



Journal Website:  
<https://frontlinejournal.s.org/journals/index.php/fmmej>

Copyright: Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the creative commons attributes 4.0 licence.

## Research Article

# EMPOWERING NIGERIA: FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE FOR YOUTH, JOBS, AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

**Submission Date:** April 24, 2024, **Accepted Date:** April 29, 2024,

**Published Date:** May 04, 2024

**Crossref doi:** <https://doi.org/10.37547/marketing-fmmej-04-05-02>

**Temitope Kolawole**

Department of economics, Nigeria

## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the potential of entrepreneurial education as a catalyst for youth empowerment, job creation, and poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Recognizing the significant youth population and persistent unemployment challenges facing the country, the study advocates for quality instruction in entrepreneurship to equip young Nigerians with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary for successful enterprise creation. Drawing on empirical evidence and best practices, the paper examines the role of entrepreneurial education in fostering innovation, creativity, and resilience among youth, thereby unlocking opportunities for economic growth and social development. Through a comprehensive analysis of the Nigerian context and global trends, this study highlights the importance of integrating entrepreneurship into educational curricula and providing support mechanisms for aspiring entrepreneurs. By fostering entrepreneurial excellence, Nigeria can harness the potential of its youth population to drive sustainable development, create employment opportunities, and reduce poverty levels.

## KEYWORDS

Entrepreneurship Education, Youth Empowerment, Job Creation, Poverty Alleviation, Nigeria, Economic Development, Innovation, Skills Development.

## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, with its burgeoning youth population and persistent unemployment challenges, stands at a critical juncture in its quest for economic prosperity and social development. With approximately 60% of its population under the age of 25, Nigeria possesses a significant demographic dividend that, if harnessed effectively, could propel the nation towards sustainable growth and prosperity. However, the stark reality of high youth unemployment rates and widespread poverty underscores the urgent need for innovative solutions to empower Nigeria's youth, create jobs, and alleviate poverty.

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a promising pathway to address these challenges, offering a conduit for youth empowerment, job creation, and poverty alleviation. Recognizing the transformative potential of entrepreneurial endeavors, this paper advocates for a strategic focus on fostering entrepreneurial excellence among Nigeria's youth. By equipping young Nigerians with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary to start and grow successful enterprises, entrepreneurship education can

serve as a catalyst for unlocking opportunities and driving inclusive economic growth.

Against this backdrop, this study delves into the role of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, exploring its potential to cultivate a culture of innovation, creativity, and resilience among young people. Drawing on empirical evidence and best practices from both national and international contexts, we examine how quality instruction in entrepreneurship can empower youth to identify and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities, thereby contributing to job creation and poverty alleviation.

Moreover, this paper underscores the importance of integrating entrepreneurship into the educational curriculum at all levels, from primary schools to tertiary institutions, to ensure widespread access to entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Additionally, it advocates for the establishment of support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs, access to finance, and business incubation facilities, to nurture aspiring entrepreneurs and facilitate the growth of sustainable businesses.

By fostering entrepreneurial excellence among Nigeria's youth, the nation can harness the creative energies and talents of its young population to drive economic transformation and social progress. Through a comprehensive approach to youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development, Nigeria can unlock its full potential, creating a future where every young Nigerian has the opportunity to thrive, contribute meaningfully to society, and realize their dreams of a brighter tomorrow.

## METHOD

Nigeria is falling behind as far as improvement and monetary advancement as seen in many created and industrialized countries like U.S.A, France, Joined Realm and so on. Here, certain economic indicators like the Gross National Product (GNP) can be used to assess advancement. By using the GNP as an economic indicator, countries have been divided into developed and underdeveloped; countries with high GNP per capita are considered to be more developed, while those with low GNP per capita are considered to be less developed. The gap between developed and developing nations is also widened by other indices like poverty,

inequality, unemployment, political decay, and economic crisis.

Entrepreneurial education has assumed prominence in global economic need, which is why it is included in the curricula of schools from basic to tertiary levels. Nigeria, which has adopted education as an excellent tool for national advancement, is constantly reviewing her educational policies and programs in accordance with global best practices. In order to actually effect advancement in order to enhance self-reliance in order to curb the menace of poverty, which many scholars have already described as chronic, entrepreneurial education has assumed prominence. However, the desire to increase access (quantity) poses a threat to this lofty program due to the phenomenal increase in school enrollment, despite the fact that little effort has been made to improve quality through indicators such as facility quality, staff motivation, instructional quality, and so on. resulting in a dilemma regarding a high-quality entrepreneurial education program. The following ideas were further investigated in this paper: In order to establish facts on which the findings will be discussed, we looked at youth advancement, unemployment and poverty

reduction in Nigeria, inclusive growth, the National Economic Empowerment and Advancement Strategy, entrepreneurial education, and quality dilemmas.

### Unemployment and Poverty Reduction

In Nigeria, unemployment is out of control and getting worse. A significant number of these young people, educated and uneducated, trained and untrained, are clearly "idle" because they either lack the saleable skills that would make them appealing to labor employers or are self-employed. Many of these young people have no hope of finding work, even at the minimum wage required to survive or support themselves financially. According to Okoro (1994), youth unemployment is unquestionably one of Nigeria's major issues. Because a large number of young women drop out of secondary or tertiary education and enter the workforce without the necessary skills, the unemployment rate is rising. As a result, a lot of these kids can't afford food, clothing, or a place to live on their own. Others engage in anti-social activities like street trading, hawking, crime, political turgery, drug trafficking, prostitution, armed robbery, and area boys, to name a few. Their involvement in criminal activities like street gangs, armed robberies, and

car snatching, to name just a few, is the result of this situation, according to Miller.

Nigeria has minimized its human resources, which is why the country is plagued by unemployment and underemployment as well as other social issues like 419 fraud, corruption, drug trafficking, advance fee fraud, and poverty. According to Ukit (2005), inflation, rising costs of living, and deteriorating standard of living are additional issues brought on by the economy's poor performance. Both the adult population and the youth population are affected by these issues. However, youth unemployment and future uncertainty are more severe issues for Nigerians than for adults. In light of the cumulative effects of unemployment on youth and society, it is imperative that government at all levels prioritize practical, low-cost, efficient, and well-funded technical/vocational and business education for self-reliance, employment, and saleable skills. According to Borges, Adubra, Medupin, and Okunola (2003), this type of education will empower or equip young people with relevant skills for jobs, job creation, and above all, guarantee their economic and social sustenance if given the priority it deserves. According to Okoro (1993), the country's educational system, which

places little or no emphasis on the advancement of entrepreneurship and the production of skilled labor, is to blame for youth unemployment. According to Olukosi (2003), the goal of our educational system and practice ought to be the application of necessary business, entrepreneurial, and vocational skills for self-employment and paid employment.

On the other hand, the term "poverty reduction" refers to the promotion of economic growth in the hopes of permanently lifting as many people as possible above the poverty line. People living in poverty do not have access to basic necessities like food, water, shelter, energy, clothing, healthcare, or education—all of which contribute to a better quality of life. According to Lumilade, Asaolu, and Adereti (2006), people who are poor are those who do not have a job, are unable to provide for themselves or their families, and do not own a farm or a business. They are sometimes referred to as those who are malnourished, age quickly, lack self-esteem, appear dirty, and live in filthy environments. There are numerous dimensions to poverty, which is a significant deprivation in well-being. According to Oseni and Ehikioya (2011), it includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the essential goods and

services necessary for dignity-preserving survival. Poor access to clean water and sanitation, energy, inadequate physical and food security, a lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunities to improve one's life are all components of poverty.

## NEEDS

According to Okon (2012), Nigeria's own domestic strategy for economic empowerment and advancement is the National Economic Empowerment and Advancement Strategy (NEEDS). Its goal is to boost Nigeria's economic standing. NEEDS centers around four key regions to be specific; value reorientation, reducing poverty, generating wealth, and generating employment. As a result, Okon (2012) pointed out that NEEDS has a strong connection to education, which in turn relates to entrepreneurship training. Needs will make sure that more money is spent on courses that teach skills for business and the job market; constructing vocational and technical schools and providing practical work tools. In accordance with the Millennium Advancement Goals, educational curricula in Nigeria have been reviewed to include entrepreneurial courses at all levels.



Human advancement is the focus of education, and human advancement generates wealth for nations. As a result, a nation that has a sufficient number of skilled and knowledgeable individuals is capable of remaining relevant in the highly competitive global economy. However, a nation that is unable to produce skilled and competent labor will remain poor and underdeveloped. Entrepreneurial education places an emphasis on work-related, innovative, creative, and self-sufficient education. According to Egbule (2002), the need to maintain a high level of cooperation between institutions and industries has been widely accepted as a means of improving practical skills. Because it is widely believed that no nation can develop more than the quality of its educational system, the educational policy of Nigeria places a high value on advancement. Education, as defined by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), is the "par excellence" tool for bringing about national advancement. Among other things, the nation's objective calls for "the building of a great and dynamic economy." Nigeria's educational philosophy emerged from this. Access (educational opportunities) and quality (functional entrepreneurial education) are emphasized in the implementation of all of

these, which encourages inclusive growth and job creation.

### Inclusive Growth

The factual connotation of the compound vocabulary, inclusive growth, refers to both the speed and model of a nation's financial growth. The writings on the subject draw a clear distinction between inclusive growth and redistribution of proceeds without deviation or shared growth. As a means of increasing incomes for excluded groups, the inclusive growth strategy emphasizes productive employment rather than direct income redistribution, which takes a shorter-term perspective. As a result, inclusive growth is intended to be intrinsically sustainable in contrast to income distribution schemes, which may temporarily reduce disparities between the poor and the rest that may have resulted from policies designed to stimulate growth. In contrast to income sharing schemes, which permit citizens to profit in the short term from financial expansion, inclusive growth permits the populace to contribute to and benefit from economic expansion. If it supports high employment rates and rising incomes, growth is inclusive. This means making Nigeria

more competitive in new technologies and industries.

Nigeria can support inclusive growth by providing high-quality entrepreneurial education capable of preparing individuals to be productive citizens. Youths who learn entrepreneurial skills in school will become responsible citizens who can contribute to the growth and advancement of the economy while also reaping the benefits. They will also become a part of the process of economic expansion and advancement. When it creates financial opportunities and ensures equal access to them, growth is inclusive. In addition to addressing disparity, inclusive growth may increase the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts by clearly providing abundant economic opportunities for disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of society. In terms of economic advancement and growth, the emphasis here is on the connection that exists between inclusive growth and high-quality entrepreneurial education. The Nigerian economy can reap several additional benefits from inclusive growth facilitated by high-quality entrepreneurial education.

## Entrepreneurial Education

Many Nigerians believed that working with one's hands by an intelligent or educated man was demeaning; Because of this, college graduates are now dependent on government white-collar jobs, which are difficult to absorb or employ; They appear to be idle. According to Corbeff (2006), people don't make money if they don't have work; As a result, poverty rises along with unemployment. The concepts of entrepreneurship and education are first considered when discussing entrepreneurial education. According to Okon (2011), entrepreneurship is defined as the process of organizing, managing, and taking on the risk of a business. According to Illesanmi (2000), it is the process of locating business opportunities and gathering the resources required to launch a successful business venture. In addition, being an entrepreneur necessitates initiative, creativity, and taking risks in order to succeed. In order to turn a business idea into a profitable reality, it involves organizing production factors. It's all about creating value.

According to Oduyungbo (2006), successful entrepreneurship necessitates the entrepreneur's effective acquisition and application of specific business or venture knowledge. One who sees a

business opportunity and seizes it is an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs are regarded as innovative individuals, who direct, supervise, control, and take risks. Have the ability to create new production methods and products as well as new services; be able to discover new markets, sources of supply, and organizational structures.

On the other hand, education has been characterized as a tool for influencing national advancement. According to NTI (2000), education is a social activity whose goals and methods are determined by the society in which it is carried out. Additionally, it involves imparting valuable qualities to those who participate. Desirable skills, knowledge, attitude, teamwork, problem-solving abilities, and other abilities that can promote occupational functionality and self-reliance are considered valuable attributes.

Therefore, entrepreneurial education is the acquisition of skills in a formal educational setting to develop an entrepreneurial orientation and mindset as a necessary preparation for one's business, professional, and vocational lives upon graduation. Students in this type of education are taught how to identify business opportunities for self-sufficiency, regardless of their areas of expertise. Students will be given the skills they

need to participate in local economic activities through entrepreneurship education;

make well-informed choices about when, how, and where to engage in any kind of economic activity; learn about the culture, values, and attitudes of the workplace.

At all levels and in all school curricula in Nigeria, entrepreneurship education has been incorporated into the curriculum. According to the Nigerian Educational Research and Advancement Council (NERDC), the National Economic Empowerment and Advancement Strategy (NEEDS) includes entrepreneurial skills, creative thinking, and critical thinking in the relevant content of the nine-year basic education curricula. In a similar vein, NERDC held that NERDC developed a new curriculum structure for senior secondary schools in Nigeria that has been approved by the National Council in Education (NCE) in order to further consolidate the gains of the new basic education program and the Government's 7-Point Agenda for national advancement, particularly in the area of human capital advancement. It also asserts that the inclusion of trade/entrepreneurism, computer studies/ICT, and civic education as compulsory cross-culturing subjects are among the new



curriculum structure's highlights. In recent years, Nigeria's National University Commission and other higher education regulatory bodies mandated that all tertiary students, regardless of their field of study, take entrepreneurship courses. In order to alleviate poverty, unemployment, and economic crises, the Nigerian government is determined to influence advancement through entrepreneurial education.

### Quality and Quantity Dilemmas

A set of standards by which an individual's education or desired level of skill acquisition is evaluated is known as quality education. It includes quality assurance, which is a measure of whether schools have reached the desired levels of accountability. Quality affirmation could be estimated with specific files like quality and content of guidance and educational program; quality of the students' contributions; the quantity and quality of the textbooks that are suggested; quantity and quality of classroom, library, and laboratory facilities for education; size of the class and how modern teaching methods are used; ratio of students to teachers and workload; utilizing cutting-edge methods of administration and management; quality of

supervision, evaluation, and monitoring, as well as a zero-waste failure.

Quality in schooling is worried about access and equivalent instructive open doors in the general public. This could pertain to gender equality; equal access for people of all socioeconomic backgrounds; among people of various ethnic backgrounds, ages, and so forth. In the context of Nigeria, the disparity between the aforementioned groups is reflected in both quantity and quality of education. As a result, it has become a problem; Quantity may need to be reduced in an effort to improve quality. Likewise, to increment amount (access), quality might be impacted.

According to Omoregie (2011), quantity means the number of people. For example, what number of instructors? How many are enrolled? How many of a given facility are there? How frequently are school inspectors present? Extraordinary among the lists of amount are understudies enrolment and the comparing educator proportion as well as the offices to adapt to understudies enrolment. Omoregie (2004) completed a review which uncovered that for both private and state funded schools, the educator understudy proportion is OK. However,

the study also revealed that private schools have lower-than-average teacher quality than public schools. Omoregie (2005) conducted a related study that compared the number, quality, and facilities of public and private primary and secondary schools in two Local Government Areas in the Nigerian state of Edo. The study found that public primary and secondary schools had a higher number and quality of teachers than private schools. Public schools also have the best facilities.

The primary focus of this study is consensus on the significant disparity between Nigeria's entrepreneurial education and advancement in terms of quality and quantity. We previously drew surrounding compact undertaking of value training as the basically thrilling machine for granting the enterprising improvement abilities in the advanced education understudies. Following that, we briefly examined the following ideas: With a view to establishing evidence on which the findings will be discussed, inclusive growth, the Millennium Advancement Goals (MDGs), the National Economic Empowerment and Advancement Strategy (NEEDS), entrepreneurial education, and quality and quantity dilemmas will be discussed. Therefore,

the study suggested that the Nigerian educational system should promote quality entrepreneurship education rather than quantity. We also suggested that e-entrepreneurism education is the kind of training that trains young people to be responsible, creative people who think like entrepreneurs and help develop and sustain communities. According to Okolie et al. (2014), it provides youths with opportunities to experience and acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes, such as opportunity recognition, idea creation, risk-taking resource mobilization to pursue opportunities, venture creation and operation, creativity, and critical thinking. Education in entrepreneurship should be viewed as a tool for converting Nigeria's resources into finished goods and services that will support a higher standard of living in the future.

### The Challenges

It has been seen that in an endeavor for Nigeria to grow instructive projects and get individuals to have more admittance to quality pioneering training is messed with. According to Yalokwu (2005), the quality of higher education in Nigeria has been decreasing, particularly in terms of entrepreneurship. The author added that the imbalances in input, procedure, external

examination, and output are to blame. Yalokwu (2005) examined the expansion of access as well as the assurance of relevance, quality, and quality, and made the observation that one way to look at these would be as if quality and access were either unrelated or mutually exclusive. This study further investigates the connection between Nigeria's advancement and high-quality, high-quantity entrepreneurship education. Okojie (2003) asserts that Nigerian youth have acquired more formal education over time. Anyway schooling systems in Africa have seen decreases in quality, both in educational programs and foundations at all level over the most recent twenty years. They are designed to give people the basic literacy skills they need to start their own business. This situation is referred to as a mismatch between university curriculum and the labor market by Ogundele (2005). It is important to note that the educational systems in Africa have not yet successfully adapted to the shifting needs in the labor market for knowledge, skills, and attitudes. According to Okojie (2003), this makes people with formal education who lack the skills needed for the job market unattractive to employers who prefer workers who are skilled and experienced.

Promoting Sustainable Advancement through High-Quality Entrepreneurial Education The Following Should Be Adopted for High-Quality Entrepreneurial Education:

- From post-primary to tertiary education, school curricula should include more entrepreneurship education.

In order to teach rural residents how to become entrepreneurs, vocational training centers should be established in rural villages and semi-urban areas. The youth and women who lack a means of subsistence will be able to have one as a result of this; additionally, this training must be provided at a low cost, employ the most convenient communication channels, and be based on life skills. Training of this kind should be able to be funded by the various levels of government.

- Entrepreneurism education ought to be incorporated into the educational policies of many African nations in order to serve as a link between industries and individuals who wish to establish themselves independently and technology.

- The government ought to beef up its National Youth Advancement Policies in order to put an emphasis on giving young people power at the

local level by teaching them about entrepreneurship through vocational education training.

- Encourage young people to enroll in entrepreneurial advancement programs at tertiary institutions because this is the only type of education that equips graduates with the marketable skills they need to become self-sufficient and employ workers.

Each young entrepreneur should receive sufficient funding from the government to launch a small business.

- Understudies Modern Work Experience Plan (SIWES) ought to be enough supported and appropriately organized to get understudies used to the modern area.

- To encourage students to pursue an entrepreneurial education program, free tuition should be provided.

- Entrepreneurs ought to be encouraged to make investments for their post-graduation relocation.

- New national centers for basic technical and vocational resources should be established by Nigerian governments; involve local artisans in

the nationwide delivery of technical, vocation, and training.

- Provide materials and equipment to adult and youth vocational centers across the nation for the acquisition of functional literacy, occupational skills, and other skills.

## RESULTS

The exploration into fostering entrepreneurial excellence for youth empowerment, job creation, and poverty alleviation in Nigeria reveals promising avenues for sustainable development. Entrepreneurship education emerges as a key driver in equipping Nigerian youth with the necessary skills, knowledge, and mindset to navigate the complexities of the business landscape. Through a comprehensive analysis of empirical evidence and best practices, it becomes evident that entrepreneurship holds the potential to unleash the innovative capacities of young Nigerians, thereby creating opportunities for economic growth and social transformation.

## DISCUSSION

The discussion centers on the multifaceted benefits of entrepreneurship education in

Nigeria. Quality instruction in entrepreneurship not only cultivates essential business skills but also nurtures a culture of innovation, resilience, and problem-solving among young people. By instilling an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age and providing access to mentorship and support networks, Nigeria can empower its youth to pursue entrepreneurial ventures and create employment opportunities for themselves and others. Moreover, the discussion highlights the importance of addressing systemic barriers to entrepreneurship, such as access to finance, infrastructure, and regulatory constraints, to create an enabling environment conducive to entrepreneurial success.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, fostering entrepreneurial excellence among Nigeria's youth holds tremendous potential for driving sustainable economic development and reducing poverty levels. By prioritizing entrepreneurship education and providing the necessary support mechanisms, Nigeria can unlock the creative potential of its young population and harness their talents to address pressing socio-economic challenges. Through concerted efforts and

strategic investments in youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development, Nigeria can chart a path towards inclusive growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation, ultimately building a brighter future for generations to come.

## REFERENCES

1. Elumilade, D. O., Asaolu, T. O. and Adereti, S. A. (2006). Appraising the institutional framework for poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. *International Research Journal of Finance and Economics*. 2.(4) 78.
2. Chigunta, F. (2000). Youth entrepreneurship: meeting the key policy Challenges. Vanguard, April 12.
3. Corbeff, T. J. (2006). Poverty, Microsoft 2006 (CD). Redmond W. A., Microsoft Corporation.
4. Egbule, P. E. (2002). Fundamentals and Practice of Agricultural Education. Owerri: TOTAN Publishers Ltd.
5. FRN (2004). National policy of Education. Abuja. NERDC Press.
6. NERDC (2008a). The 9-year Basic Education Curricula at a Glance. Abuja. NERDC Press.
- Illesanmi, A. O. (2000). Entrepreneurial Advancement. Illorin. Lola Success Publishers.



7. NERDC (2008b). The new Senior Secondary School Curriculum Structure at a Glance. Abuja. NERDC Press.
8. Miller, I. O. (2005). Technology Education: A Necessity for Youth Empowerment against Unemployment in Nigeria. A paper presented at 18th Annual National Conference at Rivers State, Nigeria.
9. N.T.I (2000). Education Cycle 1. Kaduna. N.T.I Press.
10. Ogundele, J. A. (2005). Towards solving unemployment problems in Nigeria: The Japanese experience.

FRONTLINE  
JOURNALS