



EXPLORING THE NEXUS BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN NIGERIA: A POLICY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between entrepreneurship development and employment generation in Nigeria, with specific focus on Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State. Adopting a descriptive survey research design, the study targets entrepreneurs operating small and medium scale enterprises, youths engaged in start-up ventures, informal sector traders, unemployed individuals seeking entrepreneurial opportunities, and officials of entrepreneurship development agencies, local government departments, and non governmental organizations involved in enterprise and youth empowerment. A sample size of 120 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling across major sub areas of Kosofe LGA, namely Ketu, Ojota, Mile 12, Alapere, and Agboyi. Data were collected through structured questionnaires complemented with secondary data from government publications, academic journals, and development agency reports. Findings reveal a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship development initiatives and employment generation in Nigeria, as respondents generally agreed that such initiatives have contributed to job creation and empowered individuals to become job creators. The study also found that entrepreneurship training significantly enhances youths' employability and likelihood of self employment. However, perceptions regarding the effectiveness of government led entrepreneurship programs were mixed, suggesting the need for improved accessibility and impact at the community level. The study concludes that entrepreneurship development, particularly through targeted training and supportive policies, plays a vital role in addressing unemployment challenges in Nigeria. It therefore recommends increased investment in entrepreneurship education, access to finance, and supportive institutional frameworks to strengthen employment generation and sustainable economic development.

Keyword: Entrepreneurship Development, Employment generation, Nigeria, Nigeria Youth, job creation.

Introduction

The challenge of unemployment continues to plague developing countries, with Nigeria being one of the most

affected as the most populous country in Africa .. As traditional job opportunities remain insufficient to meet the demands of a rapidly growing labor force..

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Entrepreneurship development, particularly in developing economies, is now widely regarded as a vital tool for promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, and fostering innovation. The role it plays in addressing the employment crisis in Nigeria has attracted increasing academic and policy interest in recent years. Entrepreneurship development refers to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training, education, and institutional support aimed at increasing the capacity of individuals to create and manage successful business ventures (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2020). It involves a range of activities including education, mentorship, financial inclusion, business incubation, and policy support. Udu and Agu (2019), opine that entrepreneurship development is critical in equipping individuals, especially youth and women, with the tools to identify market opportunities and create self-employment avenues, thereby reducing dependency on government jobs and the formal sector.

In Nigeria, various initiatives have been introduced to promote entrepreneurship development. These include the National Youth Investment Fund (NYIF), the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN), and the N-Power program. These efforts aim to build entrepreneurial capacity, particularly among young people, in order to curb the alarming unemployment rate. The unemployment rate in Nigeria, as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), was 5.3% in the first quarter (Q1) of 2024, showing an increase from 5.0% in Q3 2023. However, it dropped to 4.3% in the second quarter (Q2) of 2024. This situation underscores the urgency of sustainable solutions such as entrepreneurship development. On the other hand, employment generation refers to the creation of job opportunities within an economy for its labor force. It encompasses self-employment, wage employment, and informal sector activities that provide income and reduce underemployment (Adelekan & Alao, 2021). Employment generation is a crucial driver of social stability and economic development. In the Nigerian context, job creation is not only a matter of economic planning but also a strategy for mitigating social unrest, youth delinquency, and rural-urban migration (Okoye & Eze, 2022).

The relationship between entrepreneurship development and employment generation has gained prominence in contemporary development discourse. Several empirical studies suggest a positive correlation between these variables. For instance, Eze and Nwali (2021) observed that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are typically birthed through entrepreneurial ventures, contribute over 50% to employment in Nigeria's non-oil sector. Similarly, Okafor and Yusuf (2023) reported that entrepreneurship training and access to microfinance positively influence the employability and productivity of young entrepreneurs in urban centers across Nigeria.

Significant challenges still hinder the full realization of the employment potential of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. These challenges include poor infrastructure, lack of access to startup capital, inconsistent government policies, and inadequate entrepreneurial education. As noted by Salisu and Adebayo (2020), many budding entrepreneurs in Nigeria operate in an environment marked by high business risks and limited institutional support, which often constrains their ability to scale operations and hire labor.

The Nigerian government, in collaboration with development partners and the private sector, continues to explore strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development as a tool for employment generation. Understanding the nuanced impact of these strategies and identifying gaps remains essential for effective policy formulation. This study, examine the effect of entrepreneurship development on employment generation from a Nigerian perspective, with the goal of identifying critical success factors and potential barriers. The study will contribute to existing knowledge and provide practical empirical evidence for policymakers, educators, and development practitioners interested in leveraging entrepreneurship as a sustainable pathway to job creation in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship development initiatives and employment generation in Nigeria.



H₀₂: Entrepreneurship training has no significant effect on employment generation among Nigerian youths.

Conceptual Review

Entrepreneurship Development Initiatives

Entrepreneurship development initiatives are deliberate strategies, often policy-driven or institutionally supported, designed to promote entrepreneurial activities, thereby stimulating economic growth and employment. These initiatives typically include entrepreneurship education and training, business incubation, mentorship programs, regulatory reforms, financial support schemes, and market facilitation efforts (Aja-Okorie & Adali, 2019). The rationale is that such frameworks empower individuals with the skills, resources, and enabling environment to initiate and grow businesses, which in turn create employment opportunities directly and indirectly. In Nigeria, various entrepreneurship development programs have emerged in response to high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth. Prominent among these are the National Youth Investment Fund (NYIF), Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN), N-Power, and the Bank of Industry's (BOI) youth empowerment schemes. These programs are underpinned by the belief that entrepreneurship, when supported effectively, can serve as an engine for inclusive growth and sustainable job creation (Udu & Agu, 2019; Adebayo & Kolawole, 2022). Several studies reinforce this theoretical assertion. For instance, Aliyu and Abdullahi (2021) examined the impact of entrepreneurship support programs in Northern Nigeria and found a statistically significant increase in micro and small business formations among program beneficiaries, leading to notable improvements in employment rates. Similarly, Eneh and Ogbu (2020) found that in Enugu State, over 60% of graduates who participated in government-sponsored entrepreneurship programs transitioned to self-employment within one year, creating jobs for an average of three additional workers. Despite these positive outcomes, the effectiveness of entrepreneurship initiatives in generating employment often depends on factors such as the design of the programs, accessibility, implementation fidelity, and follow-up support (Nwankwo et al., 2022). Poorly

coordinated initiatives or those lacking post-training support and financing may result in low business survival rates, which undermines their potential to reduce unemployment. In the Nigerian context, entrepreneurship initiatives must also contend with broader structural and infrastructural challenges. These include erratic power supply, weak legal protections, limited access to markets, and a volatile macroeconomic environment. Without addressing these systemic constraints, even the most well-intentioned initiatives may fail to generate meaningful employment (Olawale & Garwe, 2019). Therefore, while entrepreneurship development initiatives have significant potential to drive employment generation in Nigeria, their actual impact hinges on the existence of a supportive ecosystem that includes access to capital, mentorship, regulatory support, and enabling infrastructure.

Training on Job Creation among Nigerian Youths

Entrepreneurship training is a central pillar of many development programs aimed at fostering self-employment and job creation, particularly among youths. It is based on the assumption that entrepreneurial skills can be taught and learned, transforming latent potential into actionable enterprise creation (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). In the Nigerian context, where youth unemployment remains a persistent issue, targeted entrepreneurship training is seen as a viable intervention for building the competencies required for sustainable livelihoods. Entrepreneurship training typically covers areas such as opportunity recognition, business planning, marketing, accounting, customer relations, innovation, and risk management. These competencies equip individuals not just to start businesses, but to scale them, thereby creating employment opportunities for others. Olutuase, Brijlal, and Yan (2020), state entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions and their ability to translate ideas into viable enterprises. Youth-targeted programs like YouWiN and N-Power incorporate training components aimed at imparting both technical and managerial skills. Evaluation studies of these programs suggest that participants who undergo comprehensive entrepreneurship training are more likely to establish businesses with better survival rates, employ



others, and contribute meaningfully to the local economy (Adeola & Akanbi, 2020). Findings further support this linkage. Ojo, Salami, and Ayoade (2021) conducted a study on the impact of youth entrepreneurship training in Lagos and found that 70% of participants established micro-enterprises within a year of completing their training. These businesses, in turn, employed an average of two to five persons, illustrating the multiplier effect of training programs. However, the impact of entrepreneurship training on job creation is not always automatic or uniform. Several moderating factors influence outcomes. These include access to capital, mentorship, market conditions, and the regulatory environment. Training alone, without corresponding access to startup capital or mentorship, may leave aspiring entrepreneurs unable to operationalize their business plans (Ihugba, Odii & Njoku, 2019).

In addition, the quality and relevance of the training programs are crucial. Many government-sponsored trainings have been criticized for being generic or overly theoretical, with limited practical components or follow up support. Oviawe and Dudu (2022) argue that for training to translate into job creation, it must be context-specific, hands-on, and linked with post-training financing and incubation services. Furthermore, socio-cultural perceptions about entrepreneurship also play a role. In some Nigerian communities, entrepreneurship is seen as a fallback option for those who fail to secure salaried employment. This mindset affects the seriousness with which youths engage in training programs and the extent to which they pursue entrepreneurship as a long-term career..

Effective Entrepreneurship Development

A primary constraint is inadequate infrastructure, including unreliable electricity supply, poor road networks, and limited access to digital tools and broadband internet. Okafor and Yusuf (2023), point out that, over 70% of small businesses in Lagos State operate with intermittent power supply, which not only increases production costs but also limits operating hours and productivity. Many entrepreneurs are forced to rely on generators, further escalating operating expenses. Poor

road conditions, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, hinder the efficient transportation of goods and services, reducing market reach and discouraging potential investors. The absence of a reliable digital infrastructure also impedes e-commerce and limits participation in the digital economy, which is increasingly critical for modern entrepreneurship.

Another major issue is policy inconsistency and weak institutional frameworks. While multiple entrepreneurship support schemes exist such as the National Youth Investment Fund (NYIF), the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN!), and the Bank of Industry's (BOI) programs, they are often poorly coordinated, inadequately funded, or suffer from politicization. The overlapping roles and responsibilities of various ministries and agencies create confusion among prospective beneficiaries and lead to inefficiencies in implementation. Furthermore, many of these programs lack effective monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up mechanisms. This means that after initial disbursement of grants or loans, recipients often receive no further guidance or support, increasing the risk of business failure (Nwachukwu & Onugu, 2020). Low levels of entrepreneurial education and technical training also inhibit the success of entrepreneurship development efforts. Many Nigerians venture into business out of necessity, such as lack of alternative employment, rather than a clear market opportunity. Consequently, they often lack essential knowledge in areas such as business planning, market analysis, operations, and financial management. A study by Olutuase, Brijlal, and Yan (2020) showed that graduates who received formal entrepreneurship education were more likely to operate viable businesses and create employment opportunities for others. Without this foundational knowledge, many startups remain informal, unregistered, and unsustainable in the long run.

Sociocultural factors further exacerbate these challenges. In many Nigerian communities, entrepreneurship is often perceived as inferior to white-collar employment, especially among youth and their families. Fear of business failure, stigma against self-employment, and a lack of role models or mentors deter young people from exploring



entrepreneurial ventures. Edeh and Eze (2021) emphasized that societal values and parental expectations strongly influence career decisions, and unless entrepreneurship is reframed as a respectable and viable path, youth participation will remain limited. Changing these perceptions requires comprehensive policy advocacy, success stories from young entrepreneurs, and increased visibility of entrepreneurship as a national development priority. Corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks also pose serious obstacles to accessing entrepreneurship development resources. Government schemes intended to support small businesses are often marred by long processing times, unofficial payments, nepotism, and favoritism. Such practices undermine trust in public institutions and limit the reach of potentially impactful programs. For instance, genuine entrepreneurs may be discouraged from applying for funding due to fears of unfair treatment or mismanagement, while unqualified beneficiaries may gain access through political or personal connections.

Additionally, the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system makes it difficult to measure the actual impact of entrepreneurship initiatives on employment and economic growth. Most programs are not data-driven, and feedback mechanisms are either non-existent or poorly utilized. This lack of accountability hampers continuous improvement, transparency, and strategic adjustments in program design and execution. To address these multifaceted constraints, a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach is required. First, infrastructure investments must be prioritized, particularly in the areas of energy, transportation, and digital connectivity. Improved infrastructure directly enhances the productivity of entrepreneurs and increases their ability to employ others. Second, entrepreneurship education should be mainstreamed across all levels of the education system, supplemented with mentorship, vocational training, and practical experiences. This would equip young people with the mindset and skill set required for business success.

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, posits that individuals' productivity and economic outcomes are largely determined by their level of education, skills, and training. The theory emphasizes that investments in human capital such as education, vocational training, and skill acquisition enhance individuals' capacity to perform productive economic activities and improve their earning potential. When applied to entrepreneurship, the theory suggests that individuals equipped with entrepreneurial knowledge, managerial skills, and technical competencies are more likely to establish viable businesses and sustain them over time. Such businesses not only provide self employment for the entrepreneurs but also create employment opportunities for others, thereby contributing to broader employment generation.

In the Nigerian context, where unemployment is driven partly by skills mismatch and limited employability, Human Capital Theory provides a strong justification for entrepreneurship education and training as policy tools for job creation. Entrepreneurship development programs that focus on business planning, financial management, innovation, and market analysis enhance the capacity of participants to successfully operate enterprises. Empirical evidence from Nigeria indicates that entrepreneurs who receive structured training are more likely to start businesses, achieve higher survival rates, and employ additional labor. This supports the argument that entrepreneurship development policies must prioritize capacity building alongside financial support. Therefore, Human Capital Theory underpins the assumption that entrepreneurship development, when anchored in effective education and skills acquisition, can translate into sustainable employment generation and economic development in Nigeria.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Adebayo and Kolawole (2020) conducted an empirical investigation into the role of entrepreneurship development in mitigating the high unemployment rate in Nigeria. Their study utilized a descriptive survey design, collecting primary data from 300 respondents in Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo States, including entrepreneurs, government officials, and business development service



providers. The researchers adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods, using structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews to gather data. The study found a strong positive correlation between entrepreneurship development initiatives and employment generation, particularly in the manufacturing and agribusiness sectors. The researchers observed that government programs such as the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN!) and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) had significant impacts on the creation of micro and small enterprises. Eze and Okonkwo (2019) carried out a study to assess the effect of entrepreneurial training on job creation among youths in South-East Nigeria. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design, using a sample of 250 participants selected through purposive sampling from five entrepreneurship training centers across Anambra and Enugu States. The researchers employed pre and post training surveys to measure participants' knowledge, confidence, and business outcomes. The results indicated a statistically significant increase in employment levels among youths who underwent formal entrepreneurial training. About 68% of the respondents reported establishing micro-enterprises within one year of training, and 44% had at least one employee. Olawale and Garwe (2018) examined the constraints hindering the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their capacity to generate employment in Nigeria. The researchers used data from a survey of 400 SMEs in Lagos and Abuja, employing Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to identify key growth-limiting factors. The study identified finance, infrastructure, regulatory environment, and managerial skills as the four principal constraints affecting SME expansion and employment creation. Access to finance, in particular, was found to be the most critical challenge, as over 70% of the SMEs surveyed reported difficulties in securing loans due to high collateral demands and unfavorable interest rates. The findings imply that even though entrepreneurship is widely promoted as a solution to unemployment, without resolving structural barriers such as financial constraints and bureaucratic red tape, the employment potential of entrepreneurial ventures remains limited. Yusuf, Dauda, and Ahmed (2021) corroborate about the role of

microfinance in facilitating employment through rural entrepreneurship in Northern Nigeria. Using a mixed-method approach, the study gathered data from 500 rural entrepreneurs in Kaduna, Kano, and Bauchi states. The researchers used structured questionnaires and focus group discussions to understand how access to microfinance impacted business outcomes and employment. The findings revealed that rural entrepreneurs who received microloans were significantly more likely to expand their enterprises and hire additional labor. The study found that 61% of microfinance beneficiaries had added at least one employee to their business within 18 months of receiving funding. Okafor and Yusuf (2023) conducted a localized empirical study to identify the barriers to sustainable entrepreneurship and their implications for employment generation in SMEs located within selected local government areas (LGAs) in Lagos State. The study employed a cross-sectional survey of 350 SME owners across five LGAs, using stratified random sampling. The research instruments included both open- and close-ended questionnaires, and the data were analyzed using regression and thematic content analysis. The findings pointed to several interconnected constraints that undermine sustainable entrepreneurship and job creation. These included erratic power supply, poor road networks, multiple taxation, inadequate training, and policy inconsistency at the local government level. Interestingly, the study also highlighted that most entrepreneurs were not aware of available government entrepreneurship support programs, indicating a communication gap between policymakers and grassroots entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the lack of structured mentorship and access to affordable raw materials were identified as barriers to scaling. The regression analysis showed that these constraints significantly reduced the probability of SMEs expanding their labor force. The study recommended decentralizing entrepreneurship support services to the local government level and creating local entrepreneurship hubs that provide training, mentorship, and information about financial and regulatory support



Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship development and employment generation in Nigeria, with particular focus on Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State. The study population comprises entrepreneurs operating small and medium scale enterprises, youth engaged in start up ventures, informal sector traders, unemployed individuals seeking entrepreneurial opportunities, and officials from entrepreneurship development agencies, local government departments, and non governmental organizations involved in enterprise and youth empowerment. A total sample size of 120 respondents was selected using a stratified random sampling technique, with Kosofe LGA divided into major sub-areas Ketu, Ojota, Mile 12, Alapere, and Agboyi to ensure adequate representation of diverse economic

activities. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources; primary data were obtained through structured questionnaires and oral interviews, while secondary data were sourced from government publications, academic journals, and reports from development agencies. The research instrument captured respondents’ demographic characteristics, access to entrepreneurship training and finance, business activities, and employment outcomes. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, while qualitative interview data were analyzed thematically to support and enrich the quantitative findings.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: Is there a significant relationship between entrepreneurship development initiatives and employment generation in Nigeria?

Table 1: Entrepreneurship Initiatives & Employment

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean Score	Interpretation
Entrepreneurship development initiatives in Nigeria have significantly contributed to job creation.	60	40	15	5	3.29	Agree
Government-led entrepreneurship programs have helped reduce unemployment in my community.	50	45	20	5	3.17	Agree
There is a direct link between the success of entrepreneurship development efforts and increased employment.	55	50	10	5	3.29	Agree
Entrepreneurship development initiatives have empowered individuals to become job creators.	65	40	10	5	3.38	Strongly Agree
Employment rates have improved due to increased investment in entrepreneurship development.	52	47	15	6	3.21	Agree
Average Mean Score					3.27	Agree

The data presented provides valuable insights into respondents’ perceptions of the relationship between entrepreneurship development initiatives and employment generation in Nigeria. With an overall average mean score of 3.27, the results show a general agreement among the respondents that entrepreneurship development initiatives have positively contributed to job creation. A significant proportion of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that

entrepreneurship programs have empowered individuals to become job creators, with this item recording the highest mean score of 3.38. This suggests that these initiatives are not only fostering individual economic independence but are also creating ripple effects through job provision to others. Furthermore, the belief that entrepreneurship development efforts are directly linked to increased employment (mean = 3.29) highlights the perceived



effectiveness of these initiatives in addressing Nigeria's unemployment challenges. Similarly, the respondents agree that the rise in entrepreneurship investments has led to some improvement in employment rates (mean = 3.21). However, it is noteworthy that the item regarding the impact of government-led entrepreneurship programs on community-level unemployment received the lowest mean

score (3.17). This may indicate mixed perceptions about the visibility, accessibility, or impact of such programs in specific location.

Research Question Two: What is the effect of entrepreneurship training on employment generation among Nigerian youths?

Table 2 Entrepreneurship Training & Youth Employment

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean Score	Interpretation
Entrepreneurship training has equipped youths with skills needed to start businesses.	60	45	10	5	3.33	Agree
Youths who receive entrepreneurship training are more likely to become self-employed.	55	50	10	5	3.29	Agree
Entrepreneurship training enhances the employability of Nigerian youths.	58	45	12	5	3.30	Agree
I have observed a positive impact of entrepreneurship training programs on youth employment.	50	50	15	5	3.21	Agree
Entrepreneurship education is a critical tool in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria.	62	40	10	8	3.30	Agree
Average mean score					3.29	Agree

Table 2. addresses the second research question, focusing on the effect of entrepreneurship training on youth employment in Nigeria. The responses indicate a strong consensus that entrepreneurship training plays a significant role in improving the employability and self-employment potential of Nigerian youths, as evidenced by an overall average mean score of 3.29. The item with the highest score (3.33) reflects the view that entrepreneurship training equips youths with the necessary skills to start their own businesses, demonstrating that such training is seen as practical and impactful. Additionally, respondents agreed that trained youths are more likely to become self-employed (mean = 3.29) and that entrepreneurship training enhances their employability (mean = 3.30). These

findings support the notion that entrepreneurship education is not just theoretical but imparts real-life competencies that enable economic participation. The item relating to the observable impact of such training on youth employment had a slightly lower mean (3.21), suggesting that while the potential benefits of training are recognized, actual outcomes may depend on other variables, such as access to finance, mentorship, or enabling environments. Moreover, the statement that entrepreneurship education is a critical tool for reducing youth unemployment also recorded a high level of agreement (mean = 3.30), emphasizing the broader societal value of incorporating such education into national development strategies.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

H ₀₁	Chi-Square Value	p-Value	Decision ($\alpha = 0.05$)



There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship development initiatives and employment generation in Nigeria.	1.47	0.225	Fail to Reject H₀₁
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The first hypothesis examined whether there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship development initiatives and employment generation in Nigeria. The chi-square value obtained was 1.47, with a corresponding p-value of 0.225. Since this p-value is

greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) is not rejected. This suggests that the observed association between entrepreneurship development initiatives and employment generation is not statistically significant.

Table 4
H₀₂

	Chi-Square Value	p-Value	Decision (α = 0.05)
Entrepreneurship training has no significant effect on employment generation among Nigerian youths.	0.02	0.900	Fail to Reject H ₀₂

The second hypothesis tested whether entrepreneurship training significantly affects employment generation among Nigerian youths. The result produced a very low chi-square value of 0.02 and a p-value of 0.900, which is far above the 0.05 threshold for significance. As a result, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) is also not rejected. This outcome implies that, from a statistical standpoint, there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship training and youth employment among the respondents. While this result may appear surprising, given widespread belief in the importance of entrepreneurship education, it may reflect limitations in training quality, post-training support, or job market alignment.

link (p = 0.225), suggesting a gap between perceived outcomes and actual measurable employment effects. This aligns with findings from Nwankwo et al. (2022), who argue that poorly coordinated programs lacking implementation fidelity and post-training support often under deliver on job creation. Entrepreneurship training was widely seen by respondents as effective in equipping youths with the skills necessary for self-employment (mean = 3.29), aligning with empirical studies such as those by Olutuase, Brijlal, and Yan (2020), who confirmed that training significantly boosts entrepreneurial intentions and business formation. Likewise, Ojo, Salami, and Ayoade (2021) showed that 70% of training participants in Lagos had established businesses within a year, creating ripple employment effects. Nonetheless, the chi-square result (p = 0.900) indicated no statistically significant relationship between training and youth employment in this study. This apparent contradiction may be explained by Ihugba, Odii, and Njoku (2019), who argue that training alone is insufficient without capital, mentorship, and favorable markets. Oviawe and Dudu (2022) also critique the overly theoretical nature of many government trainings, which often lack practical relevance or follow-up mechanisms..

Discussion of Findings

The analysis showed a general agreement among respondents that entrepreneurship development initiatives have contributed to job creation, with a mean score of 3.27. This finding echoes the conceptual framework of Aja-Okorie and Adali (2019), who emphasize that policy-driven entrepreneurship initiatives like You WiN and N Power are designed to stimulate enterprise growth and employment. Similarly, Eneh and Ogbu (2020) reported that over 60% of entrepreneurship program beneficiaries transitioned to self-employment within a year.. However, despite this perceived positive relationship, the chi-square hypothesis testing did not confirm a statistically significant

Conclusion



Entrepreneurship development is widely recognized as a vital and strategic approach to addressing the persistent unemployment crisis in Nigeria. It has been lauded for its potential to empower individuals, foster innovation, and create self-sustaining jobs, especially among youth and vulnerable populations. However, the findings of this study highlight a noticeable disconnect between the theoretical promises of entrepreneurship and the actual, measurable impact observed in practice. The study underscores the fact that entrepreneurship cannot thrive in a vacuum. The success of entrepreneurship as a tool for job creation depends heavily on the presence of a supportive and well-coordinated ecosystem. This includes not only access to financial services but also an enabling policy and regulatory environment, access to markets, business development services, and cultural acceptance of entrepreneurship as a legitimate career path. In the absence of these complementary elements, the potential of entrepreneurship to serve as a major driver of employment remains largely unrealized. Therefore, for entrepreneurship development to become a truly sustainable and effective mechanism for employment generation in Nigeria, more than isolated program rollouts or temporary funding interventions are needed. What is required is a comprehensive and integrated ecosystem reform that addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by aspiring and existing entrepreneurs. This includes improving access to affordable and flexible finance, strengthening entrepreneurship education with practical and hands-on components, reforming regulatory frameworks to reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and investing in critical infrastructure to support business operations. It also involves fostering partnerships among government agencies, private sector players, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to entrepreneurship promotion.

Recommendations

1. Entrepreneurship education should be practical, hands-on and specific in content. Training must be accompanied by mentorship, business incubation, and access to startup capital to ensure sustainability.

2. Agencies such as SMEDAN and BOI should enhance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure transparency and continuity in entrepreneurship programs.
3. Investment in infrastructure (electricity, roads, broadband) is essential to enhance the operational environment for small businesses. Policies should also aim to streamline business registration and reduce bureaucratic red tape.
4. Establishment of community-based innovation hubs and business support centers in local government areas can offer entrepreneurs access to resources, networks, and mentorship at the grassroots level.

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