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Table of Contents

Human Resource Factors and Employability of Educational Management Undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria Ojoogun, Kayode Musibau & Ileuma, Senimetu	1-20
Work Experience and Competence as Indicators of Performance Effectiveness of Editors in Book Publishing Firms in Southwestern Nigeria Adigun, Olubunmi Racheal & Akangbe, Clement Adeniyi	21-43
Teachers' Education, Attitude, Beliefs and Effective Classroom Management in the 21st Century Okenwa-Ojo, M. & Yusuff, R.O.....	44-54
Use of Internet Search Engines by Lecturers and Instructors (Academics) In Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate Oladapo, Oludare Samuel	55-71
A Survey of the Impact of Skills Acquisition on Job Creation and Poverty Reduction among Youths In Ondo State, Nigeria Itodo, Simon Ilesanmi; Amosun, Peter Adewale & Morohunmubo, Omosehin Foluke	72-86
Effect of Environmental Factor Variation on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Adamawa State, Nigeria Takwate, Kwaji Tizhe & Iranda, Jacob Iranda	87-99
Compensation Management and Teacher Job Effectiveness in Private Secondary Schools in Ogun State Garuba, Qudus Ajibola; Saliu, Muminat Morenikeji Maradesa, Wakeel Olalekan	100-116
Undergraduates' Entrepreneurial Intentions and Contributions of University Entrepreneurial Programme in Oyo State, Nigeria: Implications on Japa Syndrome Gbadamosi, T. V. & Adetunji, A. A.....	117-128

Assessment of Principals' Conflict Management Strategies on Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Oyo Metropolis of Oyo State
Adeyemo, Adekola Oyebamiji & Isola, Aderonke Fausat 129-143

Poverty, Child Labour and Access to Schooling in Oyo State
Adeagbo, Joseph Olusegun & Mosobalaje, Risikat Olaitan 144-166

Volume 24, No. 2, June 2023.....167

School Plant Construction, Home and Teacher Factors as Determinants of Students Academic Performance in Oyo State: Implications for Planning
Ayoola, Olubunmi Adedunke; Oyeromi, Samson Olumuyiwa & Ilesanmi, Morenike 169-181

The Role of Adult Entrepreneurship Education for Poverty Reduction in Post COVID– 19 Era in Nigeria
Okenwa-Ojo, M. & Yusuff, R.O. & Adewole, A.A..... 182-194

Do the Information and Communication Technology (Internet and Phones) Make Earth to Shrink?
Oladapo, Oludare Samuel & Oladipo, Michael Olukayode 195-207

Government Support Services and Teacher Task Performance in Oyo State Public Secondary Schools, Nigeria
Faremi, Sunday James 208-227

Selection Process and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Osun State, Nigeria
Ibrahim, Muinat Abiodun & Adebayo, Monsurat Folake 228-239

Effect of Inquiry-Based Teaching Strategy on Junior Secondary School Students' Performance in Mathematics in Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun State
Yusuf, Sikiru Adewale & Aminu, Lateef O..... 240-251

**UNDERGRADUATES' ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AND
CONTRIBUTIONS OF UNIVERSITY ENTREPRENEURIAL PROGRAMME IN
OYO STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS ON JAPA SYNDROME**

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Abstract

In Nigeria, it seems that the majority of graduates don't view the business opportunities offered by entrepreneurship as a career that can secure their future, in spite of their exposure to the entrepreneurship education programme. This study, therefore, examined undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions and the contributions of the University Entrepreneurial programme to undergraduate entrepreneurial development in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design. A total of 150 undergraduates were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. A validated questionnaire was used to collect the data. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics of mean, and standard deviation while the qualitative data was presented using content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that both entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduates and the perception of undergraduates on the contributions of the entrepreneurship programme were high, ($\bar{X} = 2.72$

> 2.50) and ($\bar{X} = 3.10 > 2.50$) respectively. From the findings, it was

recommended that the universities' entrepreneurship programme, should be comprehensive and run through the 200 to 400 level; lecturers should adopt experiential learning which would give undergraduates the opportunity to be well-trained as prospective entrepreneurs and eventually reduce unemployment and at the long run reduce Japa syndrome in Nigeria among others in society.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship programme, Soft skills, Graduates, Unemployment, Undergraduates, Entrepreneurial intentions*

Introduction

It has been observed in recent years that many university graduates are struggling to obtain employment after graduation. The public, especially the undergraduate students are more concerned about their after-school life giving the high rate of unemployment and high rate of graduation of students on yearly basis. This issue of higher unemployment rate is aggravated and more of concerned to undergraduate students given their discussion with their graduates' brothers and sisters who are still in the labour market after years of graduation from the University. Many Graduates remained unemployed, hence, results in a high rate of unemployment over time. Due to the current economic crisis, which has resulted in an extremely high rate of unemployment in the country, the problem of unemployment affects not only Nigeria, but also other nations, such as Spain, where the unemployment rate exceeds 25% of the general working population and more than 20% of them are graduates (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2014).

In recent times, the rate of unemployment in the country has increased due to population growth, and there has been a corresponding increase in school enrolment both at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. This is why there is a high rate of graduate unemployment today because all the institutions of learning churn out graduates on a yearly basis. Nigeria's unemployment rate is predicted to be 41.0% in 2023 by the KPMG Global Economy Outlook report, H1 2023 (Egole, 2023). Chronological statistics demonstrate that over the previous years, the rate of joblessness in Nigeria increased steadily. It was reported that almost 37.7% of the work force was jobless in the fourth quarter of 2022 (Egole, 2023). The unemployment situation in the country has reached a frightening height, with its attendant effects of poverty, hunger, insecurity, corruption, hopelessness, massive movement of youths for greener pasture (Japa Syndrome) (Adelaja, Akinbami, Jiboye and Ogbolu, 2023; Gbadamosi & Orunmuyi, 2020).

According to Gbadamosi (2021), the relationship between higher education and the workforce is a key topic that has sparked public discussion in a number of countries throughout the world. The ongoing emergency in the human resources undertaking, is supporting the comeback of labour interests. In any nation, higher education is typically regarded as a breeding ground for development or social transformation. The main goal of higher education is to prepare undergraduates for lucrative work during their transition. Such work may be paid for or produced by oneself. This implies that there is a connection between education and employment, but the connection is not predetermined.

Therefore, entrepreneurship education is that aspect of education that develops students' skills, ideas, and managerial abilities that are necessary for personal reliance and manpower development. However, the question remains: are the students imbibing the needed skills to be self-reliant, or are they just doing the course to get good grades, graduate, and join the ranks of unemployed graduates? This is the focal point of this research work. The government now places a lots of priority on entrepreneurship education so that graduates are more likely to offer entrepreneurship as their career after completing their higher education and not only rely on searching for jobs as graduates. This is due to the fact that entrepreneurship education provides young people with the opportunity to uncover latent talents that will reveal skills and abilities they are unaware of (Igwe, Madichie, Chukwuemeka, Rahman, Ochinanwata & Uzuegbunam, 2022; Gbadamosi & Ojo, 2021). They claimed that whether or not students become entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship education still has a positive effect on their lives.

It is therefore necessary for the government to promote entrepreneurship, thus, maintaining training programmes that prioritise practise over theory so that university undergraduates can improve their entrepreneurial skills. This will give them the ability to manage their own firms or to use this expertise in a corporation if they decide to advance their careers. As a result, the university is crucial to realising government initiatives to foster and encourage students' entrepreneurial intent to start their own firm as a profession after graduation. This is consistent with a study by Mohd, Harun, Yaacob and Rahman (2018) that found that entrepreneurship is one of the topics that students need to learn, whether they are enrolled in business or

other programmes at Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL). According to Gbadamosi and Ojo (2021), another way of encouraging entrepreneurship by the government was the introduction of entrepreneurship studies in the Nigerian educational system at the higher institutions as a two-semester mandatory course. It is further encouraged with its introduction at the senior secondary school by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) through the Federal Ministry of Education, where each student is to choose one compulsory entrepreneurship subject among thirty-two subjects.

However, the theory put forward in this study on entrepreneurial objectives for implementation indicates that intentions may be conveyed through a number of visible actions and behaviours that demonstrate a dedication to the accomplishment of business goals and ambitions. Though, perceptions are important in entrepreneurial education, it is more likely that a student or instructor will actively participate in the programme's activities if they have a favourable opinion of entrepreneurship education. When it comes to the teaching and learning outcomes, people who have a good opinion of an entrepreneurial course will believe they have what it takes to complete the programme's objectives (Moy, Luk & Wright, 2003). Therefore, the objectives an individual sets for himself or herself and the anticipated results of activities done will be greatly influenced by how he or she perceives key parts of an entrepreneurship curriculum. This study is anchored on the theory of Entrepreneurial Events model by Shapero, which introduces the theory of entrepreneurial intention (Ahuja, & Akhtar & Wali, 2019). This theory consists of three dimensions, which are perceived desirability, perceived feasibility and the tendency to act.

The Problem

The current unemployment rate among the Nigeria university graduates has been a matter of concern to the general public particularly the undergraduates and parents. Despite the introduction of an entrepreneurship education programme in various universities, the challenge still persists. Is this due to the fact that university-level entrepreneurship education has yet to be capable of instilling in graduates the desire to pursue entrepreneurship as a career? What are

the elements that, when combined with entrepreneurship education, can foster innovation among graduates?

Previous studies have focused on entrepreneurial education development in Nigeria and unemployment among graduates in Nigeria with little attention on entrepreneurial education and undergraduates' intentions and its contributions. Thus, the need for this study. In order to better understand how entrepreneurship education influences students' entrepreneurial intentions, this research examined the undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions and the contributions of the university entrepreneurship programme to the entrepreneurial development of undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered:

1. What are the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduates in Oyo State?
2. What is the perception of undergraduates about the contributions of the entrepreneurship programme to undergraduate entrepreneurial development in Oyo State?

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design (Sequential QUAN+qual) because there was no manipulation of variables and quantitative data was used to complement the quantitative data. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the study. Two universities were selected using simple random sampling techniques in Oyo, Nigeria (one private and one public). The second stage involved the selection of five faculties from each university using the random sampling technique. Also, five departments were selected using random sampling techniques from each faculty, while 400 level students were purposively selected from the department because they were in final year. From each department, fifteen (15) students were selected using simple random sampling technique since they have all offered entrepreneurship courses. In all, one hundred and fifty (150) final year students of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, and Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, were used for the study. Students Perception and Entrepreneurial Programme Intentions Questionnaire (QSPEPIQ) ($r = 0.786$) and

Students' Perception and Entrepreneurial Programme Contributions Questionnaire (SPEPCQ) ($r = 0.856$) were used to collect data. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, while the qualitative data was analysed thematically.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduates in Oyo State?

Table 1: Entrepreneurial Intentions among Undergraduates in Oyo State

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1.	I intend to work for myself after graduation.	43 30.10%	66 46.20%	22 15.40%	11 7.70%	2.99	.879
2.	I am starting a business after graduation.	53 37.10%	78 54.50%	8 5.60%	4 2.80%	3.26	.689
3.	I never thought of entrepreneurship as a career.	4 2.80%	23 16.10%	59 41.30%	55 38.50%	1.83	.801
4.	The tendency to fail is high if I work for myself.	10 7.00%	28 19.60%	49 34.30%	50 35.00%	1.99	.931
5.	I have the confidence to take the risk of exploring innovative ideas.	35 24.50%	75 52.40%	26 18.20%	5 3.50%	2.99	.761
6.	I cannot take the risk of being an entrepreneur.	8 5.60%	15 10.50%	68 47.60%	50 35.00%	1.87	.821
7.	Being an entrepreneur is the best way to be employed.	50 35.00%	72 50.30%	11 7.70%	6 4.20%	3.19	.760
8.	I am interested in doing business while in school.	53 37.10%	74 51.70%	8 5.60%	3 2.10%	3.28	.673
9.	Entrepreneurs are born and cannot be formed.	18 12.60%	35 24.50%	51 35.70%	38 26.60%	2.23	.987
10.	I am amazed at the success of those with their own businesses, and one day, I will start mine.	82 57.30%	57 39.90%	3 2.10%	1 0.70%	3.54	.579

Weighted mean = 2.72

Table 1 shows the weighted mean of 2.72 > 2.50 is higher than the standard mean. This implies that the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduates were high.

In order to complement the quantitative data, interview was conducted. The result of the interview, shows that the most of the respondents see themselves as an entrepreneur and prefer to be their own boss rather than been employed by the government or someone else. For instance,

“I like being my own boss rather than been employed (Female, age 24)”

“I see myself as an entrepreneur in the future (Male, age 22)”.

Based on the opinion of the respondents interviewed, it can be concluded that they have positive mindset about entrepreneurship programme.

Research Question 2: To what extent is the perception of undergraduates about the contributions of the entrepreneurship programme to undergraduate entrepreneurial development in Oyo State?

Table 2: Perception of Undergraduates of the Contributions of the Entrepreneurship Programme

S/N		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
	University Entrepreneurship programme:						
1	gives me the opportunity to know that many people in business and other money-making activities are not entrepreneurs.	65 45.50%	70 49.00%	6 4.20%	1 0.70%	3.40	.608
2	provides business environment to assist me in running business on campus.	15 10.50%	63 44.10%	42 29.40%	22 15.40%	2.50	.881
3	encourages creativity, innovation, and the	80 55.90%	57 39.90%	3 2.10%	-	3.55	.541

	commercialization of products among students.						
4	inspires me to develop innovative ideas.	35 24.50%	79 55.20%	20 14.00%	9 6.30%	2.98	.800
5	develops my interest in entrepreneurship because of the interactive way of learning.	42 29.40%	87 60.80%	10 7.00%	2 1.40%	3.20	.624
6	helps me a lot to understand the subject of entrepreneurship.	71 49.70%	66 46.20%	3 2.10%	1 0.70%	3.47	.580
7	equips me with entrepreneurial skills that help me seize unusual opportunities.	22 15.40%	42 29.40%	57 39.90%	21 14.70%	2.46	.927
8	made me see interpersonal relationships as fundamental business resources.	28 19.60%	44 30.80%	55 38.50%	13 9.10%	2.62	.909
9	motivates me to get involved in business.	32 22.40%	65 45.50%	35 24.50%	7 4.90%	2.88	.821
10	exposes me to the fact that a lack of relevant knowledge may make an entrepreneur fail.	96 67.10%	43 30.10%	-	1 0.70%	3.67	.515
Weighted mean = 3.10							

Table 2 displays that the weighted mean of 3.10 > 2.50 is higher than the standard mean. This implies that the perception of undergraduates about the contributions of the entrepreneurship programme in Oyo State was high. That is, the contributions of the entrepreneurship programme have a high impact on undergraduates in Oyo State.

In addition, it was reported in the qualitative data that

" entrepreneurship programme gives room for new ideas (Male, age 24)".

"If not of the inspiration I got from ETR course, I wouldn't have started my make up business"

The above statements, imply that entrepreneurship programme is beneficiary to the undergraduates.

On the other hand, a student reported that

“most times, lecturers don’t relate their courses with Job market” (female, age 21)

This implies that to some extent, some students did not benefit from the entrepreneurship programme, which might probably be as a result of pedagogy employed by the course lecturer or the time allocated for the course which are in the evening most times. However, based on the conducted interview, majority of the respondents established that entrepreneurship programme as a way of getting new ideas and relating it to the real world.

Discussion of Findings

Undergraduates’ Entrepreneurial Intention

The intentions of undergraduates in entrepreneurship in Oyo State are high. This is consistent with the findings of Adelaja, Akinbami, Jiboye and Ogbolu (2023), who found that the students’ intention towards self-employment was high. For instance, some students reported that they have confidence to take the risk of exploring innovative ideas. It is therefore, the collective actions of big businesses and entrepreneurs that determine employment, pricing, prosperity, the type of work, and occupational patterns in any given nation. In the light of this, it is crucial to educate and motivate students to improve their entrepreneurial intentions. Gbadamosi and Ojo (2021) further emphasised that high graduate entrepreneurial intention can stabilise or nurture the benefits of nation building if it is sustained.

Contributions of the Entrepreneurship Programme to Undergraduate Entrepreneurial Development

Also, the result from research question two on the perception of undergraduates on the contributions of the entrepreneurship programme in Oyo State shows the weighted mean is higher than the standard mean. This implies that the perception of undergraduates about the contributions of the entrepreneurship programme who offer a course in entrepreneurship is high. It encourages creativity, innovation and the commercialization of products among students. That is, the contributions of the entrepreneurship programme have a

high impact on undergraduates in Oyo State. This is in accordance with the study of Gbadamosi (2021), Olubusoye, Salisu and Olofin (2023), which emphasised the need for effective learning for young people so that they can become self-employed and be independent. This act as an impetus for growth in the economy, and lower the high prevalence of poverty. However, there is need to improve on the mode of delivery (pedagogy) to achieve the objectives of entrepreneurship programmes in higher education and motivate undergraduates to embrace entrepreneurship education.

Implications of the findings on JAPA Syndrome

If entrepreneurship education is adequately explored to prepare undergraduate entrepreneurial skills there will be no need for youths to leave the country since they would have acquired soft skills, such as the capacity to collaborate with others to achieve high performance, goal-getting, communication, risk-taking, problem-solving skills among others that will make them to be self-reliant and create jobs.

Effective implementation of entrepreneurship programme will also change the negative orientation of undergraduates about the nation, thereby see Nigeria as a nation full of opportunities to make it in life and fulfil destiny.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the entrepreneurship programme of the University is a potent way of improving students' entrepreneurial intentions to help them adopt entrepreneurship as a career and also be an employer of labour. Entrepreneurship programme also, influenced undergraduates' good intentions to start their own business (es) and find value in creative solutions to issues. This will, in the long run, help undergraduates and graduates create their own jobs and help reduce the mass movement of youths out of the Nigeria for jobs (Japa Syndrome).

Recommendations

The programmes for entrepreneurship development should be diverse and all-encompassing to adequately prepare students for future work. Lecturers or / and entrepreneurship facilitators should be trained and adopt experiential instructional strategies such as service learning, field education and collaborative learning to adequately train students using experiential learning.

Additionally, the entrepreneurship curricula in Nigerian universities ought to give thorough attention to critical thinking and brainstorming sessions that stimulate the creation of new ideas. However, idea generation and presentation sessions should therefore be graded components of an entrepreneurship programme. Given that every business starts with an idea, it is important that Nigerian institutions consider the inclusion and integration of entrepreneurial developmental programmes for students. Universities' entrepreneurship programmes should be comprehensive and run from 200 to 400 levels and possibly to 600 levels, this would give undergraduates the opportunity to be well-trained as prospective entrepreneurs and eventually reduce unemployment and Japa syndrome among others in Nigeria.

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