

EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON EMPLOYABILITY, ENTREPRENEURIAL ABILITIES AND PARTICIPATION OF NIGERIAN YOUTH IN THE LABOR MARKET

¹Atser, Patrick Iorkyaan & ²Omega, James Udoka

Department of Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education, Faculty of Vocational and
Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Correspondence: patrickatser@gmail.com

Abstract

The study explores the impact of entrepreneurship education on labour market integration among Nigerian youths. In light of persistent youth unemployment in Nigeria, young Nigerian view entrepreneurship as an alternative route towards economic participation and self-reliance. The study adopts both quantitative and qualitative research methods involving surveys and semi-structured interviews as tools for collecting data from 250 youths in both rural and urban areas. The results of the study indicate that entrepreneurship education significantly impacts employability through confidence building, skill development, and nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset. This positively affects their labour market integration. Notably, the impact of entrepreneurship education varies among individuals depending on several factors including socio-economic status, level of training, and availability of resources.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Employability, Entrepreneurial abilities, Nigerian Youth Participation, Labor Market.

Introduction

It is no news that Nigeria, acknowledged as Africa's most populous country, still struggles with the issue of youth unemployment. About half of the youths in Nigeria are either unemployed or underemployed. Youth unemployment refers to the situation where individuals between the ages of 15 and 34 are willing and able to work but cannot find suitable employment. In Nigeria, this phenomenon has reached alarming levels. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), more than half of Nigeria's youth population is either unemployed or underemployed. This figure includes graduates, school leavers, and vocationally trained individuals who, despite their qualifications, are unable to secure decent work. The situation is even direr in rural areas, where opportunities are fewer and access to resources such as training, capital, and information is limited (Virk, et al, 2023). This has been observed to cause major economic and social concerns (Olubusoye, et al, 2023). This is worrying especially considering the demographic profile of Nigeria, which is made up of youths. Nigeria is endowed with about two-thirds of its citizens being less than 34 years old, hence, what many have termed Nigeria's 'demographic dividend' (Sohn, 2020). However, this

dividend may prove unattainable in view of certain challenges faced by Nigerian youths, which make it difficult for them to play their roles in the development of Nigeria. Some of such challenges include the failure to have the necessary relevant skills that would enable the youth to participate actively in Nigeria's labour market. This is largely due to the poor educational and vocational training received in the process of growing up in Nigeria (Virk, et al, 2023). Additionally, other structural barriers exist that further limit youths' access to job opportunities. Structural problems like lack of infrastructures including electricity, efficient transport facilities, and adequate technological infrastructures limit firms' ability to grow and offer jobs (Foster, et al, 2023). Furthermore, tight labor market policies and an under-developed private sector have reduced the availability of formal job opportunities. According to Quak, & Flynn, (2019). the capacity of the private sector to accommodate the growing youth population is not sufficient, thus highlighting the necessity for reform policies to encourage entrepreneurial activities that generate employment.

These constraints have been compounded by the economic instability in the country, characterized by macroeconomic challenges, high levels of inflation, and poor institutional arrangements, that limit prospects for productive youths' engagement in entrepreneurship activities. Unless measures are taken to improve these situations, efforts aimed at promoting entrepreneurship will bear little fruit (Haruna & Haliru, 2025). Consequently, youth employment in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that addresses deficiencies in educational systems and labor market policies, and enhances private sector growth (Okwuchukwu, S. (2025).

Realizing the potential of entrepreneurship in mitigating the problem of unemployment, various government-led strategies have been formulated with the goal of integrating Entrepreneurship education (EE) into the educational curriculum. These interventions include incorporation of EE into the education systems at various levels, development of skills acquisition and vocational trainings, amongst others. The ultimate objective of these interventions is to enhance youths' capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activities and run their enterprises successfully, thus minimizing dependence on limited formal jobs.

Nonetheless, while much emphasis has been put on EE, it remains unclear whether such an intervention is effective enough in supporting the process of entry of youths into the labor market. Despite the existence of many EE programs, some questions arise about the quality, accessibility, and relevance of these programs. Furthermore, the effectiveness of EE and the extent to which the acquired competencies contribute to youths' engagement in entrepreneurial endeavors remain in doubt.

As a response to these issues, various programs have been implemented aimed at promoting entrepreneurship as a means to addressing the issue of youth unemployment. The increased focus has been on supporting entrepreneurship that helps young people create opportunities for themselves. Such programs address both unemployment and stimulate innovations, resilience, and overall development of the country (Adejoke, 2025). An increase in the entrepreneurial abilities of young people would lead to the drastic change in the economic sector of Nigeria. It should be noted that the mentioned viewpoint corresponds to the current global tendencies, where entrepreneurship education serves as one of the main contributors to human capital development. Accordingly, entrepreneurship education is greatly valued for helping individuals to acquire the skills needed to start and manage enterprises successfully (Galvão, et al, 2020).

As mentioned above, entrepreneurship education creates an atmosphere where youth become job creators rather than job seekers. The contribution made by such education is evident in the stimulation of economic diversification, innovation, and resilience, in addition to encouraging self-reliance and adaptation skills that help achieve changes in the economy (Ajani, 2024). As far as Nigeria keeps facing the issue of youth unemployment, entrepreneurship education can contribute considerably to making this demography an economic asset. Considering the above information, this study will aim to investigate the effects of entrepreneurship education on employability, entrepreneurship, and participation of Nigerian youth in the labor market.

Research Objectives

This study will be based on the following objectives:

1. Evaluate the level of entrepreneurship education among youths in Nigeria.
2. Explore the effects of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial abilities and employment status of youths.
3. Uncover the major problems and opportunities that exist in utilizing entrepreneurship education in improving the employability of youths.
4. Generate relevant policy recommendations for improvement in entrepreneurship education programs in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of entrepreneurship education among youths in Nigeria.

2. What are the effects of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial abilities and employment status of youths.
3. What are the major problems and opportunities that exist in utilizing entrepreneurship education in improving the employability of youths.
4. What are the relevant policy recommendations for improvement in entrepreneurship education programs in Nigeria.

The Significance of the Study

This study carries both theoretical and practical significance for its various stakeholders. Using Human Capital Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior TPB, helps in providing a theoretical foundation for understanding how EE can help to solve youth unemployment problem in Nigeria. Practically, it is important for policy makers who can use the results of the study to design appropriate interventions for promoting employability among youths. The study will also be significant for teachers who will use it in improving entrepreneurship education offered by schools through making it more practical and relevant to students. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader goal of building a more inclusive and resilient economy, where young Nigerians are better equipped with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities needed to participate meaningfully in economic activities. In doing so, it supports efforts to reduce unemployment and promote sustainable development.

Literature Review

Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges in Nigeria. Despite numerous policy efforts and interventions, the problem persists and continues to attract attention in both academic and policy discussions. The causes of this crisis are complex and deeply interconnected.

One major factor is Nigeria's rapidly growing population, particularly the expanding youth segment. While this demographic trend presents an opportunity in terms of human capital, it also places enormous pressure on the economy to generate sufficient employment opportunities. As Yeung, & Yang (2020) observes, the increasing number of young people entering the labour market has outpaced the economy's capacity to absorb them.

Macroeconomic instability further complicates the situation. Nigeria's heavy dependence on oil revenue makes the economy vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. Combined with inconsistent government policies, this creates an uncertain business environment that

discourages investment and limits job creation. Kumar (2023) noted that such instability weakens the foundation for sustained economic growth and reduces opportunities for youth employment.

Another critical issue is the mismatch between the skills acquired through formal education and those required in the labour market. Many graduates lack practical and entrepreneurial skills, leaving them ill-prepared for available job opportunities or self-employment. This disconnect contributes significantly to rising unemployment and underemployment among youths (Heriel, 2025). In light of these issues, researchers recommend considering alternative sources of employment. Entrepreneurship seems to be an excellent source of employment generation through which youths can create jobs and participate actively in development efforts. According to Sanusi, & Abdullahi, (2025), entrepreneurship skill and attitude development among youths may be considered as a useful strategy in addressing the issue of unemployment and lack of economic growth.

Entrepreneurship Education: Definitions and Significance

Entrepreneurship education (EE) refers to all forms of formal and informal learning which aim at developing entrepreneur-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes. EE is acknowledged as an important tool for innovation, creative thinking, and participation in economic activity. Formal entrepreneurship education is provided within educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities. This type of EE includes various classes which impart knowledge on how to organize and run businesses. They include business planning, finance, and marketing management classes (Valerio, et al, (2014).

On the other hand, informal entrepreneurship education is provided through platforms that go beyond the classroom setting. It includes such forms as seminars, mentoring programs, and workshops. This type of learning allows participants to obtain practical experience in the field of entrepreneurship and learn from successful practitioners (Craiu, et al, 2025).

It is worth noting that both formal and informal types of EE are important in their own ways. While formal EE ensures that learners have some basic knowledge about running businesses, the latter encourages them to think creatively and innovatively. Aparicio, et al, (2026), argue that, a combination of formal and informal strategies produces the most effective EE systems. Significantly, entrepreneurship education contributes to the emergence of independent entrepreneurs capable of creating their businesses. The acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes allow them not only to establish and manage businesses successfully but also create

jobs for other people. EE also encourages the development of an entrepreneurial mindset characterized by resilience, initiative, and creativity.

According to Bhoyar, et al, (2025), entrepreneurship education goes beyond the establishment of ventures; it fosters creativity and adaptability skills. These attributes play an integral role in achieving individual success and ensuring economic development. Therefore, entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in building a skilled labor force to tackle economic issues and promote sustainable development. Finally, entrepreneurship education in formal and informal education systems plays a critical role in developing a generation that is innovative, adaptable, and proactive to contribute positively to the nation's economic development.

Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

Entrepreneurship education (EE) in Nigeria has been embraced by various governmental and nongovernmental bodies in the country. The purpose of EE is to provide young individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude to engage in entrepreneurial activities to promote self-employment and economic development, (AMakhoba, 2024). An excellent example of entrepreneurship education is the entrepreneurship programs offered by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). According to Efido, & Ogbu, (2020), these programs seek to shift the focus of young people away from pursuing white-collar jobs to generating their own employment through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education has been incorporated into the academic curriculum of many universities in Nigeria. Universities in Nigeria offer courses in entrepreneurship, providing students with critical skills such as business planning, financial management, and marketing (Okechukwu, 2025). These competencies are fundamental for establishing and sustaining business enterprises. Incorporating entrepreneurship education into university education is critical for promoting an entrepreneurial culture among young Nigerians.

Even though these are good signs, there are still a number of problems that make entrepreneurship education in Nigeria less effective. Problems such as limited finances, bad infrastructure, and no access to good learning materials make it hard to run EE programs. There are no enough trained teachers who have both real-world business experience and the skills needed to keep students interested. Additionally, socio-cultural factors can deter entrepreneurial endeavours, especially among women and rural youth, where conventional norms may not entirely endorse such initiatives (Aung, & Khaing, 2015). To fully realize its

potential in decreasing unemployment and fostering sustainable development, entrepreneurship education must confront these challenges.

Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Labour Market

Research has consistently shown that entrepreneurship education has a positive influence on labour market outcomes. Teixeira, Casteleiro, Rodrigues, & Guerra, (2018) observe that, entrepreneurship education not only strengthens entrepreneurial intentions but also increases the likelihood of individuals starting their own businesses and expanding their employment prospects. By equipping learners with relevant skills and knowledge, EE encourages active participation in economic activities and supports the development of a more dynamic labour market.

In the Nigerian context, similar patterns have been observed. Zahid, et al, (2023), found that young people who have undergone entrepreneurship education are more likely to engage in self-employment and are able to adapt to the challenges of the labour market. This adaptability is particularly important in a country like Nigeria, where economic conditions can be unpredictable. Importantly, entrepreneurship education helps build resilience and flexibility, enabling young people to navigate labour market uncertainties more effectively. In all, integrating EE into educational and policy frameworks offers a practical pathway for improving employment outcomes and strengthening economic resilience.

Challenges and Opportunities

There is no doubt that entrepreneurship education has benefits. It helps people gain skills, knowledge and the right mindset for starting a business. Even though many people agree on its importance there are still big challenges confronting its effective performance. These challenges hindered entrepreneurship education from leading new entrepreneurs to job opportunities. One major challenge is that, young entrepreneurs struggle to get the money they need to start or grow their businesses but at the end cannot get funding (Imran Nkun,2020). Many financial institutions are cautious and don't like to take risks. There is also no venture capital available. As a result, many good business ideas don't get the funding they need to succeed (Imran Nkun,2020).

Another issue is that many new entrepreneurs do not have access to guidance and mentorship. These are essential for navigating the complexities of starting and running a business. Without mentors or support networks entrepreneurs find it difficult to create effective

strategies. They also struggle to avoid mistakes and build confidence in their businesses and this reduces their chances of success (Soetanto, 2017).

Societal perceptions and cultural beliefs concerning entrepreneurship can also be barriers. This is especially true for women and people living in rural areas. In societies women face stereotypes and traditional norms that limit their participation in entrepreneurial activities. This restriction impedes their opportunities for independence and empowerment (Akahome, & Igwe, 2026). Similarly, people in rural areas may face negative attitudes or misconceptions about entrepreneurship. These attitudes can discourage them from pursuing business ideas or seeking help from institutions (Saxena, 2012).

In summary while entrepreneurship education has addressed several challenges, many still exist. These challenges prevent it from creating jobs and fostering growth. There is need to address these issues. We must improve access to funding expand mentorship and support networks and challenge norms. This will help create an inclusive entrepreneurial environment, for everyone. In the midst of the challenges face by entrepreneurs, new opportunities have begun to surface to aid entrepreneurship development. The growth and spread of digital technologies have being a major reason behind these opportunities. These technologies have changed the way businesses are started and run. The growth and availability of platforms has made it easier for entrepreneurs to start businesses. Thus, they provide access to markets, information and resources. The digital platforms make it cheaper and easier for new entrepreneurs to start businesses. It is pertinent to say that, digital technology has made it possible for more people, young and the middle age to start businesses. This leads to innovation and economic diversification. The creation of innovation hubs and entrepreneurial ecosystems has also helped this trend. These ecosystems provide smooth environments for business growth. They offer resources such as training programs, mentorship and funding. These resources help young entrepreneurs overcome hurdles (Diamandis, & Kotler, 2020).

There is need to focus on entrepreneurship education and make sure the young entrepreneurs have the support they need to succeed. This will help entrepreneurship education achieve its potential and really help people, in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study leans on two key theories to dig into how entrepreneurship education (EE) shapes young people's skills, attitudes, and intentions about finding work or starting their own ventures. First is Human Capital Theory, from Becker (1993). In this study, EE works as a kind

of human capital builder, giving young people practical tools to do better in the job market and to take on entrepreneurship.

Then there's the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991). This theory states that people's intentions come from how they feel about the behavior, what they think others expect of them, and how much control they think they have. When it comes to EE, TPB helps explain how education can shape young people's views on entrepreneurship, changing the way they see new ventures, helping them feel supported by those around them, and making them believe they can actually pull it off.

Put together, these two theories give us a solid lens for understanding how EE influences young people not just with skills, but also with motivation and the drive to take action, whether that's in employment or starting their own business.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a mixed-methods research design, blending both quantitative and qualitative approaches to fully capture how entrepreneurship education (EE) shapes youth skills, attitudes, and their involvement in employment and entrepreneurship. For the quantitative part, the team ran a structured survey to gather numerical data on participants' skills, attitudes, and intentions about work and entrepreneurship. This let them spot patterns, trends, and connections across a broader group, making it possible to do statistical analysis and draw insights that can apply to more people.

On the qualitative side, they carried out in-depth, semi-structured interviews with selected participants. These talks dug into the details of each person's experiences, motivations, and views, bringing out rich context that just wouldn't show up in a survey. Using both methods allowed the team to cross-check their results, making the findings more solid and reliable by verifying data from different sources. In the end, this design gave a well-rounded look at how entrepreneurship education influences young people's behaviors and how they see employment and business development.

Sampling

Stratified random sampling method was used to select the respondents. Stratified random sampling was found suitable in this case because it will allow the researcher to get a representative sample of the Nigerian youths from various geographical and demographic groups. The target population were Nigerian youths from 18 to 34 years of age. In order to

obtain good representation, the population was split into strata by two selected characteristics: state of residence and location type (urban/rural). Five states were chosen for the study and within each state, participants were categorized as urban and rural. This stratification was useful in capturing the diversity of experiences, backgrounds and socioeconomic status of the Nigerian youths.

A total of 250 participants were sampled for the study. The sample was proportionately distributed by state and by residential category to ensure fairness and balance. The sampling frame comprised lists of eligible participants gathered from the relevant institutions, youth groups, entrepreneurship centres, and community records in the selected areas.

Thereafter, simple random sampling techniques such as balloting and computer-generated random selection were employed to select participants from each stratum. This procedure ensured that every eligible youth within each subgroup had an equal chance of being selected for the study. The final sample comprised students, graduates, and young entrepreneurs both in urban and rural areas. Stratified random sampling increased the representativeness of the sample, reduced sampling bias and increased generalizability of the results to the larger population of Nigeria's youths.

Data Collection

The study utilized quantitative data collected through a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of four sections with a total of 16 items aimed at obtaining information relevant to the objectives of the study. Section A contained items on the demographic characteristics of respondents such as age, gender, educational level, and residential location. Section B measured respondents' exposure to entrepreneurship education, Section C assessed entrepreneurial skills acquisition, while Section D focused on job status and labour market participation among youths.

The items in Sections B, C, and D were structured using a Likert-type scale ranging from *Strongly Agree (SA)* to *Strongly Disagree (SD)*. The use of a standardized questionnaire ensured uniformity in data collection, enhanced consistency in responses, and facilitated effective quantitative analysis of the data collected from the participants.

They also gathered qualitative data through structured interviews. The researchers talked to key stakeholders, educators, policymakers, and young entrepreneurs. These conversations dug into what people think about the value of entrepreneurship education and how it shapes youth employment and entrepreneurial activity. The semi-structured interviews were used to explore important themes in depth while still keeping some consistency. With both methods combined,

the study got a full picture of what influences how young people in Nigeria get involved in entrepreneurship and employment.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression. Descriptive statistics summed up the sample's main features, like exposure to EE, skill levels, and labor market participation. Correlation analysis explored how different variables connected to each other, while regression pointed out key predictors and showed how strong and significant those connections were.

For the qualitative data, the researchers used ATLAS.ti to perform thematic analysis on the interview transcripts. It coded the texts to spot repeating themes, patterns, and different viewpoints from stakeholders about youth entrepreneurship and employment. This thematic analysis dug deeper into the context showing what really shapes youth engagement and worked alongside the quantitative findings to create a more complete understanding.

Ethical Considerations

Everyone took part in this study voluntarily and gave informed consent before participating. Participants knew the purpose of the study, that they could leave at any time without any consequences, and how their data would be handled. The research followed all the established ethical standards for working with human participants. The researcher kept everything confidential and anonymous and made sure participants' well-being was protected from start to finish. These steps helped guarantee the integrity of the study and ensured respect for everyone involved.

Results and Findings

Research Question 1:

What is the level of entrepreneurship education among youths in Nigeria?

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Level of Entrepreneurship Education (n = 250)

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
EE is adequately incorporated into my programme	3.12	0.85	Agree
Participation in entrepreneurship courses/workshops	3.08	0.91	Agree
Institution provides practical entrepreneurship training	2.85	0.97	Agree

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
EE increased awareness of self-employment opportunities	3.34	0.73	Agree
Grand Mean	3.10	0.87	Moderate Level

The grand mean of 3.10 indicates that youths in Nigeria experience a moderate level of entrepreneurship education. Respondents generally agreed that entrepreneurship education is available and has improved awareness of business opportunities.

Research Question 2:

To what extent does entrepreneurship education influence entrepreneurial abilities among youths?

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Abilities

Variable	r	p-value
Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Abilities	0.61	.000

Regression Analysis

Table 3: Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Abilities

Variable	β	t	p-value	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Entrepreneurship Education	0.52	8.47	.000	0.61	0.37	0.36

Entrepreneurship education significantly influences entrepreneurial abilities ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < .05$). Approximately 37% of the variation in entrepreneurial abilities is explained by entrepreneurship education.

Research Question 3:

To what extent does entrepreneurship education influence the employment status of youths?

Regression Analysis

Table 4: Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on Employability

Variable	β	t	p-value	R	R ²
Entrepreneurship Education	0.45	7.92	.000	0.58	0.34

Entrepreneurship education significantly predicts employability outcomes among youths ($\beta = 0.45, p < .05$).

Research Question 4:

What are the major problems associated with utilizing entrepreneurship education for improving youth employability?

Quantitative Findings

Table 5: Problems Affecting Entrepreneurship Education

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean
Inadequate funding affects effectiveness	48	36	10	6	3.26
Lack of modern training facilities limits skills development	45	39	11	5	3.24

More than 80% of respondents agreed that funding and inadequate facilities constitute major barriers.

Qualitative Findings

- **Inadequate Funding:** Participant responses indicated that many youths lacked access to start-up capital. After training, there is no financial support to start a business.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Participants emphasized poor training facilities and outdated equipment.
- **Weak Institutional Support:** Respondents highlighted inadequate mentorship and weak implementation of entrepreneurship policies.

Discussion

The discussion interprets the results in relation to existing literature, theory, and practical implications for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

The grand mean of 3.10 is suggestive of the level of entrepreneurship education among the youths in Nigeria. Participants agreed that entrepreneurship education is part of their programmes, and that awareness of the opportunities for self-employment have been raised. This indicates that there is a development in the integration of entrepreneurship content in Nigerian institutions after policies were laid down by NUC and government institutions such as SMEDAN and NYSC-SAED. The moderate rating however in particular the lower mean for

“practical training” = 2.85 is similar to the earlier findings of the study that entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is still mainly theoretical. In similar study conducted by Galvão et al., and Okechukwu, it was believed that awareness is high but the acquisition of skills is limited. This means that youth are learning concepts and may not have practical experiences to put knowledge into practice.

Entrepreneurship Education and its Effect on Entrepreneurial Skills.

The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.61$, $p < .001$) and regression result ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < .05$) indicate that educational aspects of entrepreneurship had significant impact on skills of entrepreneurship. Training is found to have 37% of the variance in ability which means it enhances business skills such as opportunity recognition, risk taking, and business planning. The result is consistent with the Human Capital Theory that education creates skills that lead to increased productivity and entrepreneurial capacity. It also is consistent with the findings of Teixeira et al. and Bhoyar et al who noted that structured entrepreneurship training produces adaptability and career success. Therefore, if youths are being educated in entrepreneurship, they are more likely to cultivate the mindset and skills required to identify and capitalise on business opportunities.

The impact of Entrepreneurship Education on employability.

Entrepreneurship education made a significant prediction of employability ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = 0.34$). This means 34% of the variation in employability outcomes is due to entrepreneurship training. Some of the benefits that respondents who were trained attribute to the training are: problem solving capability, communication skills and financial literacy, all of which are important in wage employment and self-employment. These findings support those of Olubusoye et al. and Virk et al. which shows that skills gaps are a significant contributor to youth unemployment in Nigeria. It also helps to achieve NYSC-SAED's aim of making its corps members self-reliant. The idea here is that entrepreneurship education will not only help youth become entrepreneurs, but also be a more desirable part of the workforce, by providing them with transferable skills. The insufficient funding and lack of modern training facilities were identified by more than 80% of the respondents as major problems, both with the mean of 3.26 and 3.24 respectively. Some of the qualitative responses also pointed to the absence of start-up capital, inadequate infrastructure and institutional support/mentorship. These problems are similar to those faced by NYSC-SAED and NDE which include inadequate facilities and capital intensity in resettling trained youths. If there is no funding and infrastructure, the tie-up

between training and actual business creation is lessened, which is termed by Kritikos as “potential entrepreneurship” without economic impact. In addition, weak institutional support inhibits mentorship and policy implementation after training which are also seen as important for career development by Sanfilippo.

Entrepreneurship education was found to have a good influence on employability, with a coefficient of determination of 0.34 and a prediction β value of 0.45 ($p < .05$). That is, entrepreneur training accounts for 34% of the differences in employability outcomes. People who were trained observed an improvement in their problem solving, communication and financial skills, all of which are essential for wage work and for self-employment. The result is consistent with the results of Olubusoye et al. and Virk et al. which found that skill gaps are a significant contributor to youth unemployment in Nigeria. It also helps achieve NYSC-SAED's vision of self-reliant corps members. In the implication, entrepreneurship education is not just about preparing the youths to become entrepreneurs, but it also makes them more attractive to the employers by transferring the acquired skills to them.

The major problems reported were inadequate funding and lack of modern training facilities with mean scores of 3.26 and 3.24 respectively, by more than 80% of the respondents. The qualitative responses also revealed the lack of start-up capital, poor infrastructure and weak institutional support/mentorship. The difficulties they are facing are similar to the difficulties being reported by NYSC-SAED and NDE in the area of capital intensity and inadequate facilities which make resettlement of the trained youths difficult. If the link between training and business creation is weak, without funding and infrastructure, what is being created is what Kritikos calls “potential entrepreneurship” and that does not have an economic impact. Inadequate institutional support also hampers mentorship and policy implementation after training, something Sanfilippo said is key for career development.

Implication

The findings show that entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is functional but not yet optimal. It successfully raises awareness and builds abilities, but structural barriers constrain its impact on employability and labor market participation. For Nigeria to leverage entrepreneurship education as a tool against youth unemployment, agencies like SMEDAN, NDE, and NYSC must move beyond classroom instruction to provide funding, modern facilities, and sustained mentorship. Collaboration with the private sector and development partners, as recommended by PEBEC and NDE, will be key to bridging these gaps. In summary, entrepreneurship education works, but its effectiveness depends on the ecosystem

around it. Addressing funding and infrastructure deficits will determine whether trained youths actually transition into productive economic actors.

Conclusion

The current study investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education on employability, entrepreneurial skills and employment rate of the youth in Nigeria aged (18-34 years). The results indicate that the level of entrepreneurship education among Nigerian youths is moderate. There is a high level of awareness and theoretical exposure but limited practical training. From a statistical point of view, entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on the development of entrepreneurial skills and is a predictor of employability results. It imparts to them skills that are needed for self-employment and earning a living wage, including opportunity recognition, problem solving, financial literacy and business planning. But structural issues limit the effect of this training. The main challenges that hindered the conversion of knowledge into viable businesses or jobs for youths were inadequate funding, poor training facilities and weak institutional support.

In Nigeria, in practice, entrepreneurship education is not working, because of the unsupportive ecosystem, while in principle, it is working. If funding and infrastructure measures are not taken to address the gaps, the potential benefits of entrepreneurship education to alleviate youth unemployment and stimulate economic growth will continue to be underutilized.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, the following recommendations are given:

- Enhance Practical and Experiential Learning. Both tertiary institutions, NYSC and NDE, and SMEDAN must move from theory-based lectures to hands on training in entrepreneurship education. This encompasses business incubators, pitch competitions, and apprenticeship schemes that involve students working on actual businesses. Real-life exposure will fill the learning-to-do gap.
- Enhance access to capital and start-up funding. Government, private sector and development partners need to increase access to low cost credit, grants and equity financing for youth-led initiatives. There is need to simplify existing schemes such as the BOI, CBN Anchor Borrowers' Programme and the You WiN! to suit the needs of first-time entrepreneurs with limited or no collateral.

- Invest in Training Infrastructure, Equipment and Technology Hubs: Modern training facilities, equipment and technology hubs are essential. Educational establishments and vocational centres require workshops, digital labs and co-working areas in order to be able to develop skills that are relevant to the demands of a 21st century job market.
- Enhance Institutional Support and Mentorship. Key gaps identified were weak policy implementation and mentorship. Structured mentorship, post training support and incubation should be carried out by government agencies and universities in collaboration with successful entrepreneurs and private sector companies. This is consistent with the job of the kind of organizations that PEBEC is. The IAs in charge of youth empowerment (SMEDAN, NDE, ITF, NYSC-SAED) need to coordinate to mitigate risks of duplication, continuity of training to funding to market access and accountability.

With the implementation of the above recommendations, Nigeria can maximise the benefits of entrepreneurship education, enhance the employability of the youth and increase their participation in the labour market. This will help in a substantial way to lower the unemployment rate and promote sustainable economic development.

References

- Adejoke, O. I. (2025). Youth educational empowerment through entrepreneurial skills development: A transformative strategy for long-life impact in Lagos State. *Journal of Educational Foundations*, 14(1), 133–147. https://jef.unn.edu.ng/wp-content/uploads/sites/341/2025/02/009-JEF-2025_Volume_14_Issue_I_-2025_MainWork-133-147.pdf
- Adewale, A. O. (2025). Emerging trends and best practices in startup incubation: A contextual analysis for the African innovation ecosystem. *African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovations (AJeIN)*, 1(4), 68–87. <https://uonjournals.uonbi.ac.ke/index.php/ajein/article/view/2917>
- Ajani, O. A. (2024). Entrepreneurship education in South Africa's higher education institutions: In pursuit of promoting self-reliance in students. *International Journal of Management, Knowledge and Learning*, 13(1), 29–41. <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=1255103>
- Akahome, J. E., & Igwe, P. A. (2026). The influence of gender and cultural norms on indigenous women's entrepreneurial practices. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJGE-10-2024-0370>
- Aparicio, S., Martinez-Moya, D., Muñoz-Mora, J. C., & Urbano, D. (2026). Managing destructive entrepreneurship in place: Formal and informal institutions for the achievement of regional economic growth. *Small Business Economics*, 66(2), 565–588. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11187-025-01090-7>
- Aung, T. N., & Khaing, S. S. (2015). Challenges of implementing e-learning in developing countries: A review. In *International conference on genetic and evolutionary computing*

- (pp. 405–411). Springer International Publishing.
https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-23207-2_41
- Benyon, D. (2022). *Spaces of interaction, places for experience*. Springer Nature.
<https://books.google.com.ng/books?hl=en&lr=&id=UYlyEAAQBAJ>
- Bhojar, P. K., Chitrao, P. V., & Divekar, B. R. R. (2025). Long-term outcomes and resilience in entrepreneurship education 2024: Evaluating career success and adaptability. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), Article 2479399.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2479399>
- Craiu, D. M., Munteanu, P., & Soare, V. C. (2025). The role of informal learning in entrepreneurial education: Insights from young start-up founders. In *ICERI2025 Proceedings* (pp. 2637–2646). IATED. <https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2025.0843>.
- Diamandis, P. H., & Kotler, S. (2020). *The future is faster than you think: How converging technologies are transforming business, industries, and our lives*. Simon & Schuster.
- Efido, B. S. O., & Ogbu, C. I. (2020). Entrepreneurship for self-employment in the face of unemployment and white-collar jobs among Nigerian graduates. *International Journal of Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development*, 2(1), 147–158.
- Foster, V., Gorgulu, N., Straub, S., & Vagliasindi, M. (2023). *The impact of infrastructure on development outcomes*. World Bank.
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099529203062342252/pdf/IDU0e42ae32f0048304f74086d102b6d7a900223.pdf>
- Galvão, A., Marques, C., & Ferreira, J. J. (2020). The role of entrepreneurship education and training programmes in advancing entrepreneurial skills and new ventures. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 44(6–7), 595–614.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-10-2019-0174>
- Haruna, H., & Haliru, A. M. (2025). Youth unemployment and rising inflation in Nigeria: A call for sustainable economic empowerment strategies. *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1(5), 129–137. <https://jppssuniuyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/YOUTH-UNEMPLOYMENT-AND-RISING-INFLATION-IN-NIGERIA-JPPSS.pdf>
- Heriel, E. (2025). Skills mismatch and graduates' unemployment in Geita Region. *The Accountancy and Business Review*, 17(2).
- Imran Nkun, U. (2020). *Challenges young entrepreneurs face when seeking funding to establish business*. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-2020121428156>
- Kim, K. C., ElTarabishy, A., & Bae, Z. T. (2018). Humane entrepreneurship: How focusing on people can drive a new era of wealth and quality job creation in a sustainable world. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 56, 10–29.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jsbm.12431>
- Kritikos, A. S. (2024). Entrepreneurs and their impact on jobs and economic growth. *IZA World of Labor*. <https://wol.iza.org/articles/entrepreneurs-and-their-impact-on-jobs-and-economic-growth/long>
- Kumar, R. (2023). Impact of political instability on economic growth. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 12(9), 79–86.
<https://garph.co.uk/IJARMSS/Sep2023/G-7.pdf>
- Maguire, G. (2024). *Online business ideas for beginners: Easy ways to make money from home*. Garreth Maguire.
<https://books.google.com.ng/books?hl=en&lr=&id=VyEIEQAAQBAJ>
- Okechukwu, C. V. (2025). Entrepreneurship education: Fostering innovation in Nigerian universities. *ISA Journal of Engineering and Technology (ISAJET)*, 2(1).
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.164858589>

- Okwuchukwu, S. (2025). Training for the future: Addressing the needs of Nigeria's emerging workforce. *International Journal of Spectrum Research in Social and Management Sciences*, 1(2), 43–55. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15367432>
- Olubusoye, O. E., Salisu, A. A., & Olofin, S. O. (2023). Youth unemployment in Nigeria: Nature, causes and solutions. *Quality & Quantity*, 57(2), 1125–1157. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11135-022-01388-8>
- Quak, E. J., & Flynn, J. (2019). *Private sector development interventions and better-quality job creation for youth in Africa: Linking business performance with productivity growth and sustainable job creation*. Institute of Development Studies. <https://includeplatform.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Quak-and-Flynn-2019-PSD-interventions-and-better-quality-job-creation-for-youth-in-Africa-INCLUDE.pdf>
- Sanfilippo, F. (2025). The importance of mentorship in career development. *The American Journal of Pathology*. <https://doi.org/10.61100/adman.v2i1.129>
- Sanusi, D., & Abdullahi, A. (2025). Enhancing practical skills acquisition through entrepreneurship practical in vocational and technical education. *Gidan Madi Multi-Disciplinary Journal of Teacher Education (GMMJTE)*, 1(1), 1–16. <https://fcegmmdjte.org.ng/article/view/1>
- Saxena, S. (2012). Problems faced by rural entrepreneurs and remedies to solve it. *Journal of Business and Management*, 3(1), 23–29. <https://dlwqtxtslxzle7.cloudfront.net/60505012/602171850>
- Soetanto, D. (2017). Networks and entrepreneurial learning: Coping with difficulties. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 23(3), 547–565. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBr-11-2015-0230>
- Sohn, I. (2020). Why is Nigeria—"The giant of Africa"—still poor? *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 22(5), 11–41. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/2b194d9b18e3067ab347fc5db1c>
- Teixeira, S. J., Casteleiro, C. M. L., Rodrigues, R. G., & Guerra, M. D. (2018). Entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurship in European countries. *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 10(1), 22–42. <https://www.emerald.com/ijis/article-abstract/10/1/22/134261/Entrepreneurial-intentions-and-entrepreneurship-in?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- Virk, A., Nelson, E. U., & Dele-Adedeji, I. (2023). The challenge of youth unemployment in Nigeria. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 39(3), 319–329. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-international-and-comparative-social-policy/article/challenge-of-youth-unemployment-in-nigeria/B0CB3AE1BA1D53EF08A59B4D820EAFDD>
- Yeung, W. J. J., & Yang, Y. (2020). Labor market uncertainties for youth and young adults: An international perspective. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 688(1), 7–19. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002716220913487>
- Zahid, R. A., Darmawan, D., & Rojak, J. A. (2023). A comprehensive evaluation of entrepreneurship education in preparing the young generation to enter the modern job market. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, 3(2), 55–60. <https://jos3journals.id/index.php/jos3/article/view/251>