

Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition Required by Business Education Graduates for Employment Generation in Kwara State

Felicia Kikelomo OLUWALOLA

Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
oluwalola.fk@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

Entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is designed to empower students with the skills to exhibit enterprise, innovation, and creativity in research, teaching, and the application of knowledge for sustainable livelihoods. This study investigated the entrepreneurial skills essential for business education graduates to foster employment generation in Kwara State, Nigeria. Employing a descriptive survey design, the population comprised 428 business educators from Kwara State College of Education, Kwara State Polytechnic, and the University of Ilorin. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 217 participants: 73 from the University of Ilorin, 72 from Kwara State Polytechnic, and 72 from Kwara State College of Education, based on Research Advisor (2006). The study addressed three research questions and tested four hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Data were collected using a structured and validated questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition Required by Business Education Graduates for Employment Generation in Kwara State (ESARBEGEG)." The instrument's face and content validity were established, and its reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were employed to analyze the research questions, while ANOVA and independent sample t-tests were used to test the hypotheses. Findings highlighted the critical role of entrepreneurial skill acquisition in equipping graduates for employment generation. It was recommended that higher institutions, particularly business education departments, should organize annual workshops to sensitize students on the importance of acquiring entrepreneurial skills.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition, Business Education Graduates, Employment Generation

Introduction

Nigeria faces a complex mix of political, economic, and social challenges stemming from governance issues, global economic dynamics, and structural inefficiencies. These issues have deepened the crises of unemployment, poverty, stress, and hunger across the nation. In light of this, equipping individuals with the skills and competencies necessary for self-employment and self-reliance has become a critical strategy to combat these challenges. In today's dynamic job market, entrepreneurial skills are no longer optional but essential. The rise of technology, automation, and globalization has reshaped employer expectations, making creativity, problem-solving, leadership, and adaptability just as important as technical expertise.

Entrepreneurship is a cornerstone of economic growth and personal independence. It empowers individuals to turn innovative ideas into successful ventures, fostering both self-reliance and societal progress. Recognizing this, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has integrated entrepreneurial proficiency into its benchmark requirements for graduates of tertiary institutions. This forward-thinking policy aims to shift the focus from merely seeking jobs to equipping students with the mindset and capabilities needed to create their own employment opportunities.

For students in business education programs, this focus on entrepreneurship is particularly impactful. Maria et al. (2023) emphasizes that equipping graduates with entrepreneurial skills prepares them to navigate the complexities of the modern economy with confidence. Ademiluyi, as cited in Nwaekete et al. (2017), provides a comprehensive view of entrepreneurship, describing it as a process that involves generating innovative business ideas, identifying and evaluating investment opportunities, and making informed decisions to exploit these opportunities. It also includes setting organizational goals, conducting market research, mobilizing resources, managing risks, fostering innovation, and pursuing diversification to ensure sustainability and growth.

Entrepreneurship education equips students and young individuals with the knowledge, motivation, and skills necessary for entrepreneurial success across various contexts. It focuses on guiding learners to identify and capitalize on opportunities while fostering the competencies and drive needed to engage in entrepreneurial activities for a fulfilling life. The objectives of entrepreneurship education include: (a) providing functional education that enables youths to become self-reliant; (b) equipping graduates with the creativity and innovation required to explore new business opportunities; (c) acting as a driver for economic growth and development; (d) alleviating poverty; and (e) facilitating employment generation (Ekoh & Anthonia, 2016). According to Obananya (2022), entrepreneurship education introduces diverse skills and expertise into society, contributing significantly to a nation's economic advancement.

Business education, a fundamental aspect of general education, prepares individuals for professional success and self-sufficiency, particularly in challenging economic times. Seyi et al. (2023) described business education as an academic programme designed to develop a highly skilled, creative, and knowledgeable workforce capable of thriving in dynamic work environments while fostering self-reliance. Similarly, Okoli (2010) viewed business education as a vital component of general education that equips individuals with the skills and knowledge needed for

business and office-related occupations. It emphasizes the development of business acumen for both personal growth and national development, promoting self-reliance, job creation, and economic progress. This underscores the significant role of business education in reducing unemployment and empowering Nigerian youths to achieve economic independence.

Business education, like other academic disciplines, encompasses training for business, office occupations, economic literacy, and entrepreneurship, equipping students with foundational skills essential for future success (Onyeson et al., 2012). Onyeson and Ashibogwu (2013) outlined the core objectives of business education to include: (a) developing foundational skills for personal and professional use; (b) acquiring fundamental knowledge and competencies in business; (c) applying acquired knowledge and skills to national development; (d) gaining proficiency in office-related tasks; (e) providing a solid foundation for advanced studies in business; and (f) fostering basic work-oriented skills for students who may not pursue further training. The relevance of business education in preparing students to meet the demands of the modern business world has grown significantly. Graduates must be equipped with a diverse set of entrepreneurial skills to identify and capitalize on business opportunities, manage risks, and adapt to evolving market conditions.

Entrepreneurial skills acquisition refers to the process of obtaining essential skills required to successfully run a business or contribute to its growth. Iwuoha et al. (2021) described entrepreneurial skills as business-related competencies acquired through education, enabling individuals to navigate and excel in a dynamic business environment. With the private sector increasingly dominating the global economy, thriving in the 21st century demands the ability to take calculated risks and innovate. For business education students to excel and contribute meaningfully to their communities, they need hands-on entrepreneurial experiences. Business education programs, therefore, aim to train students for diverse roles in the corporate world while fostering entrepreneurial capabilities essential for labor market success.

These programmes empower students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to drive enterprises across various contexts. Entrepreneurial training is interdisciplinary, integrating concepts from multiple fields to cultivate a mindset geared toward creating business opportunities. According to Sherine et al. (2018), key entrepreneurial skills in business education include Management Skill, Creative skill, Planning skill, Opportunity identification skill, Cooperative skill, Communication skill, financial management skill, Conflict prevention and Resolution skill.

To effectively inculcate these skills, students must engage in practical, hands-on learning experiences that bridge theoretical knowledge with real-world applications.

Adulkadir (2011) emphasized that one of the most remarkable features of business education is its ability to produce graduates who can work independently as entrepreneurs and employers of labor. This goal is achieved through foundational training in career development, entrepreneurship, business principles, office management, and vocational activities. For business education graduates to thrive as independent business owners, they must acquire critical entrepreneurial skills that are pivotal to the success of any well-established enterprise. Obananya (2022) further highlighted that entrepreneurship skill acquisition programs in educational institutions equip learners with the knowledge and expertise to recognize and capitalize on entrepreneurial opportunities, thereby contributing to national economic growth.

By mastering these entrepreneurial skills, business education students are better prepared to face the challenges and risks of establishing and managing their businesses in competitive and unstable economies. They gain the competence, confidence, and resilience needed to hire employees, contribute to economic development, and help alleviate unemployment challenges in the nation (Falobi et al., 2020). However, the fast-evolving nature of the corporate world demands that business education students continuously adapt and learn new skills to remain competitive and relevant.

Despite the clear benefits of entrepreneurial education for business students, several obstacles hinder its effectiveness in job creation. Binuomote and Okoli (2017), identified key challenges facing entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. These include a shortage of lecturers with practical entrepreneurial experience, difficulties in developing appropriate curriculum content, and a lack of entrepreneurial culture and competitive spirit. Other barriers include inadequate resources such as teaching materials, equipment, and funding, as well as the absence of dedicated entrepreneurship programs in many school curricula.

Furthermore, as Ubong (2017) observed, while several Nigerian tertiary institutions have established Entrepreneurship Development Centres, their focus often leans disproportionately toward generating revenue for the institutions rather than fostering robust entrepreneurial capabilities among students. This lack of prioritization in teaching entrepreneurship limits its potential impact, underscoring the need for a more focused, student-centered approach to entrepreneurship education in higher learning institutions. Overcoming these challenges requires

deliberate efforts to integrate entrepreneurship training more effectively into the curriculum, provide access to experienced mentors, and create a supportive environment that fosters innovation and skill development. By doing so, business education can fully equip graduates to navigate the complexities of the modern economy and contribute meaningfully to societal progress.

Building on the preceding discussion, it is essential to establish a clear philosophy and set of goals for entrepreneurship education. These should prioritize cultivating entrepreneurial awareness and skills among students and faculty who show interest. As Ubong (2017) pointed out, the absence of a well-defined framework has resulted in inadequate facilities for effective teaching and learning. Similarly, Adelakun and Kenu, as cited in Binuomote and Okoli (2017), argued that unemployment and its associated challenges cannot be addressed without a concerted effort to minimize the barriers to self-employment. This underscores a fundamental issue: the challenges facing entrepreneurship education stem from an inadequately established foundation. These gaps highlight the necessity of this study, which aims to explore the entrepreneurial skills required by business education graduates for generating employment in Kwara State.

The business education curriculum is designed to equip students with practical skills that promote self-reliance. It seeks to empower young people with the knowledge and abilities needed to achieve financial independence, create jobs, and contribute to economic growth. The primary goals of business education include fostering skills, competencies, and the ability to identify and develop business opportunities. While entrepreneurial skills have been introduced to complement these objectives, their implementation has not fully bridged the gap between theoretical instruction and the demands of the labor market.

This disconnect has led to noticeable disparities between classroom learning and real-world industry needs. Okorie and Ijeoma (2019) highlighted a significant gap between the theoretical knowledge imparted through business education programs in Nigeria and the practical skills necessary for entrepreneurial success. This misalignment has resulted in low rates of successful business startups among graduates. Similarly, Adunola (2020) observed that the insufficient emphasis on entrepreneurial skill acquisition in Nigerian business education programs perpetuates cycles of unemployment and underemployment. They stressed the need for a curriculum overhaul to include more practical, hands-on entrepreneurship training.

Addressing these shortcomings requires a comprehensive approach to curriculum redesign, one that integrates practical entrepreneurial experiences with academic instruction. By bridging

the gap between theory and practice, business education can better prepare graduates to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship, drive job creation, and contribute meaningfully to economic development.

Statement of the Problem

The lack of adequate entrepreneurial skills among business education graduates in Kwara State remains a critical challenge, hindering employment generation and stalling economic development. Many graduates find themselves unprepared to tackle the demands of entrepreneurship, limiting their ability to innovate, create jobs, and contribute to reducing unemployment and underemployment in the state. This disconnect highlights a significant gap between the skills imparted through formal education and the practical requirements of the labor market.

Several studies have identified barriers that obstruct the effective acquisition of entrepreneurial skills necessary for job creation. Egbeyemi et al. (2023) emphasized that the introduction of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions was intended as a strategic response to the growing problem of graduate unemployment. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is undermined by persistent challenges such as inadequate practical training, insufficient resources, and misaligned curricula. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to investigate the entrepreneurial skills required by business education graduates to foster employment generation in Kwara State. The findings aim to provide actionable insights into bridging the gap between education and market demands, ensuring that graduates are better equipped to contribute to economic growth and self-reliance.

Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to explore the entrepreneurial skills that business education graduates need to foster employment generation in Kwara State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. identify the key entrepreneurial skills required by business education graduates to effectively create employment opportunities in Kwara State.
2. examine the challenges hindering entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employment generation in Kwara State.
3. Find possible solutions to address these challenges of entrepreneurial skills acquisition for business education graduates in Kwara State.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What entrepreneurial skills do business education graduates need to effectively generate employment in Kwara State?
2. What challenges hinder the acquisition of these entrepreneurial skills for employment generation in Kwara State?
3. What are the possible solutions to overcome these challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition for business education graduates in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business educators regarding the entrepreneurial skills required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business educators on the challenges hindering entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employment generation in Kwara State.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business educators regarding the strategies to address the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employment generation in Kwara State.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of business educators from different institutions on the challenges associated with entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employment generation in Kwara State.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design of the correlational type, targeting 428 business educators from Kwara State College of Education, Kwara State Polytechnic, and the University of Ilorin. In this study, a multistage sampling technique was used. First, three institutions: University of Ilorin, Kwara State Polytechnic, and Kwara State College of Education were purposively selected. Then, departments offering business education were chosen from each institution. After that, business educators were randomly selected from each department, with participants further stratified by gender to ensure both male and female educators were represented. Finally, research instruments were administered to the selected educators who

consented to participate, ensuring a balanced and representative sample from each institution and gender group.

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire adapted from Iwuoha et al. (2021), with 20 additional items developed for this study, resulting in a 50-item questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition Required by Business Education Graduates for Employment Generation in Kwara State (ESARBEGEG)." The questionnaire was divided into two main parts: Part A: Focused on respondents' demographic information, including gender (male or female). Part B: Divided into three sections: Section A: Containing 30 items designed to assess the entrepreneurial skills required by business education graduates. Sections B and C: Each comprising 10 items to explore challenges and possible solutions, respectively. A four-point rating scale was employed for data analysis: For research question one, responses ranged from Very Highly Required (4) to Not Required (1). For research questions two and three, responses ranged from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1).

To ensure the instrument's reliability and validity, Cronbach's alpha was used, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Data collection was conducted by the researcher, supplemented by Google Forms for efficiency. For analysis, a benchmark of 3.00 was used to interpret the findings: Responses with a mean score below 3.00 were classified as Moderately Required. Responses with a mean score of 3.00 or above were classified as Very Highly Required. Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, were used to address the research questions. Additionally, ANOVA and independent sample t-tests were employed to test the study's hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance, ensuring robust and meaningful results.

Results

Analysis of Demographic variable

The demographic distribution of respondents is summarized in Table 1

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Institution

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	100	46.1
	Female	117	53.9
	Total	217	100.0
Institution	University of Ilorin	73	33.6
	Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin	72	33.2
	College of Education, Ilorin	72	33.2
	Total	217	100

From the data, a total of 217 participants were involved in the study, with a slightly higher representation of females (117 respondents, 53.9%) compared to males (100 respondents, 46.1%). This indicates that more women participated in the research, reflecting a higher interest or availability among female business educators for the study. In terms of institutional representation, the University of Ilorin had the largest group of participants, contributing 73 respondents (33.6% of the total sample). Meanwhile, both Kwara State Polytechnic and the College of Education, Ilorin, each had 72 participants, representing 33.2% of the sample size for each institution. Although the University of Ilorin had a marginally larger representation, the distribution across the three institutions was fairly even, ensuring a balanced perspective from the various educational settings. The accompanying bar chart in Figure 1 visually highlights the gender distribution among respondents, further illustrating the slightly higher participation of females compared to males.

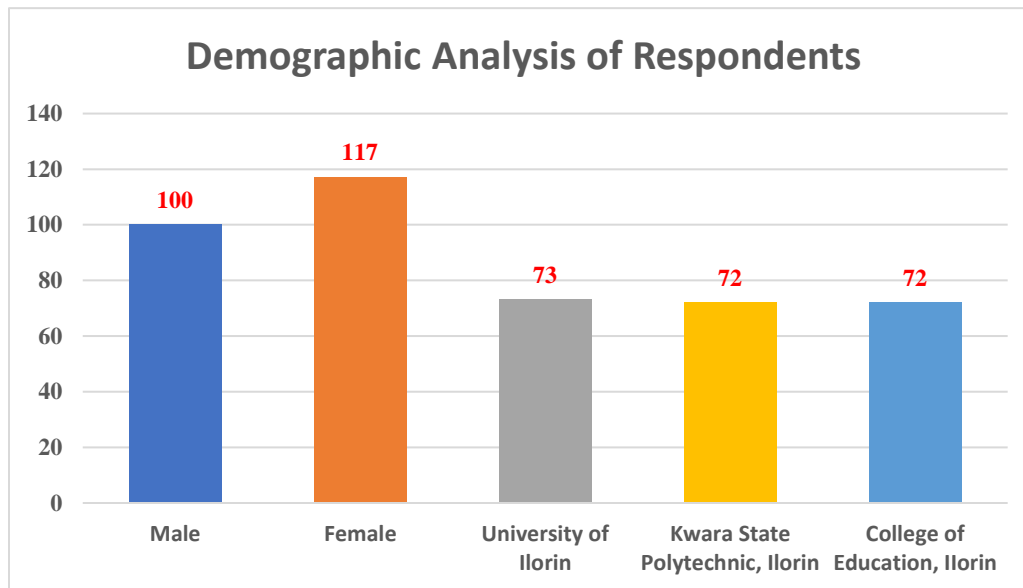


Figure 1: Bar Chart Representing Respondents' Gender Distribution

Research Question 1: What entrepreneurial skills do business education graduates need to effectively generate employment in Kwara State?

Table 2: Summary of mean ratings on the entrepreneurial skills do business education graduates need to effectively generate employment in Kwara State

SN	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Management Skill	3.58	0.564	Very Highly Required
2.	Creative skill	3.51	0.569	Very Highly Required
3.	Planning skill	3.59	0.587	Very Highly Required
4.	Opportunity identification skill	3.37	0.617	Very Highly Required

5.	Cooperative skill	3.50	0.630	Very Highly Required
6.	Communication skill	3.62	0.539	Very Highly Required
7.	Goal setting skill	3.57	0.668	Very Highly Required
8.	Critical thinking skill	3.50	0.577	Very Highly Required
9.	Problem solving skill	3.47	0.659	Very Highly Required
10.	Decision making skill	3.57	0.573	Very Highly Required
11.	Marketing strategy skill	3.60	0.526	Very Highly Required
12.	Financial management skill	3.50	0.645	Very Highly Required
13.	Conflict prevention and resolution skill	3.27	0.595	Very Highly Required
14.	Stress management skill	3.16	0.667	Very Highly Required
15.	Good customer relationship skill	3.65	0.534	Very Highly Required
16.	Department recovery skill	3.24	0.627	Very Highly Required
17.	Risk bearing skill	3.37	0.716	Very Highly Required
18.	Motivation skill	3.58	0.539	Very Highly Required
19.	Technical skill	3.40	0.654	Very Highly Required
20.	Innovative skill	3.47	0.637	Very Highly Required
21.	Self-management skill	3.63	0.555	Very Highly Required
22.	Integrity/ honesty skill	3.64	0.576	Very Highly Required
23.	Adaptability skill	3.47	0.645	Very Highly Required
24.	ICT skill	3.35	0.675	Very Highly Required
25.	Negotiation skill	3.38	0.522	Very Highly Required
26.	Networking skill	3.34	0.681	Very Highly Required
27.	Entrepreneurial mindset skill	3.58	0.547	Very Highly Required
28.	Cultural awareness	3.18	0.602	Very Highly Required
29.	Project management skill	3.47	0.560	Very Highly Required
30.	Interpersonal skill	3.53	0.568	Very Highly Required
Grand Mean		3.47	0.602	

Benchmark: < 3.00 = Moderately Required, >=3.00 = Highly Required

Table 2 reveals a shared consensus among male and female business educators on the critical importance of entrepreneurial skill acquisition for business education graduates in generating employment within Kwara State. With an overall grand mean of **3.47** and a standard deviation of **0.602**, the findings underscore a unified agreement on the necessity of these skills. This high mean score highlights the recognition among educators that entrepreneurial skills are not just beneficial but essential for equipping graduates with the tools they need to enhance their employability, foster innovation, and achieve self-reliance. Such skills play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between academic learning and the practical demands of the labor market, ultimately enabling graduates to create opportunities for themselves and others.

Research Question 2: What challenges hinder the acquisition of these entrepreneurial skills for employment generation in Kwara State?

Table 3: Summary of mean ratings on the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employment generation in Kwara State

SN	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Poor organization and entrepreneurship classes by schools	3.35	0.747	SA
2.	Inadequate infrastructure and facilities	3.53	0.658	SA
3.	Poor teaching methods	3.01	0.965	SA
4.	Wrong placement of the head of the entrepreneur unit	3.01	0.948	SA
5.	Poor curriculum planning	3.30	0.862	SA
6.	Lack of finance	3.54	0.698	SA
7.	Poor motivation among teachers	3.22	0.855	SA
8.	Lack of interest by students	3.16	0.874	SA
9.	Lack of practical experience by students	3.17	0.967	SA
10.	Lack of an enabling environment for practical	3.39	0.777	SA
Grand Mean		3.27	0.835	

Benchmark: < 3.00 = Agreed, > = 3.00 = Strongly Agreed

Table 3 highlights the mean rating of challenges hindering entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employment generation in Kwara State, as identified by the respondents. The findings reveal that several factors significantly impede the effectiveness of entrepreneurial education. Respondents agreed that poor organization of entrepreneurship classes by schools (**Mean = 3.35, SD = 0.747**), inadequate infrastructure and facilities (**Mean = 3.53, SD = 0.658**), and poor teaching methods (**Mean = 3.01, SD = 0.965**) are major obstacles. Additionally, issues such as improper placement of the heads of entrepreneurial units (**Mean = 3.01, SD = 0.948**), poor curriculum planning (**Mean = 3.30, SD = 0.862**), and lack of financial resources (**Mean = 3.54, SD = 0.698**) were highlighted as significant barriers. Other challenges include low motivation among teachers (**Mean = 3.22, SD = 0.855**), lack of interest from students (**Mean = 3.16, SD = 0.874**), insufficient practical experience (**Mean = 3.17, SD = 0.967**), and the absence of an enabling environment for practical learning (**Mean = 3.39, SD = 0.777**). These issues collectively contribute to the difficulty of acquiring entrepreneurial skills effectively. The overall grand mean of **3.27 (SD = 0.835)** suggests a strong agreement among respondents that these challenges are both pervasive and significant. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions, such as improving curriculum planning, enhancing teaching methodologies, addressing infrastructural deficits, and fostering an environment that encourages practical learning and student engagement. Addressing these challenges will be critical in empowering business education graduates with the

entrepreneurial skills necessary to drive employment generation and economic growth in Kwara State.

Research Question 3: What are the possible solutions to overcome these challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition for business education graduates in Kwara State?

Table 4: Summary of mean ratings on the way forward to the challenges of entrepreneur skill acquisition for employment generation in Kwara state

SN	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Utilize a small group system for good organization among students.	3.58	0.610	SA
2.	Provide efficient and effective infrastructure and facilities.	3.70	0.567	SA
3.	Utilize an effective and appropriate teaching method.	3.61	0.612	SA
4.	An expert should head the entrepreneurship unit.	3.68	0.539	SA
5.	Plan the curriculum to accommodate the needed practical	3.60	0.560	SA
6.	Provision of sufficient funds	3.74	0.479	SA
7.	Students should be motivated.	3.62	0.654	SA
8.	Skill acquisition centers should be established for practical	3.71	0.475	SA
9.	Collaborate with industries to ensure that students are exposed to relevant skills needed in the labour market.	3.72	0.508	SA
10.	Organizing networking events and career fairs for building professional connections	3.58	0.547	SA
Grand Mean		3.65	0.555	

Benchmark: < 3.00 = Agreed, > = 3.00 = Strongly Agreed

Table 4 provides possible solutions to address the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition for employment generation in Kwara State. The findings highlight several strategies that respondents strongly agreed upon as critical steps forward. These include adopting a small-group system for better organization among students (**Mean = 3.58, SD = 0.610**) and providing efficient and effective infrastructure and facilities (**Mean = 3.70, SD = 0.567**). Additionally, employing effective and appropriate teaching methods (**Mean = 3.61, SD = 0.612**) and ensuring that the entrepreneurship unit is headed by qualified experts (**Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.539**) were emphasized. Curriculum planning that incorporates necessary practical components (**Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.560**) and the provision of sufficient funding (**Mean = 3.74, SD = 0.479**) were also deemed essential. Motivating students (**Mean = 3.62, SD = 0.654**) and establishing skill acquisition centers to facilitate practical learning (**Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.475**) are additional steps respondents strongly supported. Collaboration with industries to expose students to relevant market-demanded skills

(**Mean = 3.72, SD = 0.508**) and organizing networking events and career fairs to build professional connections (**Mean = 3.58, SD = 0.547**) were equally prioritized. The grand mean rating (**Mean = 3.65, SD = 0.555**) reflects a strong consensus among respondents on the importance of these measures. These recommendations address the multifaceted challenges previously identified, such as inadequate infrastructure, ineffective teaching methods, and lack of practical opportunities. By implementing these strategies, it is anticipated that entrepreneurial education in Kwara State will better equip business education graduates with the skills required to generate employment and contribute to economic growth effectively.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators on the entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara State.

Table 5: Comparison of Mean Responses Between Male and Female Business Educators on Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition

Variable	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	104.98	11.08	0.303	215	0.762	Not Significant
Female	104.55	9.99				

p-value < 0.05

Table 5 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators on the entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara State. The statistical analysis yielded a t-value of 0.303 and a p-value of 0.762, which is greater than the significance threshold of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is retained. This result implies that both male and female business educators share similar perspectives on the entrepreneurial skills required by business education graduates for employment generation. The alignment in their views underscores a shared understanding of the challenges and priorities in equipping graduates with entrepreneurial competencies. This consensus is vital for fostering a unified approach to addressing the skill gaps and enhancing the effectiveness of entrepreneurial education in Kwara State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators on the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara State.

Table 6: Summary of mean responses of male and female business educators on the on the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara state

Variable	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	32.66	5.20	0.056	215	0.955	Not Significant
Female	32.71	5.92				

p-value < 0.05

Table 6 indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators on the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara State. The analysis yielded a t-value of 0.056 and a p-value of 0.955, which exceeds the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is upheld. This result suggests that male and female business educators hold similar perspectives on the challenges faced by graduates in acquiring entrepreneurial skills. Their shared views point to a unified recognition of the barriers impeding entrepreneurial education, such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient practical experiences, and financial constraints. This consensus is essential for fostering a collaborative approach among stakeholders to address these challenges and strengthen the effectiveness of entrepreneurial education programs in the state.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators on the way forward to addressing the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara State.

Table 7: Comparison of Mean Responses Between Male and Female Business Educators on Solutions to Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition Challenges

Variable	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	36.55	3.76	0.066	215	0.948	Not Significant
Female	36.52	3.77				

p-value < 0.05

The findings presented in Table 7 reveal no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators regarding solutions to the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara State. The statistical analysis yielded a t-value of 0.066 and a p-value of 0.948, which is well above the 0.05 threshold for significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted. This result underscores a shared perspective between male and female educators on the proposed solutions to address the challenges facing entrepreneurial skill acquisition. Both groups recognize the

importance of steps such as enhanced funding, effective teaching methods, improved infrastructure, collaboration with industries, and the establishment of practical skill centers. This consensus reflects a unified commitment to improving the entrepreneurial skill acquisition process and ultimately fostering greater self-reliance and employment opportunities for business education graduates in Kwara State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the institutions regarding the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Kwara State.

Table 8: ANOVA Summary of Differences in Institutional Responses on Challenges of Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Between Groups	8.186	2	4.093	0.130	0.878	Not Significant
Within Group	6746.321	214	31.525			
Total	6754.507	216				

Table 8 demonstrates that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses across the institutions regarding the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition for business education graduates in Kwara State. The ANOVA results, with $F(2, 214) = 0.130$ and a p-value of 0.878, exceed the 0.05 significance level. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This finding indicates that the University of Ilorin, Kwara State Polytechnic, and Kwara State College of Education share a similar perception of the challenges faced by business education graduates in acquiring entrepreneurial skills essential for employment generation. These challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, poor teaching methods, and insufficient funding are recognized uniformly across the institutions. The consensus among the institutions underscores the importance of a collaborative and unified approach in tackling these obstacles. Addressing these shared challenges is essential for improving the entrepreneurial readiness and employability of business education graduates, fostering economic growth, and reducing unemployment in Kwara State.

Discussion of Findings

The results from research question one indicated a strong consensus among male and female business educators that entrepreneurial skills are essential for business education graduates to generate employment. This shared perspective underscores the critical role entrepreneurial skills

play in fostering self-reliance and success in the evolving job market. This aligns with the observations of Iwuoha et al. (2021), who emphasized that entrepreneurial skills are vital competencies acquired through education, enabling individuals to adapt and thrive as entrepreneurs in dynamic business environments. Similarly, Seyi et al. (2023) highlighted that business education is designed to equip students with the skills, creativity, and knowledge necessary to excel in today's competitive workforce and pursue self-employment. As such, encouraging students to undergo rigorous entrepreneurial training is paramount to empowering them for self-sufficiency.

In addressing research question two, the study identified significant challenges hindering entrepreneurial skill acquisition among business education graduates. These include ineffective teaching methods, student disinterest, poorly designed curricula, financial constraints, and insufficient practical exposure. These findings resonate with Ubong (2017), who noted that while many Nigerian higher institutions have established Entrepreneurship Development Centres, their objectives often seem misaligned, focusing more on private revenue generation than on fostering entrepreneurial capacity among students.

For research question three, the study outlined pathways to overcome these challenges, such as enhancing infrastructure and facilities, adopting effective teaching methods, incorporating practical training into the curriculum, and ensuring adequate funding. These recommendations align with Adunola (2020), who argued that the insufficient emphasis on entrepreneurial skill acquisition within Nigerian business education programs perpetuates cycles of unemployment and underemployment. They advocate for a comprehensive curriculum redesign that prioritizes practical entrepreneurial training.

The findings from hypothesis one revealed no significant difference in the views of male and female business educators regarding the necessity of entrepreneurial skills for employment generation. Both groups recognized the importance of these skills in enabling graduates to adapt to and excel in the modern workforce, consistent with the perspective of Iwuoha et al. (2021).

Hypothesis two revealed a similar lack of disparity between male and female educators regarding the challenges faced in acquiring entrepreneurial skills. This finding is in harmony with Binuomote and Okoli (2017), who identified systemic issues in entrepreneurship education, such as a lack of practically trained lecturers and challenges in curriculum development, as significant barriers to effective entrepreneurial training in Nigerian institutions.

The results for hypothesis three confirmed that male and female educators shared identical opinions on solutions to the challenges of entrepreneurial skill acquisition. This reflects a unified understanding of the necessity for practical, well-funded, and effectively delivered entrepreneurship education to empower graduates. Adelakun and Kenu (in Binuomote & Okoli, 2017) emphasized that tackling unemployment hinges on addressing barriers to self-employment and creating supportive environments for entrepreneurial growth.

Lastly, hypothesis four demonstrated consensus among the three institutions in Kwara State regarding the challenges faced by business education graduates in acquiring entrepreneurial skills. This shared perspective underscores the need for a coordinated, institution-wide strategy to address these challenges. By fostering collaboration and implementing targeted interventions, institutions can enhance the employability and entrepreneurial readiness of their graduates, contributing meaningfully to economic development and reducing unemployment in Kwara State.

Conclusion

The study concluded that entrepreneurial skills are essential drivers of employment generation for business education graduates, particularly in today's challenging economic climate. Despite its potential, entrepreneurship education faces significant hurdles that hinder its full realization. While it is a promising career pathway in transition, there is still considerable ground to cover in addressing the persistent challenges that undermine its effectiveness.

Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen entrepreneurial skill acquisition among business education students:

1. Business education programs in Kwara State should prioritize the integration of entrepreneurial skill acquisition into their curriculum to equip graduates with the essential skills needed for employment generation and self-reliance.
2. Tertiary institutions in Kwara State should improve on entrepreneurship education by enhancing class organization, infrastructure, teaching methods, and curriculum. Also, providing financial support, motivating teachers, and increasing student interest in practical experience will help address key challenges in skill acquisition for employment generation.
3. The higher institutions, should improve infrastructure, adopt small-group teaching, update the curriculum, and ensure qualified leadership in entrepreneurship programmes. Furthermore,

providing funding, motivating students, and partnering with industries will help equip graduates with the skills needed for employment.

4. Since male and female business educators agree on the required entrepreneurial skills, a unified approach should be adopted in designing educational programmes to address the identified skill gaps in Kwara State.
5. Collaboration among stakeholders is needed to address challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of practical experience, and financial constraints in Kwara State's entrepreneurial education programmes.
6. The Association of Business Educators of Nigeria should ensure that business education departments in various higher institutions of learning are well equipped with relevant functional materials. In addition, industry collaboration and practical skill centers for business education graduates in Kwara State.
7. A collaborative approach should be taken to address challenges like inadequate infrastructure, poor teaching methods, and insufficient funding, to improve the employability of business education graduates in Kwara State.

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