



Entrepreneurial Skills Development: Stakeholders Response to the Challenges of Graduates' Unemployment in Bauchi State

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the perception of stakeholders on entrepreneurship development as a panacea to Graduates' unemployment in Bauchi State, as well as the solution to major socio-economic problems bedeviling Nigeria's development. The study was carried out in a descriptive survey design. This is a descriptive survey study as it seeks to investigate the perception of stakeholders on the graduates' entrepreneurial skill acquisition development in reducing unemployment in Bauchi state. A total of 200 respondents were sampled for this study using stratified and systematic random sampling techniques. A validated questionnaire was used to collect the data from the respondents with a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Mean ratings were used to provide answers to the research question raised, while *t*-test and ANOVA were used to test the generated hypotheses at 0.05 level significance. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for data generation. It adopts a frequency/percentage table as a method of data analysis. It was concluded that entrepreneurship development is an efficient instrument in addressing Graduate unemployment in particular and promoting overall economic development in general. It also recommends that governments at all levels should be proactive in providing entrepreneurship programmes not only to Graduates but also at all levels of education in the country.

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INTRODUCTION

The Federal Republic of Nigeria introduced various strategies and programmes to address the challenge of Graduate unemployment which has become worrisome (FGN). The initiatives were aimed at reducing the unemployment rate to a bearable rate. These initiatives include the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), and the subsidy Re-investment Programmes (SURE-P) Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) among others. The important component of these strategies has been the provision of entrepreneurship education to Nigerian graduates. Entrepreneurship skills provide beneficiaries with knowledge and motivation that help them to achieve entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings (Lackeus, 2015). Brewes (2015) in Markwell et al (2013) see graduates' employability in terms of skills,

knowledge, competence and motivation that improve the chances of their ability to secure and retain jobs and make progress on the jobs. Confederation of British Industry (CBT) on the other hand maintains that entrepreneurial education should be geared towards enabling individuals to develop the qualities and competence required to meet the changing needs of employers and customers thereby helping him/her to fully realize his/her potential and fulfil his/her aspiration.

According to Odi and Odi (2013) as in Sule, Bello and Dawaki (2020), there are various means of Promoting entrepreneurial skills. Graduates should seek to know and make use of them. These include: organizing entrepreneurial training classes, seminars, workshops, symposiums and development programmes. Scholars have argued that unemployment in Nigeria is not unconnected

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with a low level of entrepreneurial development in the nation's economy. They thus emphasized that adequate promotion of Graduates' entrepreneurial skills in Nigeria is an efficient mechanism of addressing unemployment, economic stagnation and wastage of resources in the Country.

Sule (2020) sadly, observes that there were over 25000 unemployed graduates of higher institutions in Bauchi State who were desperately seeking white-collar jobs which were unavailable. Most of these graduates did not have any skills nowadays needed in the labour market. This research work intends to investigate how the stakeholders see and respond to the entrepreneurial skills needs as a panacea to adequate unemployment in the state.

Problem Statement/Justification

Achieving the Stability of democracy, good governance and sustainable socio-economic development requires adequate provision of gainful employment to a teeming population of young men and women in Nigeria. This is more so because youth comprise the largest portion of the country's population. according to Sule, Bello and Dawaki (2020) more than 60 percent of the population. In Nigeria however, the Minister of Labour and Productivity Dr Christ Ngige alarmingly explained that the unemployment rate could reach 33.5% by 2020. However, by 2022 the rate will increase to 37.7% and it is estimated that it will hit 41% in 2023 according to KPMG. The net result of all these is Nigeria's emergence as one of the 25 poorest countries in the twenty-first century and the only member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) categorized among the world's poorest countries (Abubakar, 2020). This calls for serious empirical investigation which this study seeks to undertake.

As the population continues to grow at geometric progression, it has become apparent that the government will not be able to produce adequate white-collar jobs for the teeming youth population in the country. Consequently, unemployment has continued to be a major problem bedeviling the socio-economic development of the country. It is rightly observed that the inclusion of entrepreneurship development in the curricula of university and

tertiary institutions will serve as a panacea to this problem. It is believed that employment among Nigerian graduates part-time, full-time or even under-graduates can be said to have eluded Nigerian youths. This study fills this important gap.

Objective(s) of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate entrepreneurial skills: Stakeholders' response to the challenges of graduates' unemployment in Bauchi State. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. Investigate the stakeholders' perceptions on entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State.
2. Determine the difference in the perceptions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs on skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State.
3. Examine the difference in the stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on level of education.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the stakeholders' perceptions on entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State?
2. What is the difference in the perceptions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs on skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State?
3. What is the difference in the stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on their level of education?

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs on the impact of skills development in reducing

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graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on their level of education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive survey study as it seeks to investigate the perception of stakeholders on the graduates' entrepreneurial skill acquisition development in reducing unemployment in Bauchi state. Creswell (2014) says a descriptive survey is a systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a

given population or areas of interest factually. A total of 200 respondents were sampled for this study using stratified and systematic random sampling techniques. A validated questionnaire was used to collect the data from the respondents with a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Mean ratings were used to provide answers to the research question raised, while t-test and ANOVA were used to test the generated hypotheses at 0.05 level significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: *What are the stakeholders' perceptions on entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Stakeholders' Perceptions on Entrepreneurial Skills Development in Reducing Graduates' Unemployment Challenges in Bauchi State

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D	Remarks
1	Entrepreneurial skills help to impact the quality of lives of unemployed people	2.99	1.07	Accepted
2	It results in skill redundancy due to lack of practical application	2.23	1.06	Not Accepted
3	It contributes to the effective use of the acquired skills	2.58	1.07	Accepted
4	It promotes ingenuity and innovations among the unemployed graduates	2.51	1.05	Accepted
5	It discourages investment due to the risks involved	2.13	1.02	Not Accepted
6	Entrepreneurial skills development helps to generate incomes for the unemployed	2.56	0.99	Accepted
7	It reduces scourge of poverty among the unemployed people	2.53	1.20	Accepted
8	It promotes the growth of small and medium scale businesses among the unemployed	2.79	1.05	Accepted
9	Entrepreneurial skill development does not guarantee business success	2.16	0.86	Not Accepted
10	It guarantees the sustainability of an enterprise	2.79	1.07	Accepted
11	It helps to create more employment opportunities for the unemployed	2.74	1.14	Accepted
12	It helps to improve the skills of the unemployed for effective functioning	2.58	1.06	Accepted
13	Entrepreneurial skill development enables the unemployed to actualize their dreams of self-reliance	3.05	1.07	Accepted
14	It stimulates the right entrepreneurial attitude in the unemployed	2.67	1.06	Accepted
15	It reduces entrepreneurial intention due to a lack of fund	2.57	1.11	Accepted
Average		2.59	1.06	

The result in the above table reveals the stakeholders' perceptions on entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State. All the negatively framed items were

reversed in scoring for better interpretation. Collectively, the result of the study shows that the respondents have a positive perception of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi

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State with a mean score of 2.59 and standard deviation of 1.06. Specifically, the respondents affirmed that entrepreneurial skills development helps to improve the quality of lives of the unemployed, contributes to the effective use of acquired skills, promotes ingenuity and innovations among the unemployed, helps to generate incomes for the unemployed, reduces the scourge of poverty, promotes the growth of SMEs, creates more employment opportunities, helps to actualize dreams of self-reliance and stimulates right entrepreneurial attitude in the unemployed as the items have mean scores of 2.5 and above. However, the respondents perceived that entrepreneurial skills development reduces entrepreneurial intention due to lack of funds, does not guarantee business success, discourages investment due to risks involved and results in skills redundancy due to lack of practical applications. This means that stakeholders perceived that entrepreneurial skills development is effective in reducing graduates' entrepreneurial challenges in Bauchi State.

This result is consistent with the assertion of Garba (2015) who noted that

entrepreneurship is very significant to the growth and development of economies. The result further affirms the claim of Sule, Bello and Dawaki (2020) that entrepreneurship development makes unemployed to become self-employed or even employers, thereby allowing them to contribute towards the socio-economic development of their country. Entrepreneurship skills development can go a long way in mitigating the challenges of graduates' unemployment by equipping them with knowledge and wherewithal for innovations.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

The hypotheses formulated in this study were tested using the inferential statistics of t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: *There is no significant difference in the perceptions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs on skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State.*

Table 2: T-test Summary of the Perceptions of Entrepreneurs and Non-entrepreneurs on Skills Development in Reducing Graduates' Unemployment Challenges

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	Sig
Entrepreneurs	113	38.12	6.54	198	-0.591	0.555
Non-Entrepreneurs	87	38.66	6.23			

Note: P>0.05

The result of Table 2 shows the difference in the perceptions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs on skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State. As shown above, the calculated significance value of 0.555 is greater than the chosen alpha value of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the perceptions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs on skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State. This means that both business owners and non-business owners have the same perceptions on entrepreneurial skills development in reducing the challenges of graduates' unemployment in Bauchi State.

This finding agrees with Yildirim et al. (2016) who argued that achieving sustainable economic development in the modern world requires supporting skills acquisition programmes at relevant educational levels in both conventional and compensatory educational institutions. This outcome also lends credence to Ababtain and Akinwale (2019) who stated that imparting entrepreneurship education culture in tertiary education is a viable strategy for reducing the gap between the graduation year and employment. The finding of this study may be true because both the business and non-business owners know the significance of developing the skills acquired by the graduates for improved living standards. Entrepreneurial education provides the necessary skills for the graduates which must be developed to make

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such skills relevant for coping with the present challenges of unemployment.

skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on their level of education.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial

Table 3a: ANOVA Summary of the Difference in Stakeholders' Perceptions of Entrepreneurial Skills Development in Reducing Graduates' Unemployment Challenges in Bauchi State Based on Educational Level

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	1915.735	4	478.934			
Within Groups	6235.765	195	31.978	14.977	.000	Rejected
Total	8151.500	199				

Note: $P < 0.05$

The result of Table 3a shows the difference in the stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on their level of education. As shown above, the calculated significance value of 0.000 is less than the chosen alpha value of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the

stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on their level of education. This implies that the stakeholders have different perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on the level of education.

Table 3b: Duncan Post-Hoc Analysis of the Difference in the Stakeholders' Perceptions of Entrepreneurial Skills Development in Reducing Graduates' Unemployment Challenges

Educational level	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05			
		1	2	3	4
O'Level	53	35.8302			
NCE/ND	69	36.8696	36.8696		
First Degree	32		38.7813	38.7813	
Other Qualifications	25			40.6400	
Second Degree	21				46.1905
Sig.		.457	.172	.184	1.000

Sequel to establishment of a significant difference among the means, a further test was carried out on the various combinations of mean scores to find out where the difference lies. The test was conducted using Duncan's post hoc procedure at 0.05 alpha level. The results above indicate that respondents with a second degree have the highest contribution to the difference in the stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges. Thus, the significance difference noticed above in Table

3a was accounted for by the respondents with second degree. This result is in line with Ewubare (2015) who noted that entrepreneurship education programme equips students with entrepreneurial skills that enable them to create and develop enterprises in various areas. The higher the level of education, the higher the skills acquired by an individual. Graduates with higher levels of education are expected to be better equipped with skills, knowledge and the right attitude for entrepreneurship.

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FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the results of the data presented, the following findings of the study revealed that;

1. The respondents agreed that differences have been observed in the perceptions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs on the impact of skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State.
2. The respondents believed that differences have been observed in the stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on their level of education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that some of the concepts involved in this study include entrepreneurship development or skills, Graduate unemployment, and the challenges of unemployment. Etymologically, the concept of entrepreneur is derived from the French concept of entrepreneur which literary is equivalent to the English concept "to undertake". From the business point of view, to undertake simply means to start a business (Quick MBA, 2015). From the historical point of view, Schumpeter (1951) as adapted in Frank William (2014) as cited in Dawaki (2020) opined that the French economic Richard Cantillon, was the first to introduce the concept of "entrepreneur" in his work in 1755. He saw the entrepreneur as a risk taker (Burnett, 2000) and 2015.

Based on the findings of the study, it revealed that entrepreneurship development is the process of manipulating the psychical physical, intellectual and emotional interactions of the students to enable him/her embrace the spirit of achieving goals. The aim is to provide him/her with relevant knowledge, appropriate skills and suitable motivation to utilize business opportunities (Luckeus, 2015). Nwuoba (2014) as in Sule (2020) sees entrepreneurship education as a scheme which provides the trainee with skills aimed at making him/her self-employed as well as potential employer. The present socio-economic as well as political condition in the world and Nigeria in particular, has necessitated the introduction of Entrepreneurial education in the curriculum of

Nigerian Universities and Tertiary Institutions. It is argued that there is strong connection between unemployment rate in Nigeria with the country's low level position in terms of entrepreneurial development which has badly affected its socio-economic development.

Based on the findings of the study, it revealed that despite the country's vast human and material endowments. It remains the only OPECs member that has been categorized as one of the 25 most countries in the world (Sule, Bello and Abubakar 2020) This has accounted for the country's failure to achieve stable democracy, quality governance and sustainable development (Ibid). Graduates unemployment provide a worrisome aspect of this problem. And Sule (2020) observes that in Bauchi State alone there were over 25,000 unemployed graduates of higher institutions of learning roaming the streets seeking for jobs.

Based on the findings of the study, it also revealed that entrepreneurship development is therefore an efficient instrument of addressing the menace. This it seeks to achieve by providing graduates with sufficient knowledge. Skills and moral fibre that enable them to promptly develop business plan, start and manage businesses (Bohlmann et al 2017). They thus become self-employed or even employers thereby giving them opportunity to contribute towards the socio-economic development of their country (Odia and Odia 2013) as in Sule Bello and Dawaki; 2020). This informed the decision of the Federal Government of Nigeria to introduce various initiatives or mechanisms to provide relevant entrepreneurship skills aimed at making Nigerian graduates self-sufficient, self-employed and employment givers (FGN, 2019). Some of the strategies include but not limited to SMEDAN, NDE.

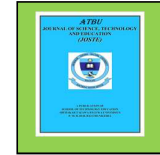
The findings indicate that; the introduction of Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions emerged as a direct response to the changing socio-economic and political conditions in the world and Nigeria in particular. Entrepreneurship is a key instrument of developing economy; it helps to create job opportunities for entrepreneurially minded individuals who create big businesses. People who are exposed to entrepreneurship education enjoy creative freedom and gain higher self-esteem, and greater sense of control over their

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own lives, economic and social success on a local, national, and global scale. To achieve this the National Standards for Entrepreneurship Education were developed- to prepare youth and adults to succeed in an entrepreneurial economy

The findings indicate that, entrepreneurship has been identified as a significant component of organization and economies (Dickson et al, 2008). It contributes immensely toward creating new jobs and wealth creation thereby reducing poverty and enhancing income generation for both governments and individuals. Scholars argued that entrepreneurship is very significant to the growth and development of economies (Keister, 2014 quoted in Garba, 2015). Bachiri (2016) established the relation between business creation and man's motives, attitudes and behavior which can be exploited to initiate and promote entrepreneurial education, through motivating entrepreneurial behavior among students. The main reason of establishing Entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is to solve students' unemployment condition after graduation which will enhance economic development (Osakede et al. 2017). Yildiri et al. 2016) argued that achieving sustainable economic development in the modern world requires supporting skills acquisition programmes at relevant educational levels in both conventional and compensatory educational institution.

Ababtain and Akinwale, (2019), Entrepreneurship education is roadmap in achieving students' plans and actions to start-up new business venture after the offset of their studies. It is generally believed that entrepreneurship is a significant component of economic development; a nexus through which jobs are created, income generated, in addition to being a means of achieving innovation, economic efficiency as well as social prosperity(Akinwale, 2018) Many nations especially the European countries have utilized Entrepreneurship education to grow their economies, and this has also been identified by emerging and developing nations as a strategy which could enable them to solve their unemployment problems as well as revitalizing their economies to become competitive in a globalized market(Osakede et al...2017) Unemployment is a fundamental economic

problem in any nation, and Nigerians' rate of unemployment is alarming!Large number of Nigerian graduates are unable to secure employment, hence the need to establish/introduce Entrepreneurship Education programe in tertiary institutions. This problem is not unique to Nigeria but applies to many countries (Saudi vision 2030 document 2016)

Ababtain and Akinwale (2019), various studies reveal that imparting entrepreneurship education culture in tertiary education is a viable strategy for reducing the gap between the graduation year and employment. Galoji (2018), reducing of unemployed graduates is one of the major targets of government in Nigeria vision 2020 and entrepreneurship education has been recognized as one of the ways to influence business start-ups which generates employment and sustainable growth. Bohlmann et al. (2017), social sciences and education play critical role in promoting entrepreneurial development. According to Ewubare (2015), entrepreneurship education programme equips students with entrepreneurial skills that enable them create and develop enterprises in various areas. The major aim of the programmes is to shift the focus of students from paid employment to self-employment. During the colonial era, education was patterned to train people to work for the colonial masters.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that stakeholders perceived entrepreneurial skills development to be effective in reducing graduates' entrepreneurial challenges in Bauchi State as they affirmed that it improves the quality of lives of the unemployed, contributes to effective use of acquired skills, promotes ingenuity and innovations among the unemployed, helps to generates incomes for the unemployed, reduces the scourge of poverty, promotes the growth of SMEs and so on. There was no significant difference in the perceptions of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs on skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State. However, there was a significant difference in the stakeholders' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills development in reducing graduates' unemployment challenges in Bauchi State based on level of education.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that;

1. Governments at all levels should be proactive in providing entrepreneurship programmes not only to Graduates, but as well at all levels of education in the country.
2. More specific skills development programmes should be incorporated into the entrepreneurial education in order to make the skills useful for the specific needs of unemployed graduates.
3. Since entrepreneurial skills promotes innovations among unemployed graduates, it must be developed by giving them appropriate financial, technical and material support.
4. This will help to make such acquired skills relevant to the specific needs of unemployed graduates in solving the challenges of unemployment.
5. Also, the entrepreneurship skills development should be geared towards creating entrepreneurial intention and attitude in the unemployed graduates. This can be done by exposing the unemployed graduates to the practical application of the skills so as to motivate them to develop the right entrepreneurial attitude and intentions.

Similarly, the unemployed graduates should go for higher education in order to acquire higher skills for coping with current unemployment challenges. Since level of education plays a significant role on the entrepreneurship skills development, good education will further help to sharpen the skills of an individual to cope with unemployment challenges.

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