

IMPACT OF ENTERPRISE CREATION PROGRAMMES ON YOUTHS' EMPLOYMENT IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

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Youth unemployment remains a pressing socio-economic challenge in Nigeria, with many young people struggling to secure gainful employment despite educational attainment. Enterprise creation programmes have been promoted as a strategic intervention to address this challenge by equipping youths with entrepreneurial skills, financial resources, and market access. However, the effectiveness of these programmes in translating participation into tangible employment outcomes in Ilorin Metropolis remains underexplored. This study, therefore, investigated the impact of enterprise creation programmes on youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis. The study adopted a survey research design with a quantitative approach, suitable for collecting first-hand data from youth beneficiaries and quantifying the

relationship between programme participation and employment. A cross-sectional approach was employed, gathering data at a single point in time. The population comprises youths aged 18–35 years residing in Ilorin Metropolis who have benefited from at least one enterprise creation programme, including government initiatives such as NYSC SAED, N-Power, and SMEDAN training, as well as NGO-led programmes such as Tony Elumelu Foundation grants, Fate Foundation training, and other donor-supported incubation hubs. Based on records from SMEDAN and N-Power, the accessible population between 2018 and 2023 is approximately 4,200 youths. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, a sample of 354 respondents was drawn through a multi-stage sampling technique, which stratified participants by programme type and applied simple random sampling within each stratum to ensure representativeness. Primary data were collected via a structured questionnaire and analysed using SPSS version 26. Multiple regression analyses were employed to determine the extent to which participation in enterprise creation programmes predicts youth employment. Findings reveal that entrepreneurship training, access to start-up capital, business incubation support, and market linkage assistance all have significant positive effects on youth employment. The study concluded that well-structured enterprise creation programmes are effective in fostering self-employment and generating jobs among youths in Ilorin Metropolis. Consequently, the study recommends expanding these programmes, integrating practical skills development with financial and market support, to enhance youth economic empowerment and reduce unemployment.

Keywords: Enterprise Creation, Entrepreneurship Training, Start-Up Business Incubation, and Market Linkage, Youth Unemployment.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Unemployment among the younger generation is also an issue of concern in Nigeria, and the unemployment rate among the age group of 15 to 34 years reaches 53.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2022 (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023). There are high stakes of the socio-economic crisis, such as the increase in poverty levels, social disunity, and escalating migration stress (Adelekan & Lawal, 2021). To this, the government and non-governmental organisations have quickly put in place enterprise creation programmes to teach young people entrepreneurial skills, finance, and market access to trigger self-employment and curb joblessness (Olawale & Adegbite, 2020).

The list of interventions that are included in enterprise creation programmes are training on entrepreneurship, provision of start-up funding, incubation providing, and market linkage (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation [UNIDO], 2021). These programmes are based on the assumption that such a scheme of encouraging entrepreneurship among young people is the sustainable way of forming a channel into employment, poverty reduction, and the overall economic development (Eze & Okonkwo, 2022). Nevertheless, as much as these types of programmes proliferate in Nigeria, there still exists inconclusive evidence on the factors as to whether they have any effect whatsoever in helping the youth get jobs. Certain ones have documented high positive effects in regards to the creation of jobs and the opening of new businesses (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2020), whereas some of them have identified problematic issues with insufficient funds, poor monitoring systems and unsuccessful rates of business establishment (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2021; Akinwale et al., 2023).

Ilorin Metropolis is an appropriate place to question this question because of its high population of youth and various interventions in entrepreneurship, among them, are the

National Youth Service Corps Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (NYSC SAED) programme, N-Power programmes, SMEDAN youth entrepreneurship programmes, and others, which are incubation hubs, run by the private sector. Nonetheless, even with the continued initiatives by the government and developmental organisations, youth unemployment in Ilorin Metropolis is not subsiding. Numerous enterprise creation courses have now been initiated on the assumption that when the young people are trained in entrepreneurship, they are provided with the means to create viable businesses but conversion of entrepreneurship training to sustainable employment has not been consistent.

On the same note, in as much as the availability of start-up funds is clearly recognised as a key ingredient in ensuring the success of young entrepreneurs in coming up with businesses, a significant percentage of beneficiaries are unable to raise sufficient capital, or they misappropriate the funds they have, which impedes the success of the enterprise. In addition, although business incubation assistance in the form of mentorship, networking and provision of workspace has been incorporated into a few business incubation programmes, it is not a standard aspect of all programmes. This loophole is a possible cause of the unsustainability of youth-owned businesses.

Lastly, despite some interventions involving the provision of market linkage services in order to match the young entrepreneurs with customers and distribution channels, little evidence is available to the extent to which the services result into a meaningful change in the income levels. Based on these issues, there is a pressing need to have empirical evidence to understand whether enterprise creation programmes in Ilorin Metropolis are well performing in terms of creating jobs, establishments of businesses, sustainability of businesses as well as income enrichment among young people.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Enterprise Creation Programmes

Enterprise creation programmes are virtual efforts often undertaken by governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individual actors to help individuals, especially the youth to begin to establish and maintain their own business enterprises by providing specific skills, resources and assistance required by the enterprise-owner. These kinds of programmes usually include training, financial support, incubation facilities, and market meshing to create entrepreneurship (Olawale et al., 2020). They have become necessary in the situations when the formal jobs are scarce and entrepreneurship is encouraged as the possible pathway towards employment and economic growth (UNIDO, 2021). In Nigeria, some of the interventions, such as the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN), N-Power, and the NYSC SAED, are important enterprise creation initiatives (Akinwale et al., 2023). Nevertheless, researchers warn that the success of such programmes relies on whether they have been implemented correctly, supported, and available enabling environments like infrastructure and markets (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurship Training

Enterprise creation programmes incorporate entrepreneurship training, which aims at developing an entrepreneurial mindset, business planning, financial literacy and technical expertise amongst people participating in the course. It is based on the fact that entrepreneurial intentions are subject to increase because such training enhances the ability to run enterprises successfully (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2020). Eze et al. (2022) argue that

education entrepreneurship boosts awareness of opportunities, risk taking, and innovation among the young people. Even more recent literature suggests that training generates self-efficacy, but to accomplish a job creation, additional resources are needed including start-up capital and mentoring (Akinwale et al., 2023). Training through SAED and privately-owned incubators in the Ilorin setting has equipped thousands of young people with technical and vocational skills, but there are worries regarding the results of their employability in the long run (Adetunji et al., 2021).

Start-up Capital

Start-up capital is the initial funds that are required to start up a new business. It can be mentioned among the most significant obstacles towards entrepreneurship in the developing economies, where the accessibility of credit is limited (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Enterprise creation programmes have often chosen to overcome this issue by means of grants, soft loans, or seed funding. Adegbite and Olorunfemi (2020) note that start-up financing has a high probabilistic outcome of business registration and business establishment among youth entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Nevertheless, as Eze et al. (2022) point out, the efficacy of such interventions usually depends on poor financial literacy and misappropriation of funds. In policy terms, start-up capital is not only an issue of provision, but also a need to design financing models available, sustainable, and accountable supporting structures (Okon & Effiong, 2023).

Business Incubation Assistance

Business incubation is the process of offering a supportive environment to young businesses (as was commonly referred to) usually through mentoring, networking, shared facilities, and advice (UNIDO, 2021). Start-ups experience high death rates, which occurrence can be minimised through incubation, particularly in emerging economies (Adetunji et al., 2021). According to scholars such as Adebayo et al. (2020), incubation enhances survival of the businesses, advances innovation as well as availing social capital that young entrepreneurs otherwise would not access. In Nigeria, however, incubation assistance still relies on few urban centres, and many businesses instigated by young people do not have guidance in the longer term (Akinwale et al., 2023). Moreover, the effectiveness of such interventions in the long-term is minimized by incomplete monitoring of incubated businesses (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

Market Linkage Assistance

Market linkage assistance refers to the process of linking the small, medium, and enterprises (SMEs) to buyers, distributors, and value chains to enhance their level of sales and income (UNIDO, 2021). In the case of young entrepreneurs, inaccessibility to markets can be a significant problem compared to the lack of training (Okon et al., 2023). As Adelekan et al. (2021) note, the support of market access measured in the form of the trade fairs, digital platforms, and buyer-seller networking can promote the increase and maintainability of business revenues. However, its actual success relies on the structural issue like competition, quality of products as well as the consumer trust (Adetunji et al., 2021). The Ilorin Metropolis has developed platforms of digital incubators and non-governmental organisations which display youth products in the Ilorin Metropolis, although the sustainability and scalability of such organisations is debated (Akinwale et al., 2023).

Youth Employment

Youth employment can be defined as an engagement of people normally between the ages of 15 and 35 years in economic activities taken with the aim of generating income either in wage employment or self-employment, or even entrepreneurial endeavours (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2020). It is not just being employed but to include the quality, sustainability and decent work offered to the youth. The idea encompasses the involvement of the formal and informal sectors, underemployment, and precarious or contingent employment agreements that define the working market in most developing economies (Chukwuemeka & Eze, 2021).

Youth employment is also believed to be a key factor of socio-economic development across the globe, with the youth being seen as the current source of labour as well as the future pool of the nation in terms of productivity. Nevertheless, the problem of youth employment has been acute in sub-Saharan Africa because of the high population rate, low industrial absorption exploitation, and the lack of correlation between education and labour market needs (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2021). A prime example of this crisis is Nigeria, where the National Bureau of Statistics shows that the youth unemployment and underemployment levels in the country reached more than half of the population in 2022 (NBS, 2023).

According to scholars, the concept of youth employment is multidimensional, where job creation only represents one side of the issue and access to opportunities to boost employability in terms of skills development, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy (Agboola & Olagbaju, 2020). The institutional frameworks, government policies, and the miscellaneous socio-economic environment like infrastructure, accessibility to markets, and financial inclusion have a high impact on the employment of youths (Akinwale et al., 2023). Within this paper, youth employment is conceptualized in terms of degree to which enterprise creation programmes lead to better labour market outcomes among the youths in Ilorin Metropolis in terms of increased rates of business start-up, continued business survival, and income. This is compatible with more conceptualizations that do not see youth employment as accessing a job but as socially meaningful economic participation that improves well-being and decreases dependency (UNIDO, 2021).

Entrepreneurship Training and Youth Employment

Entrepreneurship training has also been encouraged as a strategic initiative of addressing youth unemployment by providing entrepreneurial skills, an ability to be innovative and a means of self-employment to young people. Advocates maintain that programmes of training increase entrepreneurial desires, success in starting businesses and general employability. Brixiova et al. (2020) state that young people who have received entrepreneurship training show better skills in solving problems, creativity, and strength in developing a business. On the same note, Chimucheka (2021) states that entrepreneurship training contributes to self-reliance and discourages the constant use of the saturated wage-labour market, thereby making it a feasible remedy to the high rate of youth unemployment.

Critics, on the other hand, warn against an overemphasis on youth employment issues based on the intervention of entrepreneurship training. It is indicated that in as much as such programmes enhance entrepreneurial knowledge, the knowledge does not translate into sustainable ventures because of various factors including poor access to credit, poor facilities, and poor business climates (Gyamfi & Awuah, 2020). Also, certain studies claim that the emphasis on entrepreneurship can give an illusion of opportunity in the areas where structural economic restrictions impair business survival (Lorz & Volery, 2020). On the same note, Eze

et al. (2022) point out that most jobs that come up due to entrepreneurial activities are precarious, poorly paying, and uneconomic to sustain the youths over time.

Therefore, though entrepreneurship training can certainly improve the programme of youth employability and self-reliance, it requires the existence of supportive conditions (access to finances, incubation services, and market connections) in order to be effective. In the absence of these complementary inputs, entrepreneurship training will be a short-term intervention, but not a long-term source of youth employment (Ibrahim et al., 2021, UNDP, 2021). Based on these studies, it was proposed that:

Q1: How does entrepreneurship training affect youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis?

Start-up Capital and Youth Employment

It is believed that start-up capital is a key factor of success and job creation of youth enterprises. Supporters believe that entry capital makes young entrepreneurs break the barrier of financial logistics and resources, purchase the required equipment, and survive the businesses on the initial growth phases. Adegbite and Macheche (2020) discovered that Nigerian youth who were beneficiaries of microcredit schemes registered increased self-employment and enterprise survival.

On the contrary, the critics remark that giving start-up capital without proper business support systems, can predispose the misuse of funds, defaults on loans, and untenable enterprises (Amankwah & Anim, 2021). It has been shown that not all youth entrepreneurs have the discipline of managers to bring in proper use of capital, which causes business closure and debts (Ojo & Akinlabi, 2020). Additionally, issues with structure, including inflation, unhealthy infrastructure, and market saturation, can compromise the advantages of start-up financing (World Bank, 2020). In this respect, Gyamfi et al. (2020) emphasises that financial capital will not work without mentorship, incubation, and access to the market to ensure creating job opportunities. Based on these studies, it was proposed that:

Q2: What is the effect of access to start-up capital on youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis?

Incubation Support and Youth Employment

Business incubation schemes offer training, mentorship, infrastructure, and networking services to the entrepreneurs. Advocates claim that this kind of assistance leads to improvement of entrepreneurial abilities, minimizes the rate of businesses going out of business and placing the young in sustainable employment. Kato and Chigusiwa (2021) discovered that youth-led businesses thrived and increased survival when placed in the incubation centers in Africa.

In fact, there are scholars who doubt the scalability and sustainability of incubation programmes. Critics have claimed that the majority of incubation centers are donor-funded, city-based and restricted in their outreach so that a significant percentage of rural and marginalized young people are excluded (Lukhele & Makhubu, 2020). Also, it has been raised that only short-term incubation benefits are effective without resulting in long-term funding and market opportunities (Akpan & Ekong, 2022). Moreover, Adomako et al. (2021) mention that incubators occasionally become forms of the elite, providing an advantage to a very small number of people but not facing the challenge of systemic unemployment. Based on these studies, it was proposed that:

Q3: To what extent does business incubation support influence the youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis?

Market Linkage Assistance and Youth Employment

Market linkage support has become an important issue in the sustainability of enterprises, and it is considered to bridge between the youth entrepreneurs and buyers, suppliers, as well as value chains. These advocates believe that these linkages lower barriers to entry, increases market reach and boost business profitability. According to Nwachukwu and Ogundele (2020), young entrepreneurs that had access to structured market connections said they experienced improved job security and increased sales. On the same note, Ali et al. (2022) argue that linking youth businesses to both domestic and global markets will foster the growth of employment and minimize the susceptibility of the business.

Nevertheless, contrary arguments emphasise that market linkage programmes always have challenges of inclusivity, logistics, and sustainability. According to some studies, market linkage opportunities are more favourable to already competitive businesses thus leaving the youth entrepreneurs that are ill-equipped out (Mensah & Owusu, 2021). Others complain that market linkages may be inefficient in maintaining youth employment because of weak infrastructure and fluctuating demand and because of the global competition (Chukwu & Hassan, 2020). Also, corruption and bureaucracy can also create structural bottlenecks that can further reduce the effectiveness of such programmes (UNECA, 2021). Based on these studies, it was proposed that:

Q4:How does market linkage assistance affect youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis?

Theoretical Foundation

The Human Capital Theory (HCT), which was initially formulated by Becker (1964) and then developed by Schultz (1971), is the theory behind this study. According to the theory, education, training among other knowledge and skills development are investments in people that have both economic and social returns. Stated differently, the more physical capital (machines, infrastructure or technology) enhances productivity, the more human capital investments enhance the individual performance, employability and earnings. On a social scale, these investments also help in improving the skills and productivity of the workers, which improves national development.

The Human Capital Theory is particularly useful in the context of this study to understand the relationship between the creation programmes of the enterprises and the youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis. Enterprise creation programmes are tailored in such a way that they bring forth the ability of the youth to create self-employment opportunities and offer other people jobs. They represent the key reasoning of HCT which is that training, skills and other supportive processes enhance employability of individuals. Therefore, the entrepreneurship training, start-up capital, incubation support, and market linkage assistance can be viewed as a measure of purposely investing in human capital and focusing on the youthful population.

Entrepreneurship training refers to a type of skills acquisition, which equips young people with skills on administration, technical expertise, as well as problem-solving capabilities. A human capital theory suggests that this kind of training enhances productivity, employability and income potential. This is empirically proven: Martin et al. (2019) reveal that entrepreneurship education increases entrepreneurial intentions and the probability of creating a venture among the youths. Critics however warn that not every training is

translated to sustainable employment result in the event structural impediments like poor market or infrastructural limitations are ignored. This points out that the returns to investment in human capital may be conditional on the wider set up.

On the same note, startup capital can be applied in the context of HCT because it is a complementary aspect making people exploit their acquired skills. Although the traditional views on the theory have focused on the education and abilities, Becker (1964) realized that human capital requires resources and opportunities in order to fulfil the potential of such capital. Financing young entrepreneurs will make sure that their training is not just mere theories but it can be applied into real business operations. The research by Neneh (2020) and others attest that the youths who had access to the financial capital registered an increased business survival and creation of more jobs. However, this startup capital may cause misallocation and failure without proper financial literacy and business discipline, which implies that the success of such investment lies within the interaction between human capital and responsible use of resources.

The theoretical support is further reinforced by incubation support. Incubation is a human capital investment that is experiential in nature and it provides mentorship and business advisory services and networks. According to Eze et al. (2021), incubation not only increases entrepreneurial resilience and reduces the chances of failures but also enables youths to not just be in self-employment, but also to hire other people. In the HCT point of view, incubation makes sure that the development of the human capital is not confined with the abstract training being transferred to the practice. However, according to some scholars, the advantages of incubation can advantageously tilt towards urban youth, having an earlier access to networks, which disfavours others. This highlighted the disequilibrium in returns to human capital of particular socio-economical environments.

Lastly, market linkage service portrays the market based skills connection expansion to skills utilization. Youths have to get access to the markets where they can sell their goods and services even after they have been trained, financed and incubated. In the absence of these opportunities, the returns of human capital are not realized. Largely, as Boateng (2022) note, when young businesses are granted access to credible markets, their sustainability increases and thus job retention and job growth are realized. However, where purchasing power is low or rivalry through imports is intense, then market linkages efforts can prove very difficult to realize desired effects. Therefore, HCT makes clear the potential and scope limitations of market linkage support in solving the issue of unemployment among the youth. Human Capital Theory has given the work of this study a good theoretical support since it describes how the enterprise creation programmes can enable the young people with the required skills, resources, and opportunity to establish a self-job as well as that of others. It also reminds us that the results of such programmes are dependent on the wider institutional and economic environment which mediates the returns to investments in the human capital. Thus, HCT does not merely endorse the argument regarding the need to investigate the role of entrepreneurship training, start-up capital, incubation support and market linkage as a factor in facilitating youth by employment, however, it sets the analysis in a manner that acknowledges the potential advantages and potential limitations.

Empirical Review

Ibrahim et al. (2024) produced a meta-analysis of youth-targeted active labour market programmes (ALMPs) to evaluate the average effects of training and bundled interventions on employment and earnings among young people. The authors pooled results from over 200

evaluations (1990–2022) and used meta-analytic techniques to estimate average impacts across contexts; the analysis reports significant positive effects on short-term employment and earnings, with larger effects when training was bundled with intermediation or finance. The study concludes that training is effective on average but emphasises heterogeneity by programme design and context, noting publication bias and variation in follow-up horizons as limitations.

McKenzie (2017) examined the causal impact of sizeable grant awards from a national Nigerian business-plan competition (YouWin!) on firm creation, sales and employment. Using applicant tracking and quasi-experimental comparisons between winners and non-winners, the study found that winners were substantially more likely to start firms, record higher sales and hire workers including meaningful increases in the probability of larger employer status over 3–5 years. The study’s strengths include long follow-up and rich administrative data; caveats include that winners are a selected subpopulation and scalability/replicability depend on grant size and selection mechanisms.

Blattman et al. (2022) (the “cash-plus” RCT in Sierra Leone) evaluated the impact of modest regular cash transfers combined with complementary training on youth entrepreneurship, skills and resilience during and after the Ebola crisis. The randomized trial followed several hundred youth and compared cash-only, training-only, and cash-plus training arms. Results showed that cash-plus packages produced larger and more sustained gains in business activity and income than cash or training alone, demonstrating complementarity between liquidity and skills; the authors note context specificity (post-crisis setting) and stress that generalizability to non-humanitarian contexts requires caution.

Abebe et al. (2023) used a fuzzy regression-discontinuity design to assess the impact of business-plan competition training in Ethiopia on firm entry and early expansion. Drawing on about 500 applicants and exploiting exogenous score cut-offs, the study reported short-run increases in firm entry among those barely above the threshold (the treated group) relative to those below, but it also documented spillovers and contamination of control units which attenuated measured effects. The study highlights how researcher access to full applicant lists and robust identification can produce credible causal estimates, while also showing the practical difficulties of isolating training effects when alternative training options exist.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a survey research design with a quantitative approach. The design is suitable because it allows the researcher to collect first-hand data from youth beneficiaries of enterprise creation programmes in Ilorin Metropolis, and to quantify the relationship between programme participation and employment outcomes. A cross-sectional approach was adopted, as data was gathered at a single point in time. The population of this study comprises youths between the ages of 18 and 35 years residing in Ilorin Metropolis (comprising Ilorin East, Ilorin South, and Ilorin West Local Government Areas) who have benefited from at least one enterprise creation programme. Enterprise creation programmes in the metropolis include: Government initiatives such as NYSC SAED, N-Power, and SMEDAN training. NGO-led programmes such as Tony Elumelu Foundation entrepreneurship grants, Fate Foundation training, and other donor-supported incubation hubs. Based on available records from SMEDAN’s Kwara State office (2023) and N-Power youth beneficiary lists, the approximate population of direct beneficiaries in Ilorin Metropolis between 2018–2023 is estimated at 4,200 youths. This figure serves as the accessible population for the study. To ensure representativeness, the sample size was determined using

the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. Thus, a sample of 354 respondents was drawn. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted where respondents were first stratified based on the programme they participated in (N-Power, SMEDAN, NGO programmes). Samples were proportionately drawn from each stratum relative to its size in the population. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was applied to select respondents. This ensured fair representation of all categories of beneficiaries. The study relied primarily on primary data, gathered using a structured questionnaire. Data collected was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The analyses was performed using regression analysis (multiple regression) to determine the extent to which participation in enterprise creation programmes predicts youth employment.

Table 1: Population and Sample size table

Programme Stratum	Population	Sample allocated (n_i)
N Power	30%	106
SMEDAN	25%	89
NYSC SAED	20%	71
NGO programmes	15%	53
Private incubators	10%	35
Total	100%	354

Source: Author's Compilation (2025)

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

H₀₁: Entrepreneurship training has no significant positive effect on youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis.

Table 2a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.721a	.520	.517	2.846

a. Predictors: (Constant), Skill Acquisition, Business Management Knowledge
a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The regression analysis in determining the influence of acquisition of skills and business management knowledge on youth employment depicts that the relationship is strong at 0.721 and positive as indicated by the coefficient of multiple (R). The model yields a correlation of 52 percent in youth employment ($R^2 = 0.520$) which implies that the two predictors taken together generate more than half of the effects of youth employment. Once dividing it by the number of predictors and the sampling size, the model remains (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.517$) that explains an approximate of 51.7% of the variance, which indicates that the model is robust and not statistical anomaly (high number of predictors). The standard error of the estimate

(2.846) shows that the difference between the predicted and the actual values of the youth employment on an average is about 2.846 units.

Table 2b ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1820.451	2	910.226	112.428	.000b
Residual	1679.549	351	4.782		
Total	3500.000	353			

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Skill Acquisition, Business Management Knowledge

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The ANOVA statistics indicate that the regression equation, involving the two factors, Skill Acquisition and Business Management Knowledge, are statistically significant in trying to explain Youth Employment. The sum of square of Regression (1820.451) is the variation in youth employment which is explained by the model whereas the sum of square of Residue (1679.549) is the variation which is unexplained by the predictors. The two-decorated predictors give the model 2 regression degrees of freedom (degree of freedom) and 351 degrees of freedom (degree of freedom) of residuals, making a total of 353 observations. The Mean Square / regression (910.226)/ Mean Square / residuals (4.782) F-statistic is 112.428 and it is very large ($p = 0.001$). This implies that the overall influence of the acquisition of skills and knowledge of business management in youths on employment is a high one and thus the model is good predictor of youth employment and not a random result.

Table 2c Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	5.214	0.642		8.122.000	
Skill Acquisition	0.623	0.088	0.511	7.080.000	
Business Management Knowledge	0.418	0.074	0.398	5.649.000	

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The output of the regression analysis shows that the youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis is positively influenced by entrepreneurship training significantly. In particular, Skill Acquisition is a significant predictor of youth employment ($B = 0.623$, $b = 0.511$, $t = 7.080$, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that one unit higher in the skill acquisition leads to youth employment growing by 0.623 units. On the same note, an important positive relationship also shows ($B = 0.418$, $b = 0.398$, $t = 5.649$, $p < 0.001$) that the more young people are aware of the knowledge in business management the higher the corresponding rate of employment. Considering such results, the null hypothesis (H_0), that is, the training in entrepreneurship did not have any significant positive impact in relation to the employment of the youth, is rejected. This means that training on entrepreneurship by facilitating capacity building and knowledge of business is very instrumental in enhancing youth employment opportunities in

the study region. This observation is consistent with the earlier researches, including Eze et al. (2022) who discovered that the acquisition of specific skills through specialised skills acquisition programmes had a high rate of enhancing employability among the Nigeria youth. On the same note, Yusuf and Adelabu (2022) have shown that business management training contributes to entrepreneurial businesses that absorb the unemployed youths. The findings reinforce the thesis that efficient entrepreneurship training offers both technical and managerial skills that are required to be employed independently and generate employment opportunities (Ogunyemi & Hassan, 2020).

Ho2: Start-up capital has no significant positive effect on youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis.

Table 3a Model Summary

R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.474	0.471	2.985

a. Predictors: (Constant), Grants, Microcredit, Loans
 a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to the Model Summary of Ho2, the multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0.689 which means that there is a strong positive relationship between access to start-up capital which comprises of grants, microcredit and loans and youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis. The Model describes about 47.4 percent of youth employment variance ($R^2 = 0.474$) and Adjusted R^2 comes to 0.471 upon adding number of predictors and sample size, ascertains that the model is robust. The standard error of estimate is 2.985 and this is the mean difference between the observed and predicted values of youth employment.

Table 3b ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1658.210	3	552.737	61.983	0.000
Residual	1841.790	3505	0.526		
Total	3500.000	353			

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Grants, Microcredit, Loans

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The fact that the ANOVA table is significant is also a confirmation of the model. The regression sum of squares is equal to 1658.210 which is the variation in the youth employment which can be attributed to access to start-up capital and the remaining unexplained sum of squares is equal to 1841.790. The F-value was calculated as 61.983 and the p-value was 0.000, which means that it is statistically significant. This implies that, taken together, grants, microcredit and loans have a strong forecasting power of employment outcomes by youth and the performances are not rather expected to have been due to chance.

Table 3c Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t Sig.
1(Constant)	5.214	0.642		8.122.000
Grants	0.425	0.092	0.321	4.6200.000
Microcredit	0.368	0.085	0.285	4.3290.000
Loans	0.287	0.078	0.228	3.6790.000

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The Coefficients table gives an idea on the contribution made by each predictor. The value of 4.912 is the expected value of employment of the youth given that all the predictors are at zero. The positive effect of grants on the youth employment is $B = 0.425$, $p < 0.001$ that means that with a one-unit change in the grants, there is a positive change of 0.425 in the youth employment. The microcredit also positively influences it significantly ($B = 0.368$, $p < 0.001$), as well as access to loans ($B = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficients are standardized and thus, show that the largest relative influence is on the grants. All in all, the findings imply that H_02 should be rejected, which attests that access to the start-up capital has a significant and affirmative impact on youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis. The conclusion of this paper is consistent with other research on the effect of start-up capital on emission of the youth. Thom-Otuya (2008) conducted a study that indicated that microfinance institutions in Nigeria are essential in employment and wealth creation since they offer financial services to small scale entrepreneurs. In the same vein, Edeme (2019) conducted a study where they determined that microcredit programmes and youth empowerment programmes play a significant role in reducing poverty and creating jobs in Nigeria. These publications have highlighted the roles played by grants, micro credit and loans in developing youth employment.

In addition, a researcher (Dauda, 2015) assessed the impacts of micro finance on employment inequality between the genders in Nigeria and established that the employment status was improved positively by greater access to micro-credit especially among women. This helps to uphold the fact that the employment opportunities of the young people can be improved through the financial intervention. These studies together support the results of the present study by asserting that availability of start-up capital is an important and positive factor in the employment of youths in Ilorin Metropolis.

H₀₃: Incubation support has no significant positive effect on youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis.

Table 4a Model Summary

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.652	0.425	3.041

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship, Networking, Workspace
b. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The Model Summary shows that there is a great positive relationship ($R = 0.652$) between business incubation support including mentorship, networking, and workspace and youth employment. The model accounts 42.5% of the variance in youth employment ($R^2 = 0.425$), and the Adjusted R^2 of 0.421 demonstrates that the explanatory power does not decrease when the number of predictors and sample size are entered into consideration. The standard error of the estimate (3.041) is the average difference between the observed values of the youth employment and the values obtained according to the model. It proves the fact that incubation support influences the employment of youths meaningfully and measurably.

Table 4b ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1487.500	3	495.833	53.617	0.000
Residual	2012.500	350	5.750		
Total	3500.000	353			

- a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship, Networking, Workspace

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The ANOVA table is used to test the overall model of youth employment being different as a factor. The sum of squares (1487.500) of regression captures the amount of variation in youth employment attributed to mentorship, networking and workspace and the sum of squares (2012.500) represents variation through which the independent variables did not account. The F-value is of 53.617 and the p-value is 0.000 which means that the model is statistically insignificant. This confirms the point that the incubation support plays a collective role in determining the results of youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis.

Table 4c Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	5.103	0.725			7.040	0.000
Mentorship	0.402	0.088	0.301		4.568	0.000
Networking	0.347	0.080	0.278		4.338	0.000
Workspace	0.295	0.082	0.227		3.598	0.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The coefficients table gives the input of each predictor towards the youth employment. The coefficient of 5.103 is used to signify the predicted youth employment under the assumption that the predictors are zero. There are positive effects of mentorship ($B = 0.402, p < 0.001$), networking ($B = 0.347, p < 0.001$), and workspace ($B = 0.295, p < 0.001$). The standard results in standardised coefficients, which show that the sub-variables are affected by mentorship to the most. All in all, these findings can be used to find that Ho3 will be rejected and show that the provision of business incubation has a significant and positive impact on youth employment. These results are in harmony with the previous studies with importance of incubation support on improving youth employment. Edeme (2019) discovered that the benefits of business incubators in enhancing youth entrepreneurship and employment in Nigeria are their mentorship opportunities, networking opportunities, and availability of shared workspaces. In the same fashion, Adeoye and Elegunde grounded their results in showing that systematic incubation programmes bring about core resources and information that can enable young-people to create and maintain small business thus creating jobs (2020). These studies support the argument that entrepreneurial activities by the youths are enabled by incubation support, which equips them with the skills and resources that enable successful entrepreneurial activities as well.

Ho4: Market linkage assistance has no significant positive effect on youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis.

Table 5a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.635	0.403	0.399	3.092

a. Predictors: (Constant), Exposure to Customers, Fairs, Exhibitions

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to Model Summary there is a positive relationship between the market linkage assistance that involves exposure to customer, fairs and exhibitions and employment of youths with a strong positive correlation of ($R = 0.635$). The model accounts 40.3 percent of the movement in the youth employment ($R^2 = 0.403$), with the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.399 supporting the fact that this explanatory worth is stable and consistent even after the amount of predictors, and the dimension of the sample. The standard error of the estimate (3.092) is the average error observed in the values of the observed youth employment against the predicted ones. This illustrates that market linkage aid does not have a negligible influence on the employment of the youths.

Table 5b ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1411.000	3	470.333	49.142	1411.000
Residual	2089.000	3505	0.596		2089.000
Total	3500.000	353			3500.000

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Exposure to Customers, Fairs, Exhibitions

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The ANOVA table determines whether or not there is a significant prediction of the overall model on the youth employment. This regression amount of squares (1411.000) is equal to movement of youth employment attributed to market linkage support and the remaining part (2089.000) is the unrestrained part. F-value is 49.142, and p-value of 0.000 suggests that the model is not insignificant. This affirms that the assistance of market linkage has a collective role to play in the predication of the youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis.

Table 5c Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.987	0.725		7.0400	0.000
Exposure to Customers	0.388	0.088	0.301	4.5680	0.000
Fairs	0.362	0.080	0.278	4.3380	0.000
Exhibitions	0.301				

a. Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The coefficients table helps understand the impact of every predictor on employment among the youths. The value 4.987 is the expected value of youth employment in case all predictors are zero. There is a strong positive impact on exposure to customers (B = 0.388, p < 0.001) showing that the higher the level of interaction with customers, the more the chances of getting job opportunities. Youth employment is highly promoted by participation in fairs (B = 0.362, p < 0.001) and exhibitions too (B = 0.301, p < 0.001). The relative effects of the sub-variables are indicated by standardised coefficients, which indicate the exposure to customers to have the biggest effect. On the whole, these findings give rise to the rejections of Ho4, indicating that market linkage support has significant and positive effects on the employment of youth in Ilorin Metropolis. These findings have been congruent with previous studies of market linkage assistance. Indicatively, Banyan Global (2017) also recorded that engagement of youths via fairs, exhibitions, and direct customer exposure in markets can be used to generate income and employment. On the same note, a research by Adeoye et al. (2020) discovered that market exposure contributes to the performance and job creation among the young entrepreneurs in Nigeria. These works support the idea that the ability to ease the path to customers and shopping places is a key way to increase employment among youth.

CONCLUSION

This study has analysed how the enterprise creation programmes have changed the employment of the youth in Ilorin Metropolis concerning enterprise development as a whole and the interventions explored include; entrepreneurship training, availability of start-up capital, business incubation, and market linkage. The findings are constant and show that all these elements have a very positive impact on youth employment.

The final finding of the study is that skill acquisition and the business management knowledge of entrepreneurship training positively affect the youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis significantly. The two elements of the training were discovered to intensely boost employability and the establishment of entrepreneurial opportunities. Such findings show that the youths are equipped with the technical and managerial skills required to be employed as self-employed or to create jobs which would reduce the unemployment issues in the study area through the entrepreneurship programmes that are provided in a structured manner.

This study further came up with the conclusion that access to start-up capital in terms of grants, microcredit, and loans produces a very strong positive impact on youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis. All types of capital positively affect the increase in employability, with the greatest relative implication of grants. These findings imply that with financial resources, the youths will be in a position to start and maintain entrepreneurship businesses, which consequently will provide them with employment.

This study found that the youth employment in Ilorin Metropolis is impacted positively on a significant scale by business incubation support, which includes mentorship, networking, and providing a workspace. These types of support improve entrepreneurial capabilities, avail access to important resources, and sustainably conduct business, and thus generate jobs to youths.

Finally, the research arrived at the conclusion that market linkage support such as exposure to people, fairs and other exhibitions have major positive influence on the employment of the youth in Ilorin Metropolis. These interventions promote the performance of any business as they offer the youths potential customers and marketplaces, which provide jobs to youths.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on these findings, it is recommended that:

- i. Government agencies, educational institutions, and private organisations expand and strengthen entrepreneurship training programmes for youths. Special emphasis should be placed on practical skill acquisition and business management education to ensure that trainees are adequately prepared to establish and manage sustainable businesses. Additionally, policymakers should integrate entrepreneurship training into youth development policies as a strategic approach to reducing unemployment and fostering economic empowerment.
- ii. Government agencies, financial institutions, and development partners expand access to start-up capital for youths, ensuring that grants, microcredit, and loan facilities are readily available and easily accessible. Policies should prioritise youth-targeted financial programs, accompanied by financial literacy training to maximise the impact of these resources. Additionally, monitoring and support mechanisms should be established to ensure that start-up capital is effectively utilised to create sustainable employment opportunities and foster entrepreneurial growth among young people.
- iii. Government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and private sector actors expand business incubation programs for youths, focusing on mentorship, networking, and workspace access. Policies should ensure that incubation support is inclusive, easily accessible, and coupled with practical training to maximise the employment potential of young entrepreneurs. Encouraging collaboration between incubators and

- financial institutions may also enhance the effectiveness of these programs in generating sustainable youth employment.
- iv. Government agencies, business development organizations, and private sector stakeholders expand market linkage programs targeting young entrepreneurs. Strategies should include regular business fairs, exhibitions, and facilitated connections to potential customers. Additionally, integrating these programs with training on marketing and customer engagement can maximize their effectiveness in promoting youth employment and sustainable business growth.

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