

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR YOUTH IN CLOTHING AND TEXTILES: ADVANCING WORK FORCE QUALITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SOUTH-WESTERN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is acclaimed the world over, as education for the acquisition of skills for gainful employment and wealth creation in clothing and textiles. This study aimed at identifying entrepreneurship skills required by youths in reduction of unemployment and economic development of Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education skill is designed to satisfy the manpower needs of the nation. It enhances sustainable development in clothing and textiles by fostering innovation, environmental awareness and social responsibility. The study adopted survey research while multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study. The sample consisted of 600 respondents who are 150 graduates and 450 undergraduates from the selected states for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data to answer the research question. T-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance while descriptive statistics was employed. The findings show among others that entrepreneurship education programmes have a significant relationship with employment reduction among youths in Southwest Nigeria. The study also showed that there is significant difference between the mean responses of graduate and undergraduate students in clothing and textiles entrepreneurship education on economic growth among youths in Southwest Nigeria, $t(598) = 2.906, p < 0.05$. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that training and retraining of entrepreneurial education personnel should be encouraged so as to boost their performance. Entrepreneurial education students should be given the needed support and encouragement to produce goods and services in order to reduce dependency ratio.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Skill, Unemployment, Sustainable, Wealth Creation, Clothing, Textiles.

INTRODUCTION

The roles of education and small scale enterprises in economic development of a nation cannot be overemphasized. This is so when one considers its importance in the development of the citizenry. The unprecedented global economic hardship recently experienced all over the world gives developing nations opportunities to re-assess the economic importance of small and medium scale productions generally. It is widely reported that indigenous entrepreneurship, particularly in small and medium enterprises may be more important in a developing economy such as Nigeria, than the large-scale businesses which require huge capital outlay. It appears that the required managerial skills and shop practices of some individuals in positions of authority account for economic inefficiency of many large-scale enterprises (Fadoju, 2015).

An entrepreneur is a person who embarks on self-production, sales of goods and services with the objective of making profit (Chewitz, 2017). Entrepreneurship involves the ability to set up a business enterprise and acquire necessary skills, idea and managerial competencies needed for self-employment among clothing and textiles producers. An entrepreneur as described by Uduma in Olaitan (2015) is a person who creates, manages a business undertaking and bears risk for the sake of profit. In the view of Etuk in Alaua and Udida (2019), an entrepreneur is a visionary who must have a clear conception of what he has envisaged and must be in position to translate it into a workable project. However, in this context of study, an entrepreneur is a young adult who participates in clothing and textiles production activities and turns them into a profitable venture by harnessing the necessary skills and resources to manage the enterprise for reduction of hardship and economic development in South-West, Nigeria. However, entrepreneurship according to Fadoju and Falana (2018) is a process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and organization skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need. In the view of Uduna in Olaitan (2015), entrepreneurship is the process through which individuals combine human and material resources in order to provide goods and services desired by man. Entrepreneurship in this study is a process through which young and adults in South-West, Nigeria combines human and material resources and participate in textiles and clothing for the reduction of poverty reduction, economic development, and wealth creation. Entrepreneurship skill development is very important in harnessing a nation's natural resources. This is because skill acquisition helps in developing intrinsic potentials in individuals. To possess skills is to demonstrate the habit of acting, thinking in a specific activity in such a way that the process becomes natural to the individual through repetition or practice (Fadoju, 2015). A skill, according to Osinem (2008), is the expertness, practiced ability or proficiency displayed in the performance of a task. However, the writer explains that a skill is the ability to perform a task acquired through repeated practice (Fadoju, 2018).

Furthermore, entrepreneurship can be seen as a process which encourages new independent competitors to establish companies both small and large. This is supported by Badawi (2023) who stated that entrepreneurship education programmes are tailored to job seekers, unemployed people and to scientists, engineers and researchers – to encourage them to commercialize their intellectual property. The author affirmed that entrepreneurship education is often linked to a chain of support offered to those who decide to explore self-employment and establish a small enterprise. This type of education is meant for all individuals in every society. As observed by Akpomi (2024), it is important to expose all students to entrepreneurship education since this form of education can be learned, practiced and developed. Hence, entrepreneurial skills and attitudes provide benefits to society even beyond their application to business activities. As such, skills like creativity and taking initiative can be very useful to people in their daily life.

Globally, entrepreneurship education has been identified as a tool for promoting unemployment free nations. It is the ability of providing individuals with the knowledge and skills required to recognize business creation opportunities and rudiments needed to act on them.

In a positive reaction to this development, the Nigerian government in 2017 revised the curriculum for the tertiary institutions to include entrepreneurial education was made compulsory course for all students with effect from 2007/2008 academic session. The understanding here is that graduates from these institutions will have adequate skills to become self-employed in their areas of specialization. As observed by Fadoju (2022), “entrepreneurship education programmes are tailored to job seekers, unemployed people, to scientist, engineers and researchers to encourage them to commercialize their intellectual property.” This is consequently the result affirmed that entrepreneurship affirmed that entrepreneurship education is often linked in a chain of support offered to those who decide to explore self-employment and establish a small enterprise for wealth creation and for sustainable development. It is therefore important to expose all students in clothing and textile to entrepreneurship education since form of education can be learned, practiced and developed.

However, employment generation is one of the principal yardsticks for judging the economic, wealth creation achievement of any government world over. To cap it all, there is need to tackle unemployment and enhance job and wealth creation for the teeming populace has been brought to the fore in policy issues. Adeola (2013), says entrepreneurship is increasingly accepted as an important means in a valuable additional strategy to create jobs, improve livelihood, economic independence of young people and above all for national development. Nigeria, like other Africa countries is faced with the challenge of globalization and trade liberalization. This downturn in the economic fortunes of many African nations has meant a considerable reduction in public sector job placement. This has also led to graduate unemployments or underemployment with the consequent implications on poverty, youth restiveness and insecurity of lives and property (Fadoju, 2022).

Similarly, Chukwuma (2021) observed that stakeholders in education have constantly bemoaned the unfortunate trend in which our tertiary institutions annually turn out graduates who roam the streets daily in search of non-existing jobs. This ugly phenomenon, the author further stated, has been blamed on a dysfunctional education system that has structurally failed to capture the dynamic nature of education as an agent of transformation and a catalyst for individual and societal self-reliance. In consistency with the foregoing, it is important that those factors which can arouse higher education institution students’ entrepreneurial ability should be adequately understood and developed to implement effective strategies towards reducing graduate unemployment.

Additionally, Akinnibosun, Adeleye and Benjamin (2024) examined the entrepreneurial content embedded in the industrial design curriculum of Nigerian Universities and found that their curriculum content as far as entrepreneurship is considered adequately considered textile design education, particularly in courses that included practical projects, market research and product development. This study corroborates with Fadoju (2025) that curricula must be regularly updated to align with current industry trends, technology and entrepreneurial realities. This study confirms that formal exposure to entrepreneurship is present but its impact on students’ awareness depends largely on the relevance and currency of course content.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Nigerian government has acknowledged the role of entrepreneurship education by reviewing the national education curriculum and embedding entrepreneurship education and training as a compulsory course to be taken by all institutions and by undergraduates to stimulate entrepreneurship towards unemployment reduction and alleviating economic hardship. This is due to the huge contributions of entrepreneurship education to economic development in the country. This is consequently the result of having a mindset of white collar job which has been passed from one generation to another and coupled with the fact that Nigeria as a developing country is highly informal and has a low absorption capacity of educated individuals into formal employment. All these have turned higher education institution

graduates into job seekers as against employers of labor especially with huge turn-out of graduates into the labor force on yearly basis (Osadeke, Lawanson & Sobowale, 2017). Hence graduate unemployment is on the increase.

The full implementation of entrepreneurship education in the Universities has not been seen to yield expected result of producing graduates that are well skilled in terms of acquiring business opportunity, identification skills, good communication and marketing skills, creative thinking skills, leadership skills, networking skills, in addition to the management of business skills and team spirit. Despite all the efforts made by the government and institutions in providing young and adults trainer courses to entrepreneurship facilitators, the problem of their ineffectiveness remains unabated, this is mainly seen in students' low acquisition of entrepreneurship skills that will help them to be self-sufficient, and wealth creation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this paper is to assess the role of entrepreneurship education in advancing work force quality and its effect on the nation economy through job creation on textile sector. The specific objectives were:

1. To examine the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programme in tertiary institutions in reducing unemployment in South West, Nigeria
2. To identify the extent of entrepreneurship education required to enhance the acquisition of necessary skills for gainful self-employment and economic growth.
3. To identify the entrepreneurial skills that can reduce unemployment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programme in tertiary institution in reducing unemployment?
2. What is the extent of entrepreneurship education required to enhance acquisition of necessary skills for gainful employment and economic development?
3. What are the entrepreneurial skills that can reduce unemployment?

HYPOTHESES:

Null Hypotheses (H₀):

1. Entrepreneurship skills education programs do not significantly impact students' intention to start their own businesses.
2. There is no significant relationship between youth participation in clothing and textiles entrepreneurship education and self-employment opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey research design. Survey research design is appropriate because it allows the collection of data from a representative sample of a population for the purpose of describing existing conditions, opinions, and practices (Ali, 2019). This design was considered suitable for the present study since it sought to obtain information from undergraduates and graduates who had undergone entrepreneurial education in tertiary institutions across Southwest Nigeria. The study was carried out in Southwest Nigeria, comprising Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo States.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The target population comprised all undergraduates and graduates of tertiary institutions in Southwest Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo) who had undertaken entrepreneurship education as part of their academic curriculum. According to records obtained from selected institutions and the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2022), the estimated population

size across the five states is several thousands, out of which a manageable representative sample was drawn for the study.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error:

$$= \frac{N}{1 + (e^2)}$$

Where ; ● n = required sample size

● N = total population

● e = level of precision (0.05).

Based on this calculation and to ensure adequate representation, a total of 600 respondents was determined as the sample size. This consisted of 450 undergraduates and 150 graduates. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select respondents:

1. **Stage One – State Selection:** Out of the five Southwestern states, three states (Lagos, Oyo, and Ogun) were selected using purposive sampling. The justification was that these states have the highest concentration of tertiary institutions and student enrollment, thereby providing a more diverse and representative sample.
2. **Stage Two – Institution Selection:** From each state, two tertiary institutions were purposively selected. The criteria for selection included:
 - a. At least one federal and one state-owned institution to ensure balance.
 - b. Institutions with fully implemented entrepreneurship education programmes as part of their curricula.
3. **Stage Three – Respondent Selection:** Within the selected institutions, final-year undergraduates and graduates who had taken entrepreneurship education courses were identified from departmental records. Simple random sampling was then employed to select respondents, ensuring that each eligible student had an equal chance of being included.

Thus, the final sample consisted of 600 respondents: 450 undergraduates and 150 graduates across the six selected institutions in Lagos, Oyo, and Ogun States.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A structured questionnaire, specifically designed by the researchers was used to elicit information needed for the study. The two research questions formulated guided the development of the instrument. The questionnaire contained 30 items which were structured on a 4-point scale response of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D).

VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument was face-validated by three experienced professors from the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan. Their inputs led to deleting and modification of some questionnaire items.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics was used such as simple percentages, relative frequencies and mean. The

t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The key informant interview generated a data which was used to reinforce the data and also as supplement to major findings.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Level

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Graduate	150	25%
Undergraduate	450	75%
Total	600	100%

Table 1 showed that 150 respondents, representing (25%) were graduate entrepreneur, while the remaining 450 respondents representing (75%) were undergraduate students.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	255	42.5%
Female	345	57.5%
Total	600	100%

The above table (Table 2) showed that 345 respondents (57.5%) were female, while the remaining 255 (42.5%) respondents were male. This indicated that female constituted the largest proportion entrepreneurial education students.

Research Question 1: To what extent does entrepreneurship education enhances Acquisition of necessary skills tor gainful self-employment in South-west Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean ratings on the impact of entrepreneurship education in clothing and textiles on youth technical skills and employment opportunities

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S. D.
1.	Entrepreneurial Education programme skills encouraged students to be self-employed after graduation	384 (64.0%)	212 (35.3%)	4 (0.7%)	0	3.63	0.496
2.	Promoting Vocational Acquisition among Youths	251 (41.8%)	326 (54.3%)	23 (3.8%)	0	3.38	0.559
3.	Managerial skills acquired are relevance in ensuring entrepreneurial success	285 (47.55%)	308 (51.3%)	7 (1.2%)	0	3.46	0.522
4.	Entrepreneurship Education equips me with skills to manage a clothing and textile business	297 (49.5%)	276 (46.0%)	27 (4.5%)	0	3.45	0.581
5.	Possession of sound human relations' skills has relevance in setting up entrepreneurial venture	280 (46.7%)	295 (49.2%)	25 (4.2%)	0	3.43	0.573
6.	A well implemented Entrepreneurship education can boost per capital income of the country	319 (53.2%)	236 (39.3%)	45 (7.5%)	0	3.46	0.631
	Weighted Mean					3.47	

The result in table 3 reveals the extent at which entrepreneurship education enhances acquisition of skills for gainful self-employment in South-west Nigeria. The responses to item 1 as shown in table 2.0 that 384 respondents (64%) strongly agreed while 212 (35.3%) agreed that Entrepreneurial Education programme skills encouraged students to be self-employed after graduation whereas 4 (0.7%) disagreed with the statement. The mean score of the responses to the item was 3.63, which showed an acceptance of the statement. In the same vein, the responses

to item 2 indicated that (41.8%) were of the conviction (strongly agreed) and (54.3%) agree that promoting Vocational Skills Acquisition among youths. On other hand, (3.8%) were of contrary view. Also, (47.5%) strongly agree and (51.3%) agree that managerial skills acquired have relevance in ensuring entrepreneurial success while (1.2%) strongly disagrees to the statement. In the same vein, the responses to item 4 indicated that 49.5% strongly agreed the relevance of entrepreneurship in starting and managing a clothing and textile venture, 46.0% agreed that entrepreneurship skills in clothing and textiles contributes to societal benefits and national economic growth while 4.59% held a contrary view.

Furthermore, responses to item 5 indicated that (46.7%) strongly agree and (49.2%) agree that possession of sound human relations' skills has relevance in setting up entrepreneurial venture while (13%) of the respondents disagree. More so, (53.2%) strongly agree and (39.3%) agree that a well implemented Entrepreneurship Education can boost per capita income of the country while (7.5%) of the respondents disagree. Finally, the grand mean for all the items in table 3 was 3.47 which was an indication that clothing and textiles entrepreneurship programmes skills acquired are relevant in starting up a business venture.

Research Question 2: To what extent does Entrepreneurial Education programme have relevance on economic development?

Table 4: Descriptive analysis of the Relevance of Entrepreneurial Education programme in Economic development in Entrepreneurship

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
1.	Training people to acquire skills and knowledge for employment in business related occupations	381 (63.5%)	190 (31.7%)	29 (4.8%)	0	3.59	0.583
2.	Helping individuals to set up small scale businesses which can liberate them from poverty	219 (36.5%)	354 (59.0%)	27 (4.5%)	0	3.32	0.555
3.	Promoting the understanding of the economic system of the world	336 (56.0%)	191 (31.8%)	60 (10.0%)	13 (2.2%)	3.42	0.758
4.	Preparing individuals for production, preservation and distribution of goods and services	229 (38.2%)	300 (50.0%)	50 (8.3%)	21 (3.5%)	3.23	0.744
5.	Turning around the economic fortunes of individuals and countries, thereby reducing the poverty level activities	318 (53.0%)	214 (35.7%)	40 (6.7%)	28 (4.7%)	3.37	0.805
6.	Preparing individuals for career that are based on manual and practical	353 (58.8%)	228 (38.0%)	18 (3.0%)	1 (0.2%)	3.39	0.723
	Weighted mean					3.38	

The result in table 4 shows the extent of relevance of Entrepreneurial Education programme in economic development. From table 3.0 above, the responses to item 1, showed that (63.5%) strongly agreed and (31.7%) agreed that training people to acquire skills and knowledge for employment in clothing and textiles related occupations. On the contrary (4.8%) disagreed to the statement. This statement was accepted because the mean score of the responses to it was (3.59%). Helping individuals to set up small scale businesses in clothing and textiles which can liberate them from poverty, item 2 of the questionnaire was used. The responses

showed that (35.6%) strongly agree and (59.0%) agreed on the statement while (4.5%) disagreed. The mean score of the responses to the item was 3.42.

Also, (56.0%) strongly agree and (31.8%) agree that entrepreneurial education programme help in promoting the understanding of the economic system of the world while (12.2%) have contrary (disagree) view to the statement having mean of 3.42. In the same vein, responses to item 4 indicated that (38.2%) strongly agree and (50.0%) agree that entrepreneurial education programme prepared individuals for production, preservation and distribution of goods and services while (11.3%) disagree to the statement. More so, (53.0%) strongly agree and (35.7%) agree that entrepreneurial education programme turn around the economic fortunes of individuals and countries, thereby reducing the poverty level while (11.4%) of the respondents were of contrary view. In addition, (58.8%) indicated (strongly agree) and (38.0%) agree that entrepreneurial education programme prepared individuals for career that are based on manual and practical activities while (3.2%) disagree having mean value of 3.39. The weighted mean of 3.38 with low standard deviation. Since the weighted mean score is 3.38 and it is above the mean value of 2.50, all the items are therefore accepted which means that Entrepreneurial Education programmes have relevance on economic development.

Research Question 3: What are the entrepreneurial skills that can reduce unemployment?

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of entrepreneurial skills that can reduce unemployment

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
1.	Managerial skills acquired through Entrepreneurship Education have relevance in ensuring entrepreneurial success	251 (41.8%)	326 (54.3%)	23 (3.8%)	0	3.64	0.559
2.	Accounting and financial competency are skills acquired through entrepreneurial venture.	381 (63.5%)	190 (31.7%)	29 (4.8%)	0	3.53	0.523
3.	Marketing and sales skills possessed as a result of Entrepreneurship Education are adequate	336 (56.0%)	191 (31.8%)	60 (10.0%)	13 (2.2%)	3.18	0.557
4.	Technological and communication skills are highly possessed through entrepreneurship education	297 (49.5%)	262 (43.7%)	19 (3.2%)	22 (3.7%)	3.31	0.563
5.	Creative skills are obtainable through Entrepreneurship Education for better job performance	318 (53.0%)	214 (35.7%)	40 (6.7%)	28 (4.7%)	3.12	0.608
	Weighted mean					3.36	

According to the Table 5 above on entrepreneurial skills that can reduce unemployment among youth in southwest Nigeria, the respondents (41.8%) strongly agree and (54.3%) agree that managerial skills acquired have relevance in ensuring entrepreneurial success on the contrary 3.8% disagree on the statement- the mean values of 3.64 signify the acceptance of the statement. Also, the result shows that accounting and financial competency skills are acquired through entrepreneurial venture as (63.5%) strongly agree and (31.7%) agree while (4.8%) disagree on the assertion with mean value of 3.53 indicate positive response on the item.

The result further reveals (56%) strongly agree and (31.8%) agree on the statement, marketing and sales skills possessed as a result of Entrepreneurship Education are adequate. On the other hand, (10%) disagree and (2.2%) disagree with statement. More so, (49.5%) of the respondents strongly agree and (43.7%) agree that technological and communication skills are highly possessed through with mean value of 3.31. Creative skills are obtainable through entrepreneurship education for better job performance as (53%) and (35.7%) agree while (6.7%) disagree with mean of 3.12. This shows that entrepreneurial skills acquired are sufficient in reducing unemployment among youths in southwest Nigeria.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students and graduates about the contributions Entrepreneurial Education can make towards reduction of unemployment in South- West Nigeria.

Table 6: The independent t-test showing the difference between Graduate and Undergraduate students' responses on the contributions of Entrepreneurial Education Programme

Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	Sig.	Remark
Graduate	150	23.41	2.764	598	3.047	.002	Sign. (P<0.05)
Undergraduate	450	19.78	1.851				

Table 6 above shows that a statistically significant difference was found between respondents' level (graduate and undergraduate students) in terms of their responses to the contribution of which Entrepreneurial Education can make to reduce unemployment in South-West, Nigeria, $t(598) = 3.047$, at $P < 0.05$ level of significance. Graduate respondents had (= 23.41, S.D = 2.764) to Undergraduate respondents (= 19.78, S.D = 1.851).

It was revealed from the table that Graduate respondents had higher mean than Undergraduate students which shows that Graduate responses better on the contribution of Entrepreneurial Education can make towards reduction of unemployment in South- West Nigeria than undergraduate students. Consequently, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between mean response of towards reduction of unemployment in South-West Nigeria was therefore rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students and graduates about the factors that hinder the use of Entrepreneurial Education as a tool to reduced unemployment in South -West Nigeria.

Table 7: The independent sample t-test showing the difference in mean scores between graduate and undergraduate students on the factors that hinder the use of Clothing and Textiles Education

Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t	Sig.	Remark
Graduate	150	17.08	7.730	598	2.906	.000	Sign.
Undergraduate	450	14.14	6.527				

The result in table 7 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level of significance between graduates and undergraduates on the factors hinder the use of Entrepreneurship Education as a tool for poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The mean score of graduate respondents is higher ($= 17.08$, $S.D= 7.730$) than mean score of undergraduate students on entrepreneurial education ($= 14.14$, $S.D= 6.527$), $t(598) = 2.906$, $p < 0.05$).

Consequently, the hypothesis which was earlier stated that there is no significant difference in the mean response of undergraduate students and graduates about the factors that hinder the use of Entrepreneurial Education as a tool to reduced unemployment in South -West Nigeria was therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that entrepreneurship education in clothing and textiles plays a crucial role in reducing unemployment and fostering economic growth in Southwest Nigeria. This is consistent with the view of Ewubere and Kalirajan (2010) that entrepreneurship education is essential in empowering graduates with skills that enable them to actively contribute to national development.

In relation to Research Question 1, the result showed that respondents strongly agreed that entrepreneurship education skills encouraged students to be self-employed after graduation ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.50$). The relatively low standard deviation suggests strong agreement across respondents. This aligns with Ewubere (2011), who emphasized that entrepreneurship education helps address poverty by empowering individuals to create self-reliant ventures. Likewise, the programme was rated as promoting vocational acquisition among youths ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.56$), a finding that corroborates Fadoju (2022), who noted that entrepreneurship education equips learners with practical competencies to establish and sustain businesses in their areas of specialization.

Findings on Research Question 2 showed that entrepreneurship education has direct relevance for economic development. For instance, training people to acquire skills and knowledge for business-related employment was rated highly ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.58$), while the capacity to help individuals establish small-scale businesses that reduce poverty also received positive ratings ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.56$). These results validate Adeola (2013), who argued that entrepreneurship is a viable strategy for job creation and improved livelihood. Similarly, the programme was perceived as promoting understanding of global economic systems ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.76$) and preparing individuals for production and distribution of goods and services ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.74$). These mean scores, which are all above the acceptance benchmark of 2.50, reinforce the argument of Akpomi (2024) that entrepreneurship education cultivates skills that are applicable beyond business, making individuals more productive and adaptable in various contexts.

With respect to Research Question 3, the findings indicated that respondents recognized several entrepreneurial skills as critical in reducing unemployment. Managerial competence ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.56$) and financial literacy ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.52$) were rated as the most relevant, highlighting the necessity of these skills for entrepreneurial success. These findings are in line

with Osinem (2008), who maintained that skill acquisition enables individuals to demonstrate competence and become economically self-reliant. Although creative skills had a slightly lower mean rating ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.61$), they still exceeded the cut-off point, confirming their importance for innovation and improved job performance in the clothing and textiles sector.

The hypotheses testing further strengthened these findings. The independent t-test analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between graduates ($M = 23.41$, $SD = 2.76$) and undergraduates ($M = 19.78$, $SD = 1.85$), $t(598) = 3.047$, $p < 0.05$, in their perception of entrepreneurship education's contribution to unemployment reduction. The higher mean score of the graduates suggests they place greater value on entrepreneurship education, possibly due to their exposure to post-graduation employment challenges. This agrees with Chukwuma (2021), who noted that graduates facing limited job opportunities are more inclined to appreciate entrepreneurship as a pathway to self-reliance.

Similarly, results showed a significant difference in the perception of graduates ($M = 17.08$, $SD = 7.73$) and undergraduates ($M = 14.14$, $SD = 6.53$), $t(598) = 2.906$, $p < 0.05$, on the factors hindering entrepreneurship education as a tool for reducing unemployment. The higher mean among graduates suggests that they are more conscious of systemic and structural barriers affecting the application of entrepreneurship education. This finding corroborates Osadeke, Lawanson, and Sobowale (2017), who observed that Nigeria's educational system often fails to align entrepreneurship education with real-world labour market demands.

Overall, the mean scores and their corresponding low standard deviations confirm that respondents strongly agreed on the positive influence of entrepreneurship education in promoting employment, reducing poverty, and fostering economic growth. These findings collectively affirm the position of Badawi (2023) and Akinnibosun, Adeleye, and Benjamin (2024), who stressed that entrepreneurship education remains a strategic tool for sustainable development, particularly when curricula are updated to meet industry realities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that entrepreneurship education programmes in clothing and textiles are highly relevant in addressing youth unemployment and fostering economic growth in Southwest Nigeria. The study established that entrepreneurship education significantly equips students with technical, managerial, financial, and creative skills required for self-employment and job creation.

Furthermore, the study confirmed that entrepreneurship education not only reduces unemployment but also contributes to wealth creation, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. The t-test results revealed significant differences between graduates and undergraduates in their perception of the impact of entrepreneurship education, with graduates demonstrating stronger appreciation for its role in economic empowerment. This suggests that entrepreneurship education becomes even more valued after exposure to the realities of post-graduation labour market challenges.

In essence, the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions can strengthen clothing and textiles enterprises, expand employment opportunities, and enhance national development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Capacity Building for Educators:** Training and retraining of entrepreneurship education personnel should be prioritized to improve their pedagogical skills and ensure they are well-equipped to deliver practical, industry-relevant knowledge.
2. **Mentorship and Industry Linkages:** There should be structured mentorship programmes linking successful entrepreneurs with students. This will provide hands-on guidance, networking opportunities, and role models for aspiring entrepreneurs.
3. **Practical-Oriented Curriculum:** Tertiary institutions should continue to update their entrepreneurship curricula, particularly in clothing and textiles, to reflect current industry demands, technological trends, and innovative practices.
4. **Institutional and Governmental Support:** Students should be supported with access to start-up grants, incubation centres, and enabling environments to translate acquired skills into viable businesses.
5. **Promotion of Entrepreneurial Mindset:** Beyond technical skills, efforts should be made to foster creativity, innovation, and problem-solving abilities among students, as these are critical for long-term entrepreneurial success.

By implementing these recommendations, entrepreneurship education in clothing and textiles can serve as a stronger driver of economic empowerment, job creation, and sustainable development in Nigeria.

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