

Entrepreneurship Education and Unemployment: The Alleviation Paradigm

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Abstract

Addressing employment creation and poverty reduction should not be treated in isolation, as it requires the adoption of diverse strategies. For Nigeria to achieve meaningful economic growth and development, its education system must serve as a foundational element. Entrepreneurship education is widely regarded as a cornerstone for job creation and sustainable development. This study focused on examining the impact of entrepreneurship education on unemployment reduction in South East, Nigeria, guided by a formulated hypothesis. Utilizing a survey design, data were collected from a sample of 585 entrepreneurs in Nigeria's South East region through a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert Scale aligned with the study's objectives. The hypothesis was tested using a Z-test statistic at a 0.05 significance level. Results revealed a significant positive impact of entrepreneurship education on reducing unemployment in Nigeria. Consequently, the study concluded that sound policies on entrepreneurship education could foster job creation, economic growth, and development. Among its recommendations, the study advocated for the integration of entrepreneurship courses at all educational levels to shift the mindset from job-seeking to job creation after graduation.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Unemployment, Alleviation.

Introduction

Education in Nigeria is recognized as a key tool for driving national development (NPC, 2004). Sule (2013) emphasizes that education unlocks economic potential, empowers individuals to actively engage in and benefit from their national economy, facilitates development, and serves as a foundation for transformation, making it the most effective agent of change. The philosophy of Nigerian education focuses on developing individuals into effective citizens, integrating them into their communities, and ensuring equal access to education at all levels within and outside formal schooling.

Entrepreneurship education has gained global prominence, with numerous efforts through academic research, course instruction, seminars, and institutional programs aimed at fostering an entrepreneurial culture and mindset (Matlay, 2008). Enhancing and mobilizing entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is essential for positively impacting individuals and supporting government objectives. Economic empowerment remains a fundamental responsibility of any government, but it is unrealistic to expect the government to provide employment for all citizens simultaneously. In this context, Okafor (2018) advocates for compulsory entrepreneurship education as part of the national curriculum to empower citizens. Similarly, Aneke (2012) argues that graduates who apply entrepreneurial knowledge to establish small businesses contribute to national prosperity and competitiveness. However, in Nigeria

and many developing countries, over 90% of university graduates remain unemployed for years, often lacking awareness of alternative opportunities. To align with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), graduates must be equipped to navigate and address unemployment challenges (Aneke, 2012).

In our country Nigeria today, the high rate of increasing social vices such as banditry, kidnapping, killings, suicide cases, depression, unemployment, corruption, poverty and many uncountable social problems is of great concern to both the government and every other well meaning citizens. Research has shown that the immediate and remote cause of these social vices is the youth unemployment. To meet with the international best practices and the global challenges, there is need therefore for this country Nigeria and other developing as well as underdeveloped countries to embrace entrepreneurship education (Ugwa and Okonkwo, 2015). Akpomi (2009) postulates that the integration of economies through globalization process any government or state that hesitates to imbibe the culture of change will certainly create standstill not only at the detriment of its country but to the larger global community.

Adebowale (2011) highlights that unemployment and poverty have become some of the most pressing development challenges for African nations at the start of this millennium, remaining central to Nigeria's development agenda since independence. With 70% of the population classified as poor (Nigeria Entrepreneurship Initiative, 2009), the high poverty rate is linked to unemployment, illiteracy, corruption, and poor governance (Aneke, 2012). Unemployment, once primarily affecting school leavers in the 1960s and 1970s, now includes graduate unemployment, estimated at 25%, contributing to an overall rate of 17% for the general population and 60% among youths (Adebowale, 2011).

Gillis (1995) underscores that a nation's wealth or poverty depends heavily on the quality of its higher education, with well-educated nations achieving unprecedented economic prosperity, while poorly educated ones face bleak futures. Globally, entrepreneurship education is recognized as vital for sustainable development. Aligning with this, the Nigerian National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) emphasizes functional, skill-based education for self-reliance and societal development. However, past Nigerian education policies, particularly in the 1990s, failed to foster entrepreneurship, limiting self-reliance and national development (This Day, 2007). Acknowledging these shortcomings, the Federal Government introduced the New Basic Education Curriculum in 2007, designed to address issues such as value orientation, employment creation, poverty reduction, critical thinking, and entrepreneurship skills. This study explores the effectiveness of these reforms in addressing unemployment and fostering self-reliance.

Statement of Problem

The increasing rate of unemployment and unemployability, especially among university graduates, has become a pressing concern, resulting in deteriorating skills and confidence (Udu and Okafor, 2009). Many graduates struggle to gain entry into the labor market and fail to make significant contributions to economic development. This challenge is further compounded by an economy that does not readily accommodate its growing workforce. The reliance on producing graduates who depend entirely on white-collar jobs for sustenance, rather than being self-reliant, underscores the urgent need for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions.

With youths constituting over 60% of the population, it is imperative to engage them meaningfully to prevent resorting to unhealthy alternatives. The 2010 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) by UNESCO revealed that approximately 92% of Nigerians live on less than \$2 per day, and about 71% survive on less than \$1 daily—an alarming statistic given Nigeria’s abundant natural resources and substantial human capital. Such a situation has been deemed unacceptable, particularly in a country with immense untapped potential.

Entrepreneurship education offers a viable solution by equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills needed for self-reliance, employment creation, and economic empowerment. It provides a pathway to alleviate unemployment, enhance the economy, and reduce poverty by fostering creativity and self-sufficiency among graduates. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the impact of entrepreneurship education as a transformative tool for securing employment and improving livelihoods, emphasizing its role in addressing the socio-economic challenges facing Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The central objective of this study is to examine the effect of Entrepreneurship Education on the alleviation of unemployment in Nigeria.

Research Question

To what extent does entrepreneurship education affect unemployment alleviation in Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

Entrepreneurship education does not have significance positive effects on alleviation of unemployment in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship education, according to Udu and Okafor (2009), serves as a model for transforming attitudes and motives, aiming to spark interest and passion for practical entrepreneurship. Unlike traditional education, which primarily transfers knowledge and skills, entrepreneurship education systematically cultivates and develops natural entrepreneurial abilities through structured instruction and training within educational institutions. Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011), referencing Klatt (1988), emphasize that entrepreneurship education is more focused on innovation and initiating new ventures rather than merely managing established businesses. Sule (2013) describes it as an educational process that equips individuals with the skills, ideas, and management capabilities essential for creating jobs. Entrepreneurs, by definition, generate employment opportunities rather than seeking them, underscoring the need to adopt this form of education and provide the necessary resources to ensure its functionality.

Sule (2013) also highlights that quality entrepreneurship education can be a powerful tool in the fight against poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.

Ile (2001) defines entrepreneurship as an individual's willingness and ability to identify investment opportunities, establish enterprises, and manage them successfully. Udu and Okafor (2009), citing Peters and Shepherd (2005), view entrepreneurship as the creation of something valuable through dedicated effort, with the entrepreneur assuming financial, psychological, behavioral, and social risks in return for monetary rewards, personal satisfaction, and independence. Agbaeze (2007) adds that entrepreneurship involves leveraging need-gaps to create wealth by assembling and investing resources while managing associated risks to achieve rewards. Similarly, Enudu and Chukwuemeka (2009) list entrepreneurship activities as including identifying investment opportunities, making decisions on opportunities to pursue, establishing enterprises, aggregating scarce resources for production and distribution, organizing and managing resources to meet enterprise objectives, bearing risks, and driving innovation. From these perspectives, entrepreneurship education emerges as a critical factor in the economic development of any nation (Enudu and Chukwuemeka).

Keister (2005) reinforces this by asserting that understanding entrepreneurship's pivotal role in economic development demands careful investment and promotion of entrepreneurship education. Dickson, Solomon, and Weaver (2008) argue that entrepreneurship education is a foundational requirement for fostering entrepreneurship, particularly in contexts where entrepreneurial culture and spirit are underdeveloped. They emphasize its importance in enabling individuals to choose entrepreneurship, start new ventures, and achieve success in entrepreneurial activities. Their findings indicate a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and an individual's decision to become an entrepreneur, as well as the outcomes of their ventures.

Akpomi (2009) stresses that for any country to achieve meaningful economic growth and development, its education system must serve as the cornerstone, as education is undeniably the bedrock of progress in social, economic, and political spheres. Aladekomo (2004) aligns with this by highlighting Nigeria's policy on education, which underscores the need for functional, relevant, and practical education that facilitates skill acquisition and societal development. Unfortunately, poor implementation of these policies has left approximately 80% of Nigerian graduates struggling to secure employment each year. This gap highlights the pressing need for improved educational practices that focus on equipping individuals with entrepreneurial skills and fostering self-reliance, ultimately contributing to economic stability and growth. Entrepreneurship education not only addresses the growing challenges of unemployment but also plays a transformative role in reshaping economies by creating opportunities, fostering innovation, and ensuring sustainable development.

Nigeria Policies on Education

The history of Nigeria's education system dates back to the colonial era. Aladekomo (2004) notes that colonial education policies were designed to meet the needs of colonial administrators by providing manpower for effective governance of the colony and protectorate. Abubakar (2010) highlights that the focus during this period was on producing Nigerians capable of basic literacy and clerical work, such as

clerks and interpreters, rather than equipping them with entrepreneurial or professional skills for self-reliance. Aladekomo (2004) adds that post-independence industrial policies prioritized the establishment of large companies while neglecting the development of small-scale businesses. Aneke (2012) argues that this neglect stifled entrepreneurship at the micro level, which could have spurred broader economic growth. The colonial education system fostered a preference among Nigerian graduates for white-collar jobs, creating a limited scope for entrepreneurship.

At independence, educational policies aimed to develop manpower for economic growth and "Africanize" the civil service (Woolman, 2001, in Hauwa, 2012). However, the colonial legacy left Nigeria with challenges in nation-building after 1960. Hauwa (2012) observes that the narrow focus of educational policies failed to meet the aspirations of Nigerians, with criticisms ranging from irrelevant curricula and outdated teaching methods to high dropout rates and graduates who lacked initiative and independence. The 1969 National Curriculum Conference marked the first major attempt to shift education away from its colonial orientation, aiming to promote self-reliance and national consciousness (Nigerian Educational Research Council, 1972; Hauwa, 2012).

In 1976, bolstered by oil revenue, the Federal Government introduced the Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) program to provide free primary education to children aged six to twelve. While ambitious, the program ultimately failed to bridge literacy gaps or promote self-reliance due to poor planning and insufficient data (Hauwa, 2012). The 1977 National Policy on Education sought to align education with Nigeria's developmental needs, promoting unity and integration. This policy introduced the 6-3-3-4 system, modeled after the American education structure, aiming for self-reliance and centralized government control of education funding. Despite these efforts, the system struggled to deliver its intended outcomes, such as universal free and compulsory primary education and economic self-sufficiency (Ibadin, 2004, in Hauwa, 2012).

The National Policy on Education was revised in 1998 and 2004 to address the country's developmental challenges. Akpomi (2009) observes a strong link between education and national development in Africa, with Nigeria being no exception. The 1998 policy introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, mandating nine years of uninterrupted education: six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school. The UBE program was officially launched in 1999 to ensure equal educational opportunities and combat illiteracy. However, enforcement of compulsory UBE remained weak, limiting its impact (Hauwa, 2012).

Despite numerous policy changes, these reforms did little to promote entrepreneurship education or equip graduates with the skills needed for self-reliance and economic sustainability.

Managing Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria Higher Institutions

It has been worrisome about the nature of entrepreneurship education our Nigerian undergraduates are exposed to in the past and recent time. Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011) posit that one expects to see guest lecturers, student consultation with the practicing entrepreneurs, and development of business plan, field trips, use of videos and films as well as special reading. These activities will help to create entrepreneurial consciousness. There is need for entrepreneurship students to be exposed to the things

that government has put in place that will enhance entrepreneurial venture (Nwoye, 2011). This has to do with the apparatus that will enable the students to graduate from school to create wealth and employment as well as accumulate capital the market place.

Research has shown that entrepreneurship education in our tertiary institutions seems to be lacking from good management and generally acceptable content (Ifedili and Ofoegbu, 2011). Equally, it has been observed that there is no keen interest on the side of the students in the participation in entrepreneurship courses. Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011) submit that most of the students have been observed to see the entrepreneurship courses one of those unnecessary courses that is imposed on them to fulfill graduation requirements. Ugwa and Okonkwo (2015) argue that both the course content and the ways of delivery of the courses lack sufficient knowledge, preparation and attainment of the targeted aims and objectives. There is a general feeling among entrepreneurship education stake holders that students studying entrepreneurship courses only use scantily researched handouts given to them by their instructors. Some of these handouts according to Ugwa and Okonkwo (2015) have not been reviewed for over decades despite the continuous changes in technology and knowledge. Supporting this view, Keister (2005) submits that text books and handouts devote too little coverage for entrepreneurship education. Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011) emphasizing how poorly entrepreneurship education is managed in our higher institutions highlight that the practical aspect of entrepreneurship required for the course are usually given to groups of students instead of assigning it to individuals. However the scholars are not worried that practical are given in groups but in most cases, one or two interested people in the group opt to carry out the project while the names of others are just included for award of marks thereby defeating the sole aim of the practical. Ugwa and Okonkwo (2015) states that an individual project will create more entrepreneurship awareness and more knowledge will be acquired by the student. Supporting this view, Sexton and Bowan (1987) stress that entrepreneurship students prefer independent efforts, individual activities and individual analysis of situations. The scholars are of the opinion that individual may be more effective than the group activities. However, working in a group may likely benefit the prospecting entrepreneurs who are just learning.

Assessing the poor management of entrepreneurship education in our universities and other institutions of higher learning, Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011) submit that continuous assessment which is very important in student performance evaluation is minimally or even never used. On the other hand, most of the students are not interested in learning any skill rather their interest is on how to get the minimum pass mark to graduate at the record time. To improve on this, it was suggested the students of entrepreneurship should be often given practical assignments to enable them improve in the knowledge of the student. From the forgoing, one could get the impression that the present day education in our universities and other higher institutions does not support the needed entrepreneurship education to meet the global standard and requirements.

Entrepreneurship Education and National Development

The significance of entrepreneurship in national development cannot be overstated. Entrepreneurship and its proper education are universally acknowledged as essential drivers of economic growth and functionality. Dickson et al. (2008) assert that entrepreneurship education plays a critical role in job

creation, wealth generation, poverty alleviation, and income growth for both individuals and governments. Similarly, Garba (2010) emphasizes that nations seeking to reduce poverty and create employment must prioritize entrepreneurship education. Akpomi (2009) reinforces this by stating that an effective education system is fundamental to achieving genuine economic growth and development. Aladekomo (2004) highlights that Nigeria's education policy underscores the necessity of functional education aimed at fostering practical skills and competencies to equip individuals for societal contribution.

To advance entrepreneurship education and national development, Adejimola and Olufumilayo (2009) advocate for collaboration between practical entrepreneurs and educational institutions at all levels. According to Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011), such partnerships can help bridge the existing gap between entrepreneurs and academic institutions. The lack of this synergy, as noted by Adejimola and Olufumilayo (2009), exposes the weaknesses and shortcomings of Nigeria's education policies in achieving their entrepreneurship education objectives.

Dickson et al. (2009) use the Human Capital Theory to examine how acquired factors such as education, learning, and experience influence career outcomes. This theory suggests that education serves as a critical determinant of decision-making and contributes to the success of specific ventures. In light of this, Adejimola and Olufumilayo (2009) recommend refining education to foster and enhance entrepreneurship initiatives. Ugwa and Okonkwo (2015) further argue that instilling an entrepreneurial mindset in students through education is the ultimate goal.

Theoretical Framework

There exists a wide array of theories on entrepreneurship, including the Classical Capitalist Economic Theory and Neo-Classical Theory. However, this study is rooted in the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett. SCCT posits that career interests, goals, and choices are intrinsically linked to individuals' self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. In alignment with this theory, educational activities designed to enhance students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy and outcome expectations are likely to foster increased interest and defined goals toward pursuing entrepreneurial careers. The selection of this theory is predicated on its potential to predict and instill entrepreneurial behavior, which is a core objective of entrepreneurship education.

Udu and Okafor (2009) elaborate on the concept of self-efficacy as individuals' evaluations of their capacity to organize and execute specific courses of action required to achieve desired performance outcomes. These judgments significantly influence behavior and decisions. In the context of entrepreneurship, individuals' self-efficacy beliefs and their expectations of outcomes associated with self-employment play a crucial role in shaping their goals to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. The integration of SCCT into this study underscores the importance of leveraging education as a tool to elevate self-efficacy beliefs and align outcome expectations with entrepreneurial aspirations, ultimately contributing to a robust foundation for self-employment and innovation.

Empirical Review

Tambuwal, et al. (2020) in their study, examined the role of entrepreneurship education in addressing unemployment in Nigeria. It highlighted objectives like functional education, poverty reduction, employment creation, and curbing rural-urban migration. The causes of unemployment identified include frictional, seasonal, and cyclical unemployment. The study emphasized the impact of entrepreneurship education in enhancing earning potential, productivity, and employment opportunities. Challenges such as underfunding, inadequate facilities, untrained teachers, and ineffective curricula were noted as barriers to implementation.

Jacobs, et al. (2021) in their study focusing on Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, explored the effect of entrepreneurial education on unemployment reduction. Guided by Human Capital and Risk-Taking theories, it utilized a cross-sectional survey of 195 final-year students. Findings showed significant impacts of skill acquisition, entrepreneurship empowerment, and infrastructural development on reducing unemployment. Recommendations included practical-oriented entrepreneurial education, improved access to loans for small businesses, and enhancing practical skills training in tertiary institutions.

Nwaogu, et al. (2024) similarly their research, examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Using a sample of 480 respondents from Bayelsa State universities, the study found that entrepreneurship education enhances competencies in management, technical skills, financial literacy, and resilience, fostering job creation and self-employment. Recommendations included targeting soft skills in entrepreneurship education, collaborating with stakeholders to address unemployment, and repackaging the NYSC scheme to emphasize entrepreneurial skill acquisition.

Akhuemonkhan, et al. (2013) carried out an investigation. The study employed secondary quantitative data and econometric analysis to investigate entrepreneurship education's potential in stimulating employment and reducing poverty in Nigeria. Findings indicated that entrepreneurship development fosters job creation, poverty reduction, gender equality, and universal primary education goals. Recommendations included integrating creativity training into education systems and intensifying the incorporation of entrepreneurship education across institutions.

Methodology

The research employed a survey design methodology. A field investigation approach was utilized, involving the administration of structured questionnaires to gather data. The questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 615 entrepreneurs, randomly selected from the South-East region of Nigeria. Each item on the questionnaire was structured using a 5-point Likert Scale to capture respondents' perspectives effectively.

The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to interpret responses, while the study's hypothesis was tested using Z-test statistics. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was employed to facilitate comprehensive and accurate data analysis.

Data Analysis

Table1: Entrepreneurship Education play a significance role in alleviation of unemployment in South East.

Options	VLE (5)	LE (4)	U (3)	LI (2)	VLI (1)	Total	Mean (x)	Standard deviation (S)
Frequency of response (F)	287	161	14	84	69	615		
Weighted frequency of Response (Fx)	1435	644	42	168	69	2358	3.8321	1.4236
Percentage Response	46.67	26.18	2.28	13.66	11.22	100.00		

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Decision Rule

If mean $(\bar{x}) < 2.50$, the extent is little if $3.50 > \text{mean}$, the extent is large

Table 1 shows the response to the Likert Scale question and sample mean (\bar{x}) and the sample standard deviations.

In the respondent's response, 287 of the respondents representing 46.67% state that to a very large extent Entrepreneurship Education plays a significance role in alleviation of unemployment in Nigeria, 161 of the respondents' representing 26.18% agreed to a large extent. 14 representing 2.28% were undecided, 84 (13.66%) asserted to a little extent while 69 (11.22%) responded to a very little extent. The respondents responses gave a sample mean of 3.8321 and sample standard deviation of 1.4236. This indicates that most of the respondents were of the view that to a very large extent, Entrepreneurship Education plays a significance role in alleviation of unemployment in South East, hence the mean $3.8325 \geq 3.50$.

Table 2: Entrepreneurship Education has a positive effect on poverty alleviation

Options	VLE (5)	LE (4)	U (3)	LI (2)	VLI (1)	Total	Mean (x)	Standard deviation (S)
Frequency of response (F)	280	144	18	98	75	615		
Weighted frequency of Response (Fx)	1400	576	54	196	75	2301	3.7453	1.4671
Percentage Response (%)	45.53	23.41	2.93	15.93	12.20	100.00		

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision Rule

If mean $(\bar{x}) < 2.50$, the extent is little

If $3.50 > \text{mean } (\bar{x}) \geq 2.50$, the extent is indeterminate

If mean $(\bar{x}) \geq 3.50$, the extent is large

Table 2, reveals the respondents' opinion on sample mean, and standard deviation 280 (45.53%) of the respondents responded that to a very large extent, Entrepreneurship Education positively affect poverty alleviation, 144 of them representing 23.41% were for large extent, 18 (2.93%) were undecided, 98 (15.93%) were for little extent while 75 (12.20%) agreed to a very little extent. The data sample mean and sample standard deviation is 3.7453 and 1.4671 respectively. This shows that most of the respondents were of the view that to a very large extent Entrepreneurship Education has a positive effect on poverty alleviation hence the mean $3.7453 \geq 3.50$.

Table 3: Entrepreneurship Education has a direct positive contribution on economic growth and development in South East.

Options	VLE (5)	LE (4)	U (3)	LI (2)	VLI	Total	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (S)
Frequency of response (F)	291	133	21	87	82	615		
Weighted frequency of Response (Fx)	1453	533	63	174	82	2302	3.7556	1.5427
Percentage Response (%)	47.59	21.73	3.42	14.19	13.33	100.00		

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision Rule

If mean $(\bar{x}) < 2.50$, the extent is little

If $3.50 > \text{mean } (\bar{x}) \geq 2.50$, the extent is indeterminate

If mean $(\bar{x}) \geq 3.50$, the extent is large

Table.3 showcases the opinion of respondents and the obtained sample mean, and sample standard deviation. The analysis reveals that 291 (47.59%) of the respondents agreed to a very large extent that Entrepreneurship Education has a direct positive contribution on economic growth and development in South East, 133 of them representing 21.73% were for too large extent, 21(3.42%) were undecided, 87 (14.19) agreed to a little extent while 82 of them representing 13.33% said to very little extent. The sample mean and standard deviation obtained are 3.7556 and 1.5427 respectively. This shows that a greater number of the respondents supported the view that to a very large extent, Entrepreneurship

Education has a direct positive contribution on economic growth and development in; hence the sample means $3.7556 \geq 3.50$.

Table 4: Entrepreneurship Education encourages self reliance and economic independency

Options	VLE (5)	LE (4)	U (3)	LI (2)	VLI (1)	Total	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (S)
Frequency of response (F)	276	160	13	98	67	615		
Weighted frequency of Response (Fx)	1382	643	38	195	67	2325	3.7921	1.4930
Percentage Response (%)	45.06	26.1	2.05	15.90	10.94	100		

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision Rule

If mean (\bar{x}) < 2.50, the extent is little

If $3.50 > \text{mean } (\bar{x}) \geq 2.50$, the extent is indeterminate

If mean (\bar{x}) ≥ 3.50 , the extent is large

Table 4 reveals the respondents' submission and the sample mean as well as the sample standard deviation. The analysis goes thus, 276 of the respondents covering 45.06% agreed that to a very large extent, Entrepreneurship Education encourages self reliance and economic independency, 160 (26.15%) of the respondents concur to a large extent, 13 of them representing 2.05% were undecided, 98(15.90%) indicated to a little extent while 67 of them representing 10.94% agreed to a very little extent. This was obtained at a mean sample of 3.7921 and standard deviation of 1.49307. This implies that a greater percentage of the respondents submitted that to a very large extent, Entrepreneurship Education encourages self-reliance and economic independency.

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: Entrepreneurship education does not have significance positive effects on alleviation of unemployment in South East.

H₁: Entrepreneurship education has significance positive effects on alleviation of unemployment in South East..

Using the summary of the data from tables 1 – 4 on the respondents' opinion to Likert-scale structured questionnaire items which addressed the research objective, hypothesis was tested with a non-parametric z-test statistic

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Mean response for Item 1 - 4	2457	3.7791	1.5292	1.00	5.00

Table 5

One sample Kolmogorov – Smirnov Test

			Mean response for item 1 - 4
N			2457
Normal Mean			3.7791
Parameters ^{a....b}	Std		1.5292
Deviation			
Most	Extreme	Absolute	.265
Differences		Positive	.203
		Negative	-.265
Kolmogorov – Smirnov Z			15.155
Asymp. Sig. (2 – tailed)			.000

Decision Rule

If $Z_{\text{calculated}} > Z_{\text{critical}}$, reject the null hypothesis and accept alternate hypothesis accordingly, otherwise accept the null hypothesis and reject alternate hypothesis accordingly.

Decision

Since $Z_{\text{calculated}} = 15.155 > Z_{\text{critical}} = 1.96$ (at 95% level of Significance), and with the asymptotic significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted accordingly. Thus, Entrepreneurship education have significance positive effects on alleviation of unemployment in South East.

Conclusion

From the finding and literature review, we stand to conclude that developing entrepreneurship education is one of the sure means of self-reliance and employment creation. This implies that entrepreneurship education is pivotal for fostering self-reliance, employment creation and poverty alleviation in South East.. The consensus among respondents and literature review underscores its significance. Developing entrepreneurship education is crucial for alleviating unemployment and poverty, promoting economic growth and encouraging self-reliance. Effective policies supporting entrepreneurship education are vital for sustainable economic development. Human capital with entrepreneurial mindsets drives economic growth. Governments must prioritize entrepreneurship education, especially among youths. Integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum, coupled with training programs, public-private partnerships, and supportive policies, can unlock economic potential. Increased funding, tax incentives, simplified business registration, and mentorship programs can foster entrepreneurship. Embracing entrepreneurship education ensures sustainable growth, self-reliance, and prosperity, while promoting innovation and societal development, making its development imperative for the South East and indeed Nigeria's future.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. A policy on education should be formulated which will make it mandatory for entrepreneurship to be included in our curriculum and taught at all levels (tertiary, secondary and primary) of education in Nigeria.
2. Scholarship should be awarded to indigent students who choose to study entrepreneurship to any level as well as single digit loan or grants made available to graduates by government who wish to expand innovative entrepreneurship ventures for production of goods and services.
3. Government should encourage private public partnership in the teaching and practical training of our students on entrepreneurship skills.

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