

Entrepreneurship, labor productivity and youth unemployment in Nigeria: The missing link

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Abstract. Embracing entrepreneurship is a strategy of creating employment opportunities. However, some entrepreneurship businesses cannot survive in the long run due to a misfit in the skills acquired by the entrepreneurs and their passion/ talent. This work examined the level of misfit amongst technical/vocational skills and how it has affected the rate of unemployment and labor productivity in two geopolitical zones in Nigeria having higher rates of unemployment. Descriptive and inferential statistics was employed in analyzing data retrieved from questionnaires administered. Results showed that the relationship between entrepreneur skill and youth unemployment and also between entrepreneur skill and labor productivity were positive in Nigeria. Study recommended entrepreneurship education and training and provision of resources to train students in their area of interest/passion and not based on the resources available in the institutions.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; labor productivity; youth unemployment

JEL classification: L26; E24; O47

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is beyond mere business formation; it is a strategy to reduce unemployment rate because it provides diverse employment opportunities; this has proved successful in many other countries. Globally, private owned businesses (small and medium enterprises) represent about 90% of businesses and create over 50% employment opportunities. They also contribute 40% of national income (GDP) in emerging economies (WDI 2022; Asogwa and Dim, 2016). Many countries have braced and transformed entrepreneurship to such a transformative apparatus that significantly affects unemployment and poverty rate as a result of their enormous contribution to the various productive sectors of the economy which engenders economic growth and development (Onugu, 2005). Aside from its social benefit of creating new jobs and reducing poverty; it leads to diversity, increase in market scale, innovation, healthy competition and knowledge learning (Wang, 2020; Block et al., 2013).

Entrepreneurship is a significant determinant of productivity (Braunerhjelm and Borgman, 2004). However, this depends not only on the country's regulatory environment but also on the entrepreneurial traits; such as self-efficacy, entrepreneurial attitude amongst other factors (Wang, 2020; Mehta, 2020). In addition to productivity, the sustainability of entrepreneurship business must be given adequate attention as it relies on the quality of entrepreneurship skills. Some of these businesses struggle for existence in the long run due to misfit in the technical/vocational skills acquired, while some businesses fail because the entrepreneurs are not intentional about learning the required skill. This results in the loss of jobs and deepens the severity of unemployment, thereby the purpose for entrepreneurship defeated.

The increasing rate of unemployment is bedeviling the lives of many Nigerians most especially the youths, resulting in frustration, unhappiness and overreliance on other members of the family and

friends who already have their own glitches to struggle with. The high rate of unemployment has contributed to the increase in the rate of poverty and other social vices which is one of those factors responsible for the stirred economic and political crises presently experienced (Egunjobi, 2021; Asogwa and Dim 2016; Ajufu, 2012). In the midst of Nigeria been the second country with the highest unemployment cum underemployment rate (55.7%), three out of five of the labour population are younger than 34 and rate of unemployment for these categories (15 – 24 years and 25 – 34 years) stood at 53.4 % and 37.2% respectively in the fourth quarter of 2021 (NBS, 2021).

Interestingly, the South-East zone which is known to be the citadel for entrepreneurship (formal and informal) and the South-South zone known to be rich in oil has been on the lead in the rate of unemployment out of six geographically political zones. Additionally, the unemployment rate in the South-South is 37.0%, South-East, 29.1%, North-Central, 27.9%, North-East, 27.9%, North-West, 26.3% and South-West with 18.0% (NBS 2020). Akwa Ibom and Rivers States are the most affected in the South-South region with an unemployment and underemployment rates of 45.2%, 21.7% and 43.7%, 19.8% respectively. Imo and Abia states are taking the lead in the South-East with unemployment rates of 48.7% and 35.5% respectively.

A high level of unemployment and underemployment amongst the youths is one of the socio-economic problems confronting Nigeria (Egunjobi, 2014). It has resulted in the inability of the labor market to absorb new entrants thereby worsening unemployment incidence. Also, the deepening level of unemployment has led to a mirage of challenges faced by the youths. Such as working longer hours for low wages; increased poverty; engagement in hazardous jobs without compensation; informal employment arrangements and increased social evils. The consequences thus affect productivity levels. Embracing entrepreneurship is a strategy of reducing overdependence on white collar jobs and creating employment opportunities. However, some entrepreneurship businesses cannot survive in the long run due to a misfit in the technical/vocational skills acquired by the entrepreneurs.

Thus, the study observed a level of misfit amongst technical/vocational skills and how it has affected the rate of unemployment and labor productivity in two selected geopolitical zones. Research objectives of the study are to assess nexus amid entrepreneur skills and youth unemployment and investigate how entrepreneur skill relates to labor productivity. Owing to these specific objectives, this research answers key questions; to what extent does entrepreneur skills relate to youth unemployment and how does entrepreneur skills determine labor productivity? The research hypotheses which are tested in this study are entrepreneur skill is not significantly related to youth unemployment in Nigeria and entrepreneur skill is not significantly related to labor productivity in Nigeria.

Other works on entrepreneurship and unemployment particularly in the Nigeria context, had only emphasized entrepreneurship as a strategy to end unemployment (Olorunfunmi and Kayii, 2019; Abdullahi et al, 2022; Sukirman and Afifi, 2021) without taking cognizance of the rising rate of unemployment despite proliferations of entrepreneurship programmes. Hence, this study established the missing link as to why entrepreneurship has not been an effective strategy to curb youth unemployment in Nigeria. Also, this study focused on the South-South and the South-East region where youth unemployment is dominant and where there is increase in entrepreneurship businesses and yet unemployment has not been solved, a research area not yet explored. Descriptive statistics (tables, frequencies, and trend) and inferential statistics (Non-Parametric Chi-square) was employed in analyzing the data retrieved from questionnaires administered.

The remaining sections of the work is categorized into four; a review of theoretical, conceptual and empirical literature followed by research methodology then, presentation and analysis of data retrieved from the field and conclusion including policy recommendations.

2. Literature review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Entrepreneurship

There is more to entrepreneurship than just venturing into doing businesses. It is the course of identifying a business opportunity, allot resources (both human and physical) and create value; or an act of being a businessperson who engages creativity with money to achieve a business goal with the aim to convert the creative ideas into an output for human consumption and satisfaction. An

entrepreneur can thus be successful if traits such as self-confidence, creativity, excellent communication, resourcefulness is added up to the skills acquired either through formal learning or vocational institutes (Obi, 2010). Whatever activity that adds up to the businesses already in existence can also be referred to as entrepreneurship (Alawiye, 2004).

For Binks and Vale (1990), entrepreneurship is a spontaneous blending of economic resources initiated with the intention of making a temporary monopoly profit. Acs and Szerb (2007) noted entrepreneurship is characterized by the recognition of opportunities and the decision to commercialize those opportunities through a startup firm. Additionally, Schnurr and Newing (1997) argued that entrepreneurship culture should be promoted since youths exhibit entrepreneurship traits like; self-confidence, ambition, daring, creativity, curiosity and bravery.

Entrepreneurship in Nigeria is centered on small informal businesses, mostly unorganized, (Igwe et al., 2018; Igwe, Newbery, and Icha-Ituma 2018), rarely pay taxes, unregistered, and self-operated thereby limiting ability to generate employment. Meanwhile, some better organized and dynamic informal businesses are bedeviled with challenges inhibiting their ability to generate employment like; inadequate infrastructural facilities, low access to credit, corruption, inconsistent government policies and problem of relevant skilled labor.

Labor Productivity

There is no accurate measure for labor productivity because it is multifaceted in nature and complex; hence, making it difficult to have a single index (Setyawan, 2021). However, Productivity is a measure of the connection of the materials required to manufacture and the quality and quantity of products manufactured (Simbeye, 1992; Okojie 1995; Roberts and Tybout, 1997) and the entrepreneur's performance can be considered as one of the indices to measure labor productivity which must be reflected in the sales growth, customer's growth, profit growth, and the asset growth/ business expansion. According to Yulius (2016); the entrepreneur's objectives and perception for starting-up a business can be used to measure labor productivity.

Labor productivity can also be measured in terms of production turnover; meeting up with the projected number of production (Etekpe, 2012). In a similar vein, Agbodike et al (2015), believed that when labor input is equivalent to the production output then it can be considered as labor productivity. This is not different from the concept as expounded by Adebayo (2001) that explained labor productivity as "a ratio between input and output, effort and result, expenditure and income, cost and the resulting pleasure" that is; an "input-output relationship where maximum work is achieved for minimum input of energy or resources."

Hence, higher productivity could be attributed to cost reduction, minimum use of inputs, greater factor proficiency and efficient methods of production.

Unemployment

Unemployment is referred to as a part of the labor force without work but are willing to work and seek employment opportunities. Every country groups its population majorly in two categories: the economically active and economically inactive which refers to the share of the population willing and capable to work but could not find one (Lambo, 1987). Unemployment is a development issue that is mostly confronted by countries with less developed economies. The rate of unemployment is calculated as a percentage of the labor force unemployed (Sullivan & Sheffrin, 2003).

For Udu and Agu (2005), unemployment is a state whereby a person with the capability and willingness to work but cannot find suitable remunerated employment.

In Fajana (2000), unemployment is a period when people with the ability and readiness to work are unable to secure a well-paid job. Unemployment exists when labor supply outweighs its demand (Adebayo, 1999). Todaro (1992) grouped unemployment as open and disguised unemployment. Open unemployment is the unavailability of a well-paid job; while disguised unemployment is for the labor force with low productivity and reduced working time having no significant effect on total output. Fajana (2000) and Alao (2005) explained the concept of unemployment by identifying the various forms; Structural unemployment which exists when structural changes take place in a country's economy, Seasonal unemployment is as a result of variation in seasonal activities, Cyclical unemployment exists as a reason of a decline in aggregate demand, Frictional unemployment exists due

to frictions in industries and inability to be filled by the present workers and Residual unemployment which occurs as a result of individual factors like disabilities or old age.

This situation of Nigerian youth unemployment and its effect on the country and the need for small enterprises has necessitated the need for entrepreneurship development more than ever. (Chukwubuikem, 2008; Salami, 2011) Nigeria remained poor with a high rate of unemployment which majorly affects the young adult even with the presence of abundant natural resources with an allegedly strong economic performance.

Common Reasons why Entrepreneurship Skills cannot birth Productivity and Reduce Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

Every entrepreneur needs either an economic or human resource. Economic resources are the combination of all factors of production which are put together for an increasing produce output (productivity). The main advantages of entrepreneurship ranges from mobilizing internal savings for investment, substantial input to Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Income, utilization of local raw materials, creating job opportunities, reducing or alleviating poverty, improvement in living standard through increased earnings, and acquiring skills. However, there have been a lot of barriers to experiencing the true benefits embedded in entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The following are the major barriers as identified by Onwubiko (2011);

There are basic infrastructural amenities that are of necessity in being an entrepreneur, these facilities enhance productivity in business and the existence of humanity. Infrastructures such as accessible road network, portable water, regular electricity, communication network and other facilities needed to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship. In Nigeria, the basic facilities are not adequate for entrepreneurs to operate neither does it provide an enabling environment. This makes entrepreneurship a business costly to start, less profitable and unattractive therefore discouraging young adults from embracing entrepreneurship.

Sufficient funds for start-up and the continuous existence of business are central to an entrepreneur regardless of the size of the business, aims and objective. In Nigeria, insufficient funds especially for start-up is a problem and the financial institutions are restricted in granting credit facilities or overdraft to an anticipating entrepreneur, most especially the young ones. Sometimes, the requirements to access such financial grants are difficult and tiring which includes providing collateral security and a guarantor. Consequently, the anticipating entrepreneur may resolve to own savings or seek financial assistance from family and friends.

Education is recognized as a relevant factor in becoming a businessperson with the potentials needed. Sadly, the significance of education in forming the youth to become an agent of transformation have been disregarded. The educational system and quality have continued to deteriorate, as a result of several reasons; such as the industrial action by the academic staff union of universities, inadequate facilities and funding in the various institutions and wrong institutional policies.

Skill acquisition has become a difficult thing for intending entrepreneurs and every other young adult because the present-day academic syllabus places more emphasis on theories with no matching applied methods. Even when some of these youths are employed after school, they still have to go through training processes again to improve their skills to meet up with the job specification and standard.

2.2 Theoretical review

One of the foremost theories of entrepreneurship was propounded by Schumpeter in 1934 known as the Schumpeter/Refugee effect theory. The theory opined that entrepreneurs are pacesetter bringing inventive and creative ideas that leads to productivity and in long-run contributes to the economy. The theory described entrepreneurs as the main factor of the development process. The theory was further explained in two folds namely; the push effect, which assumes that unemployment can inspire entrepreneurship. While the Schumpeter effect assumes newly established businesses can lessen unemployment. This effect can be valid in the long run because the theory explains the relationships between entrepreneurship, productivity and employment which can positively impact economic growth later (Aubry, 2015; Langroodi, 2017).

The entrepreneurial ecosystem theory explains the linkages between entrepreneurship, productivity and employment. The theory assumes that productivity, which eventually translates to economic growth, depends largely on an enabling space that gives room to innovation in the entrepreneurship space. This theory can therefore be interpreted to mean the combination of efficiency in output, competition, and other factors that promote productivity (Prasetyo, 2019).

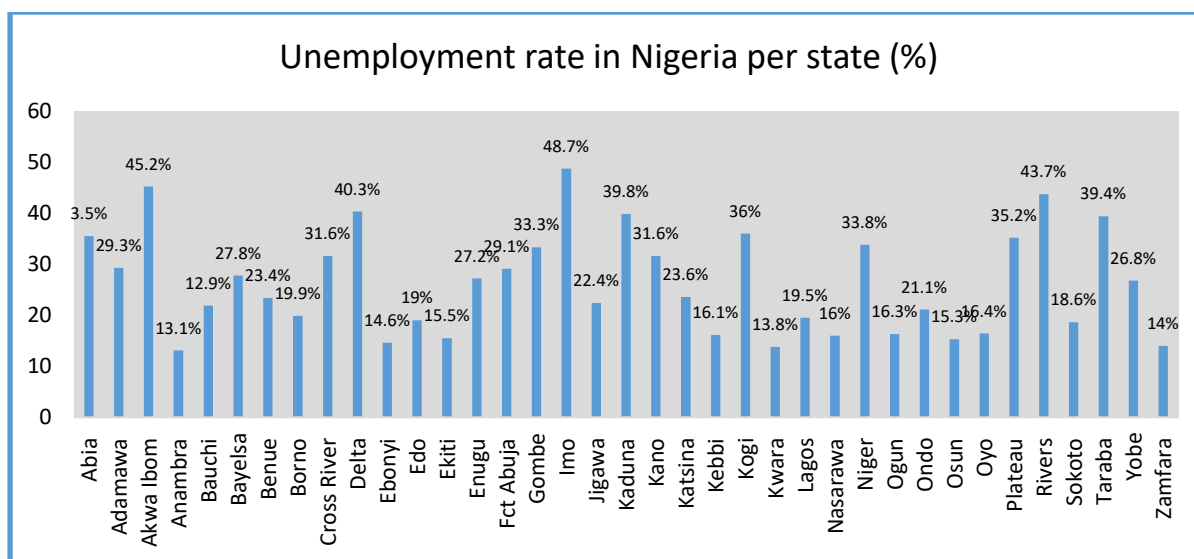
A theory that explains entrepreneurship productivity and employment relationship is the Standard micro theory. This theory revealed clearly the connection that links efficiency to remuneration, and the output generated from the efficiency. The theory opined that when wages are constant with increased efficiency, employment also rises (Meager, 2011).

The entrepreneurship alertness theory advocated by Kirzner Israel in 1984 submitted that entrepreneurs must be alert to unprepared opportunities and must possess and improve on certain skills of their interest to enable them recognize opportunities that were not recognized by others and explore such opportunities with the skills possessed. Kirzner further opined that being alert as an entrepreneur will help discover urgent problems that need quick solutions to satisfy human needs and such solutions can be sold at a high cost.

2.3 Stylized facts on Unemployment in Nigeria

Unemployment crisis in Nigeria has affected the youths severely. It is a situation where a lot of youths from the different regions across the nation are ready and have the ability to work, but cannot get any thereby endangering their lives, picking casual jobs and other unorthodox livelihood sources with health hazards due to the insufficient employment opportunities in the formal sector.

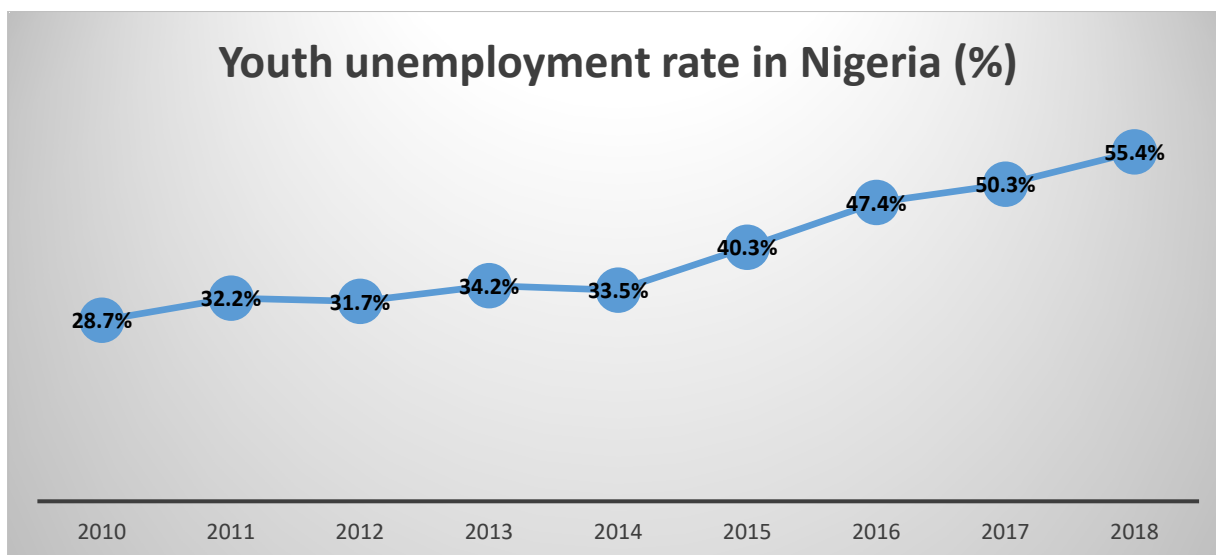
Figure 1. Q3, 2020 unemployment rate per state in Nigeria (%)



Source: NBS 2020

From Figure 1, it is obvious that none of the states is left out of the unemployment crisis in the country. However, the severity of the crisis differs from one state to another. Most states inflicted with this problem are in the South-East, South-South and core Northern region of the country. From the graph of figure 1, Imo state in the southeast region has the highest rate of unemployment which stands at 48.7%; this is followed by Akwa-Ibom state in the South-South region with an unemployment rate of 45.2%; the third state battling with high unemployment rate is Rivers State in the South-South region with 43.7%. This looks ironic because the southeast is known for their entrepreneurship prowess, while the South-South are known to have abundant resources, however these are the regions with higher rates of unemployment.

Figure 2. Youth unemployment trend in Nigeria (2010 -2018)



Source: NBS 2022

Figure 2 is a representation of the increasing trend in youth unemployment (underemployment inclusive) between the ages of 15 years and 34 years. The unemployment rates have been rising for the past 9 years, though the government has made a lot of efforts to ensure that this increasing rate in the youth unemployment be reduced, which is evident from the various programmes embarked by the government such as the “Youwin” and “Npower” programmes among others. However, this does not seem to solve the problem of the ever-increasing youth unemployment. One of the reasons for joblessness is the swift rise in the city working population majorly because of the increasing movement from the rural areas; this has caused the urban unemployment to rise from 18% in 2011 to 34.9% in 2018 (NBS 2018). Movement from the less developed areas to the city is generally described with regards to the pull and push effect. The other cause is the increasing change in post-secondary education population size which increased from a total of 22.1% in 2010 to 48.6% for NCE/OND/Nursing certificate holders, 39.0% for B.Sc/B.Ed/HND certificate holders, 31.0% for Master certificate holders, and 27.7% for Doctorate holders (NBS 2018) making the unemployment crisis in Nigeria multi-dimensional. Also, obsolete academic syllabuses coupled with lack of employable skills. There is more labor supply than labor demand in the economy

Table 1. Global entrepreneurship ranking of Nigeria

Year	Ranking Position
2019	131st
2018	146th
2017	145th
2016	169th
2015	170th
2014	170th
2013	147th
2012	138th

Source: Statista (2022)

Empirical Review

Conducting a comparative analysis on the threat of unemployment crisis in the 36 states of Nigeria with data gathered on unemployment in Nigeria. Abdullahi et al (2022), showed that no state is left out of the crisis of unemployment but only differs in its severity in the different states. The study, therefore, recommended that the tertiary education curriculum be reviewed to incorporate several subjects that will help reduce unemployment and create an enabling environment through the provision of facilities with a reduced level of corruption by government parastatals. To assess the effect of

entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial motivation and spirit, Sukirman and Afifi (2021) used a structured questionnaire to gather data from 150 college students in Indonesia. The study exposed entrepreneurship spirit, motivation and education as positively and significantly related.

Setyawan et al. (2021) investigated the nexus in entrepreneurship interest and the level of productivity of business in Indonesia. The study employed the MLE technique for analysis on the data gathered through a structured questionnaire from 100 students. The result showed that entrepreneurship interest has a significant relationship with the level of productivity in business. In the same vein, Candraningrat (2020) studied the relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' interest to become an entrepreneur amongst 100 students in Indonesia employing the Structural Equation model, the findings also showed that student's awareness and interest in becoming an entrepreneur has a positive and significant relationship with entrepreneurship education.

To investigate the effect of entrepreneurship on productivity and spill-over knowledge in China, Wang (2020) used the survey method to compile data from industrial firms and discovered there existed a relatively significant relationship among entrepreneurship and productivity and that entrepreneurship leads to market competition and knowledge spill-over in China industrial firms.

To also examine how entrepreneurship education determines students' intention and self-efficacy to become an entrepreneur, Liu et al. (2019) sampled 327 college students in China. The findings showed that a student's intention and self-efficacy to become an entrepreneur is significantly and positively related to entrepreneurship education. Similarly, the findings of Nosheena et al. (2019) in China on entrepreneurship education and student's interest and efficacy is not different. It showed significant and positive relationships amongst entrepreneurship education, student's interest and efficacy.

Olurunfunmi and Kayii (2019) examined how entrepreneurship skills can affect unemployment among students in Rivers state. It was observed that entrepreneurship skills can assist in reducing unemployment since evidence from data via structured questionnaire depicted an indirect relationship among unemployment and entrepreneurship skills

Similarly, Kheiravar and Qazvini (2012) investigated the nexus between perception of generating new jobs and entrepreneurship skills as a means of reducing unemployment in Azarbayjan-e-Shargi. A vector auto-regression model was employed to analyze the data gathered. Results depicted an indirect relationship between entrepreneurship and rate of unemployment.

Okoye-Nebo et al (2014). Assessed how entrepreneurship in Nigeria has reduced youth unemployment, through the effort of the government to curb unemployment and also examined the hindrances and prospects of entrepreneurship development. According to findings, policies implemented by the government have impacted the "transformation question". It is caused by corruption and inefficient infrastructure. Results revealed entrepreneurship as the device required to spur invention, creative ideas and generate jobs. It is recommended that policymakers recognize that entrepreneurship is an essential aspect of economic development by creating an enabling and securing environment where the youth can gainfully employ themselves and providing sufficient and efficient infrastructures.

Investigating the effect of globalization on youth unemployment in 50 African countries over a period of 20 years, Awad (2019) included economic globalization measurements as well as variables that represented fluctuations in economic activity; demographic changes; the size of countries' economies; and the quality of governmental institutions. An analysis of Bayesian techniques revealed that a lower rate of youth unemployment would result from increased access to global markets. The results also revealed that there seemed to be decreases in the rate of youth unemployment resulting from rigidity in the regulations guiding the labour market. The rate of youth unemployment increases as urbanization intensifies. These findings support contemporary calls to facilitate job creation through international trade.

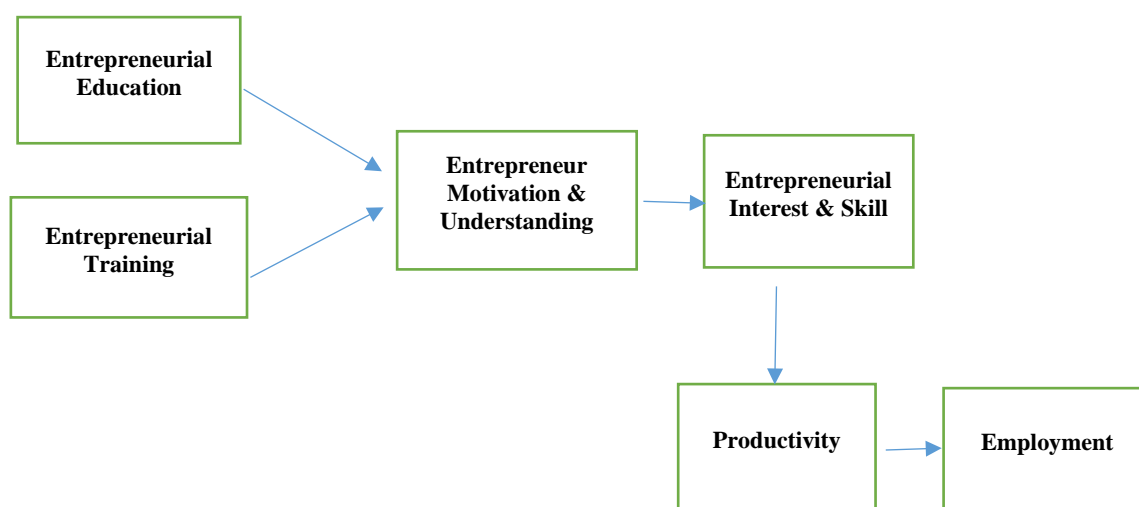
Investigating the relationship between unemployment development and unemployment reduction in Nigeria with a focus on Anambra State, Asogwa and Dim (2016) examined the youth of five local government councils in Anambra state, Nigeria. Data were collected using a set of questionnaires from an infinite population of the selected Local Government Council. A total of 150 youths were sampled. The test conducted showed that all the variables were significantly and positively related. The study recommended that the Government should strive to reduce the cost of doing business in Nigeria

Dilanchiev (2014) explored the relationship between entrepreneurship and unemployment in the case of Georgia the study employed the regression analysis of two variables; entrepreneurship and unemployment rate from the year 2003 to 2013. Entrepreneurship development plays a vital role in reducing high unemployment rates in countries like Georgia, which benefits from its entrepreneurial development as a phenomenon that generates jobs. It concluded that for Georgia a country in transition entrepreneurship development plays a vital role in solving the unemployment problem and the effect of entrepreneurship has been found to be statistically significant.

Theoretic Framework

The study is built on the theoretical framework of entrepreneurship alertness theory advocated by Kirzner Israel in 1984. The theory is appropriate for this study because it laid emphasis on acquiring self-motivated skills and entrepreneurs' alertness in discovering unnoticed opportunities and exploring such opportunities to satisfy human needs.

Figure 3. Entrepreneurship, labor productivity, and unemployment: What is missing?



Source: Authors' construct

Figure 3 depicts how entrepreneurship relates to labor productivity and employment. Entrepreneurship requires both training (practical) and education (theoretical) which gives the prospective entrepreneur a clear understanding of what is required and expected in a business. This understanding is what motivates him/her; motivation here is the willingness and attitude needed to be an entrepreneur. Then, the entrepreneurial interest puts into usage the self-motivated acquired skills into action and becomes productive which is very important for business sustainability. All of these put together is what solves the unemployment problem.

3. Methodology and data

The aim of the research was to assess entrepreneurship, productivity and the increasing rate of youth unemployment in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. Rationale for selecting these regions was because they relatively have higher rates of unemployment (22% and 28% respectively) amongst other regions in the country. A survey research method was used because it enables researchers to select respondents germane to the research and provides effective data summary and reporting with little or no observer subjectivity (Cohen et al., 2007). The research instrument used was the questionnaire, chosen because it requires low cognitive knowledge, provides wider coverage and allows the same information to be gathered from the respondents (Turner, 2010).

300 questionnaires were distributed to the targeted population, while 270 copies were retrieved and correctly filled, this is a response rate of 90% which is considered adequate.

It has two sections. The first focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the second section focused on issues concerning the extent to which entrepreneur skills relate to youth

unemployment and how entrepreneur skills determine labor productivity. The respondents provided answers based on their own opinions.

Descriptive statistics (tables, frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Non-Parametric Chi-square) were employed in analyzing the data retrieved.

Table 2. Variables and their measures

S/N	Variables	Measures
1	Gender	Nominal scale
2	Region	Nominal scale
3	Education Status	Nominal scale
4	Employment Status	Nominal scale
5	Monthly Income	Ratio scale
6	Monthly Expenditure	Ratio scale
7	Stakeholder Type	Nominal scale
8	The extent of entrepreneurship skills and youth unemployment	Ordinal/Nominal scale
9	The extent of entrepreneurship skill and productivity	Ordinal/Ratio Scale

Source: Author's Compilation

4. • Research outcomes and comments

Analysis of the field survey expressed in frequencies (freq.) and percentages (percent - %) is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Bio-data of respondents

S/N	Item	Scale	Freq.	Percent (%)
1	Gender	Male	168	62.2
		Female	102	37.8
2	Region	South East	18	6.7
		South West	180	66.7
		South South	48	17.8
		North Central	24	8.9
3	Education Status	Tertiary	258	95.6
		Secondary	12	4.4
4	Employment Status	Gainfully Employed	57	21
		Underemployed	75	27.8
		Self-Employed	96	35.6
		Unemployed	42	15.6
5	Monthly Income	Below ₺18,000	36	13.3
		₺18,000-₺40,000	48	17.3
		₺40,000-₺80,000	60	22.2
		₺80,000-₺120,000	30	11.1
		₺120,000-₺200,000	72	26.7
	₺200,000-above:	24	8.9	
6	Monthly Expenditure	Below ₺18,000	48	17.8
		₺18,000-₺40,000	54	20.0
		₺40,000-₺80,000	78	28.9
		₺80,000-₺120,000	48	17.8
		₺120,000-₺200,000	18	6.7
	₺200,000-above	24	8.9	
7	Stakeholder Type	Public servant	18	6.7
		Trader	36	13.3
		Academia	30	11.1
		Organized private sector	78	28.9
		Others	108	40.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

From the research survey conducted, it can be seen that the percentage of male gender (62.2%) is more than the female gender (37.8%), which indicated that the present unemployment crisis affects the male gender the most in the regions under survey. The survey also revealed that the increase in the unemployment rate in the region of study is not caused by the indigenes of these regions but rather caused by immigrants from other regions of Nigeria; most settlers in these regions are from the southwest zone (66.7%) of the total sample size. Most of the respondents for this survey have tertiary education (95.6%) of the total population size. Also, only 21% of the respondents are gainfully employed while 27.8% of the respondents are underemployed and 35.6% are self-employed which means the gap of unemployment in the South-South and South- East region is filled by entrepreneurs. From the income structure of the respondents, it is observed that 64.8% with tertiary education earns less than ₦100,000 while 35.6% earns between ₦120 and above. Furthermore, most respondents' expenditure is between ₦18,000 and ₦120,000 which is represented by 91.7% of the total population size. The survey also showed that most of the respondents (82.2%) either work, own a business or work for another private sector and less than 20% are public servants.

Table 4. Research Question I: to what extent is entrepreneur skills related to youth unemployment?

S/N	Item	Scale	Freq.	Percent (%)
9	Identifying and exploration of technical skills	Yes: No:	222 48	82.2 17.8
10	Skills possessed	Informal: Semi-formal: Formal:	66 102 102	24.4 37.8 37.8
11	level of skill acquisition	Intermediate: Beginner: Professional:	96 114 60	35.6 42.2 22.2
12	passion for skills acquired	No: Maybe: Yes:	192 60 18	71.1 22.2 6.7
13	Identifying business opportunities	No: Maybe: Yes:	96 12 162	35.6 4.4 60
14	motivation to be an entrepreneur	Profitability: Own a business: Financial independence: Meet customers; need:	12 96 138 24	4.4 35.6 51.1 8.9
15	Knowledge gained from school useful to you as an entrepreneur	No: Maybe: Yes:	108 6 156	40.0 2.2 57.8
16	Availability of resources	No: Maybe: Yes:	132 24 114	48.9 8.9 42.2
17	Commitment to the business	No: Maybe: Yes:	30 66 174	11.1 24.4 64.4

Source: Field survey, 2022

From the outcome of the survey, on the first research question to find out if skill acquisition is needed for a life sustainable employment. The survey showed that over 80% of the respondents have explored their various skills as an entrepreneur and 17% of the respondents do not have the skill required to explore any business. The survey showed that some of the respondents have innate skills which was actually worked upon by partial learning such as event planning interior decoration, and outdoor catering services and this is represented by 37.8% of the respondents; the formal skilled respondents such as public speaking, web designer, cybersecurity experts were formally acquired and the other respondents are traders in the market. The survey also revealed that most skills acquired by the

respondents are mostly beginner and intermediate which is represented by a total of 75.8% and 20% are professional. This showed that most entrepreneurs in the South-South and southeast needs to improve on their skills to enhance productivity and business sustainability.

The survey showed that 71% of the sample size do not have passion for the skills acquired as an entrepreneur and 22.2% were not sure if they need the skills acquired or have a passion to become an entrepreneur. Most of these respondents that are entrepreneurs identified a business opportunity before starting a business which is reflected by 60% of the sample size. From the survey, most of the respondents became entrepreneurs because they wanted financial freedom (51% of the total respondents) and because they want to own a business (35% of the respondents). Also, from the survey, most of the respondents agreed that the knowledge gained from school on entrepreneurship was useful for new entrepreneurs. However, these respondents ascertained that getting resources to start up as an entrepreneur was difficult for them and this is shown by 48% of the total respondents. Though in their little way, as an entrepreneur, they have shown some level of commitment to the business, and this is represented by 64.4% of the total sample size.

Table 5. Research Question II: To what extent is entrepreneur skill related to labor productivity?

S/N	Item	Scale	Freq.	Percent (%)
18	years of business experience	Less than 5 years	198	73.3
		6 to 10 years	60	22.2
		11 to 15 years	12	4.4
19	Have your skill improved time management in your business	No:	144	53.3
		Yes:	126	46.7
20	Skill acquired have has improved productivity	No:	84	31.1
		Maybe:	93	34.4
		Yes:	93	34.3
21	profit generated in business is attributed to skills acquired	No:	54	20.0
		Maybe:	42	15.6
		Yes:	174	64.4
22	profit level of the business	10% below	120	44.4
		11%-20%	84	31.1
		21%-30%	12	4.4
		40%-above	54	20.0
23	Ability to solve problems with your skill	No:	102	37.8
		Yes:	168	62.2
24	Has the skill expanded your business	No:	48	17.8
		Maybe:	36	13.3
		Yes:	186	68.9
25	when last did you go for a training	Recently:	168	62.2
		Never:	72	26.7
		5 years ago:	30	11.1
26	Will the training improve the business	No:	138	51.1
		Yes:	132	48.9
27	Do you need the relevant skill to improve your entrepreneurial career	No:	6	2.2
		Maybe:	12	4.4
		Yes:	252	93.3

Source: Field Study, 2022

The second table represented findings on the skills acquired and the level of productivity. The findings revealed that most of the respondents have only established their businesses in the last five years and below which is represented by 73% and businesses operating more than five years and above were altogether 26%. This has verified that the increase in the unemployment rate from the areas under study was really on the high side. In terms of time management, the skills have nothing to do with the time management as 53.3% of the respondents from the sample size opined that there is no relationship between skill and time management. While 31% of the respondents opined that the skill acquired has helped in improving productivity. 34% were not even sure if the acquired skill has improved their productivity. Profit made from businesses of the respondents was generated through the skills acquired

which showed some level of productivity in the businesses in the areas under survey and this is represented by more than 64% of the total sample size. The percentage of profit generated was 10% and less represented by 44.4%, which implies most entrepreneurs could not record more profit due to the level of the skills acquired as the outcome has also shown that most of the entrepreneurs are at the beginner's level of the acquired skills. More than 60% of the respondents that are entrepreneurs have the ability to solve problems with their skills and have experienced expansion in their businesses through the skills. Most of the respondents have recently upgraded their skills within the last one to two years, though they do not think the upgrade will have any effect on the business. Though it might not be the skill needed for their business, the respondents are willing to learn the skill of their interest if the opportunity is granted.

Chi square Test

The chi square (non-parametric) was employed because it accommodates small sample size, makes fewer assumptions about the distribution of data, valid instrument for hypothesis testing, ease of computation and the robustness of analyzing results.

Table 6. Non Parametric Chi square Test

	Entrepreneur skills is significantly related to youth unemployment in Nigeria	Entrepreneur skills is significantly related to labor productivity in Nigeria
Chi-Square	3.756 ^a	27.222 ^a
Df	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.053	.000

0 cells have expected frequencies < 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 22.5.

From the hypotheses, the P-value < 0.05 hence it is confirmed that entrepreneur skill is significantly related to youth unemployment and entrepreneur skill is significantly related to labor productivity.

The first hypothesis showed that entrepreneur skills and youth unemployment are positively related. This implies that as much emphasis is laid on entrepreneurship skills and education, it has not yet solved the unemployment crisis. This is also revealed in one of the survey questions that most of the respondents do not have passion for the skills acquired which simply implies that they do not have the intention to be in that line of business. This with no doubt has been one of the major factors for the continuous rise in rate of unemployment, despite the increase in the entrepreneurship businesses in these regions. It can also be interpreted from this finding that most of the businesses in the study areas are not functioning properly or have folded up. Findings by Lestari, et al (2016) depicting entrepreneurship as more of an art than a skill and that entrepreneurs should possess the entrepreneurship spirit which drives an individual to do business is similar to the study of Hendrawan (2017) on entrepreneurial self-efficiency, that an entrepreneur must be intentional about doing business are not different from the findings of this work.

However, the apriori expectation for this study is an indirect association between entrepreneur skills and unemployment which conforms to Schumpeter effects theory with the assumption that entrepreneurship has the potential of creating more jobs. In some other way, create new existing firms without considering experience as a factor for survival in entrepreneurship which is one of the unveiled by this study as a necessary factor for a start-up or to join an existing firm. But, results showed direct association among unemployment and entrepreneur skills. This could be attributed to the lack of experience and low level of passion for the business that has caused so many businesses to shut down in a short while and caused an increase in the unemployment rate. Thus, Wong and Auto (2005) concluded in their result that there existed a conflicting relationship between unemployment and entrepreneurial activities since the relationship is uncertain. It can therefore be concluded by this study that there is neither a theoretical nor empirical justification that unemployment causes an increase in self-employment or self-employment causes a reduction in unemployment.

The findings from this study also showed that the motivation to be an entrepreneur in the area under survey was to be financially independent, to be called a business owner, and to make a profit; rather than identifying what is needed to proffer solutions through innovation and creativity. This kind of motive will obviously not make a business thrive in the long run, and may not be able to face market competition and will have less productivity. When the entrepreneur can no longer sustain the business, it will fold up eventually and go back to square one which is the state of the individual being unemployed. This finding is in line with Sukirman and Afifi's (2021) study on Indonesia that entrepreneurship interest is an important factor for a successful entrepreneur. However, what determines entrepreneurship interest is the combination of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship spirit, and entrepreneurship motivation.

The findings also revealed that the knowledge gained by the respondents from tertiary education was of great help in becoming a self-employed individual, but the unavailability of resources (both financial and infrastructural) have been a major barrier for their business to thrive and this has forced a lot of businesses to fold up and caused setback for some while some are at the verge of folding up. Financial in the aspect of low access to credit facilities, not having collateral security demanded by banks and high interest rate. Infrastructural and social facilities like energy supply, transportation and communication whose supply and provision are inadequate and are grossly inefficient in Nigeria. This was verified by Onwubiko (2011) where the study mentioned some common factors responsible for entrepreneurs folding up and including inadequate infrastructural facilities and insufficient start-up funds by the entrepreneur.

The findings from the second hypothesis revealed a direct relationship between entrepreneur skill and productivity. Thus, the more skilled the entrepreneur gets and acquires the more productive the business outfit in terms of output, survival and profit. From the research questions, it was gathered that skill acquired basically from pursuing further training has expanded the business, generated greater profit and not only has output increased but it has assisted in problem solving. The respondents have been able to expand their businesses through the skills acquired and make profit. However, most profit made was 10% and even below for certain reasons; most of the respondents just started up their businesses, most of them do not have an interest in the businesses engaged in. Also, findings showed that if given the opportunity to learn the skills of their choice they will do without hesitation. This finding is in line with the findings of Sukirman and Afifi (2021) that having the right mind, also known as the entrepreneurial spirit, is one of the other ways to reduce the rate of unemployment in Indonesia. Also, this is not so different from the finding of Remeikiene et al (2013) which concluded that entrepreneurship attitude which is a component of entrepreneurial interest is the main drive for entrepreneur motivation to start up a business.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated why entrepreneurship has not been able to solve the unemployment crisis and improve business productivity. The South-East and the South-South were chosen for this study due to the increase in the unemployment rates in these regions despite the abundance of resources and the increase in entrepreneurship businesses. The findings showed that entrepreneur skills and youth unemployment are positively related and also, entrepreneur skills and productivity are positively related. However, it was discovered that most of the self-employed youths do not have interest in what they do; and also revealed the motivation behind engaging in self-owned businesses (financial independence, title's sake, and profitability).

Though entrepreneurship is a good strategy to put an end to increasing unemployment; but in a country like Nigeria, entrepreneurial education combined with the training and flexibility will give meaningful insight as to what is therein to become an entrepreneur. Hence, the following recommendations were made.

Both the theoretical and practical aspects of entrepreneurship should be taught to students before leaving a tertiary institution. This will equip the young adults with the full understanding of what entrepreneurship entails. Vocational centers in tertiary education should have enough resources to train graduating students in their area of interest (flexibility) and not based on the resources available in the institution

Enlightenment programmes should be organized to change the thinking perspective of entrepreneurs that the purpose of being an entrepreneur is not only to be financially independent or be a business owner, or to escape from the unemployment trap (all of these are the long-run benefits of entrepreneurship). The main purpose of entrepreneurship is to identify a problem in the society and dive into the opportunity by proffering a solution to it and meeting human needs; then every other benefit shall be added to it (such as becoming a business owner/employer of labor, financial independence and profitability. Examples are: Aliko Dangote, Mark Zuckerberg, Steve Jobs, etc.).

It can be concluded from the study that entrepreneurship skill can significantly promote labor productivity though entrepreneurship skills as a means to curb youth unemployment could not be established by the hypothesis. Hence, this study has shown by its result (a positive relationship between entrepreneur skill and youth unemployment which is contrary to most findings in the Nigeria context) that to put an end to unemployment in Nigeria, the understanding, interest, motivation and spirit should be put first, then the skills.

This research is limited to the two zones with the highest unemployment rates out of the six geo political zones in Nigeria, further studies could expand to capture the missing link in all the zones and could be extended to international frontiers especially since large sample size will be used.

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