



ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY IN KOGI STATE, NIGER

**Onje Samuel¹, Dr Joel Akowe², Dr (Mrs) Ruth Haruna A³,
Noah Opaluwa⁴, Omejeh Timothy Enejoh⁵**

¹*Business Administration, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja,*

²*Public Administration, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja*

³*Accountancy Department, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja*

⁴*Business Administration, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja*

⁵*Minerals and Petroleum Engineering Department, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja,*

ABSTRACT

The 21st century presents new problems for humanity, including globalization, the rapid rate of invention, and the rapid dissemination of technology. Along with other variables, these are altering not only how economies and businesses operate but also the nature of the labor market. Education is the most effective means available to society to challenge the future. It is widely assumed that the increasing percentage of graduate unemployment is due to a lack of required skills and competencies required by employers. To operate effectively and proficiently in the workplace, graduates must acquire the necessary capacities, knowledge, and skills. And because these skill set is lacking in most graduates; the issue of employability is brought to the table. This paper thus is to bring to light the required skill sets needed by employers of labor and how the graduates are faring as to the supply of these required skills at the sampled workstation. This paper concludes that the graduates need to do better for themselves after graduating to acquire the needed skills sought-after by these employers and also recommends a shift or readjustment of the curriculum to accommodate the required skills needed to flourish in the work place.

KEYWORDS: *Entrepreneurship, Education, Employability, Graduates, Skills, Kogi State*

INTRODUCTION

In all communities, education has been the driving force behind social, economic, and political change, it contributes to ideals that promote individual excellence, social cohesion, and national growth, acting as an integrative force in society. Throughout history, revolutions, social movements, and discoveries and innovations have been the catalysts for advancement. The 21st century presents new problems for humanity, including globalization, the quick rate of invention, the rapid dissemination of technology, and its rapid use in daily life. Along with other variables, these are altering not only how economies and businesses operate but also the nature of the labor market. The knowledge and skills needed for current and future employment are evolving, and as a result, all levels of education must adapt to the new demands (1). Given the dynamic economic environment characterized by profound and rapid change, higher education institutions can no longer provide their graduates with all of the knowledge and skills required to perform in their professional lives. Knowledge and skills needed for effective functioning in a complex global world may be changing. In the information age, industries will have dynamic needs. According to Tony Dolphin [2], these drivers for change will continue “to cause dislocations and disruptions in the labor market”, so that there will continue to be “fundamental shifts in the types of jobs that will be available and skills demanded by employers”. Individuals with "entrepreneurial, scientific, creative, and emotional skills" will be required for the new jobs that will be created in the future [1,2]. Education is the most effective means available to society to challenge the future [3].



What is an Entrepreneur?

An entrepreneur can be a person who has a home business idea and sets up their first online store on the side, or a freelancer just starting. (4). In contrast to the normal individual, entrepreneurs see opportunities and solutions whereas others simply see inconveniences and issues. Entrepreneurs are the engines that propel any economy. When entrepreneurs are educated, they are likely to contribute better to the expansion and advancement of the economy. It is through inculcating sound and practical entrepreneurship education that poverty will be mitigated and subsequently eradicated in our country. (5)

What is Entrepreneurship?

The act of founding an enterprise or business while embracing all the risks to achieve financial gain is referred to as entrepreneurship. Via entrepreneurship, individuals may take control of their careers and steer them in the way they desire. It involves making a life that works for you. infinite bosses, there isn't any time constraints. Because there's no one preventing you. Entrepreneurs always can begin the process of transforming the world for everyone, including themselves. According to real entrepreneurs, Founder and CEO of NeuroFlow, Christopher Molaro says, "Entrepreneurship means being the one who is willing to take a leap and work hard enough to sacrifice everything else around them, all in the name of solving problems because no one else is capable or possesses the desire." Entrepreneurs see better ways to accomplish tasks and look further than the limitations of existing tools and regulations. Perhaps more crucially, they are compelled to take the possible situations because of their passion and urgency to attain their goal.

Entrepreneurship has recently become a hot subject matter in our policy conversation. This real discussion emerged as a result of the fact that a large percentage of Nigerians, notably school leavers, are struggling to find paid employment, possibly requiring the acquisition or training of this pool of human capital as entrepreneurs. To research, Nigeria is the most populated black nation in Africa and 8th in the world with a population strength of over 200 million people, Nigeria has a nominal Growth Domestic Product (GDP) of \$448.10 billion. Despite these statistics, youth unemployment remains a thing of concern to the country today. According to Garba (6), the government of Nigeria is particularly worried about the increasing youth 4 unemployment rate and generally, the bad economic condition in the country. According to Oshewolo (7), this was alarming as more than 45% of the Nigerian population lives below the poverty line, while 67% of the poor are extremely poor. "The reality on the ground which helps to give a better explanation to poverty in Nigeria is that which is seen every day on the streets of both urban and rural areas" (8). To reduce this ugly trend, the Government of Nigeria introduced N-Power together with the Social Investment Programme (SIP) in 2016. Though the Federal Government of Nigeria 1986 established the small-scale industries and Youth Employment Schemes (YES) under the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), and subsequently, You WIN and others aimed at providing skills and micro-credits to beneficiaries to start businesses of their choice, as many more Nigerians are churned out from institutions of higher learning without basic readiness for self-reliance.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education refers to a specified knowledge that inculcates in learners the traits of risk-taking, innovation, arbitrage, and coordination of factors of production for the unique purpose of creating new products or services for new and old users in society (9,10,11). Entrepreneurship is conceptualized as formal or informal structured learning that inculcates in students/trainees the ability to identify, screen, and seize available opportunities in the environment in addition to skill acquisition (12). Defining it as "a process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge, and skills to act on them" (12). Entrepreneurship education is a study of the source of opportunities and the process of discovery (13, 14). To Gartner (15) entrepreneurship is about entrepreneurial individuals creating innovative organizations that grow and create value, either for profit or not. But entrepreneurship does not have to include the creation of new organizations, it can also occur in existing organizations (16).



FIG1: ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION.



Entrepreneurship learning

Learning is at the heart of education, as stated by Ramsden (17): “The aim of teaching is simple, it is to make student learning possible”. Various perspectives and theories on the concept of education have been proposed, which are relevant for entrepreneurship education. “The entrepreneur is forced to alter behavior through experiential learning”. (18). Learning can be defined as a cognitive process of attaining and organizing knowledge, making meaning from experience, and generating new solutions from existing knowledge. The learning process is intended to assist participants in better positioning themselves for entrepreneurship and becoming more enterprising. It is thus intended to cultivate individuals' entrepreneurial spirit, to make them more entrepreneurial, first in terms of mindset, then in terms of actions.

Entrepreneurship training programs aimed at helping students become enterprising individual can also influence their entrepreneurial behavior and orientation. Entrepreneurial behavior can be described as the processes, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to entrepreneurship (19).

Entrepreneurs' goal is not to learn how to run a business or become managers, but to learn how to deal with difficulties as they arise, sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing. The entrepreneur's learning thus entails discovering an increasingly quick and appropriate, feasible solution to the wide range of issues he or she encounters. Teaching “about” entrepreneurship entails a content-heavy and theoretical approach aimed at providing a broad overview of the phenomenon. In higher education institutions, this is the most common approach. Teaching “for” entrepreneurship refers to a career-oriented approach aimed at providing aspiring entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and skills. Through teaching, students undergo a present invention that provides a learning process.

Educational entrepreneurship aims to impart skills, attitudes, aspirations, and competencies mostly among the youths and supply funds to enable them to practice entrepreneurship or create self-employment as well as help generate employment for others (20,21). Therefore, the need for entrepreneurship education is important in our today's educational sectors to make students and youths self-employable after graduation.

Kogi State has been a state with fewer industries and with its proximity to over ten (10) states of the federation make it vulnerable to both homegrown and transmitted unemployment crisis. Therefore, it is imperative for her to deliberately embark on the mission of converting these seeming weaknesses and thread them into the advantage of both attaining self-reliance and securing a crime-free environment.

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYABILITY

In recent years, the concept of employability has remained a focal point for the government, employers, job seekers, and educators. Employability pertains to a person's ability to obtain and keep a job. Individually, Employability is determined by the knowledge, skills, and competencies they possess, how they introduce those assets to potential employers, and the context in which they seek employment. Employability can also be defined as the state of being prepared and fully prepared for a job in which one possesses the necessary skills. Brewer (22) also defined employability in terms of skills, knowledge, and competencies that enhance workers' ability to secure and retain a job and also make progress on the job. Employability skills are defined as graduates' ability to possess and demonstrate the knowledge, characteristics, and attitudes required to obtain and structure a result that allows them to be productive and fulfilled not only in their professions but also in life.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To assess the importance of entrepreneurial skills development on self-employment of youth in Kogi State.
- To examine the extent to which entrepreneurship education has imparted the required skills and attitudes for youth employment and employability in Kogi State.
- To identify the constraints to the practice of entrepreneurship skills in Kogi State.
- To suggest the need for repackaging entrepreneurship education in Kogi State tertiary education sector for optimal effect among the youths.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The significance of an entrepreneur's decision-making skill for self-employment cannot be over-emphasized. According to (22), risk-taking and high-level creativity and innovation are crucial for entrepreneurial success. According to (23), technical skills and business management skills“ are so much important in entrepreneurial engagement. Entrepreneurship is about identifying and converting opportunities. (24) posited that it is about seeking investment opportunities and establishing a profit-oriented enterprise. (25), expressed the need to identify and exploit 6 entrepreneurial opportunities for self-employment. It is thus important that entrepreneurial skills be acquired to enhance the easy identification and conversion of opportunities in the business environment of



Kogi State. The skills acquired are likely to facilitate the distinctive way of handling the entrepreneurial issue, instill self-confidence, and increase self-esteem and self-employment According to (26) The youth's empowerment mainly focuses on creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which youths can act on their behalf and their terms instead of at the direction of others. According to UNESCO (2008), entrepreneurship education consists of a variety of experiences that provide students with the ability and vision to access and transform various opportunities. It goes beyond just starting a business. It aims to improve students' ability to predict and react appropriately to societal changes. These enabling conditions according to these scholars include economics and social base, political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks, a stable environment of equality, peace, democracy, access to knowledge, information, and skills, and a positive value system. In general, education has been shown to have a positive impact on entrepreneurship.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. To what extent do employers in the sampled workplace expect graduates to be entrepreneurial?
2. To what extent do graduates in the sampled workplace demonstrate entrepreneurial skills acquired through Entrepreneurship Education?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

There is no significant difference between entrepreneurial skills required by employers and entrepreneurship skills displayed by graduates.

SURVEY DESIGN

The ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. This is because the design allows the researcher to conduct the study without interfering with the variables, as the variables were already in existence before this research was carried out, and the scientist does not have direct control over the variables. The population of the study comprised 100 employers of labor in both the public and private establishments in the Kogi State of Nigeria. A total of 100 respondents were used for the study. This study employed the random sampling technique, selecting from various Local Government Areas of the state. The instrument for data collection was a four-point Likert scale questionnaire titled Entrepreneurship Education and Graduate Employability Questionnaire (EEGEQ). The instrument is comprised of two sections, Section A which contains items to get data from the graduates, and Section B, which contains items to get data on employers of labor. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean, frequency distribution, percentage, and standard deviation used to analyze the research questions while a t-test was used to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 1: To what extent do employers in the sampled workplace expect graduates to be entrepreneurial?

Table 1: Graduate Entrepreneurial Skill demanded by Employers of labor.

| | | Statistics | | | | | |
|----------------|---------|------------|----------------------|------------|------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| | | INNOVATIVE | ABILITY TO TAKE RISK | CREATIVITY | PROFESSION ALISM | KNOWLEDGE | ABILITY TO COORDINATE SELF AND OTHERS |
| N | Valid | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | | .62 | .51 | .62 | .65 | .56 | .57 |
| Std. Deviation | | .488 | .502 | .488 | .479 | .499 | .498 |
| Minimum | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Maximum | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |



| | | VARIABLES | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | ABILITY TO COORDINATE SELF AND OTHERS | 1 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 16.7 |
| | ABILITY TO TAKE RISKY | 1 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 33.3 |
| | CREATIVTY | 1 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 50.0 |
| | INNOVATIVE | 1 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 66.7 |
| | KNOWLEDGE | 1 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 83.3 |
| | PROFESSIONALISM | 1 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 6 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1 reveals that entrepreneurship skill is required by employers of labor at a weighted average of 2.89 (71.9%). This implies that the level to which employers required entrepreneurship skills is high. The skill of an innovative mindset, professionalism, and general knowledge of the establishment ranked higher in the required skill set by employers of labor. This implies that graduates with an innovative mindset, a sense of professionalism, and Knowledge are more likely to secure employment faster.

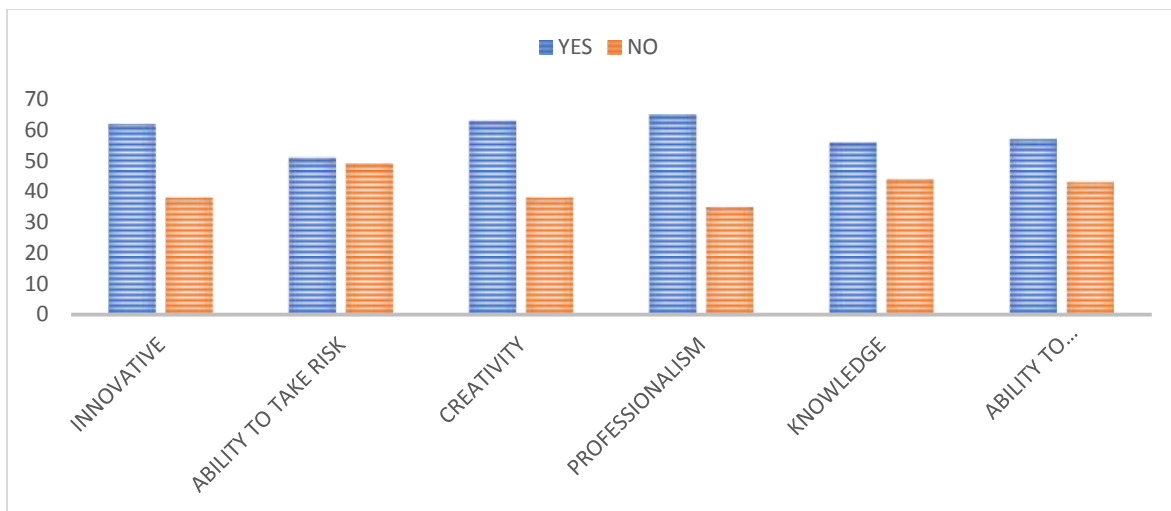


FIG 1: Bar chart showing a relationship between required and not required entrepreneurial skills by employers of labor

TABLE 2: To what extent do graduates in the sampled workplace demonstrate entrepreneurial skills acquired through Entrepreneurship Education?

| N | VARIABLES | NOT DISPLAYED | DISPLAYED | AVERAGELY DISPLAYED | HIGHLY DISPLAYED | MEAN | STD |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------|-------|----------|
| 1 | INNOVATIVE | 6 | 36 | 46 | 12 | 25 | 19.07878 |
| 2 | ABILITY TO COORDINATE SELF AND OTHERS | 8 | 50 | 14 | 23 | 23.75 | 18.55398 |
| 3 | CREATIVTY | 9 | 13 | 60 | 18 | 25 | 23.62202 |
| 4 | ABILITY TO TAKE RISKY | 11 | 47 | 36 | 6 | 25 | 19.68079 |
| 5 | KNOWLEDGE | 6 | 34 | 53 | 7 | 25 | 22.7303 |
| 6 | PROFESSIONALISM | 4 | 63 | 12 | 21 | 25 | 26.26785 |
| | WEIGHTED AVERAGE | 2.12(53.89) | | | | | |

This shows that graduates displayed the required entrepreneurial skills in the labor market. The weighted average of the table is 2.22(52.85%). This implies that the level to which graduates display entrepreneurship skills is a little on the low to average side.



Ho1: There is no significant difference between entrepreneurial skills required by employers and entrepreneurship skills displayed by graduates.

TABLE 3: T-test analysis showing differences between entrepreneurship skills required by employers and displayed by graduates.

| VARIABLE | N | MEAN | STAV | T | df | SIG. | REMARKS |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------|------|----------|----------|--------|-------------|
| Entrepreneurship Skills Required | 100 | 25 | 1.9 | 5.317655 | 128.6225 | 0.0025 | Significant |
| Displayed | 100 | 23.75 | 2.6 | | | | |

This table shows that there is a significant difference between entrepreneurship skills required and entrepreneurship skills displayed by graduates, as shown in the table ($t = 5.31$; $df = 128$; $p < 0.05$). As a result, Ho1 is rejected. This signifies a difference in the entrepreneurial skills required, as to that displayed by employed graduates.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

These results gathered from this study shows clearly the required skills needed in these days' economy and labor market. With changing times comes a need to upgrade, in other to survive. The research question 1, which demanded to know the extent to which employers of labor expect or require a show of the needed entrepreneurial skills, it was proven that an innovative mindset, knowledge of the establishment, and the ability to be professional at the workplace ranked higher than 50%, in the order, 66.7%, 83.3%, and 100% respectively, with ability to be creative ranking the highest after these three, with 50% level of requirement.

The relationship between required and not required skills by employers of labor shows that practically all the skills imaginable were needed higher than those not required, while the sampled skills are ranked above 50% for required, those that did not require them were all lower than 45%.

Research question 2, asked to know to what extent graduates in a sampled workplace demonstrate entrepreneurial skills acquired through entrepreneurial education, from the results gathered in this study, the weighted average of 2.22 (52.85%) is equated to a low-average output or show of skills by the employed graduates.

Finally, the hypothesis proposed was rejected, as there is a significant difference between entrepreneurial skills required by employers and those showcased by graduates.

The researchers' findings revealed that there were significant gaps in the availability of entrepreneurship skills by many graduates of entrepreneurship and that graduates' entrepreneurship skills were discovered to be severely lacking.

CONCLUSION

This research study investigated Entrepreneurship Education and Graduate Employability in Kogi State. It is a fact that graduates in Nigeria find it hard to get employed, after their higher education, and many employers of labor have thought that it is because they are not employable due to graduates not having the required entrepreneurial skills needed by them. Entrepreneurship skills are critical in addressing the issue of graduate employment and unemployability among higher education graduates. This result shows a difference in the demand for Entrepreneurial skill sets required by employers and the supply by the graduates of entrepreneurship. In Kogi state, Nigeria, the case is not so different, as seen from the results computed during the course of this research.

Students must take personal responsibility for maximizing their opportunities to develop diverse skills while still in university. Most graduates take pride in their certificates that cannot get them gainfully employed. The main purpose of Entrepreneurship Education is to build in students and youths, the fighting will and power to make something of themselves after graduating, being able to employ themselves and those in the long run. But how equipped are they to face the labor market? How ready are they to display skills needed to survive, build their businesses, and help them grow?

Does the curriculum of higher institutions and entrepreneurship education schools encompass the required skills needed to build the students? Because entrepreneurship education is a component of both adaptable and functional curricula, the curriculum contents should be interrelated and overlap.

Graduates should know and cultivate qualities sought after by their potential employers. The most required and sought-after skills as shown in the study include but are not limited to Professionalism, having an innovative mindset, creativity, and general knowledge of the workforce.

**REFERENCES**

1. L. Ilie, I. Bondrea, *Changing Labor Market Needs and the Challenges for Academic Leadership*. In: *ECMLG 2016-Proceedings of the 12th European Conference on Management, Leadership and Governance*, 80 (2016).
2. T. Dolphin, (ed), *Technology, globalization and the future of work in Europe: Essays on employment in a digitized economy*, IPPR. <http://www.ippr.org/publications/technologyglobalization-and-the-future-of-work-in->
3. UNESCO, *Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century Vision and Action*, World Conference on Higher Education, Paris (1998), retrieved 20.09.2010 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001163/116345e.pdf>
4. Ng. Oberlo.com/blog/what-is-
5. Enyekit, E.O & Dambo. B.I (2017): *Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria; A Triangular Approach for its Workability*. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education (NIGJBED)*. Vol.4 No.2, 2017.
6. Garba, A. S. (2010). *Refocusing education system towards entrepreneurship development in Nigeria: A tool for poverty eradication*. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 15(1), 140-150.
7. Oshewolo, S. (2010). *Galloping poverty in Nigeria: An appraisal of government interventionist policies*. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12(6), 264-274. entrepreneurship
8. Maigida, J., Saba, T., & Namkere, J. (2013). *Entrepreneurial skills in technical vocational education and training as a strategic approach for achieving youth empowerment in Nigeria*. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(5), 303-310.
9. Enyekit, E.O. & Obara, J. K. (2009). *Entrepreneurial skills requirements as perceived by sole administrators for managing entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level*. *African journal of educational research and development* 3(2), 335- 343.
10. Porter, A. (2008). *Entrepreneurship and small business management; entrepreneurship and higher education; Japan*. OECD Publications
11. Solomon, G. (2007). *An examination of entrepreneur education in the United States*. *Journal of small business and enterprise development*, 14(2), 168-182.
12. Jones, C. and English, J. (2004). *A contemporary approach to entrepreneurship education*. *Education + Training*, Vol. 46 Nos 8/9, pp. 416-23. Retrieved on February 20, 2015, from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/00400910410569533>
13. NKC. (2008). *Entrepreneurship in India*. Retrieved on January 20, 2015, from http://knowledgecommissionarchive.nic.in/downloads/documents/NKC_Entrepreneurship.pdf
14. Timmons, J.A. (1999). *New Venture Creation – Entrepreneurship for the 21st century*. New York: Irwin McGraw-Hill.
15. Gartner, W. B. 1990. *What are we talking about when we talk about entrepreneurship?* *Journal of Business Venturing*, 5, 15-28.
16. Shane, S. & Venkataraman, S. 2007. *The Promise of Entrepreneurship as a Field of Research**. *Entrepreneurship*. Springer.
17. Ramsden, P. (2003) *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*, 2nd ed., Routledge, London, UK.
18. Deakins, D. and Freel, M. (1998) 'Entrepreneurial learning and the growth process in SMEs', *The Learning Organization*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp.144–155.
19. Lumpkin, G.T. and Dess, G.G. (1996) 'Clarifying the entrepreneurial orientation construct and linking it to performance', *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp.135–172.
20. Abdullah, S. H., Osman, M. H., & Rahim, M. S. H. (2009). *The key concept of academic technology entrepreneurship in the current practice*. *Asia Pac. J. Innov. Entrepr. Korea Bus. Incubation Assoc*, 2(1), 77-96.
21. Samian, S. S., & Buntat, Y. (2012). *Self-employment: Perceptions among deaf students in Malaysian higher education through work experience*. . Paper presented at the 3rd International Conference on Business and Economic Research (3rd ICBER 2012) Proceedings, held on 12-13 March 2012 at Golden Flower Hotel, Bandung, Indonesia
22. Brewer, L. (2013). *Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? And How? Guide to core work skills: International Labour Organization (ILO) Reports 4*.
23. Faloye, D. O., & Olatunji, O. D. (2018). *Entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions among fresh graduates in Nigeria*. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*. , 12(9), 146-154.
24. Hisrich, R. D., & Peters, M. P. (2002). *Entrepreneurship*. International edition. Singapore: McGraw-Hill.
25. Ikeme, A., & Onu, V. C. (2007). *Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship: Implications for Nigerian youths and government*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Nigerian Psychological Association, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
26. Samian, S. S., & Buntat, Y. (2012). *Self-employment: Perceptions among deaf students in Malaysian higher education through work experience*. . Paper presented at the 3rd International Conference on Business and Economic Research (3rd ICBER 2012) Proceedings, held on 12-13 March 2012 at Golden Flower Hotel, Bandung, Indonesia
27. Undiyaundaye, F., & Otu, E. A. (2015). *Entrepreneurship skills acquisition and the benefits amongst the undergraduate students in Nigeria*. *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research*, 2(3), 9-14.