

EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY OF NIGERIAN GRADUATES IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

In Nigeria, despite the integration of entrepreneurship education in every degree programme in the tertiary institutions, yet there are many graduates had been unemployed and the growth of small businesses has been on a decline. This study examines the effect of entrepreneurship education on small business development among Nigerian graduates in Nasarawa State. The survey research design was adopted, and a sample of 769 Batch A National Youth Service Corps members who are owners/managers of businesses in Nasarawa State was drawn using multi-stage sampling. The primary data was collected via a structured questionnaire in a Likert scale format, and the quantitative data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The study found a positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial practical skills, entrepreneurial knowledge, internship, and small business development. Based on the results, the study recommends that the government and educational institutions should focus on developing and implementing programs that equip students with practical entrepreneurial skills, comprehensive knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship, and internship opportunities to enhance their employability and provide businesses with potential employees possessing relevant skills and experience.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship Education, Small Business Development, Employability*

Introduction

Over the years, there has been an increasing global concern with regards to expanding rates of unemployment around the world, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria where youths who are dominantly the graduates are identified as the most affected group in the society.

It is on record that the employment market in today's physical experience is a spirited, lively, demanding, challenging and a very tough environment for young individuals especially students who are graduating from different schools, universities or any higher educational institutions as job opportunities are for graduates who have employable skills that are anticipated and in demand at competitive workplaces (Delelis, 2018).

As a result to reduce the increasing rates, various governmental and non-governmental organizations have initiated policies through support agencies such as National Directorate for Employment (NDE), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Small Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), Raw Materials and Development Council (RMRDC) among others to address the challenges of unemployment among Nigerian citizens (Olayinka 2010, Emmanuel, 2012, Akhuemonkhan et al., 2013).

The aforementioned strategies were initiated with the hope that the development of self-employment and small business enterprise initiatives and development would serve as a

measure to unlock the economic potentials of the people, increase the capacity to empower and equip individuals in the society to participate and benefit from their national economy as well as facilitate economic growth that forms the basis for transformation in our dear society, Nigeria and the world over (Unachukwu, 2009, Ekpo & Edet, 2011).

The programmes notwithstanding, made some impact on the youths as well as the economy, there is the problem of a lack of sound knowledge of entrepreneurship surfaced. Since education as a process of learning and training is an instrument for change and development, the Federal government of Nigeria thus established and recognized entrepreneurship education as having the potential to curb unemployment among Nigerian youth especially the graduates. With this development at heart and the attempt to change the status quo, the National University Commission (NUC) adopted the Entrepreneurship Education Program scheme in 2006 (Okojie, 2009). The major aim was to educate individuals in tertiary institutions on entrepreneurship, thereby building intention and impacting skills, attitudes, and competencies that would ensure effectiveness in the workforce after graduation (Olorundare & Kayode, 2014).

Entrepreneurship education has been revealed as an effective tool in building up entrepreneurial intention, creativity, innovation and ability to take calculative risk, thereby increasing the number of entrepreneurs and reducing the rate of unemployment in our society. Ritwika (2020), stated that entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in everyone who engages in entrepreneurial activities for individual's life changing mechanism as education can help in improving the living conditions of many people at different levels. A person who is educated has better career opportunities and thus the level of education ensures the level of success in life. A nation that has a higher number of educated individuals especially in entrepreneurial activity will have better economic conditions and it will perform better.

Entrepreneurial education has a passion for teaching, inspiring, open-minded and confident, flexible and responsible (Izedonmi & Okafo, 2010)). Listening well, can harness and sell ideas as well as work student- and action- oriented. It has the skill of team players and has a good network. Entrepreneurial education seeks to close the gap between education and economy thereby includes external experts in it teaching; focusing on real-life experiences. Entrepreneurial education refers to the economic aspect of a topic; and business-related study that play significant roles in classes across the disciplines. Entrepreneurial education approach must follow a flexible and adaptable study plan and refer interdisciplinary, project-based learning; using training material rather than textbooks. It puts emphasis on group processes and interactions; as well as a classroom creating avenue for diversity of opinions, answers, solutions and the reflection about the learning processes.

According to Nwekeaku (2013), entrepreneurship education consists of three requirements: creativity which deals with creating all kinds of ideas; innovation that finds value in selected ideas; and entrepreneurship which is about developing a business from the innovative idea. The aforementioned requirements are to a great extent can enhance individual's entrepreneurial intention to establish business enterprise that will develop with time to create more employment opportunities to other citizens of the society.

Graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria today increasingly recognize that; in the current economic climate, most jobs are rarely for life in the formal sector. The world of employment is changing as permanence and longevity is no longer a significant feature of career paths (Salihu, 2014). Traditional paths have disappeared, where parents' believed in sending their children to school to make good grade and secure good white collar jobs with the government.

This widely held view has led to the speculation that there will be continuing growth in self-employment as a career option for individual graduates at different stages of their life (Salihu, 2014).

Entrepreneurial education developed individual's interest in establishing a business enterprise intention rather than waiting for already made jobs. Since intention is considered the best predictive factor for behaviour, an in-depth understanding of parameters affecting entrepreneurial intention is essential for evaluating business behaviour. Given its crucial role in the business process, it would be important to understand how entrepreneurship education relates to the business development and employability of an individual through skills and knowledge for life time experience. Some entrepreneurship studies focus on individual entrepreneurial intention in relation to the results associated with students of higher educational institutions and other results that are behavioural which showed that entrepreneurial education is an important factor in entrepreneurial intentions (Temoor, et al., 2021). Therefore, research needs a deeper understanding of the effect of entrepreneurship education on Nigerian graduates' capability to be self-reliant.

There are empirical links between entrepreneurship education and employment creation which have been widely investigated by scholars of developed and developing countries. Majority of the researchers reported a positive and significant relationship (Richmell, et al., 2018; Thomas, et al., 2016; Setuza, 2016; Umar & Abubakar, 2015; Olorundare & Kayode, 2014; Wee-Liang, et al, 2013; Ramos, 2014; Norhazlin, et al, 2013; Izedonmi & Okafor, 2010; Wang & Wong, 2004). However, most of these studies focused on tertiary institution students with the belief that their knowledge of entrepreneurship is most likely to shape their intention to start their own businesses in the future, while few other studies only focused on fresh Nigerian graduates and employment creation not considering the small business development aspect of those individuals which serve as a base to establish business enterprise to be self-employed. Besides, there are no noticeable studies of such conducted in Nasarawa State, only that of Mohammed and Yakubu (2020). Hence, this study is set to examine to know whether entrepreneurship education acquired from tertiary institution by Nigerian graduates will increase small business development in Nasarawa State and the country at large.

The study investigates the effect of entrepreneurship education on small business development and employability among Nigerian graduates in Nasarawa state. The following are the specific objectives:

- i. Determine the effect of entrepreneurial practical skills on small business development among Nigerian graduates in Nasarawa State.
- ii. Determine the effect of entrepreneurial knowledge on small business development among Nigerian graduates in Nasarawa State.
- iii. Determine the effect of internships on small business development among Nigerian graduates in Nasarawa State.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is universally recognized, accepted and is defined as the strength through which individuals, communities, states and countries develop both human and material resources for the betterment of humanity. This is carrying out through educational training and re-training of men by equipping them with the required entrepreneurial practical skills. Entrepreneurship education is a specialized education that focuses on demonstrating the benefits of entrepreneurship to the people who are always willing for development compared to other available career options (Chukwuma-Nwuba, 2019).

Entrepreneurship education is a comprehensive process that involves the delivery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to students, which are essential for identifying potential opportunities, evaluating their potential, and taking necessary actions to create value in the form of new ventures or social enterprises (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). The process encompasses the development of an entrepreneurial mindset, the promotion of innovative and creative thinking, and the acquisition of business and management skills that are required for starting and growing a successful enterprise. Entrepreneurship education is not only aimed at developing entrepreneurs but also at creating an entrepreneurial culture that promotes innovation, economic growth, and social development.

Kuratko (2015) entrepreneurship education is a set of educational activities designed to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to identify and exploit business opportunities, create value for themselves and others, and contribute to the growth and development of the economy. The process involves the acquisition of practical skills, such as market analysis, financial management, and strategic planning, as well as the development of personal qualities, such as resilience, adaptability, and creativity. Entrepreneurship education is essential for developing the entrepreneurial mindset and promoting the spirit of innovation, risk-taking, and problem-solving, which are crucial for success in today's competitive business environment.

Henry, et al, (2018) also defined entrepreneurship education as a field of study that helps students develop a comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial process and acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to identify and exploit business opportunities. The process involves the development of an entrepreneurial mindset, the acquisition of business and management skills, and the promotion of innovative and creative thinking. Entrepreneurship education aims to create a culture that supports and encourages entrepreneurship, fosters economic growth and development, and contributes to the wellbeing of society (Henry, et al, 2018).

Entrepreneurship education is a dynamic and experiential learning process that helps individuals acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to identify, evaluate, and exploit business opportunities (Bae, et al., 2014). The process involves the acquisition of practical skills, such as financial management, marketing, and strategic planning, as well as the development of personal qualities, such as resilience, adaptability, and creativity. Entrepreneurship education is not only aimed at creating entrepreneurs but also at fostering a culture of innovation and creativity that promotes economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability.

Viridu and Golden (2022) viewed entrepreneurship education as the process that prepares graduates or youths to be responsible and enterprising individuals, who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by exposing them to real life classroom learning and practical experiences.

Petrakis and Kostis (2012), viewed entrepreneurship education as the type of education given to a set of people to be able to instill in them the principle, skills and practices required to see and evaluate business opportunities, to gather the necessary resources and the desire to take advantage of them as well as initiating appropriate action to ensure success. It is the foundation for developing flexible skills needed to participate in knowledge intensive economic activity. Entrepreneurship education is a specialized training given to students of vocational and

technical education to acquire skills, ideas and managerial abilities to be self-employed rather than being employed (Kushnir, 2010).

Entrepreneurial Practical Skills

Olawolu and Kaegon (2012), classified entrepreneurial practical skills as the learning experiences that prepare students to think, take risks, manage circumstances and incidentally learn from the outcome of what they have acquired during their stay in school.

Entrepreneurial practical skills are perceived as a strategic management tool to cope with the current business environment (Nyhan, 1998), mainly because of the market that has changed from one of mass production to one of customization, whereby quality, price, and speed of delivery are stressed. This change has brought about new circumstances in which many organizations struggle to cope with new and emerging customer segments, cultural diversity in a global marketplace, market volatility, raised customer expectations about the quality of products and services, and the impact of the internet on an organization's core business. In the job market, there has been a growth in the higher-level jobs such as managerial and professional positions that require flexibility and problem-solving skills.

According to Okolocha, et al (2020) entrepreneurial practical skill is a significant instrument of empowerment that endeavors to provide the individuals with various skills, vocation and enterprising capacity like bead making, cap making, sewing, fashion designing, shoe making and making workers to have more enthusiasm for their occupations while enhancing their current skills. The idea of skill acquisition is aimed for battling and decreasing poverty level in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurial practical skills are education programme which are intended to give different skills on the participants, and address immediate issues, for example, employments, independence and control restiveness among young people (Uranta & Nlerum, 2017). Mike (2014) declares that practical skill acquirement is the capacity to be prepared on a specific task or capacity. Likewise, Magbagbeola (2004) as referred to in Idoko (2014) posit that practical skill acquirement requires the gathering of various abilities that enhances task execution through the coordination of both theoretical and practical form of knowledge.

Entrepreneurial Knowledge

Entrepreneurial knowledge is considered as the foremost ingredient of human entrepreneurial activities and the establishment of new businesses due to its high impact on entrepreneurial intentions leading to individual, organizational, and national success through economic sustainability in the world (Øystein Widding, 2005). Entrepreneurial knowledge comes from the interaction of the individual with a society where he/she belongs, education, training centres and host of others (Martin et al., 2013).

Roxas (2014) defined entrepreneurial knowledge as the content knowledge of an individual or people regarding business operations, resource availability, opportunity identification, exploitation, and other entrepreneurial activities within an existing human environment.

Knowledge exists both at individual and at organizational level (Nelson & Winter, 1982). The term embedded knowledge has been used by Badaracco (1991) to describe tacit knowledge amongst individuals or groups. The distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge in organizations have been discussed by Hedlund and Nonaka (1993). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have argued that the zone in between tacit and codified knowledge is what matters most.

Buana et al. (2017) stated that individuals who acquire more entrepreneurial knowledge exhibit more positive entrepreneurial attitudes. Roxas et al. (2008) stated that entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial learning practices promote the positive identification of social norms (SNs) that are related to entrepreneurial behavior (Gilaninia et al., 2013). Puni et al. (2018) argued that entrepreneurial knowledge should have a significant impact on the self-efficacy (SE) of employees. Similarly, it has a positive influence of these mediators and risk-taking on EI (Shah et al., 2020; Phong et al., 2020; Hossain et al., 2019).

Entrepreneurial knowledge refers to an individual's appreciation of the concepts, skills and mentality expected of an entrepreneur (Jack & Anderson, 1999). Massad and Tucker (2009) articulate that this knowledge can be acquired and developed through consistent exposure to entrepreneurship activities. Accordingly, entrepreneurial learning is associated with the development of entrepreneurial knowledge. Turker (2009) identifies two distinct types of entrepreneurial knowledge that complement each other when determining new venture creation processes.

Internship

An internship can be defined as a temporary work experience that provides students with the opportunity to gain practical, hands-on training in a particular industry or field (Salisbury, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2011). This form of experiential learning is structured, supervised, and designed to complement academic coursework, enabling students to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world practice. Through internships, students can apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the classroom to real-world situations, develop new competencies and proficiencies, and gain insights into various industries and professions.

According to National Association of Colleges and Employers, (2019) internship is a supervised work experience designed to provide students with the opportunity to learn about a particular career field, develop skills and knowledge, and gain practical work experience. The primary goal of internships is to offer students a glimpse into the working world, allowing them to gain hands-on experience and exposure to various aspects of a profession or industry. Internships can take place in various settings, including businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and research institutions, among others. They offer a unique opportunity for students to acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as develop a professional network and gain insight into potential career paths.

An internship is a period of work-based learning that allows individuals to apply academic knowledge and skills to real-world situations, while also providing them with the opportunity to develop new skills and gain exposure to different career paths (Dochy, et al, 2013). This form of experiential learning is an effective way to help students and individuals bridge the gap between academic study and professional practice. Through internships, individuals can gain practical experience in their field of interest, build their resumes and portfolios, and develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Furthermore, internships can help individuals to discover their passions and interests, while also exploring potential career paths.

Whetten and Cameron (2018) defined internship as an experiential learning opportunity that bridges the gap between academic coursework and professional work, allowing students to explore career options and build their resumes and networks. Internships are structured, supervised, and designed to provide students with the opportunity to acquire practical skills, knowledge, and experience in a particular field or industry. They are also a valuable

opportunity for students to network with professionals in their field of interest, develop relationships with mentors, and gain insight into the working world. Through internships, students can also enhance their employability, gain exposure to diverse work environments, and develop critical career competencies.

Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development

There are many different views on small business development, because the concept builds its base on business growth. Because business development in a simple term, is defined as ways of measuring business growth (Small Business Research Centre, 2008). The Small Business Research Centre pointed that business growth is typically defined and measured, using absolute or relative changes in sales, assets, employment, productivity, profits and profit margins. Sales data are usually readily available and business owners themselves attach high importance to sales as an indicator of business performance. In addition, sales growth is also easier to measure compared with some other indices and is much more likely to be recorded. Sales are a good indicator of size and growth. Sales may also be considered a precise indicator of how a firm is competing relative to their market (Barringer, et al., 2005). Churchill and Lewis (1983) cited in Njoroge and Gathungu (2013), as a new small firm starts and develops, it moves through some growth stages, each with its own distinctive characteristics. Churchill and Lewis (1983), went further to identified five stages of growth: existence, survival, success and take-off and resource maturity. In each stage of development of a business a different set of factors is critical to the firm's survival and success. The Churchill Lewis view gives an insight into the dynamics of SME growth, including the distinguishing characteristics, problems, and requirements of growing SMEs and explains business growth processes amongst SMEs.

According to Durowoju (2014), the Development of any enterprise whether (micro, small, medium or large) is a necessity that calls for concern by any entrepreneur. It involves the size of the business which consists of many factors such as market and technology, Tambunan (2009). If the market is small, only small or micro economic activities will be viable. This is because the market size itself is also determined by the level of real income per capital and the size of population, which together determine the actual number of buyers. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) involved in manufacturing industry produce a variety of goods that can be grouped into two categories viz consumer and industrial goods. Their consumer goods can be sold in the market.

Despite the strong competition by the large enterprises, SMEs are able to survive because their products are differentiated by nature or acquirement thereby creating niche for themselves such as handicrafts which are outside the competitive area of items that are similar but more sophisticated and produced by large enterprises with machines. As a result, SMEs have a better chance to survive and hence to grow and develop, whereas they would be out priced in the market if they tried to compete with large enterprises by making exactly the same products when the economic scale of output prescribes large enterprises accessing modern technologies (Durowoju, 2014).

Empirical Review

Okesiji and Anjorin (2019), examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on the development of small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted, all small and medium business enterprises within Lagos Metropolis form the study population and convenient sampling technique was employed to select 40 small and medium business enterprises from the target population. Questionnaires were randomly administered to the selected small business owners in Lagos Metropolis. Data collected were presented on

frequency distribution tables and analyzed descriptively using percentage ratio. The Study found that entrepreneurship education has positive impacts on development of small and medium enterprises and at the same time empowers small business owners with the ability to translate their profits into business expansion. The Study recommended that government should make policies that would deliberately provide entrepreneurship education for small business owners across the nation.

Liu, et al (2019), analyzed the effects of college students' entrepreneurship education and self-efficacy on their entrepreneurial development. Survey research design was adopted. The target population comprised of all Chinese college students in Fujian Province, purposive sampling technique was employed to select 800 college students. Survey questionnaire was used for data collection which was structured 5-point Likert scale, with 1 point denoting 'strongly disagree' and 5 points denoting "strongly agree. Out of the 800 copies of the questionnaire distributed among the students of universities in the Fujian Province, and a total of 412 copies are returned. Regression Analysis was used for test the study hypotheses. And it was revealed that college students' entrepreneurial education has a significant positive effect on their entrepreneurial intention, but has no obvious effect on the entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial development. Secondly, college students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on the entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial intention, and the entrepreneurial attitude plays a partial intermediary role in the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial development. The study concluded that Entrepreneurship is an activity that requires management, and through the provision of entrepreneurial education in the form of self-learning and taught courses, college students are able to acquire the knowledge, skills, and practical experience required for the entrepreneurial process which can then improve their entrepreneurial intention.

Chukwuma-Nwuba (2019) conducted a study on the effect of entrepreneurship education programme on Nigerian graduates' entrepreneurial intentions. This study evaluated the programme by investigating its effectiveness in nurturing entrepreneurial intentions in university graduates. The primary objective was to determine the effect of the entrepreneurship education programme on the entrepreneurial intentions of the graduates. The research was a sequential explanatory design, a mixed method of quantitative study followed by a qualitative study. The quantitative study was implemented through cross-sectional survey and quasi-experimental designs with two samples of 409 graduates who constituted the experimental group and 402 undergraduates who formed the control group while the qualitative study was implemented through in-depth interviews with six entrepreneurship education programme lecturers. All the samples were drawn from six universities in Nigeria. Furthermore, the theoretical framework was the theory of planned behaviour. Using the structural equation modelling (SEM) - AMOS, the quantitative study modelled the effects of entrepreneurship education programme proxied by traditional teaching methods and innovative teaching methods, and cultural values on the entrepreneurial intentions of university graduates with personal attitude and subjective norm as mediating variables. Findings revealed that teaching methods have only partial effect on entrepreneurial intentions. Cultural values affect entrepreneurial intentions indirectly through personal attitude and subjective norm. In addition, personal attitude and subjective norm were found to be significant in predicting entrepreneurial intentions. Fundamentally, the entrepreneurship education programme resulted in the decline of the entrepreneurial intentions of the graduates and as such has an adverse effect. The programme had no effect on the personal attitudes of the graduates. The qualitative study confirmed the quantitative finding that the lecturers employ mostly traditional teaching methods with lecture method as the most common. It also found that the lecturers have no

qualifications in entrepreneurship education and are not given the relevant training. It can be concluded that the entrepreneurship education programme is ineffective in nurturing entrepreneurial intentions and is disadvantageous as a measure to curb graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The research has several implications for policy including: the possibility to provide a framework for policy reforms in entrepreneurship education programme undergraduate curriculum and policy reforms regarding evaluation and monitoring of the programme.

Abioye (2020) carried out a study on exploring the impact of entrepreneurship education program on current graduate entrepreneurs. The study examined how Nigeria produces up to 500,000 graduates from multiple disciplines every year from its educational institutions and yet most of these graduates fail to possess the 21st Century skills and competencies that are required to be effective in the workforce and are therefore considered unemployable. The study employed the theory of planned behaviour and the theory of social construction in order to examine the role of entrepreneurship education and its impact on the graduates in the country. Semi structured interviews were conducted with a purposeful sample of 15 recent graduates from Covenant University's entrepreneurship education programs and who are current entrepreneurs. Key findings of the study provided evidence to support the notion that the entrepreneurship education impacted students' knowledge on entrepreneurship, but the program failed to be efficiently practical for graduates on their entrepreneurship journeys. This study helped to understand the impact of these programs, which may provide the policy awareness needed to restructure or create a new policy that aids the development of Nigerian youths independently and economically.

Munyoro, et al (2022) conducted a study to ascertain the significance of entrepreneurship education as a strategic approach to university graduate in Zimbabwean universities. The research adopted pragmatism research philosophy and a case study design. The study made use of structured self-administered questionnaires to collect data. Consequently, the data was analyzed using ANOVA, t-tests and descriptive statistics. The study shows that entrepreneurship education is important in the creation of a graduate who has practical qualities. In addition, entrepreneurship education helps in impacting the students with soft skills that are important in the employability of graduates after graduating from university. Furthermore, the study found out that entrepreneurship education does not exist in Zimbabwean universities. Likewise, the lecturers were found to lack entrepreneurship qualifications.

Paul et al (2022) conducted a study on the role of young females' entrepreneurial skills on family business development and job creation in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study adopts a survey research design. The population of the study consists of family businesses established and owned by young female entrepreneurs who utilized their acquired skills across six (6) LGAs of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. A total of three hundred (300) businesses; were purposively sampled within the areas covered, and fifty (50) firms were selected; from each LGA. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze quantitative data. The analysis was done using a frequency distribution table, means and percentages. Statistical inferences were conducted by means of correlation analysis and regression analysis. The study revealed that young females' entrepreneurial skills have a significant and positive effect on family business development and job creation. The study was significant in evaluating females' entrepreneurs' skills, however, the study did not state categorically how the sample size gotten which brings the question on which method was used to determine.

Thomas, et al (2022) The study examined entrepreneurship skills in automobile technology that are required for graduates of technical education to succeed in this covid-19 pandemic era

as well aids greener economic recovery. The study identified 12 employability skills and 35 entrepreneurial skill competency areas in automobile technology that can aid graduates of technical education to function and succeed in the automotive industry in this covid-19 pandemic era. The study concludes that when graduates of technical education acquire the relevant employability and entrepreneurship skills, they have higher chances of success in either employment or running their own enterprise in automobile technology industry in this covid-19 pandemic era that will consequently aid greener global economic recovery.

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory was propounded by Robert (1991). It advocates education as a tool for improving human capital, stimulating labour productivity and boosting the levels of technology across the globe.

The term “human capital” first appeared in the works of Theodor Schultz, an economist who was interested in the difficult situation of the underdeveloped countries. Schultz stated that improving the welfare of poor people depended not on land, technology or their efforts, but rather on knowledge. It can be argued that all human resources and abilities are either inborn or acquired. Each person is born with an individual complex of genes, which determines his innate human potential. The person acquires valuable qualities that can be strengthened by the corresponding investments; we call human capital. “By investing in themselves, people can enlarge the range of choice available to them. It is one way free men can enhance their welfare” (Schultz, 1961). The ideas of Theodor Schultz were developed in the works of Gary Becker, who justified the effectiveness of investments in human capital from the point of view of economics. According to G. Becker, human capital is everyone’s stock of knowledge, skills, and motivations. Investment in it can be the cost of education, the accumulation of professional experience, health protection, geographical mobility, information retrieval.

Another group of the theory of human capital (Bowles & Gintis, 2011), affirmed the weaknesses of Human Capital Theory, in that an important component of human capital formation (education) cannot be a locomotive of state development. Because educated, but without the necessary support, the individual cannot be realized. But in this case, it can speak of an overt and covert corruption system in the state itself. In this state, power and material values are in the hands of certain groups or individuals. Therefore, we can safely say that, despite numerous studies of human capital, the theory is still relative to modern requirements of the principles of economic, political, social institutions of developed and developing countries. Accordingly, the theory of human capital needs to modernize the theory in accordance with the innovative tendencies of the present in the sphere of politics, economics, sociality, culture, media, among others (Webb, Kuntuova & Karabayeva, 2018). As already noted, education is a key part of the human capital of youth. To begin with, there need to determine the importance of education in human life, and what constitutes education.

It should be noted that the youth is most susceptible to various forming and training influences and is most mobile in change of the social status. It performs special social functions in the state and society, the most important of them: inheritance of the reached level and ensuring continuity of ways of development of society and state, formation of an image of the future and performance of function of social reproduction; ensuring innovative potential of development of economy, its high-tech industries, educations, sciences and cultures. The younger generation is the most perspective component of human resources of society (Webb, et al, 2018).

Human capital theorist encourages spending on nation's workforce through entrepreneurship education because expenditure on training and development is a productive investment. Besides, human capital improvement through quality education is a critical factor that propels economic growth and development.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design to evaluate the Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on Employability of Nigerian Graduate in Nasarawa State. This design employed the use of questionnaire to test and generalizing the result of the survey to the population from which it will be drawn. A survey research is appropriate due to its effectiveness in investigating a wider population.

The target population for this study comprises of all batch A National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members who are owners/managers of businesses in Nasarawa State. According to Godfrey (2022) 1900 corps members are deployed to Nasarawa State during the NYSC orientation exercise to participate for the 2022 Batch 'A' Stream II Orientation course in order to join the earlier 2021 Batch A stream I who are 2200. Therefore, the target population consists of 4100 Batch A corps members in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

A sample of 641 was drawn from the targeted population using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table with a 95% level of confidence and 3.5% margin of error. Similar study from Adebayo, et al (2020). However, the sample size was increase by 20% to cover emergent issues of unreturned questionnaire and wrongly filled questionnaires which can be explain as thus:

$$\frac{20}{100} \times \frac{641}{1} = 128.2$$
$$641 + 128.2 = 769$$

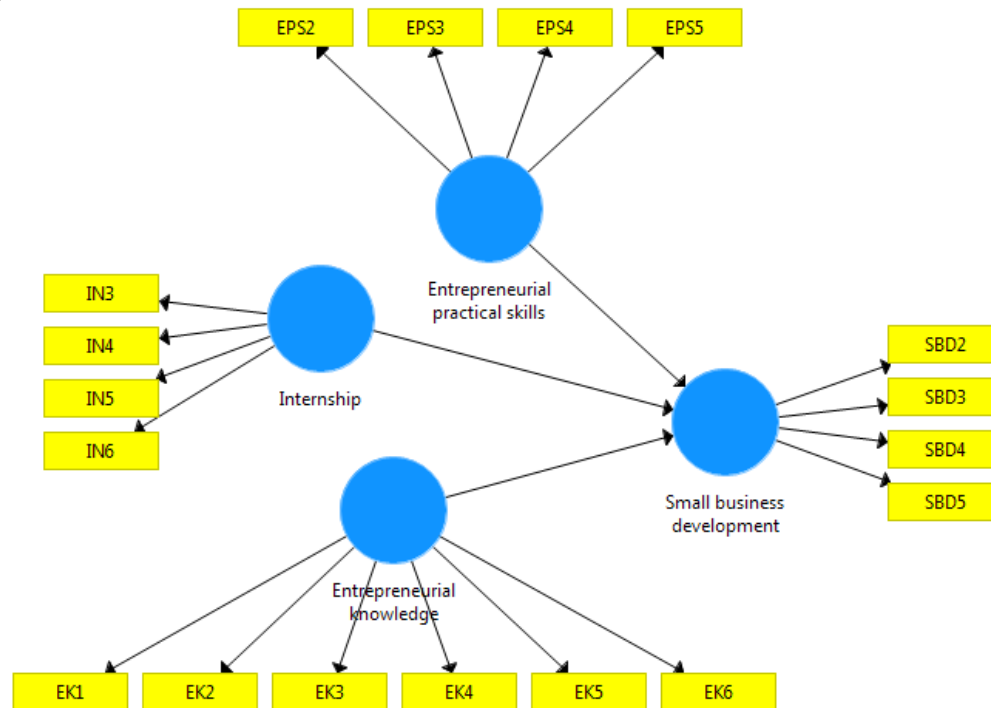
Therefore, the sample size estimated for the study is 769.

For sampling technique, firstly, multi-stage sampling technique was employed to sample four (4) local government areas out of the thirteen (13) local government areas of Nasarawa State. The local government areas to be considered are: Akwanga, Lafia, Karu and Keffi. Secondly, purposive sampling technique was employed to sample Batch A corps members from each of the aforementioned local government area.

Primary data was collected via a semi-structured questionnaire for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire was sectionalized into two. Section A consist of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics information, while section B consist of questions relating to entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial practical skills, entrepreneurial knowledge, internship, small business development and employability of graduates by response options based on the 5-Likert rating scale:

SA	=	Strongly Agree:	5
A	=	Agree:	4
N	=	Neutral:	3
D	=	Disagreed:	2
SD	=	Strongly Disagree:	1

Figure 1: Path Model



Note. Researcher's Compilation Using SmartPLS (version 3).

Results and Discussion

Figure 1: Estimated Path Model

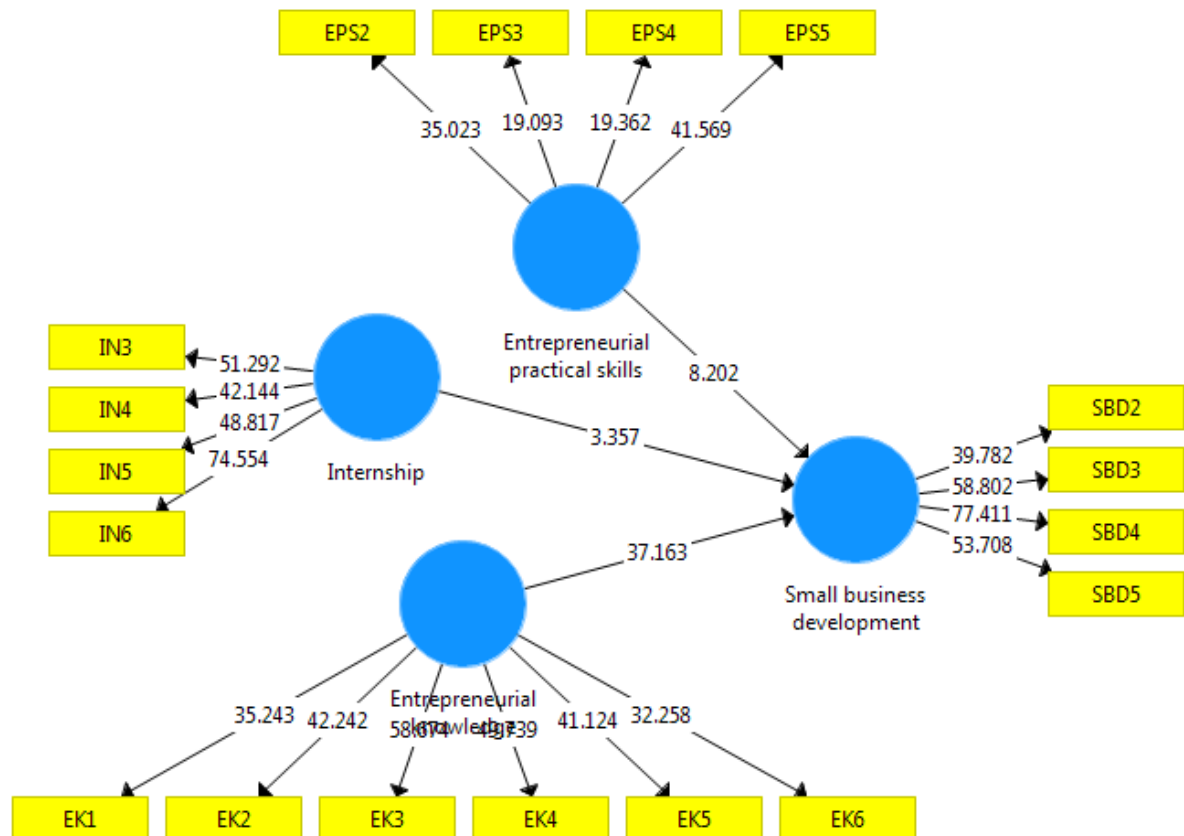


Table 1 shows the path coefficient of the regression results using SmartPls 3.0. this is the result for testing the first hypotheses of the study.

Table 1: Estimated Path Coefficients

Path Relationship	Beta	t	P Values	F ²	Ho Decision
Entrepreneurial Knowledge -> Small Business Development	0.691	37.163	0.000	1.158	Rejected
Entrepreneurial Practical Skills -> Small Business Development	0.179	8.202	0.000	0.069	Rejected
Internship -> Small Business Development	0.092	3.357	0.001	0.021	Rejected

Note. SmartPLS Output.

Ho1: Entrepreneurial practical skills do not significantly affect small business development among Nigeria graduates in Nasarawa State.

The first hypothesis states that entrepreneurial knowledge has a positive effect on small business development. The beta coefficient of 0.691 indicates a strong positive relationship between these two constructs. The T statistic of 37.163 and the p-value of 0.000 both suggest that this relationship is statistically significant. The effect size of 1.158 indicates a large effect of entrepreneurial knowledge on small business development. Therefore, this hypothesis is supported. This establishes that a positive and significant relationship exist between entrepreneurial skills and effect on small business development among Nigeria graduates in Nasarawa State.

Ho2: Entrepreneurial knowledge does not have significant effect on small business development among Nigerian Graduates in Nasarawa State.

The second hypothesis proposes that entrepreneurial practical skills have a positive effect on small business development. The beta coefficient of 0.179 suggests a weak positive relationship between these two constructs. However, the T statistic of 8.202 and the p-value of 0.000 both indicate that this relationship is statistically significant. The effect size of 0.069 suggests a small effect of entrepreneurial practical skills on small business development. Therefore, this hypothesis is also supported. This establishes that a positive and significant relationship exist between entrepreneurial knowledge and effect on small business development among Nigeria graduates in Nasarawa State.

Ho3: Internships do not significantly effect on employability of Nigerian graduates in Nasarawa State.

The third hypothesis posits that internship has a positive effect on small business development. The beta coefficient of 0.092 suggests a weak positive relationship between these two constructs. The T statistic of 3.357 and the p-value of 0.001 both indicate that this relationship is statistically significant. The effect size of 0.021 suggests a small effect of internship on small business development. Therefore, this hypothesis is also supported. This establishes that a positive and significant relationship exist between employability of Nigerian graduates in Nasarawa State.

Table 2: explanatory power of the model

Endogenous Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Small Business Development	0.653	0.652

Source: SmartPLS, 2023

The study assesses explanatory power of the model using coefficient of determination (R^2). With R^2 of 0.653, independent variables explain 65.3% of variance in Small Business Development. The R^2 ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a greater explanatory power. As a guideline, the R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 can be considered substantial, moderate, and weak (Hair et al., 2011). The R^2 values of 0.653 indicates a moderate explanatory power of the exogenous variables.

Table 3: VIF Values of the Model

EK1	2.058
EK2	1.803
EK3	2.225
EK4	2.297
EK5	2.404
EK6	2.136
EPS2	1.178
EPS3	4.329
EPS4	4.476
EPS5	1.657
IN3	2.400
IN4	2.202
IN5	1.936
IN6	2.468
SBD2	2.058
SBD3	2.189
SBD4	1.992
SBD5	1.955

Source: SmartPLS, 2023

From table 12, most of the VIF values are not close to 5 which shows that there are no indication of possible collinearity issues among the predictor constructs for this study. VIF values above 5 indicate possible collinearity issues among the predictor constructs, but collinearity problems can also occur at lower VIF values of 3 to 5 (Becker et al. 2013).

Predictive Power of the Model

To determine the predictive power, the study compare the RMSE values with a naïve recommended naïve benchmark (produced by the PLSpredict method) uses a linear regression model (LM) to generate predictions for the manifest variables, by running a linear regression of each of the dependent construct's indicators on the indicators of the exogenous latent variables in the PLS path model (Danks & Ray, 2018). The test result is shown below.

Table 4 Predictive Power of the Model

	MV	LM
	RMSE	RMSE
SBD5	0.517	0.432
SBD4	0.545	0.475
SBD3	0.396	0.354
SBD2	0.445	0.399

Source: SmartPLS, 2023

From the test results shown in table 13, indicates that majority of the dependent construct indicators in the PLS-SEM analysis produces higher prediction errors compared to the naïve LM benchmark, this indicates that the model has a low predictive power.

Base on the data presented and analyzed above, the first hypothesis showed a significant and positive relationship between entrepreneurial practical skills and small business development. This signifies that entrepreneur skill is a bedrock for improving the productivity of small business. The results supported the findings of (Nabi et al., 2017; Urbano & Alvarez, 2014; Okesiji & Anjorin 2019; Oseni 2017; Njoroge & Gathungu 2013), that practical skills empower small business owners with the ability to translate their profits into business expansion. The study further showed that despite majority of the entrepreneurs lack adequate entrepreneurship skills and experience in areas such as business planning, financial reporting, strategic planning and financial management, there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills and development of SMEs.

Similarly, the second hypothesis also indicates a positive significant relationship exist between entrepreneurial knowledge small business development. This brings us to a reasonable conclusion that the knowledge of entrepreneurship contributes a lot in developing business startup. This result is not in isolation but agrees with the study of Olsson and Bernhard (2020) that in order to remain competitive and generate business growth, women entrepreneurs constantly have to learn new skills to capture the potential of digitalization; especially regarding the knowledge and use of social media. Similarly, Sebikari (2019) also found that entrepreneurship capital, entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial capacity have significant implications for entrepreneurial performance. Furthermore, this finding is also consistent with previous studies that have shown a positive relationship between entrepreneurial skills and small business performance (Kautonen et al., 2015; Yaghoubi et al., 2020).

Interestingly, the results also suggest that the effect of internship on small business development is significant however, as indicated by a low path coefficient of 0.092 ($p < 0.001$) and a very low F2 score of 0.021. This finding is somewhat surprising, as previous studies have shown that internships can be an effective way for individuals to develop entrepreneurial skills and knowledge (Ebben & Johnson, 2006; Pittaway et al., 2011). However, it is possible that the specific type of internship examined in this study did not provide sufficient opportunities for individuals to develop the skills and knowledge needed for small business development.

Lastly, it was also reveal from the study result that entrepreneurial knowledge have a positive and significant effect on the employability of graduates in Nasarawa State. This result is in agreement with Awang and Hudin (2017) that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment creation among student because entrepreneurship

education stimulates employment creation. Furthermore, Faloye and Olatunji (2018) also revealed in their study that entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant influence on fresh graduates' business start-up intention

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the general objective of the study which is to examine the effect of entrepreneurship education on small business development of Nigerian Graduates in Nasarawa State, and taking into perspectives, the findings of each of the specific objective, it is clear that entrepreneurship education has a significant effect on small business development and employability of Nigerian Graduates in Nasarawa State at 5% level of significance.

In view of the foregoing, the conclusion of this study is relatively important to note that entrepreneurship education is imperative in today's Nigerian society. This is significant because the unemployment rate in the country is extremely on an increase due to the global economy downfall. The knowledge of entrepreneurship to the Nigerian graduate will go a long way in helping the economy and also solve the unemployment rate that have eaten us deep due to our poor industrial layout. This drawn us to the conclusion that practical skills, entrepreneurial knowledge and internship significantly influence small business development of Nigerian Graduates.

Based on the results of the study on the Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on Small Business Development of Nigerian Graduates in Nasarawa State, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The government and educational institutions should develop and implement programs that equip students with practical entrepreneurial skills. This can be achieved by including practical training, hands-on experience, and exposure to real-world entrepreneurial environments in the curriculum of entrepreneurship education. This will enable graduates to apply their theoretical knowledge and develop practical skills that will help them establish and grow successful businesses.
- ii. To enhance the entrepreneurial knowledge of Nigerian graduates, it is recommended that educational institutions and the government should focus on developing and implementing entrepreneurship education programs that provide students with comprehensive knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship. This could include courses in business planning, market research, financial management, marketing, and innovation. Additionally, entrepreneurship workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs can be organized to provide graduates with practical insights into entrepreneurial practices and challenges.
- iii. Lastly, educational institutions and organizations should establish more internship opportunities for students. This can be achieved by partnering with businesses and organizations to provide students with real-world experience and exposure to diverse work environments. Additionally, the government can establish policies and programs that incentivize businesses to provide internship opportunities to students. This will not only enhance the employability of graduates but also provide businesses with a pool of potential employees who possess relevant skills and experience.

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