



ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *In the world over, the constant increase in the level of unemployment has awakened government at all levels to realize the importance of entrepreneurship education as a stimulant for driving economic growth and development. This work is a review of entrepreneurship education, a General Studies programme of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo and its relevance to national development. A survey questionnaire was formulated and sent to progressing ex-students of Ajayi Crowther University who are applying the knowledge gained from General Studies (GES) of Entrepreneurship Education rather than their primary field of study in establishing their own businesses. The review showed that entrepreneurship education is a tool that is needed for building soft skills in students, reducing the rate of unemployed university graduates and enhancing economic and national development. The paper recommends a constant review on technical skills training, creation of idea incubators, industrial attachments and programmes relative to students' field of study.*

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Students, Skills, National Development, Economic Growth.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is constantly evolving as nations and economies are being shaped and directed by entrepreneurs. The deplorable state of unemployment and level of poverty in Nigeria has created a platform and drive for a lot of individuals to look towards entrepreneurship without proper training, information literacy and emotional intelligence. There is no doubt that entrepreneurship is a tool for positive change, economic development and innovations.

In spite of several efforts that have been made by both government and private organizations, the effect of entrepreneurship programmes has not been felt due to the inability to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial training and vocational skill training which created the need for Entrepreneurship education. Based on the structural and



functional flaws found in the nation's developmental blueprint, it then dawns on government that the proper thing to do is to review the nation's education curriculum by embedding entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course to be taken by all undergraduate students. Onuoha (2011) notes that the Nigerian education especially university system produces graduates that do not meet the need of the labour market; there is obvious disconnection and mismatch between the expectations of the industry and products of the nation's higher institutions. This structural imbalance rendered many graduates of Nigerian higher institutions unemployable and hopeless. It is in this regard that the Federal Ministry of Education directed that entrepreneurship education be included as part of the curricula of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) effective from 2007/2008 academic session (ILO, 2011; Gabadeen and Raimi, 2012).

This paper is based on the mandatory entrepreneurship education taken at the undergraduate level in Nigerian universities. The programme which is laudable can be improved to be more relevant to economic and national development.

1.1. Statement of Problem

A critical examination of the educational sector in Nigeria shows that very little or nothing is being done in the area of entrepreneurial, technological and scientific education that should make beneficiaries develop skills, abilities and ideas for national growth and development. The failure to achieve the objectives of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions could be attributed to lack of manpower and infrastructural and instructional facilities, inadequate provision of funds, unstable social and political climate, lack of harmonized entrepreneurship curriculum and harsh business environment. The problems confronting entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions has made it necessary to examine entrepreneurship education as a tool of enhancing national growth and development.

1.2. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What are the developmental tasks and benefits of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions for economic and national development?
2. What are the challenges facing entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions for economic and national development?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to:

- 1.
2. Study the impact of entrepreneurship education on fresh graduates in Nigeria.



3. Analyze the way entrepreneurship education is conducted in Nigerian universities and recommend more effective ways in which undergraduates can be imparted with it.
4. Elucidate the linkage between entrepreneur education and economic and development in Nigeria.

1.4. Hypotheses of the Study

For the purpose of this study, the following null hypotheses are formulated;

H01: Entrepreneurship education does not have a significant effect in the economic and national development of Nigeria.

H02: Entrepreneurship education does not reduce the unemployment rate of fresh university graduates in Nigeria.

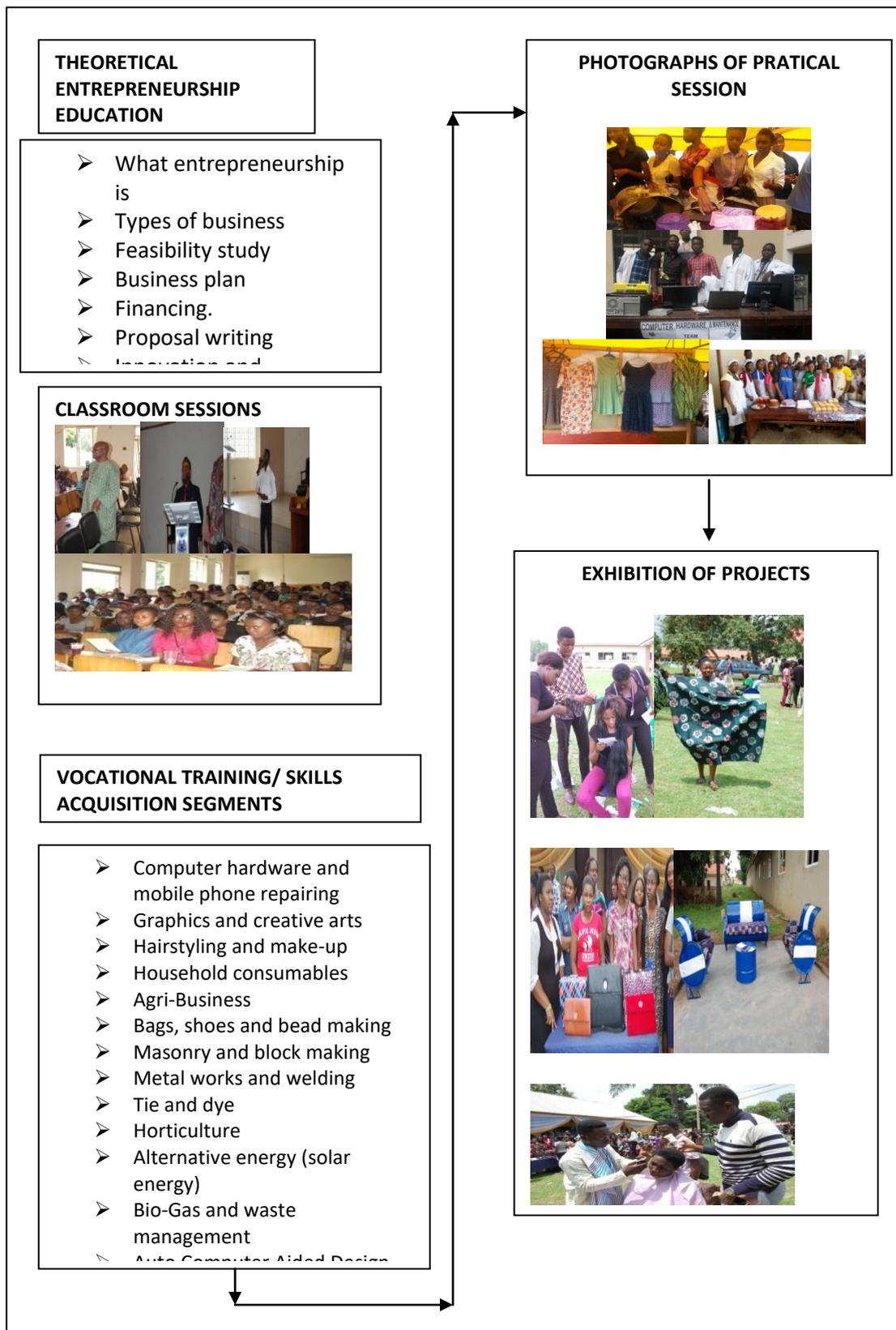




Figure 1. Ajayi Crowther University Curriculum for Entrepreneurship education

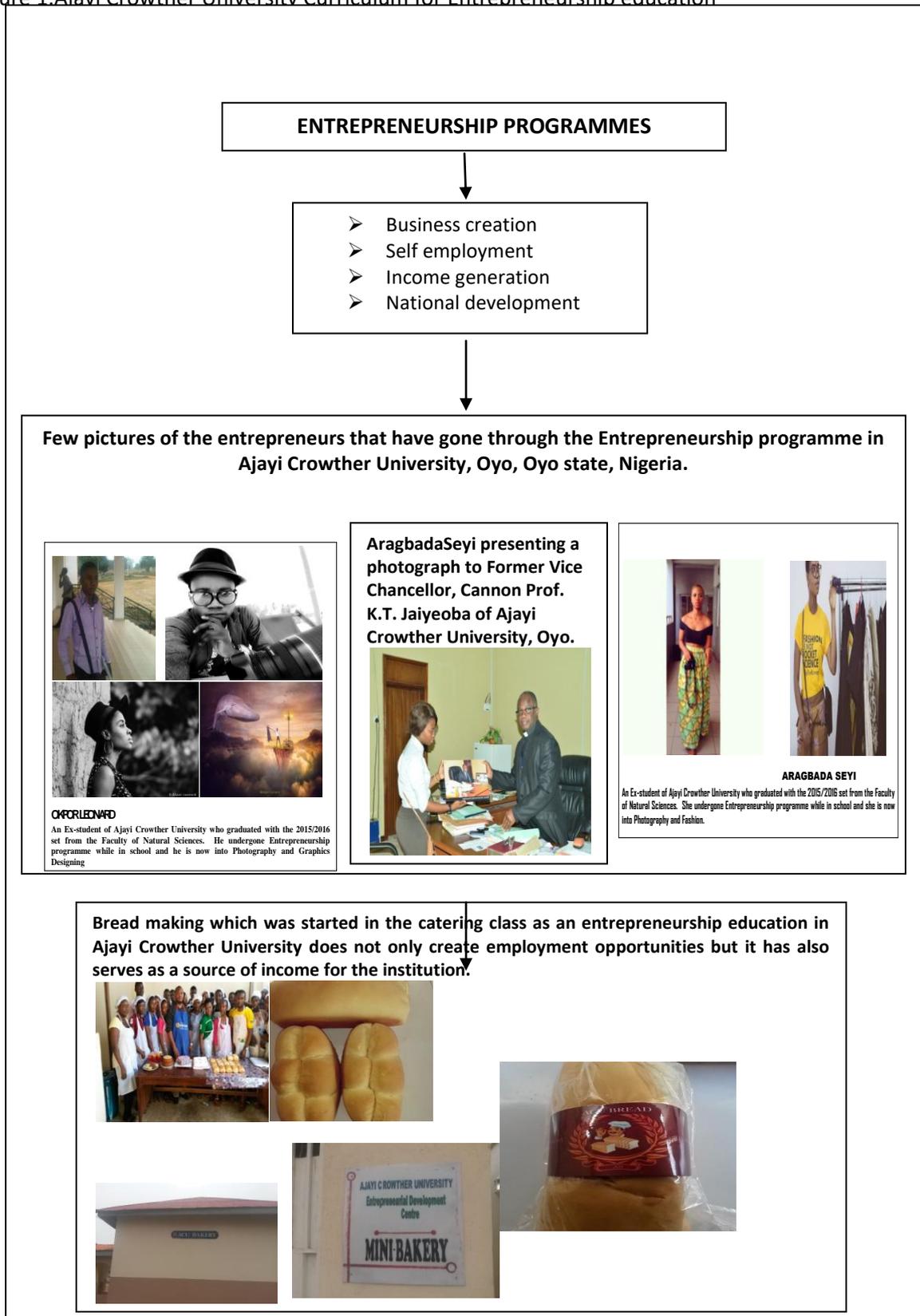


Figure 2. Positive results of the entrepreneurship programmes in Ajayi Crowther University



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

An entrepreneur is defined as someone that ventures into a business with the aim of making profit. The word entrepreneurship is gotten from the French word “*entreprendre*” meaning ‘means to undertake’, thus, entrepreneurship can be considered as the process of emergence, behaviour and performance of an entrepreneur which can be achieved through a formal process of educating an individual on theoretical, vocational and soft skill training (Ogundele, 2004). Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and to run an enterprise successfully. The entrepreneurship spirit is a pre-requisite to an entrepreneurial society and culture. This spirit is required for the overall economic growth of any nation especially developing ones like Nigeria. The personality traits of an entrepreneur includes; versatility, self-motivation, creativity, business skills, marketing and foresight.

Entrepreneurship education is the incorporation into the students’ mind, steps involved in starting a new business based on a recognized business opportunity as well as operating and maintaining that business. The belief of some people is that entrepreneurship education does not need to be taught and therefore an entrepreneur is born and not trained or made. It should however be noted that for one to be a successful entrepreneur, he/she needs to learn the requisite skills (Griffin & Hammis, 2001).

Economic development is the process whereby simple, low-income national economies are transformed into modern industrial economies. Although the term is sometimes used as a synonym to *economic growth*, generally it is employed to describe a change in a country’s economy involving qualitative as well as quantitative improvements.

National development can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. This is best achieved through development planning which can be described as the country’s collection of strategies mapped out by government. (Ebue & Onyeze, 2016).

2.1. Roles of Entrepreneurship Education in Economic and National Development in Nigeria

The introduction of Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions is actually a direct response to the changing socio-economic and political conditions in the world and Nigeria in particular (Agbim, Oseghale & Ojo, 2015). Entrepreneurship education can greatly help in addressing the level of poverty in the country (Akinyemi, 2017). The issue of poverty eradication has been a top priority of many governments and institutions, especially in developing countries where extreme poverty is conspicuous and has become a pandemic. The rate of poverty in Nigeria is on the high side, where about 80% of the total population has been classified as poor (Aremu & Adeyemi, 2011). This state may be seen as a direct consequence of the absence of entrepreneurial spirit and culture which Entrepreneurship education is supposed to foster (Anyadike & Atuma, 2015). In other words, the relevance of Entrepreneurship education is felt more in the area of checking or reducing poverty. Entrepreneurship education equally helps in checking high dependency ratios in the country. Once the working population are adequately equipped with these



entrepreneurial skills thereby leading to self-employment, burden arising from dependent population will be reduced (Akinyemi, 2017).

Entrepreneurship education is relevant to economic and national development in the following ways:

1. **Innovation and Technological Advancement:** For an entrepreneur to sustain his/her business, there is a need to get ahead of one's competitors but mostly faced with constraints not just financial but also technologically which drives the entrepreneurs to look inward therefore improving an economies indigenous technological base which causes a quick transformation in a nation's economy (Agbim, Oseghale&Ojo, 2015).
2. **Rural Sufficiency:** In Nigeria, one of the greatest challenges is the high level of rural-urban migration which in most urban areas brings an increase in the rate of negative vices being experienced. Entrepreneurship education is instrumental to rural areas for indigenes to understand the business and profit potentials around them (Onugu, Okereke&Eze, 2014).
3. **Reduction in Importation and Increase in Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** Entrepreneurship education creates a platform for increase in manufacturing and production of goods thereby increasing export and improving our foreign exchange (Anyadike&Atuma, 2015).

2.2. Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

Nigeria as a nation is saddled with setbacks that affect the harnessing of the great potential available with growth of entrepreneurship. A few of these challenges are highlighted as follows:

1. **Inadequate Financial Literacy:** In recent years, government efforts have been on the acquisition of trade and vocational skills which help entrepreneurs to start the business and the lack of financial management to sustain it.
2. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** As a developing economy this challenge is the most paramount as the cost of running a small business is expensive, unavailability of regular power supply, lack of good and accessible road and increase in the level of corruption.
3. **Lack of Soft Skills:** For an individual to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and technical skill there is a need for soft skills which enable an entrepreneur to sustain a business by risk taking, character and emotional intelligence.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on the case study of Ajayi Crowther University Entrepreneurship Education curriculum relative to its impact on graduates from the school that have been able to establish their businesses. The data collection was done through questionnaire which was administered to thirty-four (34) graduate students of Ajayi Crowther University.

The primary data collection was done through a questionnaire which was administered to thirty-four (34) graduate students of Ajayi Crowther University. Interviews



with interviewees are conducted and participants answered each question on a scale of 1 to 5; 5 stands for 'Strongly Agree', 4 stands for 'Agree', 3 stands for 'Neutral', 2 stands for 'Disagree' and 1 stands for 'Strongly Disagree'. Information was also extracted from secondary sources in addition to primary data collection. Also, the author collected information from secondary sources like; publications of the nation, magazines, book, journals, and reports.

4. ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an important part of the research. To better visualize the data, the author will use the available information. In the case of a study method and probability sample, the author will use a quantitative approach to evaluate results. For the statistical analysis, precise statistical illustrations will be used, and the exact results will be estimated. In order to interpret data accurately and statistically, the author uses a variety of methods and procedures, including Microsoft Excel and similar applications. The author uses many technologies and applications as well as various graphs with a pie chart, map, bar chart, etc. to display the results of the analysis.

In the conduct of surveys and interpretation of the results, demographic analysis is vital. A population analysis specifies the demographics of the samples found in this survey. The survey includes demographic questions emphasizing the name, age, gender, education and employment of respondents.

Table 1. Genders of the respondents (Results gathered from administered questionnaire, 2023)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	21	61.8%
Female	13	38.2%
Total	34	100%

The table (Table 1) above indicates that 61.8% of the respondents were males and 38.2% were females. There were, therefore, more males than females. The pie-chart below illustrates the gender gap of the respondents.

Table 2. Ages of the respondents (Results gathered from administered questionnaire, 2023)

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Below 25	5	14.7%	14.7%
25 – 35	22	64.7%	79.4%
36 – 50	7	20.6%	100%
51 above	0	0%	100%
Total	34	100%	



The ages of the participants (as shown Table 2 above) are significant because their age reflects their wisdom and life experiences which affect their views about entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. This study comprises; 14.7% of respondents below the age of 25 years, 64.7% of respondents between the ages of 25 – 35 years, 20.6% of respondents between the ages of 36 – 50 years, and 0% of respondents who are 51 years and above. The analysis showed that there are no respondents who are between 51 years and above in age and the majority who are between 25 – 35 years of age had good and study-friendly experiences.

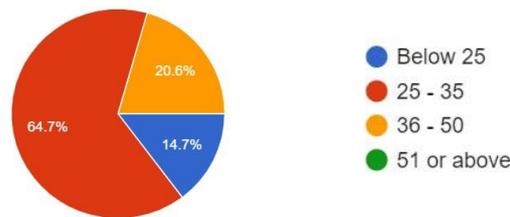


Figure 3. Diagrammatic illustration of the age differences of the respondents

Table 3. Occupation of the respondents (Results gathered from administered questionnaire, 2023)

Occupation's	Frequency's	Percentages	Cumulative Percentages
Service holders	18	52.9%	52.9%
Businesspersons	11	32.4%	85.3%
Others	5	14.7%	100%
Total	34	100%	

Taking a close look on the Table 3, we can see the special activities of the participants. We can see from the table that the minority; 14.7% of the respondents are involved in 'Other' occupations (occupations that are different from being a Businessperson or a Service holder). Other participants (52.9% Service holders and 32.4% Businesspersons) have deeper knowledge of Entrepreneurship and how it works in practice.

The questioning for the quantitative data was carried out closely. The questions were structured in a way that will satisfy the different study objectives. Each aim was evaluated using data related to the goals by setting nine questions per target. In particular, on the 5th scale of Likert, many questions are measured- 1 as "Strongly disagree", 5 as "Strongly agree."



Table 4. Analysis of quantitative data (Results gathered from administered questionnaire, 2023)

Scales	Frequency	Percentages	Cumulative Percentages
Strongly disagree	2	0.65%	0.65%
Disagree	14	4.57%	5.22%
Neutral	51	16.67%	21.89%
Agree	103	33.67%	55.56%
Strongly agree	136	44.44%	100%
Total	306 answers	100%	

A summary of the survey replies “Entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on the economic and national development in Nigeria and students should be encouraged and supported to start-up their own businesses” indicate; 0.65% strongly disagreed, 4.57% disagreed, 16.67% are neutral, 33.67% agreed and 44.44% strongly agreed. Based on this analysis, it can be said that entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on economic and national development. The bar-chart below indicates the responses of the interviewees

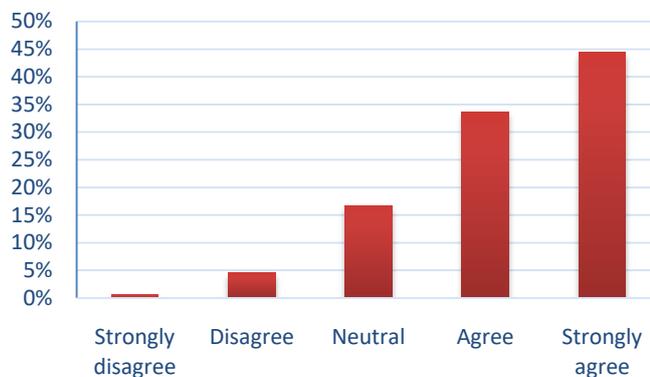


Figure 4. Responses of the interviewees (Bar Chart)

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The summary of the survey questions in the questionnaire is to confirm if Entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on the economic and national development of Nigeria. It was found that entrepreneurship education does have a significant impact in the economic and national development of Nigeria but entrepreneurship education is not taught by experienced lecturer in Nigerian university. In other words, the amount of entrepreneur experts in the country is not enough to impact university undergraduates with a deep knowledge of entrepreneur, this problem can be solved by organizing professional conferences and workshops for lecturers in the field of



entrepreneurship education, providing good infrastructure to boost the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship programme and providing an effective funding strategy for the programme in Nigerian universities.

Further study of secondary data reveals that entrepreneurial education is a tool that is needed to build soft skills in students which will help to reduce the high rate of unemployment in the country. Also, in order to combat the problem of high-rate of unemployment of university graduates in Nigeria, more effort and focus should be put on entrepreneurship education as it is an effective tool to end the narrative of joblessness of Nigerian youths. The recent rise in the number of small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria is evidence. As most university students graduates from school, many of them immediately starts a small business that will be generating money for him or her through the knowledge of entrepreneurship that he/she has gained from the university, this is an evidence that entrepreneurship education has a significant impact on the economic and national development of Nigeria.

6. CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship education is evidently relevant to economic and national development. Most governments' programmes are targeted at aspects of entrepreneurship, however entrepreneurship education give a more holistic approach. Entrepreneurship education also helps undergraduate to understand various employment options to make decision faster, e.g. pursuing a job in the ministry of agriculture or starting one's own farm.

It is my believe that when students are intimated with the ideology, concepts, theories and principles required to make one an entrepreneur; It will expose undergraduates to opportunities abound in entrepreneurship which will create a relative increase in the establishment of business; andIt will increase the level of wealth creation in the economy and a relative decrease in the level of poverty.

In conclusion, tertiary institutions that have the entrepreneurship education in their curriculum should make constant reviews on technical skills training, creation of idea incubators, industrial attachments and programmes relative to students' field of study so as to enhance and build on the entrepreneurship spirit of students.

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