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Mitigating Economic Migration among Youths Through Entrepreneurship Development and Digital Skills Training in Imo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the role of entrepreneurship development and digital skills training in mitigating economic migration among youths in Imo State, Nigeria. The increasing rate of youth migration driven by unemployment, poverty, and limited economic opportunities has become a major concern for sustainable development in the state. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design to investigate how skill-based empowerment programmes influence youth self-employment outcomes and migration intentions. The population comprised 350 youths who participated in selected entrepreneurship and digital skills training programmes between 2020 and 2023. A sample of 180 respondents was purposively selected. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship and digital skills training significantly improved youth self-employment outcomes and enhanced entrepreneurial confidence. The results also showed a significant reduction in migration intentions among participants, as many respondents expressed increased confidence in local economic opportunities after the training. The study concludes that entrepreneurship and digital skills training are effective strategies for addressing youth unemployment and reducing economic migration. It recommends increased government and private sector investment in skill-based empowerment programmes, improved access to startup capital, strengthened mentorship systems, and supportive infrastructure to enhance programme sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Economic migration, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship development, digital skills training, self-employment, human capital, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of economic migration is also now considered to be a critical issue in Imo State, Nigeria, where young people tend to abandon their communities and seek a new job and a new way of life. Lack of that access to gainful employment coupled with lack of access to self-employment has led to the impression that success can only be found in a foreign country. The trend does not only drain the local labor in the area but also the socio-economic development of the region. The unemployment rates among speakers, underemployment, and lack of practical skills acquisition programs contribute to the pressure to migrate, and many young people do not have the means to earn (Onyeneke and Aligbe, 2016; Kalu, Achike, Ogbo, and Ukpere, 2020). It is especially urgent among people who belong to the most productive age group 18-35 years old and constitute most of the working population as they are the most susceptible to economic marginalization.

Development of entrepreneurship has been largely identified to be one of the viable measures to deal with unemployment and enhance local economic development. It has been argued that through entrepreneurship programs, youths have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to establish their own businesses, increase self-employment programs, and contribute to the local economy (Afolabi, Kareem, Okubanjo, Ogunbabjo, & Aninkan, 2017; Kalagbor and Harry, 2019). Structured entrepreneurship training in Imo State has empowered the trainees to develop viable business enterprises and become self-sufficient of the traditional sources of employment (Amanze & Igwemeziri, 2024). Such training, when coupled with digital ability, increases access to markets, increases operational efficiencies and fosters innovation, which enables young people to use technology as an economic empowering tool (Njoku and Shaibu, 2023; Wordu and Ehule, 2024). This two-pronged strategy will provide a way to make the perceived need to migrate less significant, as the local economic opportunities become more accessible.

Even with such available programs, there are still gaps that exist in the effectiveness of the programs as a result of lack of adequate follow up support, poor availability of funding and lack of practical exposure. The surveys carried out on young people who attended government and non-governmental entrepreneurship and digital skills training in Imo State demonstrated that most people had plans to emigrate to other countries due to the economic reasons before joining the training programs. The confidence, employability, and local business start-up results were improved significantly post-training, which indicates how well-designed programs can change

the migration intentions (Dinika, 2024; Wordu and Ehule, 2024). Nevertheless, the extent of these interventions is still restricted by the systemic problems of access to credit, mentorship, and business networks that leave a part of the youth still susceptible to the migration pressures (Onyeneke and Aligbe, 2016; Kalu et al., 2020). Consequently, it is essential to consider the efficiency of entrepreneurship creation and training on digital skills in this regard to shape the policies that will keep human capital in the state.

One of the possible strategies to reduce youth migration and promote the development of the local economy is the integration of entrepreneurship and the training of digital skills. Such programs can help young people become more self-reliant in terms of earning income, establishing enterprises and becoming active members of the economy, which will decrease the reliance on the opportunities provided by foreign investors and build trust in the local opportunities. Based on the experience of the participants, the evidence indicates that the change of perceptions toward the viability of the Nigerian economy can be achieved by practical, mentorship-guided, and digitally enabled training, which in its turn will change migration choices (Afolabi et al., 2017; Njoku and Shaibu, 2023; Wodu, Nwanyanwu, and Allobari, 2024). These relations are critical to be studied more precisely to see how the policy and programmatic measures can be used to effectively utilize entrepreneurship and digital potential to reduce the economic migration in Imo State.

In Imo State, most young people still struggle to see an alternative to migration as the means of economic success since they are not exposed to a variety of practical entrepreneurship training, have limited to no digital skills, and do not have a set of financial and mentorship support. This has created low levels of sustained unemployment, underemployment and a feeling that there are no enough economic opportunities locally to support personal development and the development of the region. Unless specific intervention measures are taken to improve the acquisition of skills and to offer resettlement assistance, the youths are prone to remain reliant on migration as an economic survival strategy, which will continuedly result in loss of human capital and stagnation of the local economies.

This study, therefore, sought to examine the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development and digital skills training in reducing economic migration among youths in Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the effect of entrepreneurship training experience on youth self-employment outcomes in Imo State.
2. assess the influence of digital skills training experience on youth migration intentions in Imo State.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Entrepreneur development is one of the major approaches in tackling unemployment and economic migration among the young people in Imo state. It means organized programs that develop entrepreneurship, attitudes, and behavior in youth, which can be presented in the form of government and non-governmental organizations programs that include training, mentoring, and grants or business incubators. These initiatives seek to make youths less job-seekers and more job-creators in order to boost their economic participation in the local area and make them less willing to migrate (Kalagbor and Harry, 2019; Nkemjika et al., 2023; Ebide, 2025; Amanze and Igwemeziri, 2024). The theoretical framework is anchored in the endogenous growth theory which argues that innovation and human capital are critical in shaping the development of an economy and therefore development of entrepreneurship is one way that can be used to impact migration choices by providing more opportunities and possibilities at the local level.

Acquisition of digital skills supplements entrepreneurship development by helping youths to get access to the economic activities that are facilitated by technology like freelancing, e-commerce, and remote service provision. Online literacy makes the youths prepared to run their businesses effectively, reach out to the global market, and earn sustainable income without necessarily moving (Jonas, Nadine, and Darwin, 2021; Wordu and Ehule, 2024; Njoku and Shaibu, 2023; Dinika, 2024). Digital skills in the context of entrepreneurship courses will expand the horizons of economic empowerment, decrease the effects of foreign migration due to the availability of the alternative.

The dependent outcome of the intervention of entrepreneurship and digital skills is self-employment. It is the ability of people to achieve sustainable income with businesses of agricultural activities, retail, microenterprise, and freelancing on the internet. Studies indicate that youths who become self-employed following systematic policies are more economically stable and independent and have higher social capital, which reduces their intentions to migrate (Afolabi et al., 2017; Kalu et al., 2020; Okeke, 2024; Ementa and Anyanwu, 2022). Such programs are only effective when there is access to startup capital and effective mentorship. Various constraints may also leave the transaction of training translated into concrete entrepreneurial deliverables, which perpetuates the motivators of migration (Nkemjika et al., 2023; Wodu, Nwanyanwu, and Allobari, 2024; Kalagbor and Harry, 2019).

The other important dependent variable is the migration intention which measures the probability that youth intend to migrate to another country to seek more economic opportunities. The perception of local opportunities, economic difficulty, and dreams of better lives affect this intention (Onyeneke and Aligbe, 2016; Ibitomi et al., 2022; Ebide, 2025; Major and Leigha, 2019). Empirical results indicate that entrepreneurship and digital skills training, coupled with mentorship, financial access, and enabling infrastructure can lead to the reduction of the migration intentions through the increase of the confidence in the local economic opportunities (Ementa and Anyanwu, 2022; Okeke, 2024; Wordu and Ehule, 2024; Dinika, 2024). Sustainable interventions based

on skill development, therefore, have to incorporate human capital growth as well as structural provision to ensure successful reduction of youth economic migration.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Push-Pull Theory of Migration and the Human Capital Theory are the foundations of the proposed study. The Push-Pull Theory first developed by Lee (1966) is the theory of the migration of persons based on the unfavorable conditions (push factors) in their home countries and favorable possibilities (pull factors) in their destination countries. The economic hardship, unemployment, and a lack of entrepreneurial support are the important push factors in the context of the Imo State, where the young population wants to find a better livelihood in other places (Onyeneke and Aligbe, 2016; Kalu et al., 2020). Pull factors, in their turn, are superior working conditions in foreign countries, cities with greater economic benefits, and perceived access to wealth accumulation. Empirical research shows that the deficiency of practical skills training programs and access to digital resources enhances the motivation to migrate, and entrepreneurship and training in digital skills can be used as an interference in reducing the desire to migrate by increasing the economic prospects of the local population (Dinika, 2024; Wordu and Ehule, 2024; Njoku and Shaibu, 2023).

The Human Capital Theory, which was developed by Becker (1964) highlights investment on education and skills as a way of enhancing individual productivity, earning potential, and general economic performance. In this context, the idea of entrepreneurship and the training of digital skills among the youth are seen as the strategic investment in the younger generation, aimed at increasing employability, self-employment, and eventually decreasing the desire to migrate. Research has also demonstrated that structured entrepreneurial education increases the level of self-sufficiency, income generation and confidence among youths and make local economic opportunities more attractive (Afolabi et al., 2017; Amanze and Igwemeziri, 2024; Ementa and Anyanwu, 2022). Likewise, training in digital skills empowers youth with skills that enable them to conduct business, engage in e-commerce, and remotely access into international markets as the tangible domestic alternatives to global migration (Njoku and Shaibu, 2023; Wodu, Nwanyanwu, and Allobari, 2024).

A combination of these two theories is an adequate theory of explaining the migration of youth in the state of Imo. The reason why people move in response to economic limitations and the external opportunities that they perceive to exist has been explained by the push-pull dynamics, whereas the human capital theory indicates that investments in skills and knowledge can convert the economic limitations into local economic benefits. Through the provided theoretical lenses, the research will be able to investigate how the interventions involving entrepreneurship and digital skills can help to address the factors underlying migration, increase the amount of local self-employment, and enable youth to see the economic potential of their communities (Okeke, 2024; Nkemjika et al., 2023). The interaction between the environmental push factors and individual human capital improvement highlights the prospect of the skill-based interventions in order to mitigate economic migration on a sustainable basis.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The article by Dinika (2024) has investigated the importance of digital skills and entrepreneurship training in solving youth unemployment in Kigali, Rwanda. The study was meant to assess the level at which digital literacy programs influence employability of the youth and their potential to generate self-sustaining economic resources. The population of the study was 250 youths who had undergone training programs organized by the government and non-governmental organizations, among which 120 were stratified with the help of sampling. Mixed method was applied which involved a combination of surveys and focus group discussion to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The thematic and descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze them. It was possible to find that the participants gained more powerful digital skills and were more equipped to participate in entrepreneurial activities, thus eliminating the necessity to move to other countries due to economic factors. The research suggested the incorporation of digital skills in normal entrepreneurship programs in order to create sustainable jobs among the youths.

Afolabi et al. (2017) researched how entrepreneurship education contributes to self-employment ventures among Nigerian science and technology students. This was done to ascertain whether the structured entrepreneurship programs would enhance the ability of the students to be able to start their own businesses and not to rely on formal jobs. The survey sample was conducted on 150 students who were surveyed purposely through structured questionnaires in universities that had a course in entrepreneurship. The results were interpreted by use of descriptive statistical analysis. The results showed that education into entrepreneurship played a significant role in enhancing student confidence, knowledge and capacity to start business ventures. The research also found out that the participants had higher chances of viewing local economic prospects as an alternative to work opportunities outside their home country. The authors, therefore, suggested the growth of entrepreneurship initiatives in higher institutions and the introduction of feasible business incubation services so as to make these programs more effective in mitigating youth unemployment and future migration.

Amanze and Igwemeziri (2024) have also studied entrepreneurship as a form of economic development in the Imo State, Nigeria by evaluating few businesses in Owerri Municipality. The research was intended to learn the way in which development initiatives

in entrepreneurship may support the growth of the local economy and minimize the migratory trends of youth. The survey involved 200 entrepreneurs that had undergone the government and NGO-led entrepreneurship programs. Structured questionnaires were used to collect the data which was analyzed using inferential and descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that respondents had higher incomes, better sustenance of the business and greater interactions with the local market. The research found out that through entrepreneurship training, the youths have the power to use the opportunities available without having to move, and so reduce economic migration. Among the recommendations put forward by the authors are the enhancement of mentorship initiatives, availability of microfinance, and lifelong skills acquisition as the top measures to ensure that the developmental efforts of entrepreneurship activities are maximized in terms of their impact on economic development.

Ementa and Anyanwu (2022) focused on how training in entrepreneurship impacts the sustainability and management of a small and medium-sized service business in Imo State. The aim of the study was to evaluate the potential of the practical entrepreneurship programs in increasing the operational capacity of the SMEs and minimizing the outmigration of youth. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data on a sample of 180 SME operators who had acquired entrepreneurship training. Regression analysis was carried out to establish business performance relations to training exposure and regression analysis. The results showed that the participants were in a better position to handle financial and operating difficulties hence resulting in enhancement of their businesses sustainability. The study highlighted that well-designed entrepreneurship programs encourage youths to invest locally rather than seeking opportunities abroad and recommended follow-up support, mentorship, and practical exposure as critical components of program success.

Njoku and Shaibu (2023) explored digitalisation of SMEs in Imo State after the COVID-19 pandemic considering the role of digital skills to promote sustainable development of the country. The research was carried out on 150 SME operators who had been trained on digital skills. The structured questionnaires were used to collect all the data and the results were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the effects of digital capabilities on the operational efficiency, market expansion, and profitability. Findings proved that digital competency allowed participants to work with online sales, communicate with clients over the distance and streamline business processes, which made them not so interested in the migration based on economic factors. The research highlighted the importance of incorporating digital skills in the programs of entrepreneurship in making local economies resilient and suggested sustained education and access to the digital system to enable young people to maintain sustainable businesses.

In the effort to understand how such programs could help to minimize youth unemployment and the economic migration, Okeke (2024) examined the relationship between entrepreneurship education training and job creation in Imo State. Sixteen questionnaires were designed to survey 180 on the various training programs and research data was collected using the structured questionnaires. The SPSS was used to determine the relationship between the independent variable (entrepreneurship training) and the dependent variables (job creation and economic stability). The results showed that organized training schemes augmented self-employment, confidence in entrepreneurship and participation by locals in the local economy. The participants also noted an increase in income and a decline in the desire to leave the country to get jobs in foreign countries. It was advised in the study that entrepreneurship education be introduced in formal education systems and practical, hands-on business training be offered to youths to make them have sufficient skills to participate in the economy sustainably in their respective communities.

Ibitomi et al. (2022) studied entrepreneurship initiatives implemented by the government and their effects on the youth unemployment in Osun State, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to determine whether employability could be enhanced by using structured interventions as well as to determine whether migration tendencies could be decreased. The purposive selection of program beneficiaries was used to sample, and structured questionnaires were distributed to gather the quantitative data (n=200). The regression analysis showed that those participants who were given support in the entrepreneurship field had higher chances of creating small businesses, raising their income, and gaining confidence in the local economic prospects. The paper has also mentioned the significance of mentoring and financial facilitation towards successful program outcomes. Results indicated that government interventions have the capability of minimizing the youth migration when it is coupled with effective support strategies in terms of financial support, mentoring and training programs to increase the sustainability and local economic involvement.

The study by Kalagbor and Harry (2019) was dedicated to the development of entrepreneurship and youth employment in Nigeria, namely the evaluation of the selected programs oriented to the youth. The research entailed 160 individuals who had participated in the entrepreneurship training programs. The structured questionnaires were used to collect data, which was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that the program attendance led to better entrepreneurial knowledge, encouraged self-employment, and decreased foreign employment dependence. Respondents indicated that they could more easily recognize the economic deficits in the area and develop income-generating opportunities. The need to increase the scale of the youth-focused programs and improve the access to the mentorship and startup capital were the recommendations of the study designed to better influence the sustainability of the entrepreneurship development on the youth employment and migration reduction. These interventions were considered necessary in helping the youth to participate in a sustainable economy.

Ebide (2025) explored the concept of indigenous entrepreneurship and the involvement of such entrepreneurship in the local economic growth of Bomadi-Burutu, Delta State in Nigeria. The research aims at establishing whether economic migration could

be minimized through supporting local entrepreneurship in order to constitute sustainable sources of income. Structured questionnaires were used to survey a sample of 120 local entrepreneurs and thematic analysis was used to analyze the data to determine success patterns and implementation barriers. Findings showed that indigenous entrepreneurship increased the level of community incomes, social capital, and offered feasible alternatives to migration. The research suggested the incorporation of local skills and knowledge into the official entrepreneur ship schemes, facilitating the availability of funding and mentoring, and enhancing the business networks in the area to enhance the possibility of sustainable, locally-based economic growth and decreased youth migration.

In their article, Wordu and Ehule (2024) investigated the topic of digital skills and entrepreneurship education as avenues of wealth-generation in depressed economies. The survey was conducted among 150 young people who attended the entrepreneurship and digital skills programs, and with the help of structured questionnaires, the data on income generation, employment, and migration intentions were gathered. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis found out that respondents who developed digital skills were more assured about initiating businesses, entering online markets, and earning income locally, and this aspect strongly diminished their intention to migrate. It was suggested in the study that the implementation of the digital literacy initiatives should be continuous, mentorship should be provided and the support infrastructure should be established to make sure the sustainability of the entrepreneurial ventures. It concluded that digital skills and entrepreneurship skills are the necessary interventions in the minimization of economic migration of the youth in the emerging economies.

RESEARCH GAPS

Even though some previous studies have demonstrated the beneficial impact of entrepreneurship and training digital skills on increasing the number of youths in the workforce and minimizing economic migration (Dinika, 2024; Wordu and Ehule, 2024; Afolabi et al., 2017), there are still some gaps. To begin with, urban centers or capital cities are overrepresented in most of the studies, whereas rural and peri-urban areas of such states as Imo are underrepresented, even though youth migration rates also contribute significantly to these areas (Amanze & Igwemeziri, 2024; Ebide, 2025). Second, not many studies focus on the integrated intervention of entrepreneurship development and digital skills acquisition, but they are described in isolation (Njoku and Shaibu, 2023; Okeke, 2024). Third, post-training support, such as mentorship and startup capital, is a frequently cited but seldom quantified and empirically investigated aspect (Ementa and Anyanwu, 2022; Kalagbor and Harry, 2019). Lastly, although the intentions to migrate are a universally recognized phenomenon, not many studies employ the mixed-method approach to comprehend the behavioral and perceptual changes in young people after interventions. The research proposed to fill these gaps in Imo State that involves the digital training of entrepreneurship skills added to the previous digital training, a moderating role of access to capital and mentorship, and outcome measurement of self-employment and migration intentions based on a mixed-method survey.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was a survey research design to understand the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development and digital skills training in decreasing economic migration among the youth in Imo State, Nigeria. The survey design was determined due to the possibility to collect standardized data of a rather large population and the possibility to conduct both descriptive and inferential analysis regarding relations between training interventions and outcomes. The sample was a group of 350 young people who have completed three large-scale entrepreneurship and digital skills development programs in Imo State during the period 2020-2023, two of which are government-initiated, and one is an initiative of an NGO. A sample of 180 individuals was purposely chosen out of this population, as this age bracket comprised 18-35 year olds who had attended the training and were still in the productive age bracket.

A structured questionnaire that included closed-ended questions was used to collect the data, with the independent variables being exposure to entrepreneurship training, acquisition of digital skills, and the moderating variables being access to capital and mentorship and the dependent variables including self-employment outcomes, income levels, and migration intentions. The instrument met the criterion of expert validation by three scholars with expertise in the field of entrepreneurship and migration, wherein the instrument content was evaluated based on the criteria of relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness and reliability was tested using a pilot study with 20 non-target youths not part of the main study and the resulting Cronbachs alpha coefficient was found to be 0.84, which is high internal consistency. Ethical and moral matters, such as informed consent, self-voluntary participation and confidentiality were completely followed.

The quantitative analysis of the data was performed with the help of SPSS, and descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, percentages) were used to describe the experience and demographics of participants and to inferential statistics (correlation analysis), which were necessary to confirm that the results of the study were statistically significant and could be used to prove the hypothesis about the effects of entrepreneurship and digital skills training on the outcomes of self-employment in the future and intentions to emigrate.

Presentation, Data Analysis and Results Interpretation

Demographics of the people who were interviewed reveal that a rather balanced sample of youths was used in the study, but that where males dominated in the sample, which was 54 percent, the proportion of females in the sample was 46 percent. This shows that the representation of both genders in the study was satisfactory. Regarding age, the largest proportion of the respondents was in productive youth age with most of them within the age group of 26-35 years (47 percent) and then the 18-25 years (23 percent). Smaler percentages were reported in people aged 36-45 years (18 percent) and 46 years and older (12 percent), which implies that the intended audience of the study was mostly active young adults, who are most probably the ones who can use entrepreneurship and digital skills training. With respect to education, the percentage of those with a bached degree was high (41 percent) followed by those with OND/NCE education (26 percent), secondary school certificate (18 percent) and those with postgraduate degree (15 percent). This is an indicator of a reasonably educated population which has the ability to be involved in economic activities that are skill based. Moreover, the employment status illustrated that 37 percent were employed, 29 percent were self-employed, 19 percent were unemployed and 15 percent were students. This distribution demonstrates that the participants were of different economic backgrounds, which gives a comprehensive background on which the effects of the training programmes on the employment consequences and migration intentions are to be evaluated.

Table 1: Responses on Entrepreneurship Training Experience

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
The entrepreneurship training provided me with practical knowledge to start a business.	70	62	5	25	18	180
I am confident in my ability to identify and exploit business opportunities after the training.	68	65	4	27	16	180
The training improved my entrepreneurial mindset and problem-solving skills.	69	63	3	28	17	180
Participation in the training has enhanced my readiness to engage in self-employment.	69	62	8	24	17	180
Total	**276**	**252**	**20**	**104**	**68**	**720**
Average	**69**	**63**	**5**	**26**	**17**	**180**
Percentage (%)	**38**	**35**	**3**	**14**	**9**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2026

This table indicates the effect that the training in entrepreneurship made on the skills and mind of the participants. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the training gave them practical knowledge, made them more confident in recognizing business opportunities, better equipped to solve problems, and better equipped to be self-employed. The number of participants who were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed was very low. The mean and percentage values demonstrate that the training proved to be effective in equipping the youths to begin businesses and participate in entrepreneurial activities, which can aid in the empowerment of the economy and decrease the number of unemployed individuals by 38 and 35 percent respectively.

Table 2: Responses on Digital Skills Training Experience

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
The digital skills training equipped me with competencies to leverage technology for business purposes.	61	71	4	26	18	180
I can now use digital tools to access markets and improve my business operations.	63	70	5	25	17	180
The training improved my ability to offer online services or engage in e-commerce.	65	68	3	25	19	180
Digital skills acquired have made me more employable in the current job market.	63	67	4	24	22	180
Total	**252**	**276**	**16**	**100**	**76**	**720**
Average	**63**	**69**	**4**	**25**	**19**	**180**
Percentage (%)	**35**	**38**	**2**	**13**	**11**	**180**

Source: Field survey, 2026

This table shows how training in digital skills has impacted the participants on the use of technology to do business. Majority of the respondents greatly agreed or agreed that the training had prepared them with digital skills, enhanced their capacity to reach markets and provide online services, and make them more employable. The neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree answers were low. The averages show that 35% highly agreed, and 38% agreed in general, which proves that the training in digital skills has been effective in developing technological competence, as the youth is able to develop local economic opportunities, which makes them less likely to migrate to find job opportunities.

Table 3: Youth Self-Employment Outcomes

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
The entrepreneurship training provided me with practical knowledge to start a business.	63	70	4	25	18	180
I am confident in my ability to identify and exploit business opportunities after the training.	65	68	4	27	16	180
The training improved my entrepreneurial mindset and problem-solving skills.	64	69	9	21	17	180
Participation in the training has enhanced my readiness to engage in self-employment.	64	69	7	23	17	180
Total	**256**	**276**	**24**	**96**	**68**	**720**
Average	**64**	**69**	**6**	**24**	**17**	**180**
Percentage (%)	**36**	**38**	**3**	**13**	**9**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2026

This table demonstrates the impact of the training in entrepreneurship on the capability of the participants to take part in self-employment. The vast majority of the respondents were in strong agreement or agreeable that the training had offered them useful knowledge, enhanced their confidence, and their entrepreneurial mindset was enhanced. There were very few neutral participants, disagreements, as well as strong disagreements. The average and percentage rows affirm that the majority of the youths have been helped by the training as 36 percent strongly agree and 38 percent agree in general. This implies that the entrepreneurship programs have been successful in preparing the youths with skills and the readiness to be self-employed and this could help in reducing unemployment and generation of local economic opportunities.

Table 4: Youth Migration Intentions

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
Before the training, I considered migrating abroad to achieve economic success.	60	70	5	23	22	180
After the training, my desire to migrate has decreased.	63	69	4	28	16	180
I believe I can achieve financial success within Imo State through the skills acquired.	65	67	3	27	18	180
Training has increased my confidence in local economic opportunities, reducing the likelihood of migration.	64	70	4	26	16	180
Total	**252**	**276**	**16**	**104**	**72**	**720**
Average	**63**	**69**	**4**	**26**	**18**	**180**
Percentage (%)	**35**	**38**	**2**	**14**	**10**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2026

This table indicates the manner in which the training affected the intention of the participants to migrate. Some of the youths were willing to migrate to better economic prospects in other countries before the training. Most of the respondents who took part in the program strongly agreed and agreed to the fact that their migration intentions had reduced and they now felt that they can get a financial break in Imo State. Minimally low responses were those of neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. On the one hand, 35% of people strongly agreed and 38% agreed that the training had raised their confidence in local opportunities. This indicates that on-line and entrepreneurial education can minimize the intentions among the youths to migrate by demonstrating to them some of the feasible ways to achieve economic prosperity at home.

Test of Hypotheses One

H_0: Entrepreneurship and digital skills training have no significant effect on youth self-employment outcomes in Imo State.

H_1: Entrepreneurship and digital skills training have a significant effect on youth self-employment outcomes in Imo State.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Entrepreneurship Development Experience	3.7833	1.34237	180
Youth Self-Employment Outcomes	3.7722	1.31528	180

Correlations

		Entrepreneurship Development Experience	Youth Self-Employment Outcomes
	Pearson Correlation	1	.988**

Entrepreneurship Development Experience		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	180	180
Youth Self-Employment Outcomes		Pearson Correlation	.988**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	180	180

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation and Decision

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis result indicates that there is a very strong positive relationship between the experience of entrepreneurship development and the youth self-employment outcomes (r =.988, N=180, p=.000). The average scores of 3.7833 in the experience of entrepreneurship development and 3.7722 in the result in youth self-employment showed that the general opinion of the respondents is that the training made a positive impact on their entrepreneurial potential. The correlation coefficient of .988 indicates a very high level of association between the two variables whereas the significance value of.000 which is lower than the level of significance of 0.01 indicates that the relationship is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis (H01), which says that there is no significant impact of entrepreneurship and training on digital skills on the results of youth self-employment in Imo State is rejected. Hypothesis number 11, (H11) is accepted. This means that entrepreneurship and training of digital skills has high impact on improving the youth self-employment in Imo State.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H_0: Entrepreneurship and digital skills training have no significant influence on youth migration intentions in Imo State.

H_1: Entrepreneurship and digital skills training have a significant influence on youth migration intentions in Imo State.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Digital Skills Training Experience	3.7333	1.34787	180
Youth Migration Intentions	3.7389	1.33857	180

Correlations

		Digital Skills Training Experience	Youth Migration Intentions
Digital Skills Training Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.998**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	180	180
Youth Migration Intentions	Pearson Correlation	.998**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	180	180

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation and Decision

Pearson correlation analysis indicates that there is a very strong positive correlation between experiential digital skills training and youth migration intentions (r =.998, N = 180, p=.000). The mean of 3.7333 and 3.7389 of the digital skills training experience and youth migration intentions respectively indicate that the respondents agreed that digital skills training affected their opinion on migration. The correlation coefficient of.998 signifies the near perfect positive relation amid digital skills training and the results of migration intention. Since the significance level (.000) falls below the value of 0.01 level of significance, the relationship is significant. We, therefore, fail to accept the null hypothesis (H02) that purported that entrepreneurship and training in digital skills are inconsequential in youth migration intentions in Imo State and in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H12). This result demonstrates that digital skills training has a strong influence on migration intentions among young people, as it can reduce the willingness to migrate due to the development of confidence in local economic prospects.

Summary of Findings

1. The researchers concluded that the development of entrepreneurship and training in digital skills enhanced the self-employment of the youths in Imo State. The training increased the practical knowledge of the participants, confidence to be an

entrepreneur, identify opportunities, problem-solving, and willingness to initiate a business. It shows that organized skill development is significant in advancing economic empowerment of the youth and as a way of promoting self-reliance.

2. The research also found that the entrepreneurship and training in digital skills played a significant role in the intentions among the youth to migrate. Most young people who had initially high intentions to migrate ended up having better views of the local economic opportunities due to the training. Therefore, they became less motivated to migrate in pursuit of a better job and living because they were now sure that they can be financially stable back home.

CONCLUSION

The paper looked at how entrepreneurship development and digital skills training affect the youth self-employment and migration intentions in Imo State, Nigeria. The study results have made it clear that well-organized skills acquisition initiatives significantly increase the entrepreneurship potential of youths, their employability, and their confidence rates in the local economy. The high, significant, and statistically significant correlations between entrepreneurial training and self-employment, and digital skills training and migration intentions indicate that these interventions can be effective economic empowerment instruments.

The research finds that entrepreneurship and training in digital skills mitigate the reliance of youth in the limited wage employment opportunities and assists them in earning income by means of self-employment. Such programs help in making youths job makers rather than job seekers by empowering them with useful knowledge, digital literate and entrepreneurial. The lower migration intentions among the participants indicate that the need to seek better livelihoods reduces where the creation of viable economic opportunities within the locality occurs.

Sustainability of these positive results however is pegged on supportive structures including accessibility to start up capital, mentoring, and business networks. The entire effects of training programs might not be achieved without these complementary supports. In general, entrepreneurship and development of digital skills are strategic and sustainable ways of solving the issue of unemployment among youths and minimizing economic migration in Imo State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and Non Governmental Organizations should offer sustained and progressive digital skills training: e-commerce, online marketing, online service delivery among other digital skills should be offered to youths to empower them to earn incomes locally, unlike migration intentions.
2. Provide Access to Capital and Mentorship: there should be youth-friendly loan programs, grants, and structured mentorship programs that can assist trained youths to start and maintain successful self-employment enterprises.
3. Solidify Infrastructure and Market Connections: Public-private partnerships must enable access to digital tools, effective infrastructure, as well as market connections, so that youths can avail themselves of all digital and entrepreneurial capabilities in local economic opportunities.

These are the practical, focused, and closely related recommendations that can help increase the outcome of self-employment and address the issues of youth migration.

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