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INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT OF GRADUATES FROM TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN EDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Poverty levels in Nigeria are further projected to increase to 38.8% in 2024 and this may manifest through high unemployment rate, low consumer spending, the absence of commensurate increase in minimum wage to mitigate the inflationary growth, increased crime rate, resource control (banditry and ethnic militancy), poor access to health care and quality education, high mortality rate. Poverty undermines national development initiatives, sustainable livelihood and frustrates efforts of any nation towards realizing the United Nation's sustainable goal 1: which focus on Zero Poverty. Graduates unemployment is a major source of economic hardship and poverty, and one veritable step towards addressing this is through entrepreneurship education and the effect it has on graduate's career choice. The aim of the present study is thus to examine the role of entrepreneurship education in livelihood development of graduates from tertiary institutions in Edo State. Graduates from three tertiary institutions in Edo State, University of Benin, Ambrose Alli University and Federal Polytechnic Auchi were sampled, a total of 150 graduates from each institution. The study found increasing number of female graduates than male as well as in small and medium businesses in Edo state 58.7% from the University of Benin, 62% from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and 58 %from Federal Polytechnic Auchi. Most of the sampled respondents are self-employed and relying on their business for livelihood 68.7% from the University of Benin, 74.7% from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and 80.6% from Federal Polytechnic Auchi, while the remaining respondents combined paid jobs with personal businesses. A total of 48% graduates from university of Benin agreed that entrepreneurship education at tertiary institution influenced their choice of career after graduation, 45.33% from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and 36.7% from Federal Polytechnic Auchi. Financial supports from families, friends and personal savings were the main sources of capital for start-up. Other factors affecting SEMs in Edo State were

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limited access to credit facility, currency instability, government regulation, weather (flooding)a and electricity inadequacy.
Keywords*: Economic uncertainties, entrepreneurial education, livelihood, tertiary students, poverty.*

Introduction

An estimated 2.5 million of new labour force enters the nation's labour market every year with 60% (1.5 million) of the new entrants being youths (including graduates) who possess only paltry job experience and skills (Adesugba and Mavrotas, 2016 a,b). While job creation in the labour market is split between the formal and informal segments, a higher percentage of the job creation resides in the latter segment. The formal segment is made up of the public and formal private sectors with 5% of new jobs coming from the former while 33% of new job creation is traceable to the latter. The rest, which, of course, is the bulk of new jobs, is spawned in the informal segment that is identified with less structure and organization, a situation creates a state of not having enough job for all or in which case, the individual is forced to work in low-paying or low-skill jobs. The International labour organization (ILO) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking for work including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (2004). Chappelow (2020) also argues that unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work. Underemployment on the hand reflects underutilization of the productive capacity of the employed population, including those which arise from a deficient national or local economic system (ILO, 1999).

The ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook Trends: 2024 (WESO Trends) reported that both the unemployment rate and the jobs gap rate – which is the number of persons without employment who are interested in finding a job – have fallen below pre-pandemic levels. The 2023 global unemployment rate stood at 5.1 per cent, a modest improvement from 2022 when it stood at 5.3 per cent. The global jobs gap and labour market participation rates also improved in 2023 (WESO Trends, 2024). The study further projected that in 2024 an extra two million workers are expected to be looking for jobs, raising the global unemployment rate from 5.1 per cent in 2023 to 5.2 per cent. Nigeria's unemployment rate is also reported to have increase to 5% in the third quarter of 2023, up from 4.2% in the previous period. The jobless rate among young people aged 15-24 rose to 8.6% from 7.2%. Unemployment in the urban areas also increased marginally to 6% from 5.9% in the previous quarter (NBS, 2023).

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Both unemployment and underemployment especially of the young population who are in their productive stage have implications for socio-economic development. All over the world, government at all levels, financial corporations and researchers are showing greater concerns towards the high level of Unemployment and underemployment which both of which are directly related to increasing extreme poverty rate. For example the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has linked unemployment in Nigeria to the phenomenon of jobless growth, increased number of school graduates with no matching job opportunities, a moratorium on employment in many public- and private-sector institutions, and continued job losses in the manufacturing and oil sectors (Ukazu 2021). Predominantly, students pursue higher education for different educational objectives, and students select institutions for various reasons (Bastedo and Gumport, 2003) among these diverse purposes, economic perspectives emphasize the importance of educational outcomes after graduation based on future income. With the belief that more education reduces the possibility of unemployment, Brunello (2001) argues the role of higher education is as a training center for future workers. Unfortunately, today, Unemployment is more vulnerable to graduates (Ahmed 2023). According to Simon (2017) ten major weaknesses of graduates are in the aspects of management, problem-solving, communication, leadership, creativity, critical thinking, initiative, self-confidence and other interaction skills. These aspects lead to difficulties for graduates in finding jobs that match their qualifications. Furthermore, Nazron et al (2017) cited eleven causes of graduate unemployment as the relationship between the capital-intensive economy, the rapid growth of the graduate labor force, lack of relationship between educational institutions and industry, lack of training to prepare for work, rapid population growth and rapid decline in mortality, educational development, economic recession, quality education, competencies of graduates, skills and personalities of graduates. One of the socio-economic effect of graduate unemployment of under-employment is wide spread of extreme poverty.

Statement of Problem

The extreme poverty has defined as living on less than $1.90 a day (in 2011 prices, equivalent to $2.15 in 2022) (World Bank, 2022). The World Bank in its biennial Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report mentions that extreme poverty was increased in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years as the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic compounds the forces of conflict and climate change, which were already slowing poverty reduction progress. Extreme poverty affected between 9.1% and 9.4% of the world's population in 2020. According to this report, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed more than an additional 88 million people into extreme poverty in 2020, with the total

rising to as many as 150 million at the end of 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction. Globally, the extreme poor are concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. According to the Poverty and Shared Prosperity report 2020, COVID-19 can add around 27–40 million new poor in the Sub-Saharan Africa region (Saidi, et al., 2023). The World Bank and United Nations has set an ambitious target to eradicate extreme poverty globally by 2030.

Economic growth is considered to be one of the main drivers of poverty reduction and improving the quality of life in developing countries (Kouadio and Gakpa, 2022). According to Department for International Development (DFID), "the extent to which growth reduces poverty depends on the degree to which the poor participate in the growth process and share in its proceeds, thus, both the pace and pattern of growth matter for reducing poverty" (DFID, 2008). The causes of poverty cannot be narrowed down to one single source. However, un-employability of most graduates, which is one of the main causes of poverty in sub-Saharan African countries, connotes a situation where graduate are considered unfit for labour market. Graduate employability has been defined as "capacity to be self-reliant in navigating the labour market, utilising knowledge, individual skills and attributes, and adapting them to the employment context, showcasing them to employers, while taking into account external and other constraints (Small et al. 2018)". This definition underscores the interplay of disciplinal training and application of subject-specific skills in a job. As industries and career paths change, graduates are expected to possess attributes that are not only discipline-specific but also transferrable to a broader range of jobs and careers (König and Ribarić, 2019; Williams et al., 2019). Graduate employment rate is often used to assess the quality of university provision, despite the fact employability and employment are two different concepts (Cheng et al., 2023). To address the issues graduate unemployment, tertiary institutions have resorted to introducing entrepreneurship education aimed to equip students with necessary skills for labour market. Hence the present study aimed to examine the effect of entrepreneurship education on graduates' career choice after graduation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of entrepreneurship education on graduates' career choice after graduation. Specifically, the study aimed at finding out

1. Establish the connections between business/employment types and undergraduate entrepreneurship skills in tertiary institutions
2. Evaluate the influence of entrepreneurship Education on graduates choice of career after graduation
3. Determine the extent to which graduates present businesses are

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meeting their household livelihood needs.
4. Determine the sources of business funding after graduation
5. Examine the willingness of sampled graduates to leave their present business for white collar jobs
6. Assess the factors affecting small and medium businesses in Benin City

Research Questions

In line with the research objective, the following research questions guided the study:

1. Are there connections between business/employment types and undergraduate entrepreneurship skills in tertiary institutions?
2. Did Entrepreneurship Education influence graduates choice of career after graduation?
3. What is the extent to which undergraduate choice courses affect their career after graduation?
4. Does graduates present business meet their household livelihood needs?
5. What are the sources of business funding after graduation?
6. Are sampled graduates willing to leave their present business for white collar jobs?
7. What are the factors affecting small and medium businesses in Benin City?

Materials and Method

Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative research approach to investigate the influence of entrepreneurship education on graduates' career after tertiary education. According to Borrego et al., (2009) quantitative research is useful when quantifying opinions, attitudes and behaviours and aimed to find out how the whole population feels about a certain issue. Since the current study sought to investigate the extent to which entrepreneurship education influence the types of career that graduates take up after graduation, a quantitative approach was best suited as it allowed the researchers to compare the results between graduates from different types of universities at different locations.

Study population

The study area is Edo State. Graduates of two universities in Edo state, University of Benin, and Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma and one Polytechnic, the Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. These tertiary institutions were chosen following their spread across the three (3) Senatorial zones in the State. University of Benin in the south, Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma in the central and Federal Polytechnic, Auchi in the north. The survey research method was used in this study and the method the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions. It is an efficient method for systematically collecting data from a broad

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spectrum of individuals and educational settings (Glasow, 2005).

Participants

A total of 450 graduates participated in the study and who were former students of either entrepreneurial studies, business administration and management or business education (Vocational and technical education). The participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling method was adopted in the study to selected graduates of vocational Home economics. McMillan and Schumacher (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997) describe purposive sampling as "selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth" when one wants to understand something about those cases without needing or desiring to generalize to all cases. In this technique, the researcher chooses the sample based on appropriateness for the study. The choice of this method is based on the fact that sample units have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study" (Ritchie, 2003).

Data collection instruments

The study employed questionnaire in collecting data. Cohen et al., (2011) shows that a questionnaire is a widely used and a useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured information, and often numerical data that is administered without the presence of the researcher and is often comparatively straightforward to analyze. Since the researcher did not intend to engage research assistants, the questionnaires were the best instruments since they could be administered without the presence of the researcher and were clear and precise as reported by Mtemeri (2022). In each tertiary institution, a total of 150 questionnaire was distributed totaling 450 for the three (3) institutions. Sampling was carried out between May and June 2023.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used in this study. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 19 was adopted to analyze the data. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for easier interpretation and their results presented in charts and tables.

Presentation of Results

In Table 1, female graduates from the sampled tertiary institutions were more than males and also more in small and medium businesses than their male counterpart. The age brackets are predominantly 35-55years. Majority of the respondents are married, followed by singles. The table also shows that most of the graduates have been in business between 4-10years after graduation. More so, a larger percentage of the respondents are self-employed and rely wholly on their private businesses while the remaining respondents combined paid jobs and businesses.

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Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents (University graduates)

Variables	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
Sex						
- Male	62	41.33	57	38	72	48
- Female	88	58.66	93	62	78	52
Age						
- 20-35	28	18.66	22	14.66	27	18
- 35-45	48	32	51	34	62	41.33
- 45-55	56	37.33	62	41.33	44	29.33
- 55 >	18	12	15	10	17	11.33
Marital Status						
- Married	62	41.33	55	36.6	66	44
- Single	72	48	87	58	82	54.6
- Divorced	05	3.33	02	1.33	02	1.33
- Widow/widower	11	7.33	06	0.4	-	-
No of years in business after graduation						
- 2-4yrs	22	14.66	18	12	15	10
- 4-6yrs	51	34	57	38	56	37.3
- 6-8yrs	36	24	42	28	48	32
- 8-10yrs	23	15.33	18	12	22	14.66
- 10>	18	12	15	10	09	06
Type of employment						
- Self-employment	104	68	112	74.66	121	80.66
- Combined jobs (paid job and self-employment)	48	32	38	25.33	29	19.33
If married, household size						
- 1-2pers	57	38	44	29.33	37	24.66
- 2-4pers	61	40.66	71	47.33	81	54
- 4-6pers	28	18.66	22	14.66	25	16.66
- 6>	04	2.66	13	8.66	07	4.66

In Table 2, ownership provision stores was common amongst business owners, followed by soft drink business operators. Restaurants and catering businesses were also common amongst graduates.

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Table 2: Types of business/employment after graduation

Variable	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
Event planning/interior designing	10	6.66	15	10	08	5.33
Caterer	21	14	07	4.66	04	2.66
Point of sale operation (POS)	18	12	12	08	11	7.33
Provision stores	32	21.33	29	19.33	42	28
Furniture design	08	5.33	05	3.33	02	1.33
Laundry	16	10.66	22	14.66	26	17.33
Hair stylist	18	12	14	9.33	22	14.66
Restaurant owner/food vendor	12	08	16	10.66	07	4.66
Manicurist/ Pedicurist	05	3.33	12	08	08	5.33
Soft drink business	10	6.66	18	12	20	13.33

Majority of sampled graduated agreed or strongly agreed that entrepreneurship education influenced their choice of career after graduation. Only a few responded that entrepreneurship education did not have effect on their choice of career after graduation (Table 3). Mores so, on the extent to which entrepreneurship education influenced respondents' choice of career after graduation, majority of the graduates agreed that studying Entrepreneurship at tertiary institution had a great influence on their career choice (Table 4).

Table 3: Did Entrepreneurship Education influence your choice of career after graduation?

Variable	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
Strongly Agreed (SA)	35	23.31	52	34.66	38	25.33
Agreed (A)	72	48	68	45.33	55	36.66
Neutral	12	08	18	12	37	24.66
Disagree	19	12.66	08	5.33	12	08
Strongly disagreed	13	8.66	04	2.66	08	5.33

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Table 4: Extent of effect undergraduate choice course on career after graduation?

Variable	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
Very strong	36	24	22	14.66	28	18.66
Strong	54	36	58	38.66	61	40.66
Not sure	32	21.3	31	20.66	26	17.33
Little effect	16	10.66	21	14	20	13.33
No effect	12	08	18	12	15	10

In Table 5, majority of the respondents agreed that their current businesses are able to meet the livelihood of their families. Predominant sources of initial income to startup businesses are financial supports from family members, friends and soft loans from associations, cooperatives society and microfinance credit homes (Table 6). While table 7 shows that most of the sampled graduates are within 10years after their graduation and not able to secure paid jobs.

Table 5: Does your present business meet your household livelihood needs?

Variable	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
Strongly Agreed (SA)	22	14.66	18	12	56	37.33
Agreed (A)	102	68	110	73.33	72	48
Neutral	12	08	04	2.66	13	8.6
Disagree	09	06	15	10	06	04
Strongly disagreed	05	3.33	03	02	03	02

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Table 6: Sources of business funding after graduation?

Variable	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
Personal savings	12	08	09	06	11	7.33
Family/friends	45	30	55	36.6	62	41.33
Loans/credit facility	28	18.66	32	21.33	36	24
Sales of Personal/family assets	19	12.66	12	08	36	6.66
Crowd funding	11	7.33	16	10.66	10	12
Venture capital	09	06	06	04	18	1.33
Angel investing	18	12	20	13.33	02	7.33
Business incubator/starting	08	5.33	20	0	11	-

Table 7: Number of years in business after graduation?

Variable	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
1-3	48	32	37	24.66	25	16.66
3-6	56	37.33	52	34.66	61	40.66
6-9	18	12	28	18.66	32	21.33
9-12	22	14.66	18	12	12	08
10 >	06	04	15	10	20	13.33

In Table 8, the willingness to abandon respondents businesses for white collar jobs was divided between agreed and disagreed. Some of the respondent considered leaving the businesses if presented with better paid jobs while another set of respondents are comfortable with their businesses. Inadequate funding, limited access to credit facility currency fluctuation, over bearing government regulations and power outages were reported as major setback in SMEs in Edo State (Table 9).

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Table 8: Willingness to leave your present business for white collar jobs?

Variable	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
Strongly Agreed (SA)	18	12	23	15.33	36	24
Agreed (A)	52	34.66	42	28	52	34.66
Neutral	15	10	09	06	23	15.33
Disagree	56	37.33	61	40.66	33	22
Strongly disagreed	09	06	15	10	06	04

Table 9: Factors affecting small and medium businesses in Benin City?

Variable	University of Benin, Edo, State		Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo, State		Federal polytechnic Auchi, Edo, State	
	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%	Frequency =150	%
Inadequate funding	30	20	37	24.66	22	14.66
High operating costs	31	20.66	28	18.66	28	18.66
Currency volatility	12	08	15	10	20	13.33
Hostile business environment	08	5.33	04	2.66	01	0.66
Policy instability	05	3.33	02	1.33	18	12
Government regulation	20	13.33	17	11.33	11	7.33
Limited access to capital	12	08	14	9.33	24	16
Poor managerial skill and accountability	06	04	08	5.33	08	5.33
Poor saving culture	11	7.33	16	10.66	11	7.33
Effect of weather (flooding)/power issues	15	10	09	06	07	4.66

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Discussion

The fact that there are more female graduate from our findings points to the global and national efforts to increase the number of women in tertiary education, unlike in the past where the male population overrepresented female students enrolled in developing and sub-Sahara Africa. For example UNESCO, (2020a) reported that the number of female undergraduate students worldwide has exceeded the number of men since 2002. Data from UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS) shows that between 2000 and 2018, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in tertiary enrolment for males increased from 19% to 36%, while that for females went from 19% to 41%. Women have therefore been the main beneficiaries of the rapid increases in tertiary education enrolment making up the majority of undergraduate students in all regions, save for Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO IESALC, 2020b). Not only do females make up most of the undergraduate students, but they are also more likely to complete tertiary education than their male counterparts (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2017). This effort is also seen in Nigeria where the illiteracy rate in Nigeria is gradually on the decline (Adepoju, 2017). Between 1985 and 1990, the percentage of girls enrolled in schools rose from 7.2%to 42%. The enrolment of females in technical schools rose from 4.5% in 1984 to 15% in 1990 and 20% of the present enrolment in Nigerian Polytechnics is made up of females. In Universities, there is a rise of 22% in 1980 to 24% in 1990. Many States in Nigeria have introduced some educational reforms backed by legislation to provide increased access to female education such as the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC. Schools for nomads have also been established and funding of women education is made a joint effort of all tiers of government. From the study, fact that age brackets of the sampled population range between 20 and 55years is in consonant with the working age population of >15 – 64 years of age according to the National Bureau of statistics (NBS 2024). This includes the number of persons in the labour force either public or private employment (i.e. people who are able and willing to work). This age however differ from another study carried out in Japan where it is argued that the economically productive population should include some elderly and exclude some teenagers and span ages 20-69 years (Ishibashi, 1998). Majority of the graduates sampled are married followed by singles. Couples can leverage two incomes and combine and reduce many costs also helps improve their finances. Most of the sampled respondents are self-employed and have been in business for between 4 -10years after graduation. This underscores the importance of small and medium enterprises as panacea to growing unemployment rate in Nigeria.

A study conducted by Punch newspaper (2022) shows that 58.9% of HND graduates are unemployed, 49.55% of OND graduates are unemployed and 39.75% of BSc holders are unemployed. O'Neill (2024) also

reported that in 2023, the estimated youth unemployment rate in Nigeria was at almost 5.84 percent. SMEs are a veritable tool for economic growth and development as can be seen from the various types of businesses amongst graduates in Benin City such as catering, POS operators, hair stylist, barbing saloons, provision stores etc. These businesses play a key role in promoting prosperity by creating new jobs and increasing a region's economic prosperity as reported by Maksimov *et al.*, (2017). Studies have shown that SME formation is necessitated by a couple of drivers as follows: (1) necessity as a result of unemployment (Fairlie and Fossen, 2018), (2) Innovation (Visser, 2017; Adeosun and Shittu, 2021) and (3) opportunity (Aparicio *et al.*, 2016). Opportunity-driven entrepreneurship is typically around a business idea to fill a need or gap, while innovation-driven is to improve on a process, market, service, or product or service (González-Pernía *et al.*, 2015). Due to the importance of small businesses, governments in developing and developed nations see them as a means of employment, innovation and wealth creation (Mills and McCarthy, 2016). The importance of SEMs as alternative to the white collar job was further buttressed as many of the sampled respondents agreed that their businesses meet their household livelihood needs. More so, this is also confirmed as majority of the respondents are not willing to leave your present business for white collar jobs. Majority of the respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education influence your choice of career after graduation. Entrepreneurship education, according to Fayolle et al., (2014) is related to content, methods and activities supporting the creation and development of knowledge, competences and experiences that make it desirable and feasible for students to initiate and participate in entrepreneurial value creating processes.

Entrepreneurship by university graduates under specific supportive environments is crucial for economic growth and development (Yuan et al., 2020). Thus, there have been a large number of studies that investigate how the intent of entrepreneurship forms (Obschonka et al., 2015; Sieger, and Monsen, 2015; Kakouris 2016; Yu and Wang, 2019). The impact of entrepreneurship education on students' intents to become entrepreneurs remains a debated subject in different fields of literature (Wu et al., 2018). Entrepreneurship education is not limited to encouraging students to become entrepreneurs, it also involves cultivating students' non-cognitive entrepreneurship skills, including entrepreneurship thinking, management skills, and ability to adapt to harsh environments (Engle et al., 1997). The process of determining one's career can be regarded as the construction of a career (Yuan et al., 2020). It not only focuses on how the career starts but also how the interactions between the individual and the environment actively shape one's career

(Savickas, 2002). The career construction theory originates from Super's (Super, 1953) theory of vocational development, which emphasizes self-concept. The benefits of immersing students in entrepreneurship culture are not limited to helping those who wish to start their own business, in particular, the labor market currently favors those with entrepreneurship confidence (Yuan et al., 2020). Entrepreneurship education has always focused on the cultivation of non-cognitive skills. Heckman, et al. (2006) posited that some of the most essential skills for entrepreneurs are their innovation competence, vocational abilities, and adaptivity to societal developments. Heckman emphasized that non-cognitive skills play a more important role than cognitive skills. Heckman's study was greatly influential. It changed our perspective on how education affects students and had profound implications for educational science and school policies (Moberg, 2014). Rodriguez and Lieber (2020) highlighted that students who have received entrepreneurship education have entrepreneurial mindsets, especially in the aspects of communication, collaboration, identification of opportunities, critical thinking, and problem solving. Financial supports from family/friends, and credit facility mostly from suppliers, micro-credit institutions etc. These findings are inconstant with the studies of Abdulsaleh and Worthington, (2013); Adebisi and Olayinka, (2013); Ibrahim and Shariff, (2016); Ibrahim and Ibrahim, (2015). Study has shown that about 80% of Small and medium entreprises in Nigeria are stifled because of poor financing and other associated problems (Fatai, 2011) and this is due to the stringent conditions set by financial institutions, lack of adequate collateral and credit information and cost of accessing funds (Adepoju, 2003). In another study Akanni et al., (2021), also reported that other external environmental forces like electricity power supply, bad road network lack of advance technology and competition with foreign product are challenges to the growth and development of Nigeria SMEs. Furthermore entrepreneur factors like of skill, education, experience and leadership ability are also challenges to the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. This is also inconsistent with the findings from our study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Graduate unemployment is a serious socio-economic issues across the world and especaiily in developing countries like Nigeria. Hence, governments at international, regional and national levels, including non-state actor are grappling with developing policies to foster sustainable development. In spite of these efforts, unemployment continues to fuel poverty. Entrepreneurship education serve as a panacea to unemployment and poverty as such education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings as well as make them employers of labour. Embedding

entrepreneurship in education is considered an important steps for building an innovative hub and creating entrepreneurial individuals and organizations which, in turn, can create economic growth and jobs which are components of an improve quality of life. This present study shows that there are more female graduates from the sampled higher institutions and who are owners of SMEs in Edo state. A larger percentage of the respondents are self-employed and rely wholly on their private businesses while the remaining respondents combined paid jobs and businesses. Majority of sampled graduated agreed or strongly agreed that entrepreneurship education influenced their choice of career after graduation Ownership provision stores was common amongst business owners, followed by soft drink business operators. Predominant sources of initial income to startup businesses are financial supports from family members, friends and soft loans from associations, cooperatives society and microfinance credit homes. Inadequate funding, limited access to credit facility currency fluctuation, over bearing government regulations and power outages were reported as major setback in SMEs in Edo State. In views of these findings, it is recommended that government provides adequate funds to promote entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions secondly, government should provide essential and state-of-the-art infrastructural and instructional facilities for entrepreneurship education. School should also adopt innovative methods training teachers in entrepreneurship for effective serve delivery. Finally entrepreneurship education should be integrated in post primary school curriculum.

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