

# Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Emancipation of Youths in Oyo State, Nigeria, West Africa

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**Abstract:** The primary aim of every citizen in any nation of the world is to be economically emancipated, as it enables one to be self-reliant rather than depending on parents, guardians or government for survival. However, the majority of Nigerian youths are living in abject poverty compared to their counterparts in developed countries. In an attempt to find a solution to the problem of acute poverty, this study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurship, education and the economic emancipation of youths in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. A sample of 350 respondents was selected through the purposive sampling technique. Three hypotheses were tested. A self-designed online survey questionnaire titled “Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Emancipation Questionnaire (EEEEQ)” was administered and used for data collection. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis were the statistical tools employed for data analysis. The findings revealed a significant relationship between entrepreneurship knowledge and economic emancipation among youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria ( $r=0.78$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). It was also shown that entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation among youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria were significantly related ( $r=0.63$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that more emphasis should be given to entrepreneurial skill acquisition and to the adequate provision of learning tools and materials. Government should also make available grants for youth with potential to demonstrate and maximize their acquired entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, economic emancipation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is the desire of every citizen in any nation of the world to be economically emancipated. This is because economic emancipation, in most cases, comes with the opportunity for education and personal development, having a say in the political affairs of one’s society and having a better understanding of the world around us. Also, it comes with the privilege of a reasonable degree of influence and the ability to provide for the basic needs of oneself and family. It also creates socio-economic status and elevates interaction as well as enabling the making of informed decisions rather than accepting whatever life throws at one. In the opinion of Osuji and Koko (2018), economic emancipation comes with the

ability and power to determine one’s own social and political rights as well as one’s own financial position and future. This comes from a sense of autonomy and self-confidence.

Economic emancipation of youths can be described as the economic, social and political empowerment of citizens after receiving a basic secondary education, especially if they are able to earn a sustainable living (Osuji & Koko, 2018 ; Osaat, 2012). In this study, economic emancipation is viewed within the context of freedom from poverty. Poverty has many manifestations and dimensions in Nigeria, such as unemployment, indebtedness, financial dependency, inability to provide for one’s basic needs and lack of access to credit facilities. In this context, therefore, economic emancipation can be conceptualized as gaining financial freedom from poverty so as to become self-reliant rather than depending on parents, guardians or government for survival.

The general contention is that there is acute poverty in Nigeria. Research has shown that 70% of Nigerian youth live below the poverty line compared to their counterparts in some advanced European and Asian countries of the world (Egbefo & Abe, 2017). It is of interest to also note that, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), Nigeria’s unemployment rate in the second quarter of 2020 was 27.1%, meaning that about 21 764 614 Nigerians were unemployed. It was also revealed that the worst-hit are Nigerian youths, with over 13.9 million currently unemployed. A high youth unemployment rate is synonymous with increased poverty.

This increase in poverty has become very concerning because youths suffering from poverty seem to have higher rates of juvenile delinquency and crime, and higher levels of drug and alcohol abuse. Their criminal activities include stealing, pickpocketing, raping, robbery, kidnapping and ritual killing, to mention only a few (UNOWA, 2005). They usually live in bad neighbourhoods where positive role models are either non-existent or out of reach (Olaleye, 2019). Researchers have highlighted several factors that could lead to economic emancipation but have ignored one major factor, namely entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education is a process of training our students at the secondary and tertiary (undergraduate and post-graduate) levels to acquire skills to enhance productivity and self-reliance in Nigerian society (Ogbondah & Nwogu, 2017). Nafukho (2005) is of the opinion that entrepreneurship education is a catalyst for business formation, it teaches students and youths how to start and run their own businesses, play the stock market and balance personal life. According to Hafid (2016), entrepreneurship education is an educational process which applies principles and methodologies for the development of life skills to students through an integrated curriculum. Williams (2006) views entrepreneurial education as the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills which enables self-employment and self-reliance. According to Osaat (2012), entrepreneurship education deals with the process of undertaking business initiatives by applying competently acquired knowledge for the purpose of self-reliance, self-sustenance and for the overall development of society. All the above definitions point to developing individuals, realising their potential and maximizing opportunities for self-empowerment and economic growth (Oyewunmi & Adeniyi, 2013). Entrepreneurship education encompasses two key factors – entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial skills (Hansemark, 1998; Hafid, 2016; Osuji & Koko, 2018).

Entrepreneurial knowledge is a factor that could bring about economic emancipation. Entrepreneurial knowledge refers to an individual's appreciation of the concepts, skills and mentality required to be an entrepreneur (Jack & Anderson, 1999). Tshikovhi and Shambare (2015), found that this knowledge can be acquired and developed through consistent exposure to entrepreneurial activities. Accordingly, entrepreneurial learning is associated with the development of entrepreneurial knowledge. Massad and Tucker (2009) identified two distinct types of entrepreneurial knowledge that complement each other when creating new ventures.

The first type of knowledge relates to individuals' ability to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities. This involves the discovery and evaluation of new venture opportunities. Recognizing business opportunities involves being able to identify a market or a group of people facing a particular problem. Solving this problem often involves the development of an innovative or new approach. The second type of knowledge refers to successfully exploiting the identified opportunity. The entrepreneur develops a viable business model, which involves the formation and development of a profitable business around the new venture opportunity. Both these types of knowledge are expected of entrepreneurs.

The degree of aspiration for entrepreneurship is also directly proportional to an in-depth knowledge of the potential business. This accounts for the success or failure of the entrepreneur. (Yousaf, Ali, Ahmed, Usman & Sameer, 2021). Charney and Libecap (2000) stated that there is a positive correlation between entrepreneurial knowledge and economic emancipation. This implies that before anyone can be

economically emancipated, one must have an in-depth entrepreneurial knowledge of a particular business or business. This is because entrepreneurial knowledge provides a foundation for business prosperity. In corroborating this, Oyewumi (2003), Evans and Leighton (2007), as well as Othman and Ishak (2009), found that entrepreneurial knowledge contributes to successful business development and that, in fact, entrepreneurial knowledge provides the foundation for business prosperity.

Another notable factor that could influence economic emancipation is entrepreneurial skill. Skill is a term that is usually applied to the performance of a complex task (Ayanyemi, 2018). It is the basic ability and the means by which a person adjusts to life. Entrepreneurial skill is that knowledge and management capability required for an individual's economic independence (Ede, 2014). Entrepreneurial skills denote the willingness and intent to create a new thing that someone else does not possess (Coetzee et al., 2010). In the opinion of Uduma (2004), entrepreneurial skills are those activities or actions that are geared towards management, processing and marketing. Entrepreneurial skills comprise the ability to create or innovate through production for the purpose of wealth creation and self-reliance (Ezenwagu et al., 2016). Okoli and Okoli (2013) found that, due to the non-functional education to which they are exposed, the majority of graduates of higher institutions in Nigeria seemed to lack the entrepreneurial skills required for self-reliance and self-employment.

In considering the relationship that exists between entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation, Ayanyemi (2018) found in his study that there was a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation among youths in Nigeria. He therefore concluded that the acquisition of relevant entrepreneurial skills by citizens of a particular nation is one of the critical factors for industrial and economic development. In addition, Ekong and Ekong (2016) asserted that for any nation in search of a high level of industrialization to succeed, the provision of relevant entrepreneurial skills must be given serious consideration. He described the acquisition of relevant skills as an important index required for appreciable sustainable development, ability for improvement and sustainment of socio-economic development.

This study therefore becomes necessary at a time like this when the global aim is to reduce the level of poverty to the barest minimum, perhaps through entrepreneurship education. Therefore, this study investigated entrepreneurship education and economic emancipation of youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria

#### *Statement of the Problem*

It has been observed that the majority of Nigerian youths are not economically empowered and as a result, are living in acute poverty compared to their counterparts in developed countries. This was revealed when youth demonstrated at the

SARs protest last year (Abang et.al., 2021) The youth’s acute poverty has therefore become a source of concern in the education sector because it could result to higher rates of juvenile delinquency, crime, and drug and alcohol abuse.

The review of the literature on youth poverty in Nigeria did not reveal any research into the relationship between entrepreneurship education and economic emancipation. This study was therefore undertaken to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and economic emancipation of youths and to establish if the relationship is significant. A representative sample of secondary school students from Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State were selected for the study.

*Hypotheses*

- i. There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial knowledge and economic emancipation among secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation among secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.
- iii. A lack of the joint contribution of the independent variables, entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, does not have a significant relationship with economic emancipation among secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

II. METHODOLOGY

*Research Design*

The correlational survey research design was adopted for this study because it is a design that is suitable for investigating the relationship that exists between two or more variables.

*Population and Sample*

Using a purposive sampling technique, a total of three hundred and fifty youths were selected from the student population in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

*Instruments*

A self-designed instrument titled “Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Emancipation Questionnaire (EEEEQ)” was used in this study to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire comprised 28 positively worded statements utilizing a four-Likert rating scale. It also obtained information on the personal backgrounds of each of the participants. The instrument was face, construct and content validated and subjected to a pilot test, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.75.

*Method of Data Analysis*

Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

*Test of Hypotheses*

*Hypothesis One*

There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial knowledge and economic emancipation of youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State.

The result of the PPMC analysis is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Entrepreneurial knowledge and economic emancipation of youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	P	Remarks
Entrepreneurial knowledge	350	23.02	4.044	0.078	0.01	Sig
Economic emancipation	350	25.05	3.117			

S – Significant at 0.05

The results in Table 1 show that there was a significant relationship between entrepreneurial knowledge and economic emancipation of youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State ( $r = 0.078, p > 0.05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

*Hypothesis Two*

There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation of youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State.

The result of the PPMC analysis is presented in the table below.

Table 2: Entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation of youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	P	Remarks
Entrepreneurial skills	350	23.02	4.044	0.063	0.00	Sig
Economic emancipation	350	25.05	3.117			

S – Significant at 0.05

The results in Table 2 show that there was a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation of youths in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State ( $r = 0.075, p > 0.05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3: Summary of regression for the joint contribution of independent variables to the prediction of economic emancipation

R = 0.421 R square = 0.178 Adjusted R square = 0.163 Std Error = 6.39850					
Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1033.911	2	516.955	12.627	0.000
Residual	4790.081	347	13.804		
Total	5823.992	349	16.687		

Table 3 reveals a significant joint contribution of the independent variables (entrepreneurial knowledge and skills) to the prediction of economic emancipation among the youth. The result suggests that the two variables combined accounted for 16.3% (Adj. R<sup>2</sup> = 0.163) variance in the prediction of economic emancipation. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis shows that there was a significant effect of the independent variables on the economic emancipation F (4,117 = 12.627, P<0.05).

### III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results in Table 1 show that there was a significant relationship between entrepreneurial knowledge and economic emancipation of youth in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State. This is in line with the findings of Charney and Libecap (2000) that there is a positive correlation between knowledge and economic emancipation. This implies that before anybody can be economically emancipated, s/he must have an in-depth entrepreneurial knowledge of that business or career. This is because the entrepreneurial knowledge provides a foundation for future career prosperity. In corroborating this, Oyewumi (2003), Evans and Leighton (2007), and Othman and Ishak (2009) all predicted that entrepreneurial knowledge contributes to success in career development. They therefore concluded that knowledge provides the foundation for every career's prosperity.

The results in Table 2 revealed that there was a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation of youth in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State. The finding is in line with that of Ayanyemi (2018) that there was a significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and economic emancipation among youths in Nigeria. He therefore concluded that the acquisition of the relevant entrepreneurial skills by citizens of a particular nation is one of the critical factors for industrial and economic development. In addition, Ekong and Ekong (2016) asserted that for any nation in search of a high level of industrialization to succeed, the provision of relevant entrepreneurial skills must be given serious consideration. He described the acquisition of relevant skills as an important index required for appreciable sustainable development, ability for improvement and sustainability of socio-economic development.

### IV. CONCLUSION

From the above, it can clearly be seen that the importance of empowering the youth of any society for meaningful development cannot be overemphasized. When the youth is empowered through entrepreneurship education and is given an enabling environment to demonstrate or make use of their acquired entrepreneurial skills, it enables such youth to become more responsible to their society.

### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made so as to bring about economic emancipation among youth.

- i. More emphasis should be placed on entrepreneurial skill acquisition and making adequate provision for learning tools and materials.
- ii. Government should also make available grants for youth that show potential to demonstrate and maximize the acquired entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.
- iii. There should be proper monitoring to ensure that the money released for entrepreneurial training of the youth is used for that purpose.

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