



EMPOWERING NIGERIAN YOUTHS THROUGH DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS: A PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT CREATION IN ENUGU STATE

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Cite this article:

Ofodu, H. I., Egbara, E. A. (2026), Empowering Nigerian Youths through Digital Entrepreneurship Skills: A Pathway to Employment Creation in Enugu State. International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation 9(1), 45-61. DOI: 10.52589/IJEBI-FYPPFDAH

Manuscript History

Received: 11 Dec 2025

Accepted: 13 Jan 2026

Published: 4 Feb 2026

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined youth empowerment through digital entrepreneurship skills and its contribution to employment creation in Enugu State, with emphasis on programme accessibility, post-training support, and implementation challenges. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed across the three senatorial zones of Enugu State. The sample size of 400 respondents was determined from a population of 4,690,100 people using Taro Yamane formula. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, and mean score, while hypotheses were tested with regression analysis. The findings reveal that access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes has a significant positive influence on employment creation, accounting for about 51% of the variation in youth employment outcomes. Post-training support, including mentorship, access to finance, incubation, and networking opportunities, was also found to significantly enhance employment creation outcomes, explaining approximately 47.5% of the observed variation. However, the effectiveness of these programmes is constrained by challenges such as inadequate funding, limited access to internet and digital devices, high training costs, poor infrastructure, and weak policy implementation, which jointly account for over 50% of the variation in programme effectiveness. The study concludes that digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes constitute a viable strategy for reducing youth unemployment in Enugu State, provided that access is expanded, post-training support is strengthened, and structural barriers are addressed. The study recommends increased investment in digital infrastructure, subsidized training costs, strengthened post-training support mechanisms, and improved policy implementation to enhance the employment-generating potential of digital entrepreneurship initiatives.*

KEYWORDS: Digital Entrepreneurship; Youth Empowerment; Employment Creation; Post-Training Support; Digital Skills.



INTRODUCTION

Digital entrepreneurship is a process where an individual creates, sets up, and scales a digital business employing technology-advanced digital channels. It involves creating innovative business models and opportunities in the digital space. This includes activities like online marketing, e-commerce, app development, and using social media to reach a wider customer base. It allows for scalability, global reach, and the potential for rapid growth. Digital entrepreneurship skills involve leveraging online platforms and technologies to create and run a business, encompassing activities like e-commerce, digital marketing, and online learning, requiring adaptability and proficiency in data analysis and communication. Digital entrepreneurship skills are the abilities needed to create, manage, and grow business online, encompassing areas like digital marketing, e-commerce, data analysis, and technology proficiency (Chukwuka and Abude, 2024). Digital entrepreneurship lowers traditional barriers to entering business: it reduces capital costs and decentralizes access to markets, allowing for world participation. In developing economies such as Nigeria, where youth unemployment remains one of the persistent concerns, the potential of digital entrepreneurship as a tool for inclusive growth is considerable.

The acquisition of skills in digital entrepreneurship is notably essential as it equips the youth with the potential to harness prevailing opportunities. Empowering youths through digital entrepreneurship skills encompasses technical skills such as coding, digital marketing, e-commerce, User Interface/User Experience design, among others; business development skills such as business modeling, customer acquisition, and digital finance; and soft skills such as communication and problem-solving. The absence of such focused skills leaves the youth unprepared to compete in both local and global digital markets (Okegbe, 2025). When suitably structured, digital empowerment programmes can be launching bolsters for self-employment, innovation, and economic independence.

Besides financial results, job creation is another critical outcome of successful digital entrepreneurship empowerment initiatives, especially within the informal and gig economy spheres. In a context where the formal sector cannot absorb the growing labour force, creating sustainable, self-driven employment becomes critical. Digital platforms such as freelancing websites, social media commerce, and mobile-based businesses now allow youth to bypass traditional job markets (Zainol *et al.*, 2022). However, this potential is fully realized only when the right enabling environment, in terms of skills, tools, connectivity, and market access, has been put in place. Thus, digital entrepreneurship can be both a direct and indirect driver of employment.

Nigeria has one of the most gigantic populations of youth in Africa, with over 60% of its population below 30 years old (African Union, 2021). In Enugu State, the youth constitute one of the largest groups of unemployed individuals. Even though the age bracket is renowned for being richly endowed with energy, creativity, and adaptability, numerous youths are still economically sidelined due to irrelevant digital skills, insufficient exposure to innovation, and shortages in startup capital (Apeh *et al.*, 2023). Empowering this demographic is not an issue of economic policy but an imperative for social stability and national development.

Enugu State, a part of Nigeria's South-East geopolitical zone, has thus presented a unique context in which digital entrepreneurship and youth employment have to be studied. With its



growing urban population, several tertiary institutions, and increasing governmental interest in the development of ICT, Enugu holds high prospects for a tech-driven transformation. However, there are a number of constraints that hinder progress at the moment, including unreliable electricity, inadequate digital infrastructure in rural areas, and limited empowerment centres. Despite the state government's fresh moves, like the Enugu Tech Talent Training and the e-YES scheme, much remains to be done in depth, scale, and sustainability (MSME Africa, 2023). While some empowerment programmes exist, many young people are unaware of them or cannot participate due to cost, location, or lack of devices and internet access. This digital divide disproportionately affects rural and female youth, making targeted interventions necessary. Accessibility also includes the language and complexity of training content as many programmes are not adapted to the varied educational backgrounds of the participants, leading to high dropout rates or poor learning outcomes.

Again, not all digital empowerment effort translates into real economic activity. There must be strong linkages between empowerment initiatives and job markets, whether through internships, job placement services, startup incubation, or access to freelancing platforms. Without this connection training risks becoming another theoretical exercise with limited impact on livelihoods. Therefore, success must be measured not only in terms of numbers trained but in the economic outcomes they achieve.

Successful digital entrepreneurship ecosystems require coordinated efforts between government, private sector, educational institutions, and development partners. Policies must address infrastructure (power, internet), financing (grants, credit), regulation (ease of doing digital business), and education reforms. In Enugu, the presence of the SME Centre, technology partners like AltSchool, and banks like Wema has started to shape a digital entrepreneurial ecosystem, but policy gaps and implementation bottlenecks still persist.

Understanding the interplay between digital entrepreneurship empowerment and employment creation among youth in Enugu State is vital to unlocking sustainable economic growth and reducing youth unemployment. The success of such initiatives depends on the accessibility, quality, and market relevance of empowerment programmes, as well as on the support structures available to youth post-training. This study will explore these variables in detail, assess current interventions, and recommend strategies to enhance the digital entrepreneurial landscape in Enugu State, and thus contributing to inclusive youth empowerment in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment is a serious problem for the national development of Nigeria. It is not only a severe security threat and an economic waste to our dear country, but also personal blow to those concerned. Youth unemployment in Nigeria remains a critical national issue, with millions of young people unable to secure gainful employment despite having formal education. The situation is pressing in Enugu State, as a significant portion of the youth population continues to face economic marginalization due to the mismatch between their skills and the evolving demands of the labour market. While the traditional job market remains saturated and unable to absorb the increasing number of job seekers, opportunities in the digital economy are rapidly expanding. Unfortunately, many Nigerian youths, especially in semi-urban and rural areas, lack the digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills necessary to take advantage of these emerging opportunities. As a result, despite the potential of digital



entrepreneurship to drive self-employment and job creation, many young people remain locked out of the digital ecosystem.

However, despite several initiatives and empowerment programmes that has been introduced at both national and state levels to equip youths with digital skills, the unemployment rate among young people remains high, raising questions about the effectiveness, reach, and sustainability of these programmes. Many youths are either unaware of these opportunities or unable to participate due to barriers such as cost, access to devices and internet, and lack of tailored curriculum suited to varying education levels. Even among those who complete such programmes, the absence of post-training support such as access to markets, startup capital, and mentorship often hinders their ability to translate skills into viable economic ventures.

There is a notable gap in empirical literature regarding the post-training experiences of participants, the quality and accessibility of existing empowerment programmes, and the structural challenges that limit their effectiveness, particularly within the context of Enugu State. Moreover, most studies tend to focus on national-level analyses or urban centres, overlooking the unique socio-economic dynamics of semi-urban and rural areas within states like Enugu. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by critically assessing how access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes, the presence or absence of post-training support, and other contextual factors influence employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State. By addressing these gaps, the study aims to contribute practical insights that can inform policy, improve programme design, and ultimately enhance the impact of digital entrepreneurship initiatives on youth employment.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to evaluate youth empowerment through digital entrepreneurship skills and its contribution to employment creation in Enugu State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine how access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes influences employment creation among youths in Enugu State.
- ii. Assess the role of post-training support in enhancing the employment creation outcomes of youth digital entrepreneurship programmes in Enugu State.
- iii. Identify the challenges that affect the effectiveness of youth digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes in promoting employment creation in Enugu State.

Research Questions

- i. How does access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes influence employment creation among youths in Enugu State?
- ii. What role does post-training support play in enhancing the employment creation outcomes of youth digital entrepreneurship programmes in Enugu State?
- iii. What are the challenges affecting the effectiveness of youth digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes in promoting employment creation in Enugu State?



Hypotheses

- i. Access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes significantly influences employment creation among youth in Enugu State.
- ii. Post-training support significantly enhances the employment creation outcomes of youth digital entrepreneurship programmes in Enugu State.
- iii. Challenges facing youth digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes such as limited access to internet and devices, poor infrastructure, high training costs significantly affect their effectiveness in promoting employment creation in Enugu State.

Conceptual Clarification

This section provides clear explanations of the major concepts and variables used in the study to ensure a proper understanding of their meanings and applications within the research context. The key concepts reviewed include youth empowerment, digital entrepreneurship, digital entrepreneurship skills, employment creation, and access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes, post-training support, and challenges affecting digital empowerment programmes. These clarifications serve as the foundation for analysing how digital entrepreneurship initiatives influence employment outcomes among youths in Enugu State.

Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment revolves around fostering cultural, attitudinal, and structural shifts within individuals, granting them the autonomy and capability to make informed decisions for their own betterment. Abalogu and Nwokedi (2024) stated that, youth empowerment is a mechanism through which young individuals can achieve personal success and contribute to the prosperity of their nation. This self-realization does not only promote their individual growth but also fuels their motivation to perform effectively. Adding that youth empowerment is a process encompassing attitudinal, structural, and cultural transformations, empowering young people with the capacity, authority, and agency to enact change in their lives and in the lives of others, including both peers and adults. Ogar *et al.* (2020) simplifies youth empowerment as deliberate actions aimed at enhancing the lives of young individuals, focusing on developing their potentials with the recognition that they are the future leaders. Further highlights that youth empowerment is pivotal for the prosperity of nations, facilitating innovation, transparent governance systems, reduced reliance on government among youth, opportunities for expressing and advocating for youth concerns at both local and international levels.

Digital Entrepreneurship

Digital entrepreneurship is the process of developing, establishing, and expanding a business that utilizes digital platforms and technologies. It involves creating innovative business models and opportunities in the digital space. This includes activities like online marketing, e-commerce, app development, and using social media to reach a wider customer base. It allows for scalability, global reach, and the potential for rapid growth. Digital entrepreneurship skills involve leveraging online platforms and technologies to create and run



a business, encompassing activities like e-commerce, digital marketing, and online learning, requiring adaptability and proficiency in data analysis and communication. Digital entrepreneurship skills are the abilities needed to create, manage, and grow business online, encompassing areas like digital marketing, e-commerce, data analysis, and technology proficiency (Chukwuka and Abude, 2024).

Digital Entrepreneurship Skills

Digital entrepreneurship skills involve the use of automation in managing to achieve effective communication, branding, marketing, and getting the targeted audience for the supply of products and services (Afrodigital, 2021). Digital entrepreneurship skills give entrepreneurs the ability to find, evaluate, utilise, share, and create content using information and communication technologies and the internet anywhere, anytime, and any day to sell their products and services. Digital entrepreneurial skills are a core part of a business owner's toolkit, whether you are in charge of a multinational corporation or operating a local business from home. The five (5) top digital entrepreneurial skills needed to succeed by today's entrepreneurs and acquire decent work are cloud computing, cyber security, data analysis, social media marketing, and user experience (UX) design skills (Martinez, 2021).

Employment Creation

Employment creation refers to the generation of new income-earning opportunities, either through wage employment or self-employment. Employment Creation, Youth employment creation refers to the process of generating sustainable job opportunities that enable young people to earn a living, develop skills, and contribute productively to economic growth. It involves deliberate efforts by governments, private sectors, and development agencies to design and implement strategies that address youth unemployment through entrepreneurship, skill development, and innovation (Apeh *et al.*, 2023). Given the rapid advancement of technology and the digital economy, digital entrepreneurship has emerged as a viable means of promoting youth employment by equipping young individuals with the necessary skills to create self-employment and employ others (Dinika, 2024).

Access to Digital Entrepreneurship Empowerment Programmes

Access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes refers to the availability and opportunity for individuals to participate in programmes designed to build digital entrepreneurial skills. It encompasses factors such as affordability, accessibility of technological infrastructure, internet connectivity, educational resources, and institutional support that enable individuals to engage in digital entrepreneurship learning and development (Okoro and Olamide, 2023). The extent to which people can access such empowerment programmes determines their ability to participate effectively in the digital economy and to benefit from emerging online business opportunities.

Post-Training Support

Post-training support refers to the range of assistance, mentorship, and resources provided to individuals after completing digital entrepreneurship training programmes. It is aimed at helping trainees apply the knowledge and skills acquired during training to establish and sustain their digital ventures (Olawale and Danjuma, 2023). This support may include access to startup funding, business incubation services, mentorship, networking opportunities, and



continuous professional development. The provision of post-training support is essential because many trainees, despite acquiring entrepreneurial and digital skills, face challenges in translating their ideas into viable and sustainable businesses without adequate follow-up assistance (Mustapha and Hassan, 2023).

Effective post-training support enables new digital entrepreneurs to overcome barriers such as limited access to capital, lack of business experience, and insufficient market exposure. According to Mensah and Boateng (2023), follow-up programmes such as mentorship, coaching, and incubation centers provide a bridge between training and practical business implementation. These initiatives help participants refine their business models, access financial and technological resources, and gain confidence in managing their startups. Post-training support therefore plays a critical role in improving business survival rates and enhancing the long-term impact of entrepreneurship training initiatives.

Challenges Affecting Digital Empowerment Programmes

Challenges affecting digital empowerment programmes refer to the constraints that limit their ability to effectively equip youths with skills and translate training into meaningful economic outcomes. These challenges often include inadequate funding, weak digital infrastructure such as poor electricity and internet connectivity, and low awareness of available programmes among intended beneficiaries (Adenike, 2023). Many initiatives also suffer from poorly structured or outdated curricula that fail to match labour market needs, while limited access to devices and affordability issues hinder youth participation, especially in rural areas. Additionally, shortages of qualified trainers, inconsistent implementation, gender-based disparities, and the absence of follow-up mechanisms such as mentorship, market linkages, and startup support further undermine the impact of digital empowerment efforts (Ile and Nwaokwa, 2017). As a result, despite their potential, these programmes often fall short of producing sustainable employment outcomes for youths in Enugu State.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on two major theories that explain the relationship between youth digital entrepreneurship skills empowerment and employment creation, the Human Capital Theory and Innovation Theory.

The Human Capital Theory, originally advanced by Schultz (1961) and expanded by Becker (1964), posits that individuals can enhance their productivity and economic value through deliberate investments in education, training, and skill development. According to the theory, such investments function similarly to physical capital, yielding returns in the form of higher productivity, improved performance, and increased income-earning capacity. In the context of digital entrepreneurship, the theory explains how equipping youths with relevant digital and managerial competencies—such as digital marketing, e-commerce management, and innovation capabilities—strengthens their employability and capacity for self-employment. Thus, digital entrepreneurship training serves as a strategic investment in human capital, transforming young people into productive economic actors capable of contributing to employment creation and broader socio-economic development.

Schumpeter's Innovation Theory (1934) emphasizes the central role of entrepreneurship and innovation in driving economic development. The theory conceptualizes entrepreneurs as agents of change who introduce new products, processes, markets, and organizational forms,



thereby disrupting existing structures through what Schumpeter termed “creative destruction.” Innovation, therefore, is seen as the engine of economic transformation, productivity growth, and job creation. Applied to digital entrepreneurship training, the theory underscores how empowering youths with technological and innovative capabilities enables them to identify and exploit emerging opportunities in the digital economy. By developing digital applications, engaging in e-commerce, and creating digital content, young entrepreneurs introduce new business models that stimulate employment generation and foster economic diversification.

Together, Human Capital Theory and Schumpeter’s Innovation Theory provide a complementary framework for understanding how digital entrepreneurship training promotes youth employment creation. While Human Capital Theory highlights the importance of skill acquisition in enhancing individual productivity and employability, Innovation Theory emphasizes the transformative role of innovation-driven entrepreneurship in generating new economic opportunities. Combined, they provide a robust theoretical foundation for assessing how digital skills development, innovation, and entrepreneurial activity can jointly contribute to reducing youth unemployment in the digital economy of Enugu State.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between digital entrepreneurship empowerment and employment creation among youths in Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu State, South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria was selected due to its growing presence of tertiary institutions, digital innovation hubs, and youth entrepreneurship programmes. The population comprised residents of Enugu State, with a projected population of 4,690,100. Using the Yamane (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined and proportionally distributed across the three senatorial zones that make up Enugu state: Enugu East, Enugu West, and Enugu North. A two-stage sampling technique was employed: cluster sampling was used to select the senatorial zones, followed by purposive sampling to select youths who had participated in digital entrepreneurship programmes organized by government, private institutions, or non-governmental organizations.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale, complemented by key informant interviews with programme coordinators, digital hub managers, and officials from the Enugu State Ministry of Youth and Sports. The research instrument was face-validated by experts, and its reliability was confirmed using the test-retest method and Cronbach’s Alpha, which yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.83. Questionnaires were administered face-to-face with the assistance of trained field assistants, achieving an 85% usable response rate. A total of three hundred and forty-two (342) copies of the questionnaire were properly completed and were used for the analysis. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, were used to analyze quantitative data, while inferential statistics including linear and multiple regression analysis were used to test the formulated hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The qualitative interview data were thematically analyzed to support and enrich the quantitative findings.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of data collected are presented and analysed according to the research questions using frequency, percentages, and mean scores, any item with a mean of 3.00 or above was agreed while any item with a mean score below 3.00 was disagreed. The hypotheses were also tested using Linear and Multiple Regression analysis.

Research Question One

How does access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes influence employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State?

Table 4.1: Mean score on influence of access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes on employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Dec
1	Access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes improved the ability of youth to identify and exploit business opportunities	184 920 54%	82 328 24%	14 42 4%	34 68 10%	28 28 8%	342 1386 100%	4.05	Agree
2	Participation in digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes equipped youth with practical skills that enhance self-employment	193 965 56%	66 264 19%	19 57 5%	43 86 13%	23 23 7%	342 1395 100%	4.08	Agree
3	Digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes increases the confidence in youth to start and manage their own business	136 680 40%	79 316 23%	27 81 8%	63 136 18%	37 37 11%	342 1240 100%	3.63	Agree
4	Limited access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes reduces youth employment opportunities in Enugu State	199 995 58%	91 364 27%	6 18 2%	28 56 8%	18 18 5%	342 1451 100%	4.24	Agree
5	Digital entrepreneurship empowerment has provided youth with relevant ICT and business skills applicable in the labour market	207 1035 61%	71 284 21%	11 33 3%	31 62 9%	22 22 6%	342 1436 100%	4.20	Agree
6	Government and private sector support for digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes contributes significantly to youth job creation	221 1105 65%	63 252 18%	14 42 4%	26 52 8%	18 18 6%	342 1469 100%	4.29	Agree
7	Access to online and physical digital empowerment platforms has made it easier for youth to develop income-generating ventures	199 995 58%	103 412 30%	4 12 1%	22 44 6%	14 14 5%	342 1377 100%	4.32	Agree
Total average mean		4.05 + 4.08 + 3.63 + 4.24 + 4.20 + 4.29 + 4.32					$\frac{28.8}{7}$	4.12	Agree

Source: Field Work, 2025



The analysis of the individual questionnaire items in Table 4.1 shows a consistent positive perception of the influence of access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes on employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State. All the items recorded mean scores above the benchmark of 3.00, indicating general agreement among respondents.

The total average mean score across the seven items is 4.12, which clearly exceeds the benchmark of 3.00 used to indicate agreement. This average confirms that, on the whole, the respondents believe that access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes has positive influence on employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State. The high level of agreement across all items reinforces the conclusion that the access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes is an effective mechanism for employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State.

Test of Hypothesis One

Access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes significantly influence employment creation among youth in Enugu State.

Table 4.2: Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Hypothesis One

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T-value	P-value	Decision
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.452	0.183	-	7.93	0.000	Sig.
Access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes	0.620	0.057	0.715	10.88	0.000	

Model Summary: $R = 0.712$, $R^2 = 0.507$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.503$, $F(1,512) = 118.4$, $p = 0.000$

The regression result shows a strong, positive relationship between access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes and employment creation among youth in Enugu State ($\beta = 0.715$, $p < 0.05$). The R^2 value of 0.507 indicates that approximately 51% of the variation in employment creation among youth can be explained by access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes. The p-value (0.000) is less than 0.001, indicating the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis that Access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes significantly influences employment creation among youth in Enugu State is accepted.

Research Question Two

What role does post-training support play in enhancing the employment creation outcomes of youth digital entrepreneurship programmes in Enugu State?



Table 4.3: Mean score on the role of post-training support play in enhancing the employment outcomes of digital entrepreneurship training among Nigerian youth in Enugu State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Dec
1	Access to post-training mentorship and guidance help youth apply the knowledge gained from digital entrepreneurship training effectively	126 630 37 %	91 364 27 %	26 78 8%	53 106 15%	46 46 13 %	342 1224 100 %	3.58	Agree
2	Provision of start-up grants and financial support after training enables youth to establish sustainable businesses	74 370 22 %	169 670 49 %	18 54 5%	37 74 11%	44 44 13 %	342 1218 100 %	3.56	Agree
3	Continuous follow-up and monitoring by training providers improve youth business performance after digital entrepreneurship training	61 305 18 %	154 616 45 %	36 108 11 %	42 84 12%	49 49 14 %	342 1162 100 %	3.40	Agree
4	Lack of adequate post-training support makes it difficult for some trained youth to translate skills into employment opportunities	79 395 23 %	107 428 32 %	28 84 8%	56 112 16%	72 72 21 %	342 1091 100 %	3.19	Agree
5	Networking opportunities provided after training enhance collaboration and access to business markets	166 830 49 %	76 304 22 %	11 33 3%	55 110 16%	34 34 10 %	342 1311 100 %	3.83	Agree
6	Access to incubation centres and digital business hubs after training enhances the survival rate of youth-led enterprises	181 905 53 %	67 268 20 %	14 42 4%	60 120 18%	18 18 5%	342 1353 100 %	3.96	Agree
7	Post-training support from government and NGOs increases the likelihood of job creation among trained youth	206 103 0 60 %	91 364 27 %	9 27 3%	21 42 6%	15 15 4%	342 1478 100 %	4.32	Agree
Total average mean		3.58+3.56+3.40+3.19+3.83+3.96+4.32					<u>25.8</u> 4 7	3.69	Agree

Source: Field Work, 2025

The analysis of the data presented in Table 4.3 reveals a generally positive perception among respondents regarding the role of post-training support in enhancing employment outcomes of digital entrepreneurship training among Nigerian youth in Enugu State. The mean scores for all items were above the decision benchmark of 3.00, indicating overall agreement that post-training support enhances employment outcomes of digital entrepreneurship training among Nigerian youth in Enugu State.



The total average mean score of 3.69 further supports this conclusion, showing that respondents acknowledged the role of post-training support mechanisms such as mentorship, financial assistance, incubation hubs, and networking opportunities significantly contribute to youth employment generation. This implies that post-training interventions help sustain the gains of digital entrepreneurship training by providing the needed environment for business growth and continuity.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Post-training support significantly enhances the employment creation outcomes of youth digital entrepreneurship programmes in Enugu State.

Table 4.4: Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Hypothesis Two

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T-value	P-value	Decision
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.318	0.201	-	6.56	0.000	-
Post-training support	0.584	0.061	0.692	9.57	0.000	Sig.

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.475$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.471$, $F(1, 512) = 96.5$, $p = 0.000$

The regression results indicate a strong and positive relationship between post-training support and employment creation outcomes among youth in Enugu State ($\beta = 0.692$, $p < 0.05$). The R^2 value of 0.475 shows that approximately 47.5% of the increase in employment creation outcomes were explained by post-training support. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, confirming that Post-training support significantly enhances the employment creation outcomes of youth digital entrepreneurship programmes in Enugu State.

Research Question Three

What are the challenges affecting the effectiveness of youth digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes in promoting employment creation in Enugu State?

Table 4.5: Mean score on the challenges affecting the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship training in promoting employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Dec
1	Inadequate funding limits the scope and sustainability of digital entrepreneurship training programmes for youth.	212 1060 62%	79 316 23%	16 48 5%	23 46 7%	12 12 3%	342 1482 100%	4.33	Agree
2	Poor internet connectivity and unreliable power supply hinder effective participation in digital entrepreneurship training.	173 865 51%	103 412 30%	22 66 6%	31 62 9%	13 13 4%	342 412 100%	4.15	Agree
3	Lack of qualified trainers and facilitators reduces the quality of	206 1030	85 340	26 78	15 30	10 10	342 1488	4.35	Agree



	digital entrepreneurship training.	60%	25%	8%	4%	3%	100%			
4	Insufficient access to digital tools and equipment affects the practical learning experience of trainees.	184 920 54%	73 292 21%	22 66 6%	34 68 10%	29 29 9%	342 1375 100%	4.02	Agree	
5	Limited government support and policy implementation weaken the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship initiatives.	211 1055 62%	88 352 26%	12 36 3%	20 40 6%	11 11 3%	342 1494 100%	4.37	Agree	
6	Inadequate follow-up mechanisms after training reduce the long-term impact on youth employment creation.	197 985 58%	85 340 25%	22 66 6%	26 52 8%	12 12 3%	342 1455 100%	4.26	Agree	
7	Low awareness of available digital entrepreneurship programmes prevents many youths from participating in training opportunities.	194 970 57%	97 388 28%	7 21 2%	38 76 11%	6 6 2%	342 1461 100%	4.27	Agree	
Total average mean		4.33 + 4.15 + 4.35 + 4.02 + 4.37 + 4.26 + 4.27					<u>29.7</u> <u>5</u> <u>7</u>		4.25	Agree

Source: *Field Work, 2025*

The analysis of data presented in Table 4.5 reveals that respondents generally agreed that there are several critical challenges affecting the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship training in promoting employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State. All the items recorded mean scores above the cutoff point of 3.00, indicating that these challenges are widely recognized among respondents. The computed mean scores ranged from 4.02 to 4.37, with a total average mean of 4.25, which signifies strong agreement. This implies that issues such as inadequate funding, poor internet connectivity, limited government support, and lack of qualified trainers constrain the full impact of these programmes. This finding suggests that while digital entrepreneurship training holds great potential for youth empowerment and job creation, its success is hindered by infrastructural, financial, and policy-related barriers.

Test of Hypothesis Three

Challenges such as limited access to internet and devices, and high training costs significantly affect the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes in promoting employment creation in Enugu State.

**Table 4.6: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis Three**

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T-value	P-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.482	0.921	-	8.13	0.000
Limited access to internet and devices	-0.462	0.118	-0.428	-3.92	0.000
High training costs	-0.537	0.147	-0.371	-3.66	0.000

Model Summary: $R = 0.711$, $R^2 = 0.505$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.488$, $F(1,984) = 29.314$, $p = 0.000$

The results show that challenges such as limited access to internet and devices, and high training costs significantly predict the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes in promoting employment creation ($F = 29.314$, $p < 0.001$). Limited access to internet and devices ($\beta = -0.428$, $p < 0.001$) and high training costs ($\beta = -0.371$, $p = 0.001$) both exert significant negative influences on digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes. With an R^2 of 0.505, the model explains 50.5% of the variance in digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes effectiveness, confirming that challenges such as limited access to internet and devices, and high training costs significantly affect the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes in promoting employment creation in Enugu State.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence on the influence of digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes on employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State, with particular emphasis on access to programmes, post-training support, and prevailing challenges. The results indicated that digital entrepreneurship initiatives play a significant role in youth employment generation, although their effectiveness is moderated by structural and operational constraints.

The results relating to research question one revealed that access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes has a significant positive influence on employment creation among youth in Enugu State. The high mean scores across all items and the overall average mean of 4.12 indicate widespread agreement that such programmes enhance opportunity recognition, build practical skills, boost entrepreneurial confidence, and improve access to ICT and market-relevant competencies. The linear regression analysis further confirms this relationship, with access to digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes explaining about 51% of the variation in employment creation among youth. This finding aligns with the assertion by Okoro and Olamide (2023) that digital entrepreneurship education provides a critical pathway for addressing youth unemployment in Nigeria by equipping participants with ICT literacy, business development competencies, and innovation-oriented mindsets. Similarly, Edeh *et al.* (2024) found that access to structured digital entrepreneurship programmes leads to higher rates of start-up creation and business survival among young graduates in Sub-Saharan Africa. These studies reinforce the conclusion that expanding access to such training is vital for youth empowerment. Thus, digital entrepreneurship



empowerment programmes constitute a viable strategy for addressing youth unemployment in Enugu State.

Findings from research question two demonstrate that post-training support plays a critical role in enhancing the employment creation outcomes of youth digital entrepreneurship programmes. Respondents strongly agreed that mentorship, access to finance, incubation centres, networking opportunities, and continuous monitoring significantly improve the ability of trained youth to translate acquired skills into sustainable employment outcomes. The average mean score of 3.69 confirms the perceived importance of post-training interventions. The regression results further reveal that post-training support accounts for approximately 47.5% of the variation in employment creation outcomes, indicating a strong and statistically significant relationship. This suggests that training alone is insufficient to guarantee employment creation; rather, complementary support mechanisms are essential for sustaining entrepreneurial ventures. This finding corroborates the work of Adelowo *et al.* (2023), who emphasized that post-training interventions especially mentorship and access to seed funding are critical determinants of entrepreneurial success among Nigerian youth. Similarly, World Bank (2024) reports that post-training ecosystems such as business incubation and digital hubs in developing economies contribute up to 40% higher start-up survival rates compared to training-only interventions.

With respect to research question three, the study identifies several challenges that significantly undermine the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes in promoting employment creation. The high mean scores (average mean of 4.25) indicate strong agreement that inadequate funding, poor internet connectivity, unreliable power supply, lack of qualified trainers, insufficient access to digital tools, weak government support, and poor follow-up mechanisms constrain programme outcomes. The multiple regression results further confirm that limited access to internet and digital devices, as well as high training costs, exert significant negative effects on programme effectiveness. Together, these challenges explain about 50.5% of the variance in the effectiveness of digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes. This result aligns with the findings of Okegbe (2025), who identified poor digital infrastructure and inconsistent electricity supply as major barriers to digital skill acquisition in Nigeria. Similarly, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2023) emphasized that African youth face structural digital divides that limit their participation in the digital economy. Apeh *et al.* (2023) further noted that inadequate funding and weak government policy implementation reduce the sustainability of digital entrepreneurship initiatives. It underscores the reality that without addressing these constraints, the full potential of digital entrepreneurship programmes in driving employment creation may not be realized.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes significantly contribute to employment creation among Nigerian youth in Enugu State by enhancing access to entrepreneurial opportunities, digital skills acquisition, and self-employment prospects. The findings show that access to these programmes and effective post-training support—such as mentorship, financing, incubation, and networking—play a critical role in translating acquired skills into sustainable employment outcomes. However, the effectiveness of these



programmes is constrained by challenges including inadequate funding, limited access to internet and digital devices, high training costs, poor infrastructure, and weak policy implementation. Therefore, the study affirms that digital entrepreneurship can serve as a viable tool for reducing youth unemployment in Enugu State, provided that supportive structures and an enabling environment are strengthened.

Based on the findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed

1. Government and private sector stakeholders should increase the reach of digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes through more centres and flexible delivery models, including online and blended learning, to accommodate more youths across Enugu State.
2. Structured post-training support systems such as mentorship, incubation hubs, networking platforms, and regular follow-up should be integrated into all digital entrepreneurship programmes to enhance business sustainability and job creation.
3. Dedicated funding schemes, start-up grants, and low-interest loans should be provided for trained youth entrepreneurs to reduce financial barriers and support business start-up and expansion.
4. Government should prioritize investments in reliable internet connectivity, stable power supply, and access to digital tools through public-private partnerships to create a conducive environment for digital entrepreneurship.
5. Training costs should be subsidized, while continuous capacity building for trainers and effective monitoring mechanisms should be implemented to ensure quality, relevance, and sustainability of digital entrepreneurship empowerment programmes.

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