

Curriculum Design and Entrepreneurial Intention: Bridging Graduates' Unemployment Gap in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study assesses how curriculum design can be used as a lever to propel robust entrepreneurship intentions among graduates in reaction to rising youth unemployment. A total of 19 respondents (graduates and educators) were interviewed to understand the role of curriculum design in the development of entrepreneurial intentions for employment and venture creation. Themes and sub-themes were identified with the NVivo (12) qualitative software. Results revealed ambiguous and outdated course curricula incapacitated to explore and provoke appropriate entrepreneurial intentions. The right mix of entrepreneurial intentions, skills, traits, and competency is largely not infused in the existing higher education curriculum in Nigeria. Addressing graduates' unemployment challenges is unconnected to having a robust and practical curriculum in tandem with global best practices. The study concludes with the need to revoke the existing Nigeria's higher education curriculum through the infusion and application of entrepreneurial intentions skills and traits.

Keywords: Curriculum, Entrepreneurship, Graduates, Pedagogy, Unemployment

1. Introduction

Nigeria, like many other developing nations, is still struggling with the challenge of curriculum design and implementation in higher institutions of learning (Igbokwe, Mezieobi & Eke, 2014). The continuous increase in global graduate unemployment has welcomed a justification for the urgent rejigging of higher education curricula, in tandem with entrepreneurial intention and skills development (Deng, 2022). However, there is little evidence to support any effort on the part of Nigeria toward the revitalization of higher education curricula for graduate entrepreneurial intention (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015). Nonetheless, the fact that the responsibility of curriculum design and implementation is not entirely at the core of government, a significant role is expected from relevant stakeholders, including teachers and education administrators. Sadly, in the case of Nigeria, this role has been largely politicized, leaving teachers and education administrators out of the curriculum design initiatives (Ogar & Awhen, 2015). The high incidence of graduate unemployment in Nigeria¹ is yet to put the Nigerian educational system on a path of rebirth, for the inculcation of innovative and technology-aided teaching and learning mechanisms for graduates' entrepreneurial intention and sustainability (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015).

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¹ According to the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria, 42.5 percent of Nigeria graduates are unemployed as at the last quarter of 2022.

The needed skills, innovation, and competency required by graduates to upturn the unemployment situation in Nigeria have been argued as missing in higher institution curricula (Igbokwe, Mezieobi & Eke, 2014). For instance, the higher education curriculum is lacking in content relating to graduates' labour market preparedness, the development of independent-thinking graduates, and the enhancement of capacity for employment opportunities (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016). According to Do Paço et al., (2015), the crusade for curriculum design will continue to form public opinion and debates, especially as the global trends of employment are drifting towards entrepreneurship. In a sense, it is important to revise and re-design higher education curricula to meet this global demand.

The challenge of provoking an effective curriculum in Nigeria, that can stimulate entrepreneurial-minded graduates, thus addressing graduates' unemployment is not far-fetched. For instance, in the case of Nigeria, there is evidence to support the conundrums of institutional bottlenecks, cultural constraints, and poor or lack of clear-cut framework (Adiaha et al., 2019). The fallouts of this narrative are issues sprouting graduates' roll-out lacking the appropriate entrepreneurial knowledge, thus swelling the rate of graduates' unemployment. The argument that this paper seeks to pursue is the emphasis on the significance of curriculum design and how this can be utilized as a lever for building sustainable entrepreneurial intention and bridging graduates' unemployment in Nigeria.

The literature is satiated with discussions on the separate themes of curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention in Nigeria. These discussions include an analysis of implementing contemporary issues through curriculum development, teaching models, and curriculum design for teaching institutes (Adiaha et al., 2019); the role of e-learning, advantages, and disadvantage of its adoption in higher education (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015); an analysis of teachers' attitude to curriculum design, changes and implementation (Igbokwe, Mezieobi & Eke, 2014); interrogating teachers perceived problem of curriculum implementation in Nigeria's tertiary institution (Ogar & Awhen, 2015). From the perspective of understanding the nexus between curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention, particularly from the lens of bridging graduates' unemployment, hardly has there been any study in Nigeria that seeks to understand and focus the twin discourse of curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention on bridging graduate unemployment in Nigeria. This locus explains the originality of the present study and its uniqueness in the canon of curriculum and entrepreneurship studies. In specific, the study aims to dissect and understand the relationship between curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention with a focus on how graduates' unemployment can be bridged in Nigeria.

The contribution of this paper is the interrogation of curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention through bridging graduates' unemployment in Nigeria. It is irrefutable the verity that existing studies on these themes are limited in Nigeria, especially within the context of higher education institutions in Nigeria. By examining these issues, it is likely to engender a more distinct discussion and understanding of curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention as it relates to addressing graduates' unemployment in Nigeria. In pursuit of this, the analysis takes the position that these issues are germane for predicting and addressing graduates' unemployment in Nigeria. After a brief explanation of curriculum and curriculum design, the paper turned to explain the concept of graduate entrepreneurship. This is followed by a review of curriculum design and graduate entrepreneurial intention. The different methodologies and methods were succinctly explained. The implication of the study is the need for a strategic rejigging of higher

education curricula for improved graduates' entrepreneurial intention that could address the bane of graduates' unemployment in Nigeria.

2. Curriculum and Curriculum Design

The theoretical understanding and definition of curriculum shoulder a range of meanings and explanations. The conundrum of upholding a single description of the concept of curriculum is not far-fetched from the different available meanings, opinions, and understandings adopted by different stakeholders such as researchers, administrators, students, and other allied partners (Amanamah, Acheampong & Owusu, 2018). Therefore, the problem of uniformity evidently shows the intricacy of the concept. The conceptual understanding of curriculum can be explicated as an embodiment of information, skills, and attitude that are wedged on persons through the school management system (Asitik & Nunfam, 2019). The central theme of information means the amalgamation of all truths, evidence, theories, and instructions needed to be acquired for a person to be declared proficient in a chosen area of study (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017). By insinuation, a curriculum is constructed as a set of scheduled events strategically planned for the implementation of a definite educational goal (Cunningham et al., 2019). By this narration, the schedule must be intentional and purposeful toward the realization of the education such as learning and teaching. The concept of the curriculum can also be defined as deliberate and steered learning actions projected by the school, regardless of whether such learning is performed with an individual or group of persons, or whether executed within or outside of the school premises (Hendry & Winfield, 2013). On a broader level of explanation, the concept of curriculum signifies a contract between the educational managers and the State on the method of learning and teaching instructions learners are guided to undertake during the period of their learning lives (Peterman & Kennedy, 2017).

According to Rengiah and Sentosa (2016, p.34), curriculum design can be interpreted as the managerial process associated with the maintenance of accuracy and ensuring up-to-date communication about a curriculum (Zhang, Duysters & Clodt, 2013). Therefore, it can be theorized as a scholarly exercise, administration, and instructional guidance of the school business, not excluding learning and other teaching practices (Bouihères et al., 2019). Curriculum design and management is an inclusive learning activity that promotes the participation of other pertinent stakeholders for robust and successful implementation of the curriculum policy (Bodnar, Clark & Besterfield-Sacre, 2015). The academic implementation of curriculum design does not mean the abolishment of an existing curriculum and replacement with a new one, rather it explicates addressing a precise learning and teaching challenge (Amsal et al., 2014).

Curriculum design signifies a procedure that can be instantaneous, adaptable, and responsive with the aim of attaining more productive and robust teaching and learning outcomes (Tsai et al., 2016). This process can be actualized through two unrelated methods such as educational design and institutional process (Turker & Sonmez-Selcuk, 2008). First, educational design involves the involvement of professionals in the designing of curriculum for explicit teaching and learning outcomes and all other related institutional learning processes. Second, the institutional process of curriculum design explicates the design and implementation of the curriculum through market research and quality assurances (Wang & Chugh, 2014). In essence, the design of the curriculum encapsulates internal and external assessment for more productive learning and teaching outcomes. Curriculum design at the level of higher education of learning is planned

in a fixed period frame. For instance, the changing face of education and learning instructions has hugely steered educators and university instructors to reassess the suitable teaching and learning methods that align with the changing nature of education and the learning process globally (Ogar & Awhen, 2015). However, this changing trend is expected to usher in some changes in the design and implementation of the curriculum. The envisaged changes are envisaged to provoke innovative alterations in the existing curriculum of higher education that will embrace issues on the development of students' entrepreneurial intention. This no doubt will have a long-standing positive impact on the rising surge of graduate employment in Nigeria.

3. Graduate Entrepreneurship Explained

The concept of entrepreneurship is no doubt enjoying increase stimulus amongst university students and graduates. For instance, studies have established that the present global economy has resuscitated the mindset of youths toward initiating and commencing their businesses (Amsal et al., 2014; Hall, Daneke & Lenox, 2010). In contrast, studies conducted in Nigeria have established conflicting judgments (Ogar & Awhen, 2015). Careers in entrepreneurship afford important opportunities for graduates to attain financial freedom by providing critical platforms for job creation and innovations (Hendry & Winfield, 2013). According to Arkorful and Abaidoo (2015), the necessity to transmute university graduates into self-sustaining entrepreneurs is more needed than ever in this era of economic turbulence and increase job loss. It is instructive, therefore, to understand the role of curriculum design in graduate entrepreneurship intention and mindset. Graduate entrepreneurs have been continuously charged with the mandate to upturn and create great business change through innovation and assertiveness. For example, in the area of economic expansion, entrepreneurs that are geared toward innovation and a new business venture for economic growth become admirable. With evidence of government support in the area of inspiring higher education institutions towards the identification and development of graduates with entrepreneurial skills for venture creation, it is important to mention that there is a dearth of this transformation available in Nigeria as the surge of graduate unemployment continues to ascend (Hall, Daneke & Lenox, 2010).

Globally, graduates are faced with the conundrum of labour market flexibility (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016). This development mandates graduates to compete for the sparsely available jobs or opt for self-employment. However, organizations are always interested in graduates with entrepreneurial mindsets. This narrative explicitly advances the importance of graduate entrepreneurship as a critical step towards dwindling the high rate of unemployment among graduates. Thus, the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and skills represents a pathway to employability (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015). The continuous global changes have continued to stimulate the interest of employers in graduates with adequate and equipped skills that will afford them to perform in innovative ways and cope with difficult business (Bae et al., 2014). According to Bladh (2020), it is important to assess and understand the myriads of issues constricting graduate entrepreneurial intentions for a business start-up. Hall, Daneke, and Lenox (2010) argued that they are a collection of factors that can stimulate a person's interest in becoming an entrepreneur including demographics, attitude, and other psychological traits. For instance, Do Paço et al., (2015) contend that personality traits have been found to influence business start-ups among university graduates. Several arguments have been re-echoed in the management literature that for effective entrepreneurship mindset and intention policymakers and stakeholders must pay appropriate attention to

the collection of factors that affects graduate entrepreneurial intentions. Conclusively, the concept of graduate entrepreneurship must be viewed in the context of understanding the personality and willingness of the individual to commence an enterprise and their readiness to understand and overcome business challenges.

4. Curriculum Design and Graduates' Entrepreneurial Intention

The concept of entrepreneurial intention has been conceptualized from diverse standpoints (Bladh, 2020). For instance, Caliendo, Fossen and Kritikos (2014) defined the concept as an act of delving into knowledge and other resources required for the commencement of an enterprise. It can also be explained as a mental position that is premised on own intent to explore and begin a new business venture (Bümen & Holmqvist, 2022). Other perspectives including Leeman and Wardekker (2011) argued entrepreneurial intention is a personal dedication toward the realization of a new business venture. Entrepreneurial intention is a robust predictor of becoming interested in entrepreneurial behaviour which can transmute into setting up a business venture. In other words, the importance of intention remains an important trigger for any entrepreneurial behaviour to lead to a business venture. Intentions play a crucial role in clarifying social behaviour. For instance, social behaviours, including the commencing of a new business venture, are voluntarily controlled and these behaviours have been explained to be appropriately predicted by intentions (Lekoko, Rankhumise & Ras, 2012). Therefore, an individual with a more promising attitude towards a particular behaviour, has a higher intention to exhibit such behaviour. The role of curriculum design and entrepreneurship education in the enhancement of entrepreneurial intention has remained inconclusive in the curriculum and entrepreneurship literature. Although there are available studies that explain the increase in graduates' entrepreneurial intention may be suggestive of curriculum design and implementation (Bümen & Holmqvist, 2022; Lekoko, Rankhumise & Ras, 2012). Ocean, Tukwasibwe and Oketch (2021) analysis remains incomplete with the explanation of any link or relationship between curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention. The study creates an impression that there might be other factors that might impede entrepreneurial intention while students are undergoing teaching and learning with the new curriculum design.

Curriculum design and implementation remain fundamental in the understanding of graduates' entrepreneurship intentions and behaviours (Caliendo, Fossen & Kritikos, 2014). Through appropriate design and implementation of curriculum and course contents, graduates are projected to obtain the knowledge and skills desirable to take appropriate steps and advantage of prospects that are fit for the management of their enterprise (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2016). Considering the importance of entrepreneurship for graduates and the Nigerian economy, curriculum design, and implementation have consistently remained critical for many industries and organizations seeking graduate employment in recent times (Igbokwe, Mezieobi & Eke, 2014). This narrative is supported by the belief my many industries that appropriate design and implemented curriculum can engender high-spirited graduates' entrepreneurs. Supporting this position is Hall, Daneke and Lenox's (2010) thesis that the integration of entrepreneurship curriculum into higher education curricula can aid and promote a suitable learning environment for innovation and creativity among university graduates with an increase in business awareness. Curriculum design also encourages increased and stable mental attributes toward venture creation. The literature has consistently found experiential evidence that curriculum design predicts an

individual intention to commence a business venture (Gafar, Kasim & Martin, 2013). Studies have found that curriculum design plays an important role in molding behaviour with a significant increase in graduates' self-sureness and motivation, proactiveness, creativity, and ability to work in a challenging business situation (Leeman & Wardekker, 2011).

Curriculum design and implementation are fundamental in the discourse of entrepreneurship education for the development of graduates' entrepreneurship intentions. From the prism of social behavioural theorist postulations, socializing, understanding, skills, and attitudes apparent in any entrepreneurship curriculum possibly predict graduates' entrepreneurial behaviour intention (Malebana, 2014). The aim of any entrepreneurship curriculum course content avails the foundation for the development of appropriate entrepreneurship-connected knowledge and competencies needed for the provocation of graduates' entrepreneurial intention for venture creation in the long run. Gafar, Kasim and Martin's (2013) study found that entrepreneurship curriculum had a positive relationship with the possibility of expressing interest in entrepreneurship among university graduates. In other words, the emphasis and process of curriculum design and implementation in provoking entrepreneurial intention skills are more probable to impact the degree to which learners absorb the nitty-gritty of venture and business creation through entrepreneurship curriculum. In specific, the entrepreneurship curriculum design process affords graduates the opportunity to learn by practice and this has been argued to be more effective in the acquisition of the requisite skills and knowledge needed for entrepreneurial intention (Piperopoulos & Dimov, 2014).

The appropriateness of curriculum design has been established to significantly impact graduates' career choices and tends to enable them to venture into creation (Ogar & Awhen, 2015; Singh, 2012). Entrepreneurship is under the deliberate behavioural control of the individual and entrepreneurial intention represents one of the predictors of entrepreneurial behaviour. The first step in any venture creation for graduates is the importance of critically assessing the quality and viability of the existing curriculum and teaching contents. In addition, curriculum design is grounded in entrepreneurship actions, including entrepreneurial intentions (Malebana, 2014). The efficacy of curriculum design has been found to strongly influence graduates' attitudinal development for venture and innovation creation (Gafar, Kasim & Martin, 2013). In a similar context, Piperopoulos and Dimov (2014) analysis argued that offering university graduates a high level of suitable knowledge and innovativeness for entrepreneurship has the propensity to provoke graduates for entrepreneurial intention needed for venture creation.

A curriculum design initiative can increase the entrepreneurial intention of graduate students. Nonetheless the noteworthy role of curriculum design, the central focus is the reliability of the output value on graduates. Liñán and Alain (2015) study interrogated the nexus between entrepreneurial education students' entrepreneurial intention to commence a business venture. The analysis suggests that entrepreneurial features are diverse and their association with effective curriculum design is capable of stimulating graduates into establishing their business ventures. Developing entrepreneurial skills through curriculum design has an important impact on an individual's decision to commence a business. In addition, curriculum design also plays a major role in building the inward strength of entrepreneurial passion. In conclusion, an effective and sound entrepreneurship curriculum can be used to rouse graduates' entrepreneurial interests, amassing entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and insights.

5. Methodology and Methods

The present study employs the interpretivism research philosophy and depends on qualitative data to understand the research phenomenon. The qualitative research literature argued that the assumption of the interpretive research method is to understand different opinions, perceptions, and worldviews concerning a research problem (Quinlan, 2011, Yin, 2016). For the purpose of this study, students' opinions, perceptions, and experiences were gathered to understand the role of curriculum design in sustainable entrepreneurial intentions as a bridging gap for graduates' unemployment in Nigeria (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). With the sparsity of empirical studies on the nexus between curriculum design and students' entrepreneurial intentions, specifically through the lens of addressing graduates' unemployment in Nigeria, the study employs the exploratory research design to expand the threshold of knowledge by interrogating the discourse from a different standpoint (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Creswell, 2014). The assumptions of the qualitative research approach where interviews will be conducted, therefore, become appropriate for this study. The population of study constitutes a total of 14 graduates' and 5 higher institutions educators. The recruitment of the sample followed two strategic approaches: snowballing and purposive sampling techniques respectively. For instance, unemployed graduates were identified through referrals, and it was later streamlined to 14 after considering the intention of those who meet the study's criteria. This procedure was also followed in the recruitment of the 5 educators. This criterion was accomplished by first establishing an initial interaction with the identified respondents who first showed interest in participating in the study. In summary, a total of 19 respondents participated in the study.

The semi-structured interview approach was employed for the retrieval of qualitative data from respondents. This interview approach is justified to permit the exploration of supplementary questions and to ensure lucidity as the interview progresses (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). The interview process was conducted on a personal basis and recorded. In addition, note-taking was engaged in the situation that the quality of the interview becomes a challenge when transcribing. During the interview processes, an interview guide was employed to permit an unimpeded flow of questions and responses respectively. The common conundrums known with the interview approach of data collection including ambiguity in questions and responses and the misinterpretation of questions were clearly addressed in this study. These issues were checked by ensuring that all questions are written in the English Language and easy to understand by all respondents. The interview process begins on the 20th of November to the 15th of December 2022. The variety of questions enquired lean on the challenges of curriculum design, the role of curriculum design in building students' sustainable entrepreneurial intentions and how can curriculum design bridge the barrier of graduate unemployment in Nigeria.

For data quality, the quality of the qualitative data was ascertained through the application of Trochim and Donnelly's (2007) four strategic steps of qualitative data quality including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The credibility of the qualitative data was ascertained by ensuring that the data clearly reflected the views and opinions of the respondents. Similarly, transferability was pursued through the transferability of the research findings to another research context. By dependability, strict compliance was ensured in terms of ethics in the data collection and reporting. For confirmability, a synergy between the data and results was established to confirm that the results emerge from the data. In terms of analysis, the collection of the transcript interviews was transcribed. Subsequently, the different

texts were analyzed with the NVivo (v.12) qualitative software for the identification of relevant themes and sub-themes. In what follows, compressed themes and sub-themes that are related to the research questions and objectives were identified. The different themes and sub-themes were later analyzed with the Qualitative Content Analysis in order to make sense of the different themes and sub-themes respectively. For ethics, the consent of all respondents was duly sought before the commencement of the interview and a consent note was signed indicating their voluntary participation in the study. The anonymity and confidentiality of all participants were robustly protected in such a way that their names and other identifying identities were concealed during the interview and report of the research findings.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

6.1 Curriculum Design and Implementation Challenges

This objective seeks to identify and understand curriculum design and implementation challenges. Several major themes were identified from the analysis as issues affecting the effective design and implementation of the curriculum in the context of higher education institutions of learning. These themes include the challenge of institutional bottleneck, poor expert opinion, innovation challenges, and exclusion of teachers' opinions. Others are culture, politicizing education, corruption, and administrative challenges. The challenge of institutional bottlenecks in the design and implementation of curriculum policy in Nigeria has continued without appropriate checks (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016). For instance, the challenge of policy implementation and enactment has continued to raise serious debates due to attitudinal and behavioral challenges. Most of the respondents shared valuable insights on the institutional challenge inherent in designing and implementing a new curriculum course content. This narration questions the responsibilities of the Nigeria Ministry of Education saddled with the design and implantation of the new curriculum. Thus, it is safe to contend that the poor state of curriculum and course content in Nigeria's higher education cannot be distanced from the collection of institutional tailbacks militating against timely and effective curriculum design and implementation. One of the respondent's recounts on the challenge of an institutional bottleneck as follows:

I strongly think we have a lot to do if we are serious about getting it right in terms of curriculum design and implementation in higher institutions of learning. One of the major challenges constricting the realization of the globally accepted curriculum in the higher institution of learning is the challenge of institutional bottlenecks. As an educator, I have seen how low or no priorities are given to the charge for a curriculum design, especially when it is agreed by all stakeholders for the need to revamp the existing curriculum, you still found out that there are institutional bottlenecks to get this done from the part of Nigeria's Ministry of Education. I can tell you a number of these delays are intentional, and this only describes the nature of seriousness we attached to education.

The importance of expert opinion and contribution in the design and implementation of the curriculum cannot be exhausted without the mention of expert opinion. As a matter of fact, expert opinion remains the most fundamental factor in the design and implementation of a curriculum. From the analysis, it was reported that several curriculum designs and implementation policies were largely comprised of political appointees while experts are grossly excluded. No doubt, this will continue to provoke weak and

ineffective curriculum and course content that can change the dynamics of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. To address this, it is important that experts with the appropriate knowledge and insights be employed in the design and implementation of the curriculum. In other words, for any positive look in the area of ensuring curriculum and course content provoked the desired entrepreneurial intentions among graduates for business ventures, the significance of expert opinion in the design and implementation stage must be taken seriously by Nigeria's Ministry of Education. One of the respondents reports below:

I am not sure those responsible for ensuring the effective design and implementation of higher education curricula are left up to the task. It is common knowledge that expert opinions are frequently excluded in the design and implementation of curricula for some political reasons. We have seen, on severally, where a non-educator is overseeing the committee in charge of curriculum design. We have also seen cases where experts' opinion is offered and neglected in order to satisfy some political curiosity. This practice cannot yield the expected results in terms of the development of graduates' entrepreneurial intention through curriculum design.

Many of the respondents also explain that corruption and poor monitoring and supervision function remain critical to the failure of higher education curricula in engendering graduates with sound entrepreneurial minds. For instance, it was reported that the incidence of corruption perpetuated in Nigeria's Ministry of Education is to a great extent stalling the progress of curriculum design and implementation, as most funds aside for this exercise are being utilized for political activities and embezzled. The concern of corruption has remained a major issue and can be argued to explain the poor state of Nigeria's educational system. Thus, this argument supports the urgent necessity to revamp and eradicate corruption in the interest of Nigeria's higher education development. Aside from corruption, the analysis also revealed poor monitoring and supervision effort of curriculum design and implementation. Most of the respondents interviewed decried the poor state of monitoring the progress of curriculum design and implementation policy. This challenge has further exacerbated and engendered poor curriculum content in Nigeria's higher education of learning. In other words, people are bound to neglect the importance of curriculum design if they are not monitored in terms of evaluation and progress assessment.

I am sure I cannot be wrong when I mention corruption. Like in any of the sectors, corruption has remained a bane stalling Nigeria's progress, especially in the area of educational advancement. We often hear about the bogus amount of money budgeted for the education ministry, but little or no evidence to show for them. It is on record that funds are periodically awarded for the curriculum design and implementation exercise, but the challenge of poor curriculum content persists, and graduates are yearly chucked out without a robust entrepreneurial intention for venture creation.

The challenge of poor monitoring and supervision of curriculum design and implementation policy was re-echoed by another respondent.

I must be sincere with you; the culture of poor monitoring and supervision of policy is also another issue because curriculum design and implementation are yet to provide any positive outlook in terms of developing and building graduates with a strong

entrepreneurial intention for venture creation. If the desired results become crucial, then there is a need for an urgent change in attitude for an improved curriculum design outlook. This change must be supported by all relevant stakeholders as it were.

6.2 Curriculum Design and Sustainable Entrepreneurial Intention

Curriculum design plays an important role in the development of graduates' entrepreneurial intentions. These roles include but are not limited to business savvy knowledge, the stimulation of an innovative mindset, and improved business and entrepreneurial understanding. Other crucial importance of curriculum design captures the development of capacity for entrepreneurial spirit, and the introduction of learning and teaching practices that supports robust and effective business thinking and action. These roles were explained by many of the respondents as critical to the development of graduates' entrepreneurial intentions. Business savvy skills and knowledge can be achieved through the inculcation of business models and skills into the curriculum, and this should be actionable in terms of teaching. Therefore, to attain sound graduates' entrepreneurial intentions, the curriculum must be redesigned so that business cases and other important business plans can be included in the teaching curriculum. Most of the respondents further argued for continuous advocacy in the areas of revamping the higher education institutions' curriculum in order to reflect important metrics that can build sustainable business savvy knowledge, thereby bridging the unemployment gap among Nigerian graduates.

I think considering curriculum design has a lot to do in terms of building business-savvy knowledge for graduates. I believe a lot can be done in this area, essentially by ensuring that the right business information can be infused into the curriculum. Business models and actionable business teachings can be inculcated into the existing curriculum where students are taught the nitty-gritty of entrepreneurship and business creation. A lot can be done, and this will become a benchmark that will see through building and developing graduates with the right business attitude and entrepreneurial intention.

An innovative mindset has remained an important discourse in the analysis of building a sustainable entrepreneurial culture among graduates. This expectation has become crucial in the evaluation of sustainable entrepreneurship intention. Thus, innovation should be seen at the centre of curriculum design where graduates can be taught the appropriate entrepreneurial skills. The advocacy for an innovative-driven curriculum is premised on the demands of the global village and the advance in information technology, which has remained a criterion for any successful business venture.

In my opinion, an innovative mindset should be really assessed, and it is important that this becomes a part of the curriculum. Innovation remains critical when we talk about developing graduates' entrepreneurial intentions. The curriculum needs to serve an innovative purpose so graduates can gain top-notch entrepreneurial skills and knowledge as they sojourn through the entrepreneurship world. Innovation in teaching, learning, and entrepreneurial skills should be included in the graduate's curriculum for improved entrepreneurial intention and venture creation skills.

Respondents reiterated the role of curriculum design in building sustainable entrepreneurial intention through the prism of teaching and learning instructions offered. The significance of teaching and learning cannot be overemphasized in the discourse of curriculum design and building entrepreneurial intention. As a matter of fact, it is instructive to argue that the nature and style of teaching and learning instructions a graduate undergoes will greatly determine how their business confidence can be built. Respondents contend that the existing teaching and learning instructions emanating from the existing curriculum are not developed in tandem with global trends and cannot be used to develop or build robust graduates' entrepreneurial intentions. In other words, it is important to begin to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum through the perspective of the style of teaching and learning instructions being offered to students. Many of the respondents argued that the current teaching and learning approach being employed in Nigeria's higher institutions of learning is ambiguous and outdated. As such, little or no evidence to support the development of graduates' entrepreneurial intention through the existing curriculum.

We need to give emphasis to teaching and learning instructions for evidential development in graduates' entrepreneurial intention skills and capacity. What we presently have in terms of teaching and learning is nothing to write home about and there is an urgent need to revamp the current curriculum so we can include approaches that support global trends in teaching and learning. Graduates need to be taught the intricacies of business and job creation and this must come through the teaching and learning approach. The only way this can happen is to redesign the curriculum so graduates can become entrepreneurial developed.

6.3 Curriculum Design and Graduates' Employment

The challenge of graduates' employment has continued to soar in Nigeria with little or no evidence to tame its tide on the part of the Nigerian government. According to the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics report released in the last quarter of 2022, over 73 million Nigerian youths are unemployed. This scenario explains the failure of the Nigerian government to implement policies and strategies that are needed for the creation of jobs in Nigeria on the one hand. On the other hand, it can be explained through the poor curriculum and course content being utilized in higher education institutions of learning. For instance, several of the curricula departs from conventional work and entrepreneurial preparedness. According to many of the respondents, the existing higher education curriculum is outdated and does not exhibit current labour market realities. Thus, the importance of curriculum design for graduates' employment and sustainable entrepreneurial intention and venture creation cannot be over-emphasized. The results explain a variety of importance of curriculum design for graduates' employment including labour market preparedness, business creativity and thinking, bridging the employment gap through technology, and curriculum design that support a stimulating business environment.

The significance of labour market preparedness represents an important cog in building graduates with entrepreneurial intention and venture creation mindset. In other words, the higher education curriculum requires urgent revisits to ensure that the contents are reflective of labour market preparedness. However, failure to ensure this will continue to escalate the surge of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. One of the respondents explains as follows:

I will say the curriculum should be revised to ensure labour market preparedness skills are inculcated into the contents. We have been having a lot of theoretical teachings in our higher institutions of learning with little effort on practical ones. We need to start looking inward on how to ensure graduates are labour market prepared through the teaching of labour market and entrepreneurial skills. As a matter of matter, I think this should be a part of the entire course of study in higher institutions of learning.

For others, the significance of bridging graduates' unemployment through technology cannot be overstretched. The world is presently being driven by technology and graduates must be wholeheartedly involved in order to be able to create value for themselves. As reiterated earlier, the present higher education curriculum is woefully designed and lacking in technology and innovative teachings. For curriculum to be employed as a vehicle for addressing graduates' unemployment in Nigeria, technology must be embraced. One of the respondents' recounts:

Are we even thinking in the direction of technology? I think we need to give focus on the importance of technology as well in our crusade for curriculum design and all. We cannot be talking about building sustainable graduates with robust entrepreneurial intentions and business skills without talking about technology. In my opinion, I think we should start canvassing how to incorporate and make use of technology in our curriculum. We need to start supporting and enlightening students on how to liberate the entrepreneurship market with technology and this can happen swiftly if we attend to the curriculum and re-design, it to fit this purpose.

Business creativity and thinking skills also form an important component of building an army of graduates with entrepreneurial intention and mindset. The present curriculum is not skewed to develop graduates with the appropriate thinking and creativity skills required for a successful business venture. The Nigeria Ministry of Education, no doubt has failed in this regard with the high incidence of graduates' unemployment stemming from graduates' lack of skills and creativity for business success. Thus, the argument is the need for a revisit of the existing curriculum by inculcating the required skills and creative thinking in the course content for stimulating graduates' employment and business creation experience. This position was also re-echoed by one of the respondents.

We can start looking at the importance of business creativity and thinking if we are keen on addressing graduates' unemployment in Nigeria. The curriculum requires that these important skills become part of the curriculum so that graduates can be well-prepared and equipped for the business world as it were. We cannot continue to talk about job creation without addressing the lack of business creativity and thinking among graduates. A thinking graduate is an entrepreneur in the making. Efforts, therefore, must be shifted towards ensuring graduates are possessed the right mix of business creativity and thinking capacity needed to survive entrepreneurship and the business world.

Table 1: Themes and Sub-themes

Research objectives	Major themes	Sub-themes
To identify and understand curriculum design and implementation challenges	Institutional bottlenecks, lack of clear framework design, poor expert opinion, cultural constraints, innovation challenges, exclusion of teachers' opinion	Incompetency, administrative challenges, politicizing education, corruption, lack of adequate monitoring and supervision
To assess the role of curriculum design in sustainable entrepreneurial intention and venture creation	Business savvy knowledge, stimulating innovative mindset, improved business and entrepreneurial understanding, developing business intention through curriculum design and implementation	Stimulating business confidence, building capacity for entrepreneurial spirit, introducing learning and teaching that supports business thinking and action
To highlight the importance of curriculum design in bridging graduates' unemployment	Employment creation through curriculum design that assesses business and venture creation, labour market preparedness, business creativity, and thinking, bridging the unemployment gap through technology, a curriculum that supports the stimulating business environment	Action plan and implementation, creating entrepreneurial awareness through curriculum design and implementation, creating independent thinking graduates for job creation, enhancing capacity development for employment opportunities through curriculum design and implementation

Source: Qualitative data

7. Discussion of Results

The aim of this study has been to assess the significance of curriculum design in the development of graduates' entrepreneurial intentions. This important discourse was, however, interrogated beyond the conventional narratives of curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention nexus, to a more crucial analysis of how these themes can bridge and address the ascending rates of graduates' unemployment in Nigeria. The Nigeria case clearly offers an important pointer and rich analysis with evidence of the growing rate of graduates' unemployment, partly due to the lack of commitment to building a global and innovative curriculum that can aid in the development of graduates with entrepreneurial interests. Curriculum design policy has consistently been used in other climes as a resuscitation tool in terms of creating entrepreneurial-minded graduates for business and venture creation. Its strategic importance represents a developmental tool that should be embraced by developing nations like Nigeria, for turning the tide of graduates' unemployment conundrums.

The findings showed several curriculum design and implementation challenges including institutional bottlenecks, lack of a clear framework, and poor expert opinion. Others are politicization, cultural constraints, innovation challenges, and the exclusion of teachers' opinions respectively. The collection of these issues clearly explains the current state of the Nigerian education system. In Nigeria, one of the core problems affecting the performance of the educational system has been the rising influence of politicization. In other words, there has been a massive exclusion of relevant stakeholders such as teachers and university administrators in the design of the curriculum. The fallout has been a poorly designed curriculum incapable of building sustainable graduates' entrepreneurial intention and employment creation. In the case of the Nigerian educational system, unclear structures are mounted to frustrate any meaningful attempts towards the resuscitation of the education system through the design of curriculum. In effect, the existing curriculum has not been able to address the current challenges of graduates' unemployment in Nigeria (Bümen & Holmqvist, 2022). Similarly, the challenge of innovation in the course content represents another concern. With the mammoths of manpower and innovative individuals, Nigeria still struggles with the infusion of technology and innovation in the context of higher education curricula (Ogar & Awhen, 2015; Rawling, 2020). This development has continued to reflect in the readiness and competency of graduates to commence entrepreneurial activities. Several studies support these arguments (Deng, 2022; Ocean, Tukwasibwe & Oketch, 2021).

The results also revealed the role of curriculum design could play in building a sustainable entrepreneurial intention and venture creation skills. Some of these roles include building business savvy knowledge, stimulating business confidence, and learning and teaching that support business thinking and action. Other important roles are improved business and entrepreneurial understanding. From this analysis, it is important to argue that curriculum design in tandem with global trends plays a crucial role in the development of graduates' entrepreneurial intentions (Cunningham et al., 2019; Bouiheres et al., 2019).

The ascending global graduates' unemployment rate is being attended to by nations through swift attention to the re-design of higher education curricula in order to fit with the requirement of developing graduates with entrepreneurial intention and business skills (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2016). On the contrary, Nigeria seems to be lacking behind in terms of addressing the scourge of graduates' unemployment through the re-design of higher education curriculum (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016; Adiaha, et al., 2019). For instance, one of the missing links is the challenge of stimulating business confidence as many graduates undergo theoretical learning, thus lacking the practical confidence to stimulate and commence a business venture. In addition, the Nigeria higher education curriculum is lacking the right recipe that supports business thinking and action. In other words, graduates become docile and less motivated to commence venture or business start-ups after graduation. Some of the existing literature has repeatedly explained the significance of curriculum design in the entrepreneurial intention of students (Biraglia & Kadile, 2017), however, the focus on graduates in this study reflects its originality.

Finally, the importance of curriculum design in bridging graduates' unemployment shows several significances such as graduates' labour market preparedness, bridging unemployment through technology, and creating independent-thinking graduates. Similarly, finding show enhancing capacity development for employment creation skills. The Nigerian labour market is doubt competitive and requires graduates with the right mix of skills and preparedness. The significance of curriculum n the realization of this objective

cannot be overemphasized. The implication of these arguments can be harnessed from the perspective of ensuring the right framework are put in place and swift response are ensured for the realization of curriculum policy capable of addressing the snag of graduates' unemployment. To do this, the focus must be reassigned and directed toward having a globally accepted curriculum with contents that address the stimulation and inculcation of entrepreneurial skills and intentions in graduates. These analyses have been repeatedly argued in the management and entrepreneurship literature, that to instigate and encourage graduates' entrepreneurship, effort must be given to curriculum design and its implementation (Asitik & Nunfam, 2019).

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The debates in curriculum design have long been a major discourse in the context of building graduates with sustainable entrepreneurial intention globally. However, in the context of Nigeria, little effort has been committed to addressing graduates' unemployment through curriculum design and implementation. Thus, the argument, of this paper is the position that the Nigerian government must swiftly commence addressing the gap toward building the entrepreneurial intention of graduates. In this sense, the Ministry of Education must strategically include this in its developmental goal. While graduates are continuously being affected by the poor state and content of the curriculum, revising and re-designing the existing curriculum possess important strides that can upturn the unemployment situation in Nigeria.

The study also argued that with evidence of the conundrum plaguing curriculum design and implementation in Nigeria, there are obvious consequences on graduates' employment. The study advocates for a more robust portent strategy for addressing curriculum design challenges in Nigeria. This argument explains that curriculum design initiatives must be sincerely valued as a tool for improving higher education in Nigeria. On this note, it is suggested that different stakeholders in the curriculum design policy and implementation must begin playing their roles for a positive outcome. Conclusively, the study recommends a strategic rejigging of the higher education curriculum for improved graduates' entrepreneurial intention. This can become realizable through the active participation of stakeholders such as teachers and educational administrators. Similarly, the challenge of politicization of curriculum design must also be quickly addressed. The job of curriculum design must be allowed by relevant stakeholders. This recommendation becomes highly critical as policy implementation in Nigeria has been hijacked by politicians for personal aggrandizement. Future studies can interrogate curriculum design and entrepreneurial intention through a comparative lens in Nigeria as the present study only focuses on a single case study.

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