurship rather than government jobs that not even there. Katz, and Green, (2011), Suleiman (2015) in their studies revealed that college students consider a business of one’s own an excellent way to get ahead. The implication is that entrepreneurship education helps develop in the students the awareness to know the prospects inherent in entrepreneurship education.

Table 2: Contingency Analysis of Participants Perception of Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (O-YES)

Participants Remark	Influence of(O-YES)Scheme on Graduate unemployment		Total	df	X ² Calculated Value	Critical value	level of significant
	Creates Employment	Do not create Employment					
Male	1,500	300	1,800	9	41.21	19.50	0.05
significant	*1550	*250					
Female	1,300	200	1,500				
	*1350	*150					
Total	2,800	500	3,300				

Table 2 above indicated that the calculated value of 41:21 is greater than the table value 19.50 at 0.05 level of significance. This signifies that the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus there is significant influence of Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme on graduate unemployment. The programme significantly provides job for unemployed graduates of Osun state. The scheme could be said to be radical and innovative approach meant to tackle unemployment, youth restiveness and criminal tendencies. The programme to a greater extent had made youths in the state to be gainfully employed. The World Bank commended the scheme as an admirable model for solving graduate unemployment.

Corroborating this finding Pittaway and Cope, (2007) in their study assert that Nigeria and other countries of the world are seeking to increase the entrepreneurship capacities of their citizens with the understanding that it will contribute to the economic growth and development. More importantly, the O-YES Scheme had attracted the attention of governors in Nigeria and some had followed suites by implementing similar programme in their states.

Table 3: Contingency Analysis of Participants Perception of Rural Enterprise and Agricultural Development programme (O-REAP)

Participants Remark	Influence of O-REAPScheme on Graduate unemployment		Total	df	X ² Calculated Value	Critical value	level of significant
	Creates employment	Do not create employment					
Male	1,600	200	1,800	9	40.35	16.05	0.05
significant	*1600	*150					
Female	1,300	200	1,500				
	*1350	*150					
Total	1,900	400	3,300				

Table 3 above revealed that calculated (X^2) value 40.35 is greater than the table value of 16.05 at 0.05 level of significance and this indicates that the null hypotheses is rejected. The implication is that rural enterprise and agricultural development programme had significantly influenced graduate employment in Osun state. The programme had not only created jobs for the unemployed graduates, it has equally contributed to agricultural development in the state. Through this programme most of the youths in the state are now gainfully employed thus, reducing the rate of crime in the state. The finding could be said to be in line with the submission of Suleiman (2015) in his study that entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people particularly youths to be responsible enterprising individuals who became entrepreneurs by immersing them in real life and deductively, the programme had significantly reduced graduate unemployment in the state.

Table 4: Contingency Analysis of Participants and their Perception of Osun Youth Employment Scheme Technology (O-YESTECH)

Participants	Influence of O-YESTECH on Graduate unemployment		Total	df	X^2	Critical level of Calculated Value	value significant	Remark
	Creates employment	Do not create employment						
Male	1,700	100	1,800	9	40.25	17.60	0.05	
	*1740	*60						
Female	1,350	150	1,500					
	*1400	*100						
Total	2,850	250	3,300					

Table 4 above indicated that the calculated value (X^2) 40.25 is greater than the table value of 17.60 at 0.05 level of significance. This signifies that Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme Technology has significantly influenced graduate employment in the state. It could be said and it is on record that this programme had helped successful trainees to be engaged as employees to private organization, government initiatives as well as opportunities to be self employed through the provision of initial startup capital by the government. The finding further corroborates the submission of Garavan and O’Cinnede (2018) in their study that entrepreneurship programme helps in developing enterprising people and inculcating and attitude of self reliance.

Table 5: Contingence Analysis of Participants and their Perception of Osun Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme (O-MEAL)

Participants	Influence of O-MEAL		Total	df	X ² Calculated Value	Critical	Level of value
	Creates employment	Do not create employment					
Male	1,650 *1700	150 *100	1,800	9	41.10	20.11	0.05
Female	1,300 *1300	200 *100	1,500				
Total	2,950	350	3,300				

Table 5 above revealed that the calculated value (X^2) 41.10 is greater than the table value of 20.11 at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that Osun Elementary School and Health Programmes significantly influenced graduate employment in Osun State. The scheme because of its relevance to youth development has gained international endorsement. In November, 2012 Partnership for child Development (PCD) United Kingdom and Osun State Government signed a pact to further strengthen the programme. The implication of the collaboration is as a result of its impact on graduate employment in the state. Through this programme some unemployed youths are now fully engaged and not only that, this programmes has contributed to the development of the state economy. To this end, all the empowerment programmes implemented by the state government had significantly influenced graduate employment. For instance the Osun youth Empowerment Scheme (O-YES) has helped youths in the state to be gainfully employed and thus reduced the rate of unemployment and level of poverty among the youths who formed the larger percentage of the Osun State indigenes. The finding is in line with Ewuzie (2012) and Stevenson (2020) in their studies that entrepreneurship programmes greatly enhanced reduction in the youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Conclusion

It is evident from this study that entrepreneurship education and training programmes have greatly played a vital role in reducing graduate unemployment in Osun State, Nigeria. Various entrepreneurship programmes embarked upon by the state government had tremendously impacted on youth empowerment. The emphasis therefore is that entrepreneurship programmes in the state afford the beneficiaries the right skills, knowledge and competence necessary for them to take their position as useful members of the society. The era of graduates picking up certificates and roaming the streets for jobs that are not there is now a thing of the past. The aim of Nigeria education therefore should be made to produce employable graduates those who have skills to create wealth on their own. This has been shown on the entrepreneurship programmes put in place by Osun State government during the administration of Governor Rauf Aregbesola as most of the unemployed graduates are now gainfully employed as a result of the skills acquired from those programmes.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made;

1. Taking into consideration the relevance of entrepreneurship education and training programmes, the use of experimental learning, involving case studies and simulation exercises should be made part of the curricular for entrepreneurship course run by tertiary institutions for the improvement of effective learning styles that will equip students with relevant knowledge and skills needed for job creation.
2. There should be school based enterprises especially in our tertiary institutions i.e colleges of education, polytechnic and university where students can identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business by using the school as mini incubator.
3. Also, government should develop entrepreneurship internship programme by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programmes.
4. Again, government should establish an enterprise tertiary institution aimed at fostering the specific skills acquisition centre for job creation.
5. There should be an increase from government as policy makers in terms of capacity building to equip University graduates who studied entrepreneurship courses with the requisite skills as well as funding for their start up business ventures.
6. Furthermore, there should be collaboration between the federal government and the state governments and implement entrepreneurship programme meant for creating empowerment for the jobless youths with a view to reducing social vices in the society.

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