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EXPORT MARKET AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION POTENTIALS AMONG RURAL CROP FARMERS IN ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE.****RUKAYAT KIKELOMO ISIAKA**

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****Corresponding Author****ABSTRACT**

Nigeria has been making series of efforts to encourage export and improve standard of living of her most vulnerable people. This study examined the level of awareness in export market and participation potentials among the rural crop farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The study employed a mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 372 farmers in Ifo block using structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions. Stratified random sampling ensured representativeness. Data analysis combined descriptive statistics with thematic content analysis, enhancing validity and contextual understanding. The findings indicated that 77% of farmers are aware of export, 79% have considered export before while about 66.9% are likely to participate in export. This study concludes that more rural crop farmers are aware of export than those that are ready to participate in export. The study recommends that export development institutions should continue with export sensitisation programmes for rural farmers in order to encourage them to increase their participation in export market while rural crop farmers should take advantage of the opportunities to export their produce in order to improve their income and standard of living.

KEYWORDS: Export awareness, export participation, export potentials, rural farmers, crop farmers.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, before the discovery of oil, rural dwellers with farming as a major occupation contributed significantly to the nation's economy by exporting cash crops like cocoa, groundnut, kola-nut and rubber. For example, agriculture had a high export share of 75% in 1965 which declined to just 3% in 2012. Its contribution to the GDP in 1960 was about 63% which nosedived steadily to 34% in 1988, 33.4% in 2009, 30.9% in 2012 and less than 20% in 2014 (Odetola and Etumnu, 2013). The discovery of crude oil in commercial quantities in Nigeria in 1968 and the subsequent oil boom of the 1970s culminated in its displacement of agriculture as the driver of the nation's economy. Within a decade up to 1981, agricultural output in Nigeria continuously declined leading to the importation of major staples like rice, wheat, sugar and fish to augment local supplies. Since then, Nigeria has been spending a substantial amount of its foreign reserves on importing staple foods. For example, Adesina (2012) averred that Nigeria spent over 1.3 trillion Naira in 2010 alone on importation of wheat, rice, sugar and fish. This is why the Federal Government recently began to emphasize the need for diversification as a means of improving the quality of life of the Nigerian populace.

In Nigeria, the government has implemented different financial and non-financial export support programmes to improve the welfare of producers of exportable goods and earn foreign currency for the country. Examples of non-financial incentives include training, export processing factories, buyback arrangements, foreign market linkage, export expansion grant scheme, establishment of the Nigerian Export-Import (NEXIM) Bank and export credit insurance facility (NEPC, 2023). Similarly, there are institutional frameworks through which export information can reach farmers, which include extension workers under Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) and Nigeria Export Promotion Councils (NEPC) (Afreximbank, 2022).

However, despite efforts by different stakeholders including government and international organisations to reposition smallholder farmers towards production for export, there is little or no improvement for the rural farmers to embrace export-oriented production according to Ignatius and Haapasaari (2018). There are social and environmental challenges confronting rural farmers towards adopting export-oriented production. Government motivation focus on the technical aspect of production, such as seedlings, land cultivation, fertilizers and pesticide issues with little consideration on adequate awareness creation on the opportunities and benefits of export to rural and smallholder farmers in Nigeria. This gap in the body of knowledge motivated this study to determine the level of export market awareness and participation potentials among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of this study are to examine:

1. The level of export market awareness among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State.
2. The extent of export market participation potentials among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In line with the objectives, the study answers the following questions:

1. What is the level of export market awareness among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State?
2. To what extent are rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State positioned to participate in export markets?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Obidike (2011), rural farmers account for the greater part of the population of any developing country such as Nigeria. Consequently, it is a major responsibility of the governments of developing countries to ensure that there is adequate rural development in their various communities and local governments which would lead to effective and efficient agricultural systems that will not only supply food and animal protein but also foster the utilization of natural resources in a sustainable manner. Achieving this objective requires adequate dissemination of knowledge to rural farmers to enable them improve their processes for greater food production. Zheng and Ma (2023) posited that lack of access to required knowledge and information that can help rural farmers in their farms achieve maximum agricultural productivity contributes in no small way to inadequate food security in different nations. This incapacitates the ability of the nation to have excess food supply which will necessitate exporting to generate more income for national development.

The recent decline in oil revenues has forced the government of Nigeria to seek economic diversification by pursuing agricultural development as a veritable means to address dependence on food imports costing nearly 11 billion dollars annually (Yakubu and Akanegbu, 2015). It has also engaged in a campaign to redirect focus from oil to agriculture, manufacturing and solid minerals development. In this regard, the government has rolled out five agricultural development initiatives, namely; Anchor Borrowers Program (ABP), Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI), Youth Lab, Presidential Economic Diversification Initiative (PEDI) and Food Security Council.

The ABP, for example, was created by the Central Bank of Nigeria and works in partnership with state governments and several private sector groups to provide farm inputs in kind and cash to smallholder farmers to boost the production of agricultural commodities. At harvest, the farmers supply their produce to the agro-processors (anchor), which pay the cash equivalent to the farmers' account. According to government reports, under the ABP initiative, a cumulative amount of over 150 million dollars has been disbursed to more than 250,000 small farmers who cultivated almost 300,000 hectares of farmland for rice, wheat, maize, cotton, soybeans, and cassava (Busari and Wahab, 2003; Evbuomwan and Okoye, 2017).

A review by Nwanosike, Kalu, Ogbuabor, Uzoechina and Ebenyi (2016) indicated that the agricultural sector contributed over 60% of the GDP in the 1960s and despite the reliance of Nigerian peasant farmers on traditional tools and indigenous farming methods, these farmers produced 70% of Nigeria's exports and 95% of its food needs. However, events took a downturn following the oil boom of the 70s, which turned the country's attention to 'oil dollars', leading to the total neglect of this important sector. Since then, the country has been witnessing several economic problems as the nation that once exported foods could no longer even feed its citizens. Despite the country's abundant workforce, land and water resources, food and animal production continues to be on the decline which prompts the government to import food to meet the nation's food requirement.

According to the 2006 National Population Census, Nigeria has about 71 million hectares of arable land. In spite of all these, it still cannot feed its populace, not to talk of exporting for more income generation. Successive government, as well as other stakeholders in the sector, have, therefore, continued to develop different intervention programmes to revive the ailing economy by addressing the Nation's Agricultural challenges. Among some of the development initiatives that had been implemented to bring the nation back to its good old days included; the Farm Settlement Schemes; and the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), launched in 1972, the Operation Feed the Nation, launched in 1976, the River Basin and Rural Development Authorities, established in 1976, the Green Revolution Programme, inaugurated in 1980, the Back to the land initiative, the Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), as well as the World Bank-funded Agricultural Development Projects (ADP), among others. All these programmes sought to improve food production, which will subsequently translate to food security and a better economy (Agber, Iortima and Imbur, 2013; Sylvanus, Edet and Ityav, 2023).

Also, in September 2000, Nigeria was one of the 193 nations of the world that endorsed the Millennium Development Declaration aimed at encouraging development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries. The summit developed a roadmap that has as its target eight goals that were to be achieved by the year 2015. The Goal One of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was to

‘Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger’ by the year 2015. And to this end, Nigerian governments, at all levels on their part, have continued to embark on many programmes and introduce many policies to increase food production via agricultural development. There have also been various Presidential Initiatives on Agriculture and Rural Access as well as programmes such as Mobility Programme, Buyer of Last Resort Programme, Fertilizer Stabilization Programme, National Special Programme on Food Security, Community-Based Agricultural Development Programme and National Fadama Development Programme, and the Transformation Agenda (Okon, and Ukwayi, 2012; Ajiye, 2014; Nnoli, Enilolobo, Hassan and Bello, 2023). Arokoyo (2012) stated that many development efforts in Nigeria, including agriculture, in which substantial human and financial resources have been invested, have failed to achieve the expected desired results primarily because the targeted beneficiaries of the efforts have not been involved in the planning and design of the programme.

While many African countries are yet to realize the potential of horticultural and vegetable exports, Kenya has positioned itself as a major supplier of both globally. In 2018, for example, Kenya exported \$1.53 billion worth of flowers and vegetables to the European Union (EU). Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the export market for flowers, fruits and vegetables remains vastly unexploited. Only one known flower in Nigeria is cultivated for exports; the hibiscus. When dried, hibiscus flowers are used in the production of tea, popularly known as ‘Zobo’ in Nigeria and for other medicinal uses. The fruit and vegetables market has not fared any better. According to official statistics, in Nigeria, in 2013, exported goods were worth \$46.32 billion, of which a paltry \$3.83 billion was contributed by vegetables and fruits to Europe and America (Oseghale, 2019).

In 2016, vegetable exports took an upward swing when Anambra State Governor, Willy Obiano, announced that the state was the first in Nigeria to export fluted pumpkin leaves or ‘Ugu’ valued at \$5 million to Europe. According to the Agricultural Fresh Produce Growers and Exporters Association of Nigeria (AFPGEAN), Nigeria loses between 55 per cent and 72 per cent of its cultivated fresh produce (fruits and vegetables) before it can be consumed, much less exported (Oseghale, 2019). According to Market Insider (2015), most of the non-oil Nigerian exports are usually destined for Europe. The country exports huge quantities of oranges and various varieties of pepper, waterleaf and telfairia.

According to NAQS (2020), importing countries of the world need phytosanitary certificates to accompany Nigeria's plant and vegetable export. Request forms for certifications are obtainable at the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS). A phytosanitary certificate contains statements to the effect that the accredited officers of the NAQS have carried out quarantine inspection and that the consignment of plants/plant products is pest-free at the time of examination. It also states whether or not any form of treatment has been carried out. Plant materials exported from Nigeria

that are not covered by a phytosanitary certificate stand the risk of being rejected or destroyed on arrival at the importing country, usually at the exporter's expense. Application forms for plant export permits are available on demand at designated NAQS offices in Ibadan, Ikeja, Kano, Port-Harcourt, Maiduguri and Abuja.

NAQS is a Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development regulatory agency. NAQS ensures that our agricultural exports meet international standards such as the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). It is part of the NAQS's job to visit farms and tell farmers how to farm the vegetables, what chemicals to apply when to harvest based on flight schedule, how to harvest them, how to put them in pack houses and how to treat them. NAQS also encourage exporters to get a cold van to transport them from the farm to the airport so that the shelf life and the rate of wilting are reduced to the barest minimum (NAQS, 2020).

Market participation is a major pathway for rural people to assuring better income and improve their food security. Improving access to markets is paramount in increasing smallholders' market participation and the extent of their participation, *ceteris paribus* (Kyaw, Ahn and Lee, 2018). Avoiding factors that limit market access by smallholder producers will enhance market participation.

A researcher (Olwande and Mathenge, 2012) examined the factors influencing the market participation of crop producers, and their impacts on income and poverty among the poor and marginalized groups in Kenya. The objective of the study was to examine the most significant constraints to market participation for the different social groups. The study used a Heckman two-stage model and modelled participation in input and output markets. The study found that female-headed households had higher bean market participation than male-headed households. Land size, membership to a group, and distance to a tarmac road had positive and significant effects on bean market participation, while price had a negative but significant effect. The study found that per capita land size had a positive and significant effect, while crop price had a negative and significant effect on the extent of beans market participation (see also Abdulai, Bahadur and Fraser, 2023).

Another researcher (Mussema and Dawit, 2012) evaluated the market chain of red pepper at the HSD and Silti zone of Ethiopia. The objective of the study was to identify factors affecting the volume of pepper supply. The study used a Heckman two-stage model to assess the factors that affect red pepper producers' output market participation. The study found that the quantity of red pepper produced and the extension service had a positive and significant influence on market participation, while the yield of cereals had a negative and significant effect on market participation. The study also found that livestock numbers and non-farm income negatively and significantly influence the amount of red pepper supplied to the market. It was concluded that policies improving pepper production capacity by identifying new

technologies and creating stable demand for surplus production would enhance farmers' decisions on marketable surplus. As a result, policy should be designed on integrated farming systems to minimize income risk and improve the farmers' livelihood. An attempt was made to analyse red pepper market participation and the extent of participation. Similar conclusion can be found in (Shangshon, Wongsamun, Polthane and Suriya, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of rural farmers' export market awareness and participation potentials in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The quantitative aspect enabled the collection of measurable data through structured questionnaires, while the qualitative aspect, via in-depth interviews (IDIs) with extension officers and focus group discussions (FGDs) with farmers, allowed for deeper insights. This triangulation enhances the validity of findings and ensures a robust analysis of the research questions. The study was conducted in the Ifo block of the Abeokuta agricultural zone, Ogun State. The Abeokuta zone consists of six blocks: Ilewo, Ifo, Ilugun, Wasimi, Olorunda, and Opeji. Ifo block was purposively selected due to its strategic proximity to Lagos State, a major market hub and export gateway for agricultural produce via air and sea routes. The Ifo block comprises an estimated 22,800 rural farming households (OGADEP, 2017), distributed across eight agricultural circles: Akinsinde, Egbeda, Ijoko, Coker, Ajibode, Iju-Atan, Iyesi, and Irodu.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness across the eight agricultural circles. Based on the formula provided by Singh and Masuku (2014) and further supported by Rahman (2023), a statistically adequate sample size of 372 rural farmers was determined and randomly selected for participation in the study. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, complemented by in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The instruments were subjected to content validity checks by experts in agricultural economics and rural development. A pilot study involving 20 respondents from a non-sampled block was conducted to assess reliability. The questionnaire yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating acceptable internal consistency and reliability. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) while qualitative data from IDIs and FGDs were analysed thematically using content analysis techniques, which allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and emergent themes. The decision on research questions was guided by the proportions that fall into yes and at least likely (typically more than 50%) and the repetition and consistency of themes in the qualitative data. This integrated approach ensured that both measurable trends and contextual factors were captured to adequately address the study objectives.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of export market awareness among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State?

Table 1: Extent of export market awareness among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State

| Measures | Options | Frequency (Percentage) |
|-------------------|---------|------------------------|
| Know about export | Yes | 287 (77.2%) |
| | No | 85 (22.8%) |

For the level of awareness about export, 77.2% of respondents were aware of export while the remaining 22.8% claimed they were not aware of fresh crop export. This indicated that majority of the farmers are aware of export market opportunities for agricultural produce.

The existence of adequate awareness about export was confirmed by comments of farmers and the extension officers during in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. For example, in one of the focus group discussions, it was aired thus:

I see export as transporting or selling agricultural produce from one country to another. The introduction of export to the farmers will be seen as a good advantage for farmers' growth.

FGD/Farmer/Female/Yoruba/37years/2022

A male extension officer stated during the interview that:

To me, export is moving agricultural produce abroad or selling crops to another country. Exportation also depends on the kinds of crops being produced. It will have a good and a great positive impact on our farmers if they can adopt export, it can make improve their standard of living.

IDI/Extension officer/ Male/ Yoruba/51 years/2022

Thus, the conclusion on research question 1 is that there is high level of export market awareness among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State

Research Question 2: To what extent are rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State positioned to participate in export markets?

Table 2 export participation potentials among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Considering export | Yes | 294 (79.0%) |
| | No | 78 (21.0%) |
| Likelihood of participating in export | Very likely | 112 (30.1%) |
| | Likely | 137 (36.8%) |
| | Undecided | 104 (28.0%) |
| | Unlikely | 14 (3.8%) |
| | Very unlikely | 5 (1.3%) |
| Enough for export | Yes | 245 (65.9%) |
| | No | 127 (34.1%) |

A focus group discussion comment on the subject matter goes thus:

Export involves selling produce outside Nigeria/ Transportation of agricultural goods to other countries, or sales of produce outside the border of the country. This will be a good advantage to the farmers if the farmers get it right.

FGD/Farmer/Male/Yoruba/42years/2022

Another extension agent stated the advantage of export as follows:

Though export is the selling of agricultural produce from one country to another country. Selling agricultural produce overseas or selling agricultural produce abroad brings foreign exchange to the country. This will help the farmers to receive foreign currency, and this will also help to boost their income.

IDI/Extension officer/ Female/ Igbo/48 years/2022

But a respondent had this to say thus:

In my own opinion, export is the selling of agricultural produce outside one's country. That is selling agricultural produce like crops and the rest to another country. This is a good idea if our farmers will welcome it because there are some farmers that we need to explain and explain to before they can understand and be convinced; they are contented with their old ways of doing things. Suppose it can be well explained to some of our farmers, to be able to convince them of a new method of selling that can bring more money. I think it will be a good and welcome development for the farmers.

IDI/Extension officer/ Male/ Yoruba/50 years/2022

Another FGD discussant similarly emphasized this thus:

Welcoming export will be a great positive impact on the farmers, bring about an active and high standard of living, generate more farmers, improve farmers' life quality, encourage more youth to participate in farming and bring about youth empowerment in agriculture through export.

FGD/Farmer/Male/IGBO/53years/2022

An extension officer has this to say about export:

To me, export is taking goods outside Nigeria ... to another country. The farmers also know about export, but they don't know how to do it. Usually, it is the business people that know how to export that buy from farmers for export. I know of one Alhaji that export garri, precisely ijebu garri. The man usually goes to the farm to buy the garri from the farmers. He will do the finishing and everything by himself. He will now export. He has a brother abroad that he sends to that use to help him. If I want to do it today, I have people like that that I can contact on the process. But for the farmers, I don't think that in my area any farmer is exporting. Those farmers, if they see somebody that can guide them; they will be eager to do export. They need information and somebody they trust. We have many farmers with some level of formal education; they have attended several trainings on agricultural businesses. They are ready to do anything that would increase their profit. But the only problem farmers are having is a lack of information. For example, if a farmer is told that a special type of okra or any other vegetable is needed by white people and the seed is given to farmers with explanations on how to nurture it, farmers would be interested. Even farmers that are only involved in cassava before can do such business. Even the farmer will go and look for appropriate land that suits the crop if necessary. They will be very, very happy that they were remembered because they have done this for years without anybody seeing them. Now that people are looking at their side. I think it is a good thing.

IDI/Extension Officer/Female/Yoruba/46years/2022**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study found a strong level of export awareness among rural farmers, with 77.2% of respondents recognizing export potential and articulating its benefits clearly during FGDs and interviews. This aligns with broader trends in Sub-Saharan Africa, where access to market information and farmer training enhance commercial outlooks

significantly. For instance, Otekunrin et al. (2022) reported that improved market knowledge positively influenced commercialization and reduced food insecurity among smallholders in Southwestern Nigeria. Likewise, Onomu (2023) showed that better awareness of market dynamics increased participation and use of technologies like tractors, underscoring the critical role of information distribution in mobilizing farmers toward new market opportunities (Onomu, 2023).

Regarding export participation potential, a substantial proportion of farmers showed readiness and intent as 79% had considered exporting, 66.9% were likely to participate and 65.9% felt they had enough production. Notably, farmers' openness was often tempered by gaps in procedural knowledge. Extension agents noted that farmers possess the interest and production capacity but require guidance on navigating the export process. This is consistent with Otekunrin's (2022) assertion that while awareness is necessary, it is not sufficient as farmers also need structural support such as trust-based linkages with exporters and training on quality standards to fully integrate into export value chains.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the level of export market awareness and participation potentials among rural farmers in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The findings revealed a relatively high level of awareness among the majority of respondents regarding export opportunities for agricultural produce. This suggests that previous efforts by government and institutional actors to create awareness have had a measurable impact. These efforts are in the form of support on input, implementation and extensions service from the Ogun State Agricultural Development Programme (OGADep), Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP), and FADAMA programme.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of rural farmers indicated their willingness to participate in export activities and believed they had sufficient production capacity to support such ventures. However, despite this positive disposition, the study also highlighted a critical gap: while interest and potential exist, actual participation remains low due to limited knowledge of export procedures and weak linkages to export value chains.

The study concludes that improving access to reliable export information, targeted training, and institutional support is essential to transition rural farmers from awareness to active participation in export markets. Addressing this gap will not only increase farmers' income and welfare but also contribute to Nigeria's broader economic diversification agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding from this study, the study recommends that Ogun State government should do the following:

1. Empower extension agents and NEPC to offer export-focused training that includes regulatory processes, quality standards, packaging and certification to rural farmers.
2. Develop local hubs equipped with processing, packaging and storage facilities to enable value-addition and ensure consistency.
3. Support access to agricultural technologies and foster direct connections to exporters, reducing dependence on intermediaries and increasing farmer earnings.

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**IMPACTS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL CONSTRUCTS AND THE
MODERATING ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS ON
SUSTAINABILITY OF CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA IN
PRE AND POST COVID 19 PANDEMICS****INEGBEDION DANIEL, PhD**

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ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship (SE) has been significantly recognised to be the solution to worsening global pandemic, social issues and economic crises, which were caused by the pre and post era COVID 19 pandemics. The study determined the impacts of social entrepreneurial constructs and the moderating role of social entrepreneurs on sustainability of corporate organizations in Nigeria in pre and post Covid 19 pandemic. Five alternative hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive longitudinal-survey research design was utilised in this study. The population of the study comprises of 97,091 Nano, micro, small and medium scale enterprise in Lagos state (NMSMEs) in Lagos State, Nigeria. Random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was employed and a sample size of 146 and 140 of social entrepreneurs was derived during pre and post pandemic. Survey Online Google form of questionnaire distribution was used as instrument administration and data collection for the study. The instrument reliability was assessed with Cronbach's Alpha reliability test of .70. Hence, the data collected was analysed using Partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The analysis of the results showed that SEF, EEF, BEF and GEF has significant impact on sustainability during the pre-covid pandemic. The study also revealed that EES does not impact significantly on sustainability and social entrepreneurs have a significant role to play in the sustainability of NMSMEs.

KEYWORDS: Social entrepreneurship strategy, Social entrepreneurial constructs, Economic entrepreneurial constructs, Behavioural entrepreneurial constructs, Governmental entrepreneurial constructs, Sustainability, Social Entrepreneurs, Pre and Post Covid 19.

INTRODUCTION

The world has been ravaged by the devastating effect/t of COVID 19 pandemic and emerging economic hardship. There are rumors of war all over the place and societal ills and diseases are ravaging and devastating the world, most especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, social and economic hardship is prevailing in the society, thereby affecting sales growth and corporate sustainability. Therefore, the achievement of sustainability is more relevant than ever before to all kind of businesses and social enterprises. This is why the understanding of the underlying factors determining sustainability cannot be over-emphasized. The influence social entrepreneurship strategy (SES) could have on sustainability is enormous especially from the social, economic, behavioural, and governance perspectives (Kamaludin, Xavier & Amin, 2021).

Numerous linkages have been examined the various constructs of social entrepreneurship strategy (SES) and how it has led to corporate sustainability during and after COVID 19 diseases and tragedy worldwide. Conversely, the devastating effect on entrepreneurs and corporate organisations is still noticeable in their operational activities, sales growth and profit. On the contrary, a number of entrepreneurial strategies (Akande, Inegbedion, Ighodalo, Ojelade, Nwaogu (2019) and strategic plans have been implemented as emergent action plans in tackling the devastating effect and possible solution to providing a conducive and sustainable environment for businesses to thrive. Undoubtedly, there are traces of calamity of the pandemic and sustainability. In spite of that, over 30 percent of businesses in Africa continents, were closed down after COVID 19 Pandemic, 45 percent of Business in Asia region are picking up and doing well post COVID (Anakpo & Misha, 2021, Teachout & Zipfel 2020). In the same vein, in Europe, 43 percent of businesses are striving to survival after COVID. Here in Nigeria, 48% of Businesses are been sustained after COVID tragedy (Chinedu et al., 2020, Ekanem & Lawrence 2024). In the Atlantic region basically in the New York City 54 percent of business were temporary shut down and unemployment lump by 47 percent due to the pandemic as reported by Alexander, Marianne & Zoe (2020). Consequently, corporate enterprises and MSMEs particularly are closing down some of their business or product line which intend to have low returns/profits that could limit their potential in generating huge sales and profit, thereby hampering on the sustainability of the corporate organisations. From the foregoing, there is paramount need to re-evaluate the fundamental SES constructs and how it impacts the sustainability performance of MSMEs especially in the sub-Sahara Africa, most especially those enterprises domicile in Nigeria.

There is evidence that numerous researches have been done in this area of study. However, very little works focus on how it has affected the covid -19 crises in the sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, there is a dearth in the role of social entrepreneurs in achieving sustainability development of Micro, small and medium scale businesses during the pandemic. Therefore, there is need for the examination of certain frameworks and dimensions regarding the constructs of SES. Furthermore, very little from the developing countries of Africa such as Nigeria. Some business processes and measurement of social impact still need attention so as to unveil the likely impact of social entrepreneurship on business survival and sustainability in Nigeria. Kamaludin et al. (2021) observed that in the emerging field of academic research on social entrepreneurship, studies linking social entrepreneurship to sustainability were gaining traction due to the importance of these constructs. However, there are traces of inconsistency and various dimensions on the different conceptual models that have been developed with regard to the variables. This has given rise to the need for better understanding of the ideal conceptual framework and theoretical underpinning to addressing the issues based on the importance of the relationship between social entrepreneurship strategy and business sustainability. Furthermore, the understanding of the predictors of sustainability from the point of view of social entrepreneurship paves way for businesses to employ suitable strategies to sustain competitive advantage (Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018). It is noteworthy that many authors and researchers have delved into the relationship between social entrepreneurial constructs and social entrepreneur on sustainability in Nigeria but they focused on the trait part of behaviour whereas the behavioural dimension is broad and requires more extensive research. This study, therefore, was deemed imperative in order to fill the gaps in the body of knowledge on the influence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Related literature to the study were reviewed under the key variables in the study as follows:

Social Entrepreneurship (SE)

The word social entrepreneurship (SE) was initiated by social entrepreneurs called Bill Drayton (Cited in Zulkifl & Aziz 2023). It was during the workplace in Ashoka Foundation he supported and financed solely corporate entrepreneurs in their social mission. Through entrepreneurial intention of Bill Drayton, he addressed the financial challenges and social issues of the vulnerable by formulating policies in tackling the challenges and bringing to an end the problems. Also, Bill extensively creating public wealth through innovative thinking (Wallance, 1999). Therefore, social entrepreneur is an individual or corporate personality who has a strong interest in resolving social issues and demonstrating ethical behaviour towards driving social mission (Koe Hwee Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010; Hockerts, 2015; Patient Takawira, 2021). Subsequently, there are four determinant factors of social entrepreneurship strategy, namely the social

factors, economic factors/dimension, behavioural factors and governance factors. In whole, this strategy led to the emergence of social entrepreneurship.

Social Entrepreneurial factor (SEF)

The motives of one trying to participate in the social entrepreneurship is altruistic in nature, meaning that some people do because of fulfilment the desire for achievement (Kuznecova, 2016). Hence, the social strategy indicators include value creation, social mission, community, network and change constitute the social dimension.

Economic Entrepreneurial factor (EEF)

Economic factor is another dimension that defines the social entrepreneur. After striving to attain a social mission, a social entrepreneur has also tried to implement strategies that would help to attain economic efficiency (Costa & Pesci, 2016). The critical nature of the economic dimension cannot be over emphasized since we ensure that social entrepreneurship and sustainability is achieved.

It is imperative to study this economic dimension in order to differentiate it from the perspective of various corporate organisations and charitable giving and social mission (Grieco, 2018). Economic elements in this regard comprises of accountability, product/service innovation, new opportunities in the marketplace, generating wealth and individual or corporate firm being financially autonomous.

Behavioural Entrepreneurial factor (BEF)

One concept that is critical in defining is the behavioural factor, this is because the constructs social entrepreneur encompasses a myriad of variables like culture, image, identity, cognition, and business-like behaviours that is tend towards behaving entrepreneurially as well as having individual attributes and acting boldly (Kamaludin et al., 2021). It is worthy of note that while many researchers and academics have focused on the trait part of behaviours of social entrepreneurs, there is still need to differentiate it from certain known phenomenon, and since the behavioural dimension is broad, it calls for more extensive research (Kadir & Sarif, 2016).

Governance Entrepreneurial Factor (GEF)

The governance structure and strategy of any corporate entrepreneurial firm is undermined with due cognisance to accountability, transparency and corporate ethics. The basic element of social entrepreneurship comprises of two variable which are governance and autonomy. Santos, Pache & Birkholz, (2015) noted that the importance of governance dimensions stem from the fact that it encompasses areas such as social impact as well as the interaction between customers, clients and beneficiaries in order to achieve social entrepreneurship sustainability.

Sustainability

It is recognized that sustainability literature has its origin from the 1980s Kamaludin et al (2021). The concept of sustainability has garnered many academicians' interest worldwide since it is pivotal to the difficulties encountered in trying to bring about positive economic growth and development in any social enterprise (Sarango-lalangui, Santos & Hormiga, 2018). Result shows that many have misconceived the concept of sustainability in business by giving it different meanings and names. While some researchers refer to sustainability as the growth, expansion and advancement that meet the requirement of the present without necessarily compromising the capacity or enablement to future generations to be able to meet their needs, others argue that it consists of many kinds of social and economic equity which covers areas of resources, policy, health and exchange. It tries to assure the viewers and investors that there is future stability in the business (Stenn, 2017).

Sustainability from the point of view of Social Entrepreneurship is concerned with the need for social enterprise to survive as well as how they can endure financial pressure over time. This shows that to achieve sustainability, social enterprise has to establish viable business that is running well. This means that there is not significant evidence of social enterprise demonstrating sustainability unless they possess the ability to attain operation impact within a duration of time. Subsequently, prior studies revealed that sustainability arising from SE hinges on three components of social sustainability (SS), economic sustainability (ES) and environmental sustainability (ES) (Burkett 2010; Javed, Yasir & Majid, 2019). In addition, Elkington's triple bottom line framework depicts those efforts geared toward sustainability, which are focused on three areas bothering on people, profit as well as the planet. Sustainability for social purposes has to do with the ability to survive in serving the constituencies of the enterprise. It is in this manner that social mission organisation fulfils their commitment to the entire stakeholders of business (customers, clients, employees, financial institutions and community at large) in which they operate. Apparently, sustainability can be ascertained when resources of the organisation are managed and controlled with a view to ensuring long-term sustainability and performance. Enterprise can also initiate possible strategic plans and action with view to achieving long term goals and entrepreneurial operational efficiency and effectiveness (Rajput & Chopra, 2014).

It is important to have social entrepreneurship sustainability that requires business endurance as well as the ability to press on in an ever changing, challenging and complex environment. In Nigeria today, many organisations cannot sustain their business because there is no capability especially in terms of ability to foresee through forecasting uncertainty in the near future. So having experienced the effect of COVID 19, it became difficult to manage and compete favourably in the industry (Alegro, Kislenco & Berbegal-Mirabel, 2017). Thus, the achievement of sustainability of social

enterprise is realistic with the maximization of positive impact through the effective management of health, nature of the ventures by way of incorporating social equity, economic prosperity and also environmental integrity into their business philosophy (Wilson & Post, 2013; Chowdhury et al., 2021). The social entrepreneurial sustainability is the state of achieving a social purpose while staying financially viable (Kamaludin et al., 2021; Jay, Robert & Gillian, 2010). However, the problem of unifying conceptual framework arising because of many competing concepts has caused the definition or the concept to lack unifying background (Preeti, Anil & Jyoti, 2022).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

this study is anchored on dynamic capabilities theory which states that organisational internal resources (Values, HR, financial resources, Mission statement, competencies and capabilities and external resources are determinant for social obligations, Eriksson, Rodger & Oguji, (2021) entrepreneurial intention and corporate sustainability (Inegbedion & Oghojafor, 2021; Pascucci, Cardella, Hernandez-Sanchez, Sánchez-Garcia, 2022). For instance, sustainable social entrepreneurship (SE) involves funds or resources which could be internal source of finance to entrepreneurship in most corporate firms in Nigeria. Internal sources of finance to simply mean getting funds to finance entrepreneurship outcomes through personal saving, the external source of funds to financing entrepreneurship could come through borrowing from bank. The dynamic capability theory helps to enhance and promotes the sources of finance to social entrepreneurship. Therefore, this theory is most suitable for this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to determine the impacts of social entrepreneurship (SE) constructs and social entrepreneurs on sustainability in Nigeria in pre and post COVID 19 pandemics. Specifically, the study determined the impact of

1. Social entrepreneurial (SE) indicators on ~~and~~ sustainability in Nigeria in pre and post Covid 19 pandemic.
2. Economic entrepreneurial (EE) indicators and sustainability in Nigeria in pre and post Covid 19 pandemic.
3. Behavioural entrepreneurial (BE) indicators and sustainability.
4. Governance entrepreneurial (GE) indicators and sustainability.
5. Social entrepreneurs on social entrepreneurship constructs and sustainability.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following alternative hypotheses were tested at

H₁: Social entrepreneurial (SE) indicators have significant impact on sustainability in Nigeria in pre and post Covid 19 era.

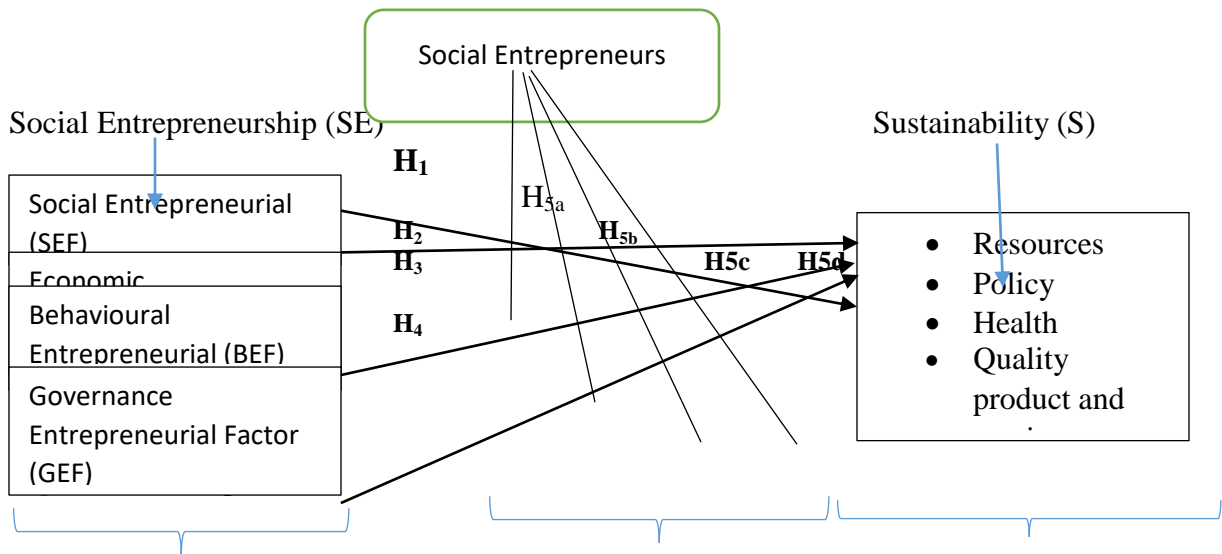
H₂: Economic entrepreneurial (EE) indicators have significant impact on sustainability
 H₃: Behavioural entrepreneurial (BE) indicators have significant impact on sustainability

H₄: Governance entrepreneurial (GE) indicators has significant impact on sustainability

H_{5a}-H_{5d}: Social entrepreneurs moderate and mediate s significantly between social entrepreneurship constructs and sustainability.

Research Framework

This study adapted mentioned the Hocketts’ model (Hocketts’, 2017) as the theoretical approach in line with the standard and previous work done by prior social entrepreneurs, researchers and academia. Explicitly, the study also utilised perceived social support model as a framework.



network and model design of the study

Source: Adapted from Zulkfle and Aziz (2023). Determinant of social entrepreneurship intention: A longitudinal study among Youth in Higher Learning Institutions.

The study explored the impacts of the four constructs of social entrepreneurship and the social entrepreneur on sustainability of business processes. Studies report that social entrepreneurial factors or dimensions have linkages with social entrepreneurship and sustainability. Hence, the proposition is that the concept of social entrepreneurship provides an intended experiences for social values, social needs and awareness. The intention of every social entrepreneur is to make available resources that can sustain the business, deliver quality services and products that can exploit opportunities in the marketing environment (Paredo & McLean, 2006) and also increase entrepreneurial

innovativeness (Matinaro & Liu, 2017, Inegbedion, Afolayan & Opaleye, 2019). Hence, the essential need for social intention is to increase value creation and deliver free healthy society caused by COVID 19 crises. Kamran, Khaskhely, Nassani, Haffer & Abro (2022), examined the interrelationship between social entrepreneurship (SE), the importance of social distancing during the pandemic and the value of social creation and innovation and found that information technology significantly shaped entrepreneurial opportunities and innovation as a tool for social distancing during the pandemic. In the same vein, Priya and Venkatesh (2019) evaluated the factors that determine social entrepreneurship such as social values, environmental issues and cultural norms and their influence on sustainable development and entrepreneurship creation while Kamaludine et al., (2021) examined the association between social entrepreneurship (SE) dimensions and sustainability and reported a significant relationship. Haugh & Talwar, (2016) also explored the use of previous data base on literatures integrating social entrepreneurship, social empowerment, social change and entrepreneurial activities of Indian women in the rural cities. The authors found out that entrepreneurial engagement promotes or contributes to social change and social empowerment and at the same time facilitates Indian women's engagement to ~~engaging~~ in economic and innovative processes.

H₁: Social entrepreneurial (SE) indicators have significant impact on sustainability.

Economic Entrepreneurial factors as it relates to social entrepreneurship is the integrate part of enterprises discovering market/products opportunities, developing innovating ideas and product (Inegbedion, Asikhia & Obi, 2022; Inegbedion, Micheal and Opaleye, 2019) with a view to attaining sustainable development through wealth creation and entrepreneurs being financial sufficient and inclusive (Inegbedion, Akande, Asikhia, Adeyemo & Adebayo 2022). Therefore, when a social entrepreneur is said to be financially empowered and all-inclusive, there is tendency of supporting innovation, delivery quality products, formulating policies that is comprehensive and holistic achieving enterprise sustainability. Most importantly, social entrepreneurs can provide financial assistance in eradicating COVID pandemic and also incubating new industry formation. Therefore, a number of previous literatures has supported this view. Empirical studies from Islam, Hossain, Khan, Rana, Ema & Bekun (2022) empirically conducted a study in Bangladesh on contextual issues and linkages between economic factors, global warming and climate change and how it affects the SDGs of 2030 in Bangladesh. The study utilised the secondary data approach from 45years annual data 1972-2017. They authors found out that there was a significant interrelatedness between the various dimensions used in the study. In addition, these variables can significantly affect suitable development goals in 2030. Furthermore, Kamaludine et al., (2021) employed the use of conceptual literature to examine the association between social entrepreneurship factor (SEF) dimensions and sustainability. The

findings revealed a significant relationship between the SE constructs and sustainability. In the same vein, Wagner (2015) utilised the structural equation modelling (SEM) and the RBV model to examine the effect of performance of economic and environmental determinant on sustainable integration. The overall results indicate that the RBV can be used to achieving sustainability, economic performance and environmental integration. Similarly, Singh (2016) determine the relatedness between ecological, environmental and economic factors, concerns and how it affect the sustainable development in the cities of Himalayan. The author discovered that environmental dilapidation and economic poverty has affected sustainable development in that county. Based on the empirical standpoint the following assumptions are proposed as:

H₂: Economic entrepreneurial (EE) indicators have significant impact on sustainability

Prior empirical research examines the connection between behavioural indicator of social entrepreneurship and sustainability. Most of the research pays attention to social and economy related changes. There is dearth or very little research that has employed the utilisation of behaviour entrepreneurship factors in social entrepreneurship. Behavioural trait is very key to the success of an entrepreneur. Attitude towards innovative change and quality sustainability is an epitome of entrepreneurial traits found in any corporate entrepreneur. Therefore, leadership, personal assessment and management is a comprehensive and integral parts that promotes entrepreneurial performance and sustainability Francis, John, Okon & Inegbedion (2015). It is therefore, essential that social entrepreneurs should possess good behavioural skills and traits in order to demonstrate entrepreneurial innovativeness and encourage reward on social entrepreneurial activity. Consequently, social entrepreneur can only demonstrate social reward by constantly educating and promoting entrepreneurial education Inegbedion, et al., (2021) on the process of altitude entrepreneur should embark during and after COVID pandemic Owenbuigie & Egbri, (2021). Vanessa, (2022) review the components of social entrepreneurship such as cultural pattern, demographic pattern, lifestyle and social change. The author completely focused on the developing issues affecting entrepreneurs. The results found out these components are essential factor that drive social entrepreneurship. This mean that culture and life style entrepreneur aligned their entrepreneurial practice to suit their individual circumstances (Sun & Xu, 2017). In line with the above empirical review and preposition, the following hypothetical assumption are proposed:

H₃: *H₃*: Behavioural entrepreneurial (BE) indicators have significant impact on sustainability

Apparently, very few empirical studies indicate the association between governance factors and sustainability. Kamaludin et al., (2021) was the first to link governance

structure with sustainability. The authors examined four key strategic measurements of SE and its linkages on sustainability. They exposed that the literature framework of these key dimensions has an association with SE and sustainability. On the other hand, Ebrahim, Battilana & Mair, (2014) also investigated the problems of governance mechanism in corporate enterprise when making effort to achieving social mission and social sustainability. The authors revealed that the key limitations and problems faced by the amalgamated enterprises are recently addressed by the board governance stakeholders with a view to achieving performance objectives, accountability and transparency. Consequently, in line with previous submission the following assumption was highlighted as:

H4: Governance entrepreneurial (GE) indicators have significant impact on sustainability.

Next on the list of empirical submission is the moderating role of social entrepreneurs in connection with the independent's variables (Social entrepreneurial factor, economic entrepreneurial factor, Behavioural entrepreneurial factor and Governance entrepreneurial factor in association with sustainability. The desired goal of a social entrepreneur as an individual or corporate organisation is to provide solutions to the social needs, economic needs, behavioural needs and governance needs. Therefore, in the context of social entrepreneurship, individuals with social desire may have the desired goal to solve entrepreneurial need, promote entrepreneurial intention Inegbedion et al., 2021), solved social and behavioural issues. Therefore, behavioural issues, governance system and challenges are seen as another deliberate constructs that stimulate the creation of social and corporate entrepreneurs. Therefore, the underline assumption was stated.

H_{5a}-H_{5d}: Social entrepreneurs moderate and mediate significantly between social entrepreneurship constructs and sustainability. Thus, the above listed moderating assumptions are seen in the research framework (Figure 1).

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was designed to adopt the quantitative-online survey approach. The online survey approach was distributed to corporate and social entrepreneurs in Nigeria, most especially those domiciles in Lagos state. There were two basic sections in the online survey. The first section comprises of demographic/personal related information and section two is made up of five constructs. Explicitly, SEF, EEF, BEF and GEF. The measurement scale used for this survey item is the 5-point Likert scale (Croasmum & Ostrom 2011; Kothari, 2008). The random and purposive sampling approach was utilised in this study. Random sampling techniques were employed which give the population equal chances of being selected and the purposive method of sampling was also chosen, reason being that there was no particular target of population of social

entrepreneurs and specific criteria of social entrepreneurs as respondents. The study employed the utilisation of Survey Online Google form of questionnaire distribution to the target respondents. This approach was employed to facilitate the administration of the questionnaire and to ensure quick access and response. Therefore, the hypothetical proposition was analysed.

Sample size Determination and techniques

In order to determine the sample size techniques, the study first of all extrapolated the number of Nano, micro, small and medium scale enterprise in Lagos state (NMSMEs) which is estimated to be 97,091. This figure was reported by National MSMEs in 2020. (Also Cited in owners of by Inegbedion, et al., 2022). Furthermore, Adeyemi, (2022) reported in research conducted by FATE foundation in collaboration with British council. In their research it was reported that there are estimated 443,096 social enterprises which is made up of NGOs, Co-operative societies and MSMEs. Therefore, Taro Yarmane (1973) Formula for determining sample size was adopted to determine 146 sample size of the study and the number was fully retrieved from the respondents.

Data Collection Techniques and Longitudinal Design Approach

The data collection instrument for this study was the utilization of online survey approach through the means of questionnaire as a primary base instrument. The study also employed a longitudinal approach due to the nature of the research that covered a period of 2019 pre covid pandemic and 2021 Post covid pandemic. Thus, the study examining the variables of the study during the pre-COVID 19 era and post-COVID 19 era. Data collection was done during the peak period when Covid 19 started in 2020 and 2021 and after Covid 19 era, that is the ending year of 2021 and 2022.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

50 percent of responses collected from the respondents were analysed to validate the reliability of the surveyed instruments. The Cronbach's Alpha test that is above .70 is adequately suitable and .80 greater is preferable, accepted and deemed fit to be good. Therefore, the survey carried out was good and acceptable (Cortina, 1993). Table 1 represent the Cronbach's Alpha results of the various constructs used in measuring social entrepreneurship.

Table 1: Construct Measurement and Cronbach's Alpha results:

| S/N | Constructs | Alpha Values | N |
|-----|--|--------------|----|
| 1 | Social Entrepreneurship (SEF) | 0.821 | 29 |
| 2 | Economic Entrepreneurship (ESF) | 0.722 | 29 |
| 3 | Behavioural Entrepreneurship (BEF) | 0.772 | 29 |
| 4 | Governance Entrepreneurship Factor (GEF) | 0.712 | 29 |
| 5 | Sustainability. | 0.787 | 29 |

Field survey, 2022

Data Analysis Strategy

Given the association between two constructs social entrepreneurship (SE) and sustainability and the moderating variable, the study employed the structural equation model (SEM) and multivariate correlation analysis method (MCAM) to test the proposed research framework and supported the examination of linkages between the two constructs. In this study, two analytical approach was employed, first to examine the constructs of the model for its reliability and validity and next to utilised SEM to evaluate the postulated hypotheses. Partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) version 3.3 was employed as a research software to run the data analysis. In order to appraise the various dimensions, the dependability and consistency was measured by utilising Composite Reliability (CR) (factor reliability/construct reliability) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Netemeyer et al, 2003). Furthermore, validity of the constructs was measured by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which was used to validate the constructs. In the same vein, SEM was also used to measure or evaluate the statistical method to determine the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the model fit value standardize root mean square residual (SRMR). The model fit determines how well the model suggests covariance matrix matches the simple covariance matrix. The values of the model fit stated that if the value is less than 0.03 represent excellent fit, Thus, if the good values (GFI) is greater than 0.95 scaled between 0.1. Furthermore, the acceptable SRMR value/index is between 0 and 0.08.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Reflective Measurement Model**

In order check the dependability of the model, reliability and consistency was evaluated utilising the Composite Reliability (CR) and the outside loading, while validity of the research model was assessed utilising the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All of this measurement was employed using PLS-SEM 3.3. The scale value of the Composite Reliability (CR) is from 0 to 1. If the value is greater than the standard scale 0.7, this indicates the measurement model achieve a greater internal consistency reliability (Hair et al, (2017b). Table 3 reflects the CR values for all the loading constructs used are beyond 0.70, which is above the standard value of 0.7. Thus, implies the CR values was accepted. Reflecting back to Table 3 all loading values is deemed to be acceptable because all values meet the threshold of 0.7 and none of the items required was eliminated. Furthermore, according to Hair et al., (2022) AVE standard value is 0.5, which implies that all the reflective constructs used in the study exceed the standard AVE of 0.5 and they all fulfil the convergent validity test.

Table 2: Typical Framework showing Reflective measurement

| | | | Pre-COVID Pandemic (n=146) | | | Post-COVID Pandemic (n=140) | |
|------------|-------|----------|----------------------------------|-------|----------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Constructs | Items | Loadings | AVE | CR | Loadings | AVE | CR |
| SS | 1 | 0.739 | 0.518 | 0.810 | 0.771 | 0.561 | 0.810 |
| | 2 | 0.759 | | | 0.773 | | |
| | 3 | 0.808 | | | 0.770 | | |
| | 4 | 0.774 | | | 0.775 | | |
| | 5 | 0.767 | | | 0.852 | | |
| | 6 | 0.735 | | | 0.716 | | |
| ES | 1 | 0.767 | 0.681 | 0.821 | 0.710 | 0.589 | 0.911 |
| | 2 | 0.792 | | | 0.712 | | |
| | 3 | 0.718 | | | 0.770 | | |
| | 4 | 0.817 | | | 0.781 | | |
| | 5 | 0.840 | | | 0.821 | | |
| | 6 | 0.735 | | | 0.844 | | |
| BS | 1 | 0.725 | 0.561 | 0.941 | 0.761 | 0.574 | 0.883 |
| | 2 | 0.719 | | | 0.755 | | |
| | 3 | 0.767 | | | 0.761 | | |
| | 4 | 0.814 | | | 0.883 | | |
| | 5 | 0.850 | | | 0.817 | | |
| | 6 | 0.724 | | | 0.712 | | |
| | 7 | 0.792 | | | 0.740 | | |
| GS | 1 | 0.721 | 0.626 | 0.820 | 0.734 | 0.565 | 0.910 |
| | 2 | 0.745 | | | 0.541 | | |
| | 3 | 0.741 | | | 0.751 | | |
| | 4 | 0.703 | | | 0.702 | | |
| | 5 | 0.861 | | | 0.882 | | |
| | 6 | 0.833 | | | 0.821 | | |
| S | 1 | 0.762 | 0.762 | 0.674 | 0.820 | 0.639 | 0.912 |
| | 2 | 0.841 | | | 0.778 | | |
| | 3 | 0.852 | | | 0.840 | | |
| | 4 | 0.791 | | | 0.782 | | |

After thorough analysis and the extent of empirical standardise threshold, it was obvious on the differences in the measure of constructs. These differences in measures of constructs are said to be called discriminant validity (DV). Consequently, this study for the purpose of this research was assessed by the standard recommended by Fornell-Larcker (1981) and Hair, page & Brunsveld (2020). Larcker standards of DV compares the reflective measured constructs in association with the square root of the Average variance extracted (AVE) standards. Regarding the analytical results of Table 4 & 5, the AVE values for both pre-Covid pandemic and Post Covid pandemic for all the social entrepreneurship measurement constructs SEF, EEF, BEF, GEF and S is greater than the relationship with other variables used in the study, thereby reflecting the uniqueness and validity of the constructs.

Table 3: Multi-Correlation Matrix showing the impact of social entrepreneurial constructs and sustainability during Pre-Covid Pandemic

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| | SEF | EEF | BEF | GEF | Social entrepreneurs | S |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| SEF | 0.773 | | | | | |
| EEF | 0.581 | 0.714 | | | | |
| BEF | 0.439 | 0.617 | 0.818 | | | |
| GEF | 0.557 | 0.481 | 0.537 | 0.831 | | |
| Social entrepreneurs | 0.040 | 0.043 | 0.034 | 0.028 | 1.000 | |
| S | 0.293 | 0.343 | 0.480 | 0.242 | 0.087 | 0.871 |

Table 4: Multi-Correlation Matrix showing the impact of social entrepreneurial constructs and sustainability during Post Covid Pandemic Multi-Correlation Matrix

| | SEF | EEF | BEF | GEF | Social entrepreneurs | S |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| SEF | 0.757 | | | | | |
| EEF | 0.663 | 0.760 | | | | |
| BEF | 0.629 | 0.717 | 0.752 | | | |
| GEF | 0.551 | 0.616 | 0.644 | 0.821 | | |
| Social entrepreneurs | 0.088 | 0.060 | 0.044 | 0.031 | 1.000 | |
| S | 0.386 | 0.488 | 0.487 | 0.474 | 0.087 | 0.891 |

The testing of the proposed hypotheses in this research tends to assess the association between the various constructs of SEF, EEF, BEF, GEF and S is represented in Table 5. For a two tailed test study of this magnitude of research in social sciences, Hair et al., (2017b) suggested a p -values of 5%. The probability values test the possibility of error occurring in the calculation. The results from the study revealed a significant relationship and linkages between the various constructs SF, EF, BF, GF and the independent variable Sustainability (S) during the pre and post covid pandemic. Consequently, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H5a-H5d are significantly associated with each variable. That is the postulated hypothesis tested are significant in both periods of Covid. However, H2 was found to be significant in pre-Covid and not to have significant relationship with S in Post Covid period. Next, the results also revealed the moderating variables of H5b which was found not to be significant in the Pre Covid era. Furthermore, the moderating effect of each of the relationship variables (H5c and H5d) was also found to be significant and revealed that there is a relationship between the moderating variables and sustainability in both periods.

In order to test the coefficient of determination, which is represented as R^2 or r^2 or R squared as pronounced. Then R^2 is the square of the coefficient of multiple correlation. This concept emphasis the proportion of the variation/construct in the independent variable that is predictable in the dependent variables/constructs. Specifically, the R squared emphasis the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is predicted or explained by the linear regression. In the context of statistical framework or analysis, the major objectives is the prediction of future outcomes or the testing of

formulated hypothesis Draper & Smith, (1998). Thus, in the case of this study, the correlated determination ranges from 0 to 1. The R square value has three standards. First if the predicted value is 0 it indicates a weak prediction or model, if the value is 0-1 it indicates a moderate prediction or model and if the value is 1 it indicates a perfect or substantial prediction or model. Therefore, showing in Table 7 the prediction value of SE constructs on sustainability during the pre and post covid pandemic is 0.652 and 0.572, indicating that the prediction value is perfect and moderate.

Table 5: Testing of Hypotheses using the Structural Equation Model (SEM)

| Hypotheses (H) | Constructs | <i>p</i> -values | Pre-Covid Pandemic (n=146) T-values | Results | <i>p</i> -values | Post-Covid Pandemic (n=140) T-values | Results |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| H ₁ | SEE → S | **0.047 | 2.767 | Significant | **0.048 | 2.584 | Significant |
| H ₂ | EEF → S | **0.000 | 2.553 | Significant | 0.363 | 1.592 | Not Significant |
| H ₃ | BEE → S | **0.045 | 2.776 | Significant | *0.037 | 2.520 | Significant |
| H ₄ | GEF → S | *0.034 | 2.892 | Significant | *0.029 | 2.522 | Significant |
| H _{5a} | Social entrepreneurs (SEF → S) | ▶ *0.037 | 2.656 | Significant | *0.031 | 2.521 | Significant |
| H _{5b} | Social Entrepreneurs (EEF → S) | → 0.268 | 0.588 | Not Significant | **0.044 | 2.501 | Significant |
| H _{5c} | Social entrepreneurs (BEF → S) | **0.035 | 2.660 | Significant | *0.019 | 2.215 | Significant |
| H _{5d} | Social entrepreneurs (GEE → S) | **0.032 | 2.490 | Significant | 0.029 | 2.644 | Significant |
| | | Pre-Covid Pandemic (n=146) | | | Post-Covid pandemic (n=140) | | |
| Variable | R ² | Predictive Value | | R ² | Predictive Value | | |
| SE | 0.652 | Perfect | | 0.572 | Moderate | | |

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings showed that a correlational relationship exists between social entrepreneurship constructs and sustainability with a moderating variable social entrepreneur in the era of pre and post pandemic. The study revealed that three social entrepreneurship (SE) constructs specifically SEF, BEF and GEF were found to be significantly linked to sustainability in the pre and post covid pandemic. These findings are consistent with the work of Priya and Venkatesh (2019) which demonstrated that social strategy (SS) such as social values and environmental issues significantly influences sustainable development and entrepreneurship creation. Also, works of Kamaludine et al., (2021) was in line with the findings which revealed a significant relationship between the SES constructs such as SS in achieving sustainability. Furthermore, the works of Islam et al., (2022), was also in line with prior submission; Thus, the findings exposed that there was a connection between economic factors (SEF) and other climatic and environmental factor and these factors affect the achievement of SDGs 2030 in Bangladesh. Next, the findings BEF was found to be significantly related to sustainability. The findings were also in line with previous empirical studies, Noruzi, et al., (2010) found that determinant if SE such as Behavioural traits help to achieve entrepreneurial activities. More so, Vanessa, (2022) review the social entrepreneurship behavioural components namely cultural pattern, demographic pattern, lifestyle and social change. The results found out these components are essential factors that drive social entrepreneurship and sustainability. This is an indication that the behavioural pattern of individuals and social entrepreneurs during pre and post covid influences sustainable development. Additionally, the findings of BEF were found to be significantly related to sustainability. The findings were in accordance with past empirical literature. Kamaludin et al., (2021) found out that governance strategic factor contributes significantly to sustainability. Therefore, the role and effort of government in the control, prevention and monitoring during pre and post covid pandemic tend to achieve significantly social and economic sustainable development. Relatedly, Ebrahim, Battilana & Mair, (2014) also found that the challenges social enterprises face when making deliberate effort in solving the pandemic issues have been solved, addressed and supported by government.

On the contrary, a combine effort has been made by social enterprise stakeholders and government in the control of covid 19 pandemic. In the same vein, the meditating role of social entrepreneurs was found to be interconnected and significantly related with SEF, EEF, BEF & GEF. Hence, the results confirmed the hypothetical preposition of the study. Therefore, the findings are consistent with past studies. Zulkifle & Aziz (2023) revealed that social responsiveness, social entrepreneurial drive, self-sufficiency, past experience in entrepreneurial management is significantly associated and determinant of social entrepreneurial mind-set and entrepreneurial participation in

the Pre and Post Covid 19 Pandemic era. In addition, social entrepreneur was found to have a moderating role in associating with the variables.

CONCLUSIONS

The research focused on the linkages between four social entrepreneurship (SE) constructs (SEF, EEF, BEF, and GEF) and sustainability (S) and the moderating impact of social entrepreneurs on sustainability in the pre and post Covid 19 Pandemic. The findings revealed that each of the four social entrepreneurship constructs has significant relationship with sustainability and that mediation by social entrepreneurs had positive impact on sustainability in the pre and post Covid 19 Pandemic era. Based on these findings, it was concluded that integrating social values as part of our corporate culture would bring about sustainable performance and create social and economic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1 The government should provide conducive environment and financial support for owners of SMEs entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs to drive the vision of social intention and values.
- 2 Collaborative efforts from all stakeholders in entrepreneurial ecosystem should pursue the social mission with a view to achieving enterprise sustainability.
- 3 The government through the intervention strategy and programmes should address the social challenges and social issues of the vulnerable by formulating policies in tackling the social pandemic and bringing the economic hardship and pandemic to an end.

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**INFLUENCE OF GREEN ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION ON THE
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****Corresponding Author****ABSTRACT**

The study determined the influence of green entrepreneurial innovation on the performance of small and medium enterprise(SMEs) in South-East Nigeria. The focus was to ascertain whether green entrepreneurial innovation influences the competitive advantage of SMEs in the area. One research question guided the study while one null hypothesis was tested. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Population of the study was 196,075 registered SMEs out of which a sample size of 400 SMEs was randomly drawn from each of the five states and used for the study. Data were

collected with a 13- item validated questionnaire which was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. The five-point Likert scale with the following responses ranging from 5 indicating strongly agree (SA); 4 indicating agree (A); 3 indicating Neutral (N), 2 indicating disagree (D); and 1 indicating strongly disagree (SD) was utilized. Cronbach Alpha reliability tool was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Twenty-one (21) copies of the questionnaire were administered to Small and Medium Enterprises in Delta State, outside the area of study and the data obtained yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Mean was used to answer the research question while standard deviation was used to check the spread of the respondents' responses to the mean. The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using simple linear regression analysis. Findings of the study revealed that business owners agreed that green entrepreneurial innovation positively influences SMEs' performance. The result of the hypothesis testing also revealed that there is a significant positive influence of green entrepreneurial innovation on SMEs performance in Southeast Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a significant positive influence of green entrepreneurial innovation on SMEs performance in Southeast Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that SMEs in Southeast Nigeria should adopt green innovation practices, such as reducing waste, conserving energy by using renewable energy sources, and using environmentally friendly materials while the government should develop policies that support the growth of green innovation, such as tax incentives and subsidies, in the area.

KEYWORDS: Green entrepreneurship, green innovation, small and medium sized enterprises, performance, influence.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the surge in global population has fueled a rise in consumption and production, ultimately contributing to resource depletion and environmental harm. Some of the serious repercussions of environmental damage include global warming, increased environmental pollution, and decline in the flora and fauna (plants and animals). Then the environmental concerns of climate change have been globally intensified recently as its disastrous consequences are overwhelming and reported in almost every region in the world, Nigeria inclusive (Michali, et al, 2022).

With the growing attention paid to global environmental protection, firms are facing pressure to take responsibility in protecting the environment in order to meet regulations from local government (Ebrahimi & Mirbargkar, 2017) and to meet expectations from stakeholders and marketplaces. In other words, firms are facing the challenge of cultivating green capability to cope with increasing pressure from the government and the public (Dangelico & Pujari, 2010; Lee & Min, 2015.). Many entrepreneurs have adopted environment-related strategies, such as creating a firm green image, pollution reduction and green innovation, among others. Since then, green entrepreneurship has been receiving growing attention from the public and researchers.

Green entrepreneurship (or environmental entrepreneurship, eco-entrepreneurship, sustainable entrepreneurship) refers to the implementation of innovations related to environmental protection (Ebrahimi & Mirbargkar, 2017). According to Kirkwood and Walton (2014), green entrepreneurship was first mentioned in a book by Gustav Berle (1991) which provided a poetic definition of green entrepreneurship as the ability and willingness of humans to take up responsibilities of creating the kind of world they dream to live in. Kirkwood and Walton (2014) defined green entrepreneurship as activities that makes purposeful efforts at proffering solutions to, or curbing socio-environmental challenges using basic entrepreneurial ideas in a way that does not only benefit the environment, but also provides sustained financial gains for the entrepreneur. Similarly, anyone who sets-up and commences the running of an entrepreneurial entity with the goal of designing green products, or offering green service in an environmentally friendly manner is referred to as a green entrepreneur (Schaper, 2016). The goal of a green or eco-friendly business is to reduce or eliminate any negative influence that business will have on the environment, both locally and globally. Green businesses are characterized by; offering non-toxic, eco-friendly products in sustainable, recyclable, or reusable packaging; sourcing materials and ingredients from companies dedicated to ethical, fair-trade, and sustainable practices;

prioritizing the health, wellbeing, and treatment of their workers and employees amongst others.

According to Chukwuka and Eboh (2018), green businesses are also measured by using the indices such as; green entrepreneurial initiative, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green innovation, green marketing, green entrepreneurial inclination, green entrepreneurial orientation, green entrepreneurial jobs, ecological economy and carbon economy. However, Gao et al. (2019), averred that green entrepreneurship is entrepreneurial behavior in an enterprise's green innovation of products and services, aimed at enhancing the performances of SMEs while considering environmental protection.

Green innovation refers to all aspects of environmentally friendly items and procedures, such as minimizing energy usage, regulating pollution, recycling garbage, creating products, and managing the environment (Chan et al., 2012). Green innovation includes green product and process innovation, including green administrative innovation (Chan et al., 2012). It necessitates minimizing the environmental effects of the whole product life cycle, like manufacturing-related pollution, increasing energy efficiency, and adopting biodegradable packaging (Wilburn-Green et al., 2015). Green innovation is a strategic step for SMEs to increase sustainability and financial performance in the global market through recycling sustainability. Green entrepreneurial innovation, also viewed as eco-innovation (environmentally friendly innovation green innovation or sustainable innovation), is often used to locate those innovations that bring about sustainable environment through ecological improvements (Olalekan et al., 2020). It consists of completely new or perhaps modified procedures, methods, and items that benefit the environment and additionally play a role in environmental sustainability (Li et al., 2018). Seman et al. (2018) opines that bringing together green innovation practices is the key to survival and maintenance of manufacturing companies in improving and sustaining their capabilities and performance. Wang et al. (2014) define green innovation as those innovations that focus on achieving sustainable development and the conservation of natural resources through the development of greener products and services. Chen et al. (2012) define green innovation as the development of sustainable products and processes through the use or adoption of environmentally friendly raw materials during the manufacturing or design process. Green innovation is defined as the development, promotion and development of ecological products, services and processes that incorporate a certain degree of novelty. Green innovation is understood as a balance between the different pillars of sustainability, including the implementation and development of innovations that minimize environmental and social damage and produce economic improvements. It is understood as the search, promotion, and development of ecological products, services, and processes that incorporate a certain degree of novelty.

Green innovation consists of new innovative ideas that aim to provide a product or service without attacking nature, respecting the environment, and being ecological in its conception, construction, use, and disposal. It is the development and implementation of new or improved products, processes, and services that reduce environmental impacts. Green innovation is the integration of environmental considerations into the innovation process to reduce environmental impacts. Green innovation refers to all aspects of environmentally friendly items and procedures, such as minimizing energy usage, regulating pollution, recycling garbage, creating products, and managing the environment (Chan et al., 2012). Porter and Van der Linde as cited by Muo and Adebayo (2019) also defined green innovation as the creation of new or improved products, processes, and services that deliver greater environmental benefits than existing ones. According to Chen et al. (2012), Green innovation is the development and application of new technologies, products, and processes that reduce environmental degradation and improve environmental sustainability. Muo and Adebayo (2019) in his study defined green innovation as the introduction of new or improved products, processes, and services that reduce environmental impacts and improve resource efficiency. Green innovation is the development and implementation of sustainable solutions that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Green innovation is the development and application of new technologies, products, and processes that reduce environmental impacts and improve environmental sustainability (OECD, 2011). Green innovation fuels the development of eco-friendly products and services, which can then be effectively promoted through targeted green marketing campaigns. It involves the development and implementation of new or improved products, processes, and services that minimize environmental impact, reduce waste and promote sustainable development. Small and medium-sized enterprises can leverage green innovation to improve environmental performance and enhance competitiveness.

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are businesses that have limited resources, size and scope. SMEs are defined by the World Bank as businesses with a maximum of 249 employees and annual revenue of \$15 million (World Bank, 2020). The European Union (EU) defined an SME as an enterprise which has less than 250 employees; has either an annual turnover not exceeding ECU 50 million, or annual balance sheet total not exceeding ECU 27 million; is less than 25% owned by non-SME, (European Commission, 2020). SMEs play a vital role in economic development as they have been the main source of employment generation and output growth, both in developing as well as in developed countries. SMEs are also the fastest-growing sector of most economies and are perceived to be more pliant regarding structure and speed of response than larger enterprises (Kumar 2015). Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute the largest business entities in many countries, where governments show a keen interest in ensuring their competitiveness. This interest is usually

channeled through policies and financial assistance towards the implementation of innovative and emerging technologies, especially in developing countries. To compete and survive in a highly competitive global marketplace, it is important for SME owners to resort to the utilization of green entrepreneurial practices to have a competitive edge over their rivals, as well as to improve business performance (Maziriri and Maramura, 2022).

Consequently, the environmental damage phenomenon is a challenge for businesses today, including small and medium industries in developing countries. In Nigeria, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the economy, contributing significantly to GDP, employment, and innovation (Adejumo & Olufemi, 2015). However, SMEs in Nigeria face numerous challenges, including environmental degradation, resource depletion, and climate change. The country's southeast region, home to numerous Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), is no exception. This region has suffered from rampant deforestation and land degradation threatening biodiversity and ecosystem; Industrial activities, vehicle emissions, and poor waste management leading to air and water pollution, affecting human health and the environment (WHO, 2018; NPC, 2018); Vulnerability to climatic change impacts like rising temperatures, droughts, and floods, which affect agriculture, health, and livelihoods (IPCC, 2014).

Green innovation has become increasingly important in Nigeria, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This concept involves the creation of businesses that focus on environmental sustainability and social responsibility. In southeast Nigeria, green innovation has the potential to drive socio-economic development while promoting environmental conservation. Green innovation among SMEs in southeast Nigeria has several socio-economic benefits. These include: creating employment opportunities in various sectors, such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and eco-tourism which helps to reduce poverty levels in southeast Nigeria; improve the livelihoods of individuals and communities by providing access to clean energy, water, and sanitation; promoting environmental conservation by encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, reducing waste, and promoting sustainable practices. According to a study by the Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team (NEST 2019), the adoption of green innovation practices among SMEs in Nigeria can lead to significant economic benefits, including increased revenue and job creation. As a valuable resource, green innovation can be a crucial component of a firm's resource-based view strategy, enabling it to differentiate itself from competitors and achieve long-term success.

The resource-based view (RBV) theory was propounded by Jay Barney in 1991. RBV theory posits that a firm's resources and capabilities are the primary sources of

competitive advantage and superior performance. The theory suggests that firms can develop sustainable competitiveness advantages by exploiting their internal resources. According to RBV theory, intangible assets are essential for a company's success (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993). This theory notes that entrepreneurs must interact with their resources over time to discover their productive services and judge how best to allocate, deploy, and maintain those resources (Penrose, 1959). Technological advancements, production/process, expertise, customer loyalty, and machine capacity are all among the company's resources (Wernerfelt, 1984). The RBV theory relates to green innovation by highlighting the importance of developing unique resources and capabilities that enable firms to adopt environmentally friendly practices and technologies.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Various authors argue that, green innovation positively influences SME firm performance. Green innovation can bring an SME economic performance not only by use of physical resources and technology but also intangible resources. On the one hand, green innovation contributes to economic performance by lowering cost, increasing productivity, or differentiating products that can gain market position (Ma et al., 2018; Weng et al., 2015)

Achaku et al. (2022) investigates the effect of green entrepreneurship on the performance of SMEs in North-Central Nigeria and the federal capital territory. A pre-test was conducted, and a descriptive cross-sectional questionnaire was used. The study examined 1,233 consenting randomly chosen respondents from six states and Abuja City in North-Central Nigeria. Simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses. The findings demonstrated that green entrepreneurship can decrease the negative influences of business activities on the environment and also ensure profitability. Moreover, green entrepreneurial innovative production and green entrepreneurial inclination significantly influence competitive edge respectively. The study offers useful public information and experimental confirmation of environmental sustainability engaged in viable business activities. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable and dependent variable and was also carried out in the same country. The difference exists in terms of method of data collection and analysis.

Abubakar et al. (2022) examined the strategic integration effect of green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial behavior and information systems on sustainable business performance and competitiveness in Nigeria. The relationships between the constructs were discussed in terms of long-term developments and post pandemic business trends. Data were collected from 221 owners/managers of small and medium sized enterprises in Kano using structured questionnaire, while structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data. All the hypotheses were supported,

and the results revealed that there was significant influence of green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial behavior and information systems on sustainable business performance and competitiveness. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable and dependent variable, as well as having the same subsector under study. The difference exists in terms of tools of analysis and in the geographical scope.

Michalis et al. (2022) examines both the relationship between green innovation and green entrepreneurship and the mediating role of firm strategies in the relationship between green entrepreneurship, green innovation, and competitive advantage. A total of 225 managers responsible for the environmental strategy of medium and large-sized firms operating in Greece were used as a sample for the study. To measure the research variables, a structured questionnaire was used. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inductive statistics, including principal components analysis, correlation analysis, a multivariate generalized linear model, and a structural equations model. The empirical results indicate a positive influence of green entrepreneurship in green product innovation and green process innovation. Furthermore, the mediating role of firm strategies in the relationship between green entrepreneurship, green innovation, and competitive advantage is confirmed. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable and dependent variable. The difference exists in terms of the size of firms studied and in the geographical scope.

Eugene and Tafadzwa (2022) conducted a study aimed at assessing the impact green product innovation and green process innovation on sustainable competitive advantage and business performance of SMEs in the manufacturing sector of South Africa. For this study, a quantitative approach was employed. The analysis was carried out in SPSS 25 for demographic data analysis and AMOS 25 was used for the modeling and modeling of the structural equation. It was established that sustainable competitive advantage and business performance were positively affected by green product innovation and green process innovation. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable and dependent variable. The difference exists in terms of geographical location.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Several environmental hazards in Nigeria gave rise to youth restiveness in the country and emergence of angry groups came up due to the environmental pollution caused by SMEs that did not appreciate the need to go green. Nigeria has a high level of air pollution, poor water quality, high level of noise from traffic, environmental pollution caused by polymer, a lot of great and rapid decrease energy waste. SMEs in Nigeria face numerous challenges, including environmental degradation, resource depletion, and climate change. The country's southeast region, home to numerous Small and

Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), is no exception. This region has suffered from rampant deforestation and land degradation threatening biodiversity and ecosystem; Industrial activities, vehicle emissions, and poor waste management leading to air and water pollution, affecting human health and the environment (WHO, 2018; NPC, 2018); Vulnerability to climatic change impacts like rising temperatures, droughts, and floods, which affect agriculture, health, and livelihoods (IPCC, 2014). Small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria as a whole and southeast in particular can use different strategies to encourage green behavior to achieve sustainable development. Due to growing environmental problems and its adverse effects on physical and mental health of human beings a lot needs to be done in advocacy for ethos of greenness.

Despite the growing importance of green entrepreneurship in influencing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) performances in southeast Nigeria, this region is still faced with significant challenges in adopting green innovative practices, which hinders their ability to improve their environmental performance, reduce carbon footprint, and enhance their overall performance (Chukwuka and Eboh, 2018). The lack of understanding of the influence of green innovation on firms' performance and inadequate regulatory support are some of the key barriers that hinder the adoption of these practices among SMEs in the region. As a result, SMEs in southeast Nigeria are missing out on the opportunities to improve their competitiveness, reduce environmental degradation, and contribute to sustainable economic development. There is also limited research that explores this area and need for more empirical studies to be carried out in order to understand the actual outcomes and influences of green entrepreneurship in different context, more especially on the context of green innovation. This study therefore seeks to close this gap by determining the influence of green entrepreneurial innovation on SMEs performance in Southeast Nigeria.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study was to determine the influence of green innovation on small and medium enterprises performance in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether green entrepreneurial innovation influences competitive advantage of SMEs in the region.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research question guided the study:

1. How does green entrepreneurial innovation influence competitive advantage of SMEs in South-East Nigeria?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance

H₀: There is no significant influence of green innovation on competitive advantage of SMEs in South-East Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This is because the study made use of questionnaire to collect data from a sample of SMEs operators while the findings are expected to be generalized to the entire population. Survey research design involves asking questions and recording responses on a defined research problem using a specified instrument usually the questionnaire (Okeke, Olise & Eze, 2014). The study was conducted in the South-East Nigeria comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States respectively. The population of the study was all the 196,075 small and medium enterprises in the area that were registered with SMEDAN as at 2020. Taro Yamane formula was used to determine sample size of 400 SMEs, while stratified random sampling technique was employed to draw 80 SMEs from each of the five states. The instrument for data collection was a five-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Green entrepreneurship and SMEs performances (GESMEsP) containing 13 items with strongly agree(SA), agree (A), neutral (N), disagree (D) and strongly disagree(SD). The questionnaire was validated by three experts and to check the internal consistency, Cronbach Alpha was used because it is one of the best methods used in measuring attitude scales where there are no preferred answers and every answer attracts a score (Nworgu 2015). The internal consistency of the questionnaire items was 0.83. Data were collected using electronic media comprising of Facebook, WhatsApp and Telegram to distribute the online questionnaire prepared using Google form and collect data from respondents. This helped in the seamless distribution of the questionnaire and easy coding and analysis of the questionnaire as the questionnaire was returned to a designated email already arranged and some level of descriptive statistics would have already been done.

The data collected were analyzed using mean ratings and standard deviation to answer the research question and to check the spread of the respondents' responses to the mean; while simple linear regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Decisions for the questionnaire items and the research question were based on a cut-off mean score of 3.50 which implies that if an item or the cluster mean score is 3.50 and above, it means that the respondents agreed but if it is below 3.50, it means that the respondents disagreed. Therefore, a cluster mean score is 3.50 and above means that respondents agreed that green innovation influences the competitive advantage of SMEs in the area of study, but where it is less than 3.50, it means that respondents disagreed that green innovation influences SMEs' competitive advantage in the study area. For the hypothesis, where the p-value is equal or greater than 0.05, ($P > 0.05$) it means that green innovation does not have significant influence

on the competitive advantage of the SMEs and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Where the reverse is the case, ($P < 0.05$), it means that green innovation has significant influence on the competitive advantage of SMEs and the null hypothesis was rejected. SPSS version 25 was used for the analysis.

RESULTS

The result of the descriptive analysis is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Respondents' mean and standard deviation ratings on how green entrepreneurial innovation influences competitive advantage of SMEs in Southeast Nigeria.

| S/N | Item statement | Mean | SD | Remarks |
|-----|--|------|------|---------|
| 1 | designing products with minimal environmental impact using recyclable materials gives SMEs a competitive advantage. | 4.08 | 0.81 | A |
| 2 | minimizing waste makes SMEs to differentiate themselves from competitors and gain a competitive advantage in the market. | 4.07 | 0.93 | A |
| 3 | using renewable energy sources such as solar energy, can lead to cost savings and operational efficiency of SMEs. | 4.04 | 1.00 | A |
| 4. | applying nature-inspired designs such as pineapple-leaf inspired textiles gives competitive advantage. | 4.19 | 0.86 | A |
| 5. | developing new products and services that cater to the growing demand for eco-friendly solutions, gives SMEs a unique selling proposition | 4.19 | 0.86 | A |
| 6. | Partnerships and collaborations with other environmentally conscious organizations helps to expand the market reach and customer base of SMEs. | 4.2 | 0.7 | A |
| 7. | Conducting regular environmental audits to comply with | 4.11 | 0.81 | A |

mance of SMEs.

| | | | |
|---|------|------|---|
| 8. Applying green Innovative ideas helps to avoid potential penalties or legal issuing, ensuring long-term business sustainability. | 4.08 | 0.9 | A |
| 9. Investing in solar, wind, or other renewable energy sources to power operations provides positive media coverage and public recognition. | 4.06 | 0.91 | A |
| 10. SMEs use green innovation for enhancing brand visibility and reputation. | 4.12 | 0.86 | A |
| 11. Prioritizing sustainability and environmental responsibility like reduction of energy consumption and paper usage attracts investors and secure funding more easily, which gives financial advantage to SMEs. | 4.06 | 0.92 | A |
| 12. Implementing water-saving technologies and practicing minimizes water waste thereby improving resource management and reducing costs. | 4.09 | 0.83 | A |
| 13. SMEs Implement green innovation by creating products with longer lifespan. | 4.12 | 0.91 | A |
| Cluster Mean | 4.12 | | A |

(N=383)

Table 1 shows that mean scores for all the items are above the cut-off mean of 3.50 which means that the respondents agreed with each of them. The cluster mean value of 4.1 which is above the cut-off point of 3.50 indicates that on the whole, the business owners agreed that green innovation influences competitive advantage of SMEs in South-East Nigeria. Standard deviation for all the items is within the same range from 0.8 to 1.0 which shows that the respondents are homogeneous in their ratings.

Table 2

Results of linear regression analysis on the influence of green innovation on competitive advantage of SMEs in South-East Nigeria.

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R square | Std Error of estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 0.67 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 2.3 |

Predictors (constant) Green innovation
Dependent variable: competitive advantage.

ANOVA

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig | Decision |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|-------------|
| Regression | 1846.302 | 1 | 1846.302 | 321.067 | .000 | Significant |
| Residual | 2190.946 | 381 | 5.751 | | | |
| Total | 4037.248 | 382 | | | | |

Coefficients of Regression analysis

| Model | Unstandardized coeff. | | Standardized coeff. | T | Sig |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------|------|------|
| | B | Std Error | Beta | | |
| Constant | 7.4 | 0.97 | | 7.6 | .000 |
| Green innovation | 0.6 | 0.34 | 0.67 | 17.9 | .000 |

Data in Table 2 shows that the model demonstrated a significant overall fit. $F(1, 381) = 321.067$, $P < 0.05$, with an R^2 of 0.45, indicating that approximately 45% of the variance in competitive advantage could be explained by the linear relationship with green innovation which is large. The regression equation in competitive advantage where the unstandardized coefficient for green innovation ($B=7.4$, $\beta=0.67$, $P < 0.05$) signifies that there is significant positive influence of green innovation on SMEs competitive advantage in South-East Nigeria, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. The findings suggest that SMEs that adopt green innovation strategies are more likely to achieve a competitive advantage over others.

DISCUSSION

Influence of green innovation on competitive advantage of SMEs in Southeast Nigeria

The findings of this study revealed that green innovation positively influences competitive advantage of SMEs in Southeast Nigeria. All thirteen items under green innovation were rated as 'Agree' by the respondents. This rating indicates that SMEs that design products with minimal environmental impact, invest in solar, wind or other renewable energy sources and adopt other green innovation strategies tend to have a higher competitive advantage compared to those that do not, thereby leading to greater performance. The result of the linear regression analysis also indicated that there is significant positive influence of green innovation on SMEs competitive advantage.

The finding is consistent with Abubakar et al (2022) which reported a significant influence of green entrepreneurial innovation on sustainable business performance and competitiveness. They agree with the findings of Michalis et al (2022) that there is a positive influence of green entrepreneurship in green product innovation and green process innovation. Furthermore, the results support Mohammad et al (2018) which found a significant positive impact of entrepreneurial innovativeness on business performance.

However, the findings of the study differ slightly from that of Wafiq and Erna (2023) which reported that green product innovation has effect on firm performance while green process innovation does not have effect on firms' performance. The findings of this study also have implications for policy makers and practitioners. For instance, policy makers can provide incentives and support for SMEs to adopt green innovation strategies, such as tax breaks, subsidies and training programs. On the other hand, practitioners can also prioritize green innovation as a key strategy for achieving competitiveness and higher performance. Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that SMEs in South-East Nigeria can benefit from adopting green innovation strategies, such as reducing waste and emissions, using renewable energy and implementing water saving technologies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, that green innovation has a significant positive influence on SMEs' performance in South-East Nigeria, it was concluded that by adopting green innovation strategies the SMEs can improve their competitiveness and also contribute to sustainable development in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. SMEs in Southeast Nigeria should adopt green innovation practices, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and using environmentally friendly materials. They should invest in green innovations, such as solar, wind and other renewable energy systems, to reduce their environmental impact and improve their performance.
2. Business owners should sponsor their staff to adequate training programmes like short courses, conferences, seminars and workshops to develop skills for effective adoption of green entrepreneurial innovation practices.
3. The government should develop policies that support the growth of green entrepreneurship in Southeast Nigeria, such as tax incentives and subsidies.
4. Government should provide training and capacity-building programmes for SMEs to develop the skills and knowledge needed to adopt green entrepreneurship practices.

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PERCEPTIONS OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS ON DIGITAL MARKETING SKILLS REQUIRED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the perceptions of Business Educators on digital marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for self-employment in universities in South-South, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The population of this study consisted of 85 Business Educators (57 males and 28 females) in eight public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The entire population was studied without sample as size was not too large. A structured questionnaire titled "Digital Marketing Skill Assessment Questionnaire" adapted for data collection and were analysed descriptively, using mean to answer the research questions, standard deviation to determine the homogeneity and closeness of the responses and t-test to test the null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance. The Instrument consists of 14 structured questions arranged in two clusters. All the clusters were based on four-point scale of Highly Required, Required, Moderately Required, and Not Required. The instrument was validated by three experts with the reliability coefficients of 0.82 and 0.84 respectively. Data collected relating to the research questions were analysed using Cronbach Alpha to determine its reliability. Findings of the study revealed that the respondents perceived that affiliate marketing skills and social media marketing skills as required in Business Education in South-South, Nigeria for self-employment of the graduates. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that unless these graduates are adequately equipped with these skills, they

will hardly be successful in entrepreneurial endeavour in this digital era. It was recommended that stakeholders should design learning activities that allows students to use internet and social media platforms while in school and that Business Education graduates should embark on further digital marketing skill training programmes to acquire affiliate marketing skills.

KEYWORDS: Business educators, Business Education, Digital marketing skills, social media marketing skills, Affiliate marketing skills, Self-employment.

INTRODUCTION

Business educators are facilitators through which the students acquire the right skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies to excel in the technology driven world. Morrison (2017) defined business educator as an academic professional dedicated to the art and science of teaching and mentoring in the area of business. Also, Akpomi and Ikpesu (2021) viewed business educators as tertiary education professionals who serve as major implementers of educational reforms while contributing immensely to developing a skilled workforce for private and public sectors. According to Emeasoba and Nwatalari (2021), Business Education at university level has to do with mainly the development of suitable and important saleable skills and knowledge that would enable an individual to function effectively in the world of work. Business educators in universities, therefore, are trained professionals who are expected to be innovative and skilled in accounting, entrepreneurship, office technology and management, marketing and cooperative studies. Universities, globally, are accepted as the citadel of knowledge, education and human resource development (Ekpo & Aiyedun, 2020). Business educators are male and female professionals who are qualified instructors specifically trained to deliver business-related courses, possessing comprehensive expertise across all business subjects.

Business Education at tertiary level is offered in both federal and state universities and consist of both male and female business educators. Gender as a moderating variable in this study, could influence the perceptions of business educators as they are made up of males and females. Gender is a sociological concept that is used to define social distinctions between men and women and from which these differences can be deduced (Amidu, 2022). Business educators in the context of this study are males and females who are professionally qualified and are employed to teach Business Education and its related subjects in universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Business Education is a vocational education programme of instruction which provides students with information, skills, techniques and competencies required for managing personal business or serving in public and private establishments. Ordu and Abdulkarim (2020) noted that recipients of Business Education programme have every opportunity to acquire skills relating to the various areas of business such as, accounting, office technology and management, marketing/distribution trade, entrepreneurship, and management if guided appropriately. According to National University Commission (NUC, 2023), the philosophy of Business Education programme is to provide individuals with relevant knowledge, skills and competence to be self-reliant and economically self-sufficient for gainful employment, meaningful living and to contribute to the development of the society. The programme is designed in consonance with the needs of the business community to ensure that education and

training offered are consistent with the competencies for the current and emerging job requirements and opportunities. In the same vein, Emeasoba and Mmuo (2018) noted that Business Education is a tripartite programme of instruction that equips the recipient or the learner with skills, competencies knowledge, attitudes and values to be business teachers of business subjects, an office worker or an entrepreneur. Furthermore, Aina (2018) noted that products of Business Education programme are expected to adequately acquire numerous business-related skills to help them in creating and managing their own businesses as source of employment and become self-reliant. Business Education is a vocational education programme that aims at grooming students with information and competence to fill the very growing vacuum created by unemployment through self-employment.

Self-employment can be considered as the residual category of gainful employment not remunerated by a wage or salary. According to Hurst (2022), self-employment is the promotions of free enterprise and self-sufficiency by creating and spreading wealth to the grass root level as a contribution to economic growth, employment generation and social process. It is an economic activity whereby individuals own and manage their business as gainful employment. Self-employment refers to the state of working for oneself rather than an employer. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), reported that the unemployment rate in Nigeria increased significantly in the 3rd quarter 2023 at 5.0% showing increase of 0.8% from the 2nd quarter of the year. NBS also reported that about 87.3% of workers were self-employed in 3rd quarter 2023. This is why increasing level of unemployment has become a growing problem in different part of the country requiring that more people acquire skills to become self-employed.

Self-employment is an important potential source of new jobs and a way of employing the entrepreneurial ability of the population in Nigeria where large and increasing unemployment has become a major economic problem (Umoru, 2020). Self-employment is currently on the increase globally, and its pursuit will invariably lead to poverty reduction and reduced joblessness among university graduates. The decision to become self-employed hinges on a wide array of factors which include graduate unemployment, inability to get a well-paid job, job satisfaction, personality traits, and independence among others. Self-employment can take many forms, from freelancing and entrepreneurship to the creation of small businesses. Success in self-employment especially operating a private enterprise requires possession of different skills set and such as marketing skills.

Business Education graduates need basic skills that are necessary for starting, keeping and running a business and one of the basic skills in the programme is marketing skills. Marketing skills enable individuals to identify needs, create a product that satisfies the need, place a proper value on the product, win customers' interest through the use of the

right media and ensure that the product is effectively distributed. Abdulkarim (2019) noted that skills for marketing products acquired through Business Education are meant to enable students to identify market needs, persuade and win clients, build marketing relationships and sustain such relationships for entrepreneurial success. Angelo *et al* (2019) explained that marketing skills that ensure employability include effective communication, personal selling, interpersonal skills, creativity and innovation skills, IT and presentation skills, work planning and prioritization, sales knowledge and management skills, planning, organization and time management, creative thinking, precision and attention to details, content creation across channels, as well as the ability to manage multiple marketing tasks.

The ever-changing and complex need for digitalization requires Business Education graduates to develop adequate digital skills to succeed in self-employment. Due to globalization, digital skills are currently considered requisites for a successful entrepreneurial journey in the world. UNESCO (2018) defined digital skills as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication, applications and networks to access and manage information. Digital skills involve the ability to find, organize, understand, evaluate, create and share information using digital devices or technologies such as smartphones and computers as well as relevant applications and software. Cornell University in Burton (2016) also defined digital skills as the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share and create content using information technologies and the internet. Chaouchi and Bourgeau (2020) noted that some digital skills are required to use the internet with technology to fulfil specific tasks while others are required to design, create and maintain tools and solutions for different industries. UNESCO (2018) also noted that digital skills enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfilment in life, learning, work and social activities at large. Other workplace digital skills include e-commerce, network and information security, digital Business analysis, data analysis, data entry, original content creation, programming and coding, artificial intelligence, and digital marketing. Digital skills are necessary to effectively and efficiently participate and benefit in digital marketing

Digital marketing is the use of digital technology to build and maintain customer relationships by creating integrated targeted and measurable communication to facilitate the exchange of ideas, goods and services that satisfy the customer. The American Marketing Association Dictionary (2019) stated that digital marketing has to do with planning and initiating marketing campaigns using digital platforms such as the Internet, email, search engines, social media and other tools. Angelo *et al.* (2019) explained that the digital transformation of marketing has posed a systematic phase change in marketing and communication practice, developing a parallel and fragmented world focused on digital media.

Digital marketing does not occur in isolation but is most effective when it is integrated with other communication channels such as phone, and direct mail, among others. Barone (2020) viewed digital marketing as the use of the internet, mobile devices, search engines and other channels to reach customers. Gustavsen (2022) reported that digital marketing encompasses a wide variety of marketing tactics and technologies used to reach customers online. Digital marketing enables and improves the communication of product value using digital technology and aids the execution and implementation of marketing strategies and tactics. In regards to these, Dawada (2019) outlined the reasons digital marketing is important in today's business to include: higher conversation rates, increase of trust in the brand, creation of longer growth options for any business, cost-effective marketing, targeting and getting connected to mobile customers. Mckinley's Marketing partner (2019) reported that the relevance of digital marketing to firms made its skills to be sought among personnel requirements for future marketing endeavours. To achieve success in digital marketing, an individual needs it is necessary to possess certain digital marketing skills.

Digital marketing skills equip a marketer with the right strategy and tactics on how best to communicate the value of a product to the customer, how to meet their dynamic and emerging needs and how to build a reliable and sustainable relationship and loyalty. The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UN-CSTD, 2018), defined digital marketing skills as a part of the intermediate digital skills required for the performance of work-related tasks. Mckinley Marketing Partner (2019) noted that skills relating to digital marketing most substantially demanded by firms are digital content creation, digital analysis, search engine optimization, cloud computing, emails and social media skills. Digital Marketing Institute (2022) also reported that digital marketing skills that provide students with the opportunity to be instantly employed after graduation include social media marketing skills, search engine skills, digital analytic skills, content marketing, email marketing, skills, mobile marketing skills, strategic planning skills, social selling skills, pay-per-click marketing skills and video creations skills. This study covers two skills; social media marketing skills and affiliate marketing skills as very important digital marketing skills for success in self-employment.

Social media marketing creates a digital linkage and communication with customers. Social media is a channel of providing information to customers, connecting with stakeholders, and ultimately generating sales by effectively utilizing the advantages offered by the Internet (Maria, Borges & Jose, 2014). According to Constantinides (2014), social media marketing is a form of digital marketing that involves creating and sharing content on different social media channels to achieve branding and marketing goals. Social media platforms are more than just avenues for companies to broadcast information about themselves. Social media marketing activities like posting text,

images, videos and other audience-engaging content on different social media platforms can be used to achieve these goals. Social media marketing skills can help Business Education graduate to build an online presence through content creation, blog, podcast, influencer marketing, affiliate marketing and engage with potential customers on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, among others, which can lead to more brand awareness and sales.

Affiliate marketing is a form of digital marketing where businesses partner with content creators to earn a commission on sales generated by customers who visit the company's website through the affiliate's unique referral link. Haydn (2017) noted that affiliate marketing is a kind of online marketing, whereby a company (an advertiser or merchant) makes an agreement with another firm (a publisher or affiliate) to feature a link for its website on affiliated sites. Affiliate marketing is an agreement achieved between a merchant and content providers for promoting the merchant's products/services at their websites. Based on the agreement, the content provider is paid when visitors from their website perform a specific action. Bede and Anuradha (2015) noted that affiliate marketing is a performance-based channel meaning that the publisher is paid a reward in a form of commission only for a realized sale or any other desired action. Affiliate marketing promotes self-employment by allowing individuals to earn commission-based income through promoting other companies' products or services across digital platforms. It requires minimal startup costs while offering flexibility in work hours, location independence, and the potential for multiple passive income streams through various promotional channels like blogs, social media, and email marketing.

The success of Business Education programmes in preparing students for self-employment significantly depends on the quality and expertise of Business Educators, particularly their understanding and teaching of essential digital marketing skills. This is highly necessary due to the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. This study determined necessary digital marketing skills perceived by Business Educators in universities in South-South, Nigeria for their students' entrepreneurial success and self-employment. This is very important in enveloping effective educational strategies that prepare students for successful self-employment in the digital age.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rate of unemployment among Business Education graduates continues to increase despite the fact that it is a vocational programme that should empower the graduates with essential business skills to help them thrive independently. The rapid growth of the digital economy, accelerated by increasing internet usage has impacted every facet of business, from product, distribution and consumption to transactional processes and operational management. Regrettably, Business Educators seems to have neglected to

adequately emphasize digital marketing in their teaching approaches. Business Educators appear to focus on theoretical instruction without sufficient practical applications which raises concerns about students' inability to acquire the necessary digital marketing skills to succeed independently as self-employed in the 21st-century business world. Many graduates of the programme are still roaming the streets years after graduation looking for white collar jobs instead of establishing and successfully operating entrepreneurial businesses. This ugly situation could be as a result of their lecturers not knowing the essential digital marketing skills they require to succeed in entrepreneurship businesses. Therefore, this research provides empirical data on digital marketing skills mostly required by Business Education graduates for success in self-employment to enable both the curriculum designers and implementers take remedial actions for the benefits of the students and society.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to determine the perceptions of business educators in universities in South-South, Nigeria on digital marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for self-employment. Specifically, study sought to determine the:

1. Social media marketing skills perceived by business educators in universities in South-South, Nigeria as required by Business Education graduates for self-Employment.
2. Affiliate marketing skills perceived by business educators in universities in South-South, Nigeria as required by Business Education graduates for self-Employment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following Research Questions guided the study:

1. In the perception of business educators in universities in South-South, Nigeria, what are the social media marketing skills required in Business Education graduates for self-employment?
2. In the perception of business educators in universities in South-South, Nigeria, what are the affiliate marketing skills required in Business Education graduates for self-employment?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance:

H0₁: there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators on the social media marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for self-employment.

H0₂ there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the affiliate marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for self-employment.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is deemed suitable in line with Siedlecki (2020) which explained that descriptive survey enables a researcher to observe and describe individuals, events, or conditions in their natural state. As the study sought to determine the perceptions of business educators on digital marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for self-employment, the design is therefore adequate for the study. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Population of this study consisted of 85 Business Educators (57 males and 28 females) in eight public universities in South-south, Nigeria. There was no sample because the population was manageable, hence census sampling was adopted. The instrument for data collection was a 14-item structured questionnaire titled "Digital Marketing Skills Assessment Questionnaire (DMSAQ)". The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A sought for background information of the respondents and Section B contained 14 items organized into two clusters of 7 items each covering the research questions. The instruments were structured on a four-point Likert rating scale of: Highly Required (HR)=4, Required (R) =3, Moderately Required (MR) =2 and Not Required (NR) =1. The instrument was validated by three experts two in Business Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all in College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State. The reliability of the instruments was established by administering the questionnaire to 20 business educators in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State which is outside the South-South zone and not part of the study but with similar characteristics to ensure the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test method and their responses were analysed using Cronbach Alpha. A reliability coefficient level of 0.82 and 0.84 respectively and it was deemed adequate for the study. The instruments for the study were administered to the respondents and were collected back after five days by the researchers, with the help of three research assistants whom they gave instructions regarding what to do. Out of 85 copies administered, 80 copies (which represents 94 percent) were properly filled and used for data analysis. Data collected from the respondents were analysed using Mean to answer the research questions and standard

deviation to determine the homogeneity of the respondents while t-test statistic was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Mean value of 2.50 or above in a given item was regarded as required while any item with a mean below 2.50 was regarded as Not Required. The null hypothesis was accepted when the t-calculated value is less than the t-table value at 0.05 level of significance but rejected when the t-calculated value is equal to or greater than the t-table value at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS Question 1: what are the social media marketing skills required in Business Education graduates for self-employment?

Table 1: Respondents' mean rating on social media marketing skills required by Business Education graduate for self-employment.

| S/N | Social media marketing skills | Male X | (N57) SD | Decision | Female X | (N28) SD | Decision |
|-----|--|--------|----------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| 1. | Ability to obtain relevant feedback from customers | 3.44 | 0.54 | Required | 3.46 | 0.51 | Required |
| 2. | Ability to run paid social media advertising campaigns | 3.46 | 0.54 | Required | 3.34 | 0.54 | Required |
| 3. | Ability to manage and grow social media communities | 3.44 | 0.50 | Required | 3.54 | 0.56 | Highly Required |
| 4. | Ability to create engaging social media content across platforms | 3.50 | 0.54 | Highly Required | 3.51 | 0.56 | Highly Required |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------|------|-----------------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| 5. | Ability to use instant messaging to respond promptly | 3.50 | 0.54 | Highly Required | 3.54 | 0.56 | Highly Required |
| 6. | Ability to use social networking site to connect with potential customers | 3.52 | 0.52 | Highly Required | 3.35 | 0.48 | Required |
| Cluster Mean | | 3.46 | | Required | 3.42 | | Required |

In Table 1, the mean scores of the items range from 3.26 to 3.54. Also, the cluster mean of the item range from 3.42 to 3.46. The standard deviation did not vary much as the scores range from 0.48 to 0.57. The standard deviation scores for both male and female respondents for all the seven items are within the same range showing that the respondents are homogenous in their mean ratings. This suggest that, the items were perceived by Business Educators as social media marketing skills required in Business Education for self-employment

Null Hypotheses 1: there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators on the social media marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for self-employment.

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis of significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Respondents on social media marketing skills required by Business Education graduate for self-employment.

| Gender | N | X | SD | DF | t-cal. | t-crit. | Decision |
|--------|----|------|------|----|--------|---------|----------|
| Male | 57 | 3.46 | 0.54 | 83 | 0.33 | 1.98 | NS |
| Female | 28 | 3.42 | 0.53 | | | | |

N= Number of respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, DF = Degree of freedom, NS = Not Significant

Table 2, shows that the calculated-t value of 0.33 is less than the t-critical value of 1.98 at 83 degrees of freedom. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on social media marketing skills required by

business educations graduates for self-employment, therefore the null hypothesis of no significance difference was not rejected.

Question 2: what are the affiliate marketing skills required in Business Education graduates for self-employment?

Table 3: Respondents' mean rating on affiliate marketing skills required by Business Education graduate for self-employment.

| S/N | Affiliate Marketing skills | Male (N57) | | | Female (N28) | | |
|-----|---|------------|------|-----------------|--------------|------|----------|
| | | X | SD | Decision | X | SD | Decision |
| 8. | Ability to create persuasive product reviews and recommendations | 3.50 | 0.50 | Highly Required | 3.46 | 0.51 | Required |
| 9. | Ability to understand affiliate marketing terms, conditions, and commission structures. | 3.50 | 0.54 | Highly Required | 3.29 | 0.62 | Required |
| 10. | Ability to integrate affiliate links effectively into content | 3.52 | 0.51 | Highly Required | 3.31 | 0.53 | Required |
| 11. | Ability to build and maintain relationships with affiliate program managers | 3.52 | 0.58 | Highly Required | 3.29 | 0.56 | Required |
| 12. | Ability to optimization conversion and customer journey | 3.46 | 0.54 | Required | 3.11 | 0.47 | Required |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------|------|-----------------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| 13. | Ability to identify and evaluate profitable affiliate programs | 3.52 | 0.51 | Highly Required | 3.29 | 0.62 | Required |
| 14. | Ability to use affiliate marketing platforms and tools effectively | 3.28 | 0.49 | Required | 3.23 | 0.43 | Required |
| Cluster Mean | | 3.47 | | Required | 3.28 | | Required |

In Table 3, the mean scores of the items range from 3.11 to 3.52. Also, the cluster mean of the item range from 3.28 to 3.47. The standard deviation did not vary much as the scores range from 0.43 to 0.62. The standard deviation scores for both male and female respondents for all the seven items are within the same range showing that the respondents are homogenous in their mean ratings. This suggest that, the items were perceived by Business Educators as affiliate marketing skills required in Business Education for self-employment

Hypothesis 2: there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators on the Affiliate Marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for Self-Employment.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Respondents on Affiliate marketing skills required by Business Education graduate for self-employment.

| Gender | N | X | SD | DF | t-cal. | t-crit. | Decision |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Male | 57 | 3.47 | 0.52 | 83 | 1.57 | 1.98 | NS |
| Female | 28 | 3.28 | 0.53 | | | | |

N = Number of respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, DF = Degree of freedom, NS = Not Significant

Table 4, shows that the calculated-t value of 1.57 is less than the t-critical value of 1.98 at 83 degrees of freedom. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on affiliate marketing skills required by business educations graduates for self-employment, therefore the null hypothesis of no significance difference was not rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicated that the respondents perceived that social media marketing skills are required by Business Education graduates for self-employment. This means that social media marketing skills will help Business Education graduates to be proficient in the use of information and communication technology to connect their customers effectively and market their products online with ease. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of males and female's respondents on social media marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for self-employment. These findings are supported by the findings of Burton (2016) who reported that graduates are lacking digital marketing skills for modern workplace. This finding is also supported by the finding of Constantinides, E. (2014) that emphasizes the need to expose business students to courses in social media marketing skills. Findings indicated that social media marketing skills are essential skills required by anyone respective of gender to facilitate marketing in the 21st century digital era.

The findings from research question two indicated that the respondents perceived that affiliate marketing skills are required by Business Education graduates for self-employment. This means that affiliate marketing skills will help Business Education graduates to use affiliate marketing platforms and tools effectively to identify and evaluate profitable affiliate programs while managing multiple affiliate partnerships simultaneously. These findings agreed with the findings of Haydn (2017) that affiliate marketing create an online platform where business and graduate can meet for a commission. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of males and females' respondents on affiliate marketing skills required by Business Education graduates for self-employment. The findings shows that affiliate marketing skill is required of Business Education graduates for self-employment as if is an important skill in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, that Business Educators perceived social media marketing skills and affiliates marketing skills as required by Business Education graduates for self-employment, the study concluded that unless these graduates are adequately equipped with these skills, they will hardly be successful in entrepreneurial endeavour in this digital era.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Business educator with social media marketing skills should design learning activities that allows students to use internet and social media platforms in creating digital content for promoting products or service online while in school.
2. Business educator should be re-trained to enable them up-date their digital skill competencies for proper teaching of affiliates marketing skills.
3. Business Education graduates should also embark on further digital marketing skill training programmes to acquire marketing skills. This will enhance their self-employability potentials.
4. Educational administrators should plan and provide appropriate digital marketing resources, tools, and infrastructure needed for effective teaching. This includes digital labs, software, and online platforms essential for practical digital marketing training.

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**TEACHERS VOCATIONAL SKILLS AS CORRELATES OF QUALITY
INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY OF BUSINESS STUDIES IN PUBLIC JUNIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE****IBIAM-CHUKWUEMEKA CHIGOZIEM OLIVE**

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ABSTRACT

This study, examined the relationship between teachers' vocational skills and quality instructional delivery of Business Studies in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was used for the study. Two research questions and two null hypotheses, guided the study. The population of the study was 301 Business Studies teachers and students in public junior secondary schools in three educational zones in Ebonyi state. A sample of 172 respondents was drawn, using stratified, proportionate, purposive and random sampling techniques. Instrument for data collection were two sets of questionnaires developed by the researcher and titled "Teachers' vocational skills questionnaire (TVSQ) for teachers and" Quality of instructional delivery questionnaire (QIDQ) for students. The instruments were validated by three experts, two in Business Education and one from measurement and evaluation unit from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State. Data collected were analysed using Cronbach Alpha statistics to determine the internal consistency of the instruments which yielded .74, and .71 coefficients respectively. Data for the study were collected by the researcher with the help of three research assistants who were briefed on what to do using a sample copy to guide the respondents on how to adequately fill the instrument and to ensure high rate of return. . Out of the 172 copies of questionnaires administered, 162 copies (representing 94% return rate) were retrieved and used for data analysis. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer the research questions while linear regression was used to test the null

hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings revealed that technical and computer skills relate to quality instructional delivery of Business Studies in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state. Based on the findings, it was concluded that to a high extent, teachers' vocational skills has significant relationship with quality of instructional delivery of Business Studies in public junior secondary schools .Recommended among others was that Ebonyi State Universal Basic Education Board should post only teachers with adequate vocational skills to teach Business Studies in public secondary schools in the state.

KEYWORDS: Teachers' vocational skills, Quality instructional delivery, Relationship, Technical skills, Business studies, Junior Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a tool that facilitates socio-economic development of individuals and nations. It is the means through which people gain new skills required to deal with life situations. Education equips an individual to attain a certain level of life through acquisition of skills, morals and knowledge thereby becoming a useful member of the society (Adebayo, Kehinde & Olusanya, 2016). According to Nworgu (2019), it is because of the value of education to individual and national development that the government of different countries invests tremendous resources in the provision of education for its citizen. There are three levels of education in Nigeria, namely; primary level, secondary level and tertiary level. At each of these levels, certain core subjects are taught while some are optional. Secondary education in Nigeria is grouped under junior secondary school and senior secondary school. Business Studies is one of the core subjects taught at the junior secondary schools.

Business Studies is an introductory subject for Upper Basic level teaching and learning in business. It is one of the subjects' student's studies in the three years of the Upper Basic Education popularly known as junior secondary school in preparation for the study of other business subjects in the senior secondary and tertiary levels. Business Studies is an integration of office practice, commerce, book-keeping, and typewriting, shorthand and computer studies. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) described Business Studies as a prevocational subject which aims at equipping recipients with the practical skills for useful living within the society and lifelong education. According to Agbagbue (2018), the fundamental aim of teaching Business Studies at the junior secondary school level is to prepare the of students for roles in enterprises such as paid employees, entrepreneurs or simply as self-employed and employers of labour. In other words, the aim is to ensure that individuals who complete the level should be able to fend for themselves and also cater for others without difficulty since they have been equipped with relevant knowledge to scale through in life with or without white collar jobs.

Furthermore, teaching of Business Studies helps in the production of competent, skilled and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. FGN (2013) outlined the objectives of Business Studies to include:

1. Basic knowledge acquisition to enable students to gain foundational knowledge in business concepts.
2. Skill development to equip students with essential skills for office occupations and personal business applications.
3. Preparation for further training to prepare students for advanced studies in business related field.

4. Economic relevance to relate business knowledge and skills to the national economy
5. Entrepreneurial orientation to foster an understanding of entrepreneurial and self-employment opportunities.

The Business subject taught at this education includes book-keeping, commerce, office practice, Accounts, typewriting and shorthand. The major aim of Business Studies is primarily to harness competent, skilled and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. While its fundamental aim, is the preparation of students for roles in enterprises; such roles could be as employee entrepreneurs and employers or simply as self-employed (Agbagbue, 2018). In other words, the aim of the introduction of Business Studies in the junior secondary school is to ensure that an individual who has passed through school at this level should be able to fend for himself and also cater for others without complain haven been equipped with knowledge of various skills which would make him scale through in life with or without the white collar- job.

According to Lawal (2019) Business studies enhances skill acquisition through series of activities to enable students effectively manage material and human resources in future towards economic growth. As a prevocational subject, Business Studies equips students with the knowledge of vocational and technical skills, enabling them to effectively apply the acquired skills towards the economic growth of the society. To achieve the aims and objectives of Business Studies, it is necessary for teachers to possess relevant vocational skills that will ensure high quality instructional delivery. Teachers' vocational skills are set of skills that help teachers perform and demonstrate expertise in the teaching career. Salami and Adigin (2016) explained that they connote professional skills, expertise in teaching and learning and discipline specialism. According to Morrison (2018), teachers' vocational skills refer to specific competencies and abilities that educators need to effectively teach and support their students in a vocational and technical education setting. Morrison posited that key components of teachers' vocational skills are pedagogical skills, assessment and evaluation skills, communication skills, computer skills, industry knowledge, professional proficiencies, collaborative skills and technical skills. Morrison further averred that these skills are essential for preparing students for career in various trades and professions, helping them to acquire the knowledge and experience they need to thrive in the workplace and contribute to the economy. This is because teachers' vocational skills help s in bridging the gap between academic learning and practical application, preparing individuals for successful career. Similarly, Uzoka (2018) explained that teachers acquire vocational skills through theoretical and practical training to prepare them to play a crucial role in equipping other individuals with practical skills for the workforce and life in general.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning when it comes to students' rate of assimilation and instructional outcomes depends on the level of vocational skills

applied by teachers during teaching. According to Candolfi (2019), teachers who possess high vocational skills are generally in high demand because they understand the student's diverse needs and learning styles and employ various teaching methods to cater for these differences. In the teaching of Business Studies, vocational skills possessed by teachers are key determining factors on the rating of how well they will perform the role of imparting knowledge to students. It is, therefore, expected that teachers who have high vocational skills will be able to handle both the practical and theoretical aspects of Business studies for quality instructional delivery. In the same vein, Yakmuz and Ojede (2019) stressed the need for recruiting adequate number of teachers with vocational skills in junior secondary schools for quality instructional delivery to promote saleable skill acquisition and possible employment generation. In view of all the above there is need for teachers of Business Studies to possess vocational skills such as technical skills, computer skills, financial skills and communication skills among others. The study, however, covered technical skills and computer skills because of their importance. Technical skills facilitate an in-depth knowledge of business concepts and principles and a thorough understanding of various components of Business studies which are shorthand, typewriting and computer (keyboarding), commerce, and office practice. Technical skills focus on providing students with hands on training and practical knowledge in a specific area. New technologies and techniques emerge regularly and a good teacher should be able to adapt and learn new skills in order to stay current and give students the best through designing curriculum that is centered around practical applications, solving problems and project-based learning to prepare students for the demands of the workforce. Teachers of Business Studies should be proficient in using technology tools and resources to enhance their instructional delivery and enable students develop digital literacy skills.

The level of education and training received by a teacher plays an important role in determining their ability to deliver quality instructions. Highly qualified and trained teachers, according to Pupet (2019) are more likely to use effective teaching strategies and techniques that engage students and promote learning. Clearly, Emeasoba (2015) noted that technical skills required by Business studies teachers include shorthand, typewriting, book-keeping, computer, and commerce and office practice. Furthermore, Bello (2016) stated clearly that when a teacher has mastery of his subject, he exhibits confidence and boldness in guiding, directing and issuing instructions during the lesson. Technical skills become more efficient when complemented by computer skills.

Computer skills refer to the ability to operate a computer machine, proficiency in using Microsoft office suit (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), experience with virtual teaching platforms and online learning management systems, effectively use and navigate computer hardware, software and application to complete tasks and solve problem.

Computer skills deal with all activities involved in coupling and bringing together the hardware components to make a functional unit as well as accessing and utilizing the operating system and programs. Okwuanaso (2015) explained that computer is an aspect of Information and Communication Technology used in almost every kind of endeavor including teaching to improve efficiency and productivity. Application of computer skills helps teachers in utilizing various audio-visual aids in teaching and makes learning more interesting for students. Nworgu (2018) observed that computer skills are innovations that enable the teachers to modify the teaching and learning process in order to increase and sustain students' interest and ensure quality in instructional delivery.

Quality instructional delivery is where teachers of any school subjects use suitable methods, strategies and instructional materials to enhance the presentation of the content to clearly convey information to students to enhance their assimilation and retention. Madeleine (2018) defined quality instructional delivery as teachers' effective presentation of content and facilitation of learning in the classroom using suitable instructional strategies, clear and engaging communication, appropriate pacing and differentiation, among others in order to meet the needs of all students. By tailoring lessons to meet the diverse needs and abilities of individual learners, teachers ensure that every student has equal opportunity for growth and development. The primary goal of quality instructional delivery according to Yakmez and Ojedele (2019) is to ensure that a greater percentage of students understand, assimilate, are able to retain, recall and use the acquired knowledge and skills in examinations or other real life situations. David (2018) affirmed that the quality of any educational system is dependent on the quality of its teaching staff and that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Quality instruction is an essential factor that influences students' learning outcome, academic achievement and retention rate. It is pertinent to note that quality instructional delivery of business studies is a factor of teachers' vocational skills. Hence this study to determine the extent teachers' vocational skills correlates quality instructional delivery of business studies in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teacher's vocational skills play a vital role in the quality of instructional delivery of the practical components of Business studies, namely; shorthand, typewriting and computer studies (keyboarding) A junior secondary school student who has been taught the theoretical and practical aspects of Business studies well should be able to construct words meaningfully in letter writing, pronounce words properly when communicating with clients in business and visitors in the office, produce malleable documents, serve as a good clerical staff in an office, possibly, run a commercial business center and so become self-employed and can also employ others with little or no assistance by his parents. Most principals in junior secondary schools in Ebonyi

state have not given attention to the vocational skills of the crop of teachers posted to teach business studies as a pre-vocational subject. It appears that most of the teachers do not possess adequate vocational skills for quality instructional delivery in Business Studies leading to students' poor attitude towards and achievement in shorthand, typewriting and computer studies (keyboarding) undermining the achievement of the aims and objectives of the subject. Consequently, there is general lack of instructional materials such as typewriters, computers (laptops), keyboarding studio and non-inclusion of business studies in the list of pre-vocational subjects to be offered in most of the schools. This also results to poor level of readiness by students after JSCE for self-employment as expected. Regrettably, there is no empirical evidence on the extent to which teachers' vocational skills are correlated with the quality of instructional delivery of business studies in public junior secondary schools in Nigeria generally and Ebonyi State in particular. This made it imperative to conduct this study to reveal the relationship between teachers' vocational skills and quality instructional delivery of business studies in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state to provide empirical data for remedial actions by relevant stakeholders.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between teachers' vocational skills and quality instructional delivery of Business studies in junior secondary school in Ebonyi state. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. The extent teachers' technical skills relate to quality instructional delivery of Business studies in junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state.
2. The extent teachers' computer skills relate to quality instructional delivery of Business studies in junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do teachers' technical skills relate to quality instructional delivery of Business studies in junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state.
2. To what extent do teachers' computer skills relate to quality instructional delivery of Business studies in junior secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between teachers' technical skills and quality instructional delivery of Business studies in Junior secondary school in Ebonyi state.

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between teachers' computer skills and quality instructional delivery of Business studies in Junior secondary school in Ebonyi state.

METHODS

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of this study consisted of 301 teachers and students of Business studies in the 222 public junior secondary school in Ebonyi state. A sample of 172 respondents was drawn from the three educational zones in Ebonyi state, using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Two sets of questionnaires developed by the researcher and titled ÷ Teachers' Vocational skills questionnaire (TVSQ) and quality of instructional delivery questionnaire (QIDQ) designed to collect information on vocational skills of teachers and quality instructional delivery respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts, two experts from Business Education and the other from measurement and evaluation all in the college of Education, Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia state. Cronbach Alpha statistical tool was used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments and reliability coefficient values of .74. and .71 were obtained respectively. The researcher administered the instruments with the help of three research assistants who were briefed on what to do using on the spot method. 172 copies of questionnaire administered, 162 copies representing 94% return rate. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to answer the research questions based on Rumsey (2016) correlation coefficient scale with the following ratings.

± 70 to 1.0 = strong/high extent relationship
± 40 to 0.69 = moderate/medium extent relationship
± .00 to 0.39 = No correlation/weak/low extent relationship

Linear regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was not rejected where the p –value is equal to or greater than the alpha-value of 0.05 otherwise it was rejected.

RESULTS

The result of the analysis was presented in the table as follows;

Table 1 Correlation matrix of teacher technical skills and quality instructional delivery of Business Studies in public junior secondary school in Ebonyi state.

| Business studies | | Teacher technical skills and instructional delivery of Business Studies | Quality |
|---|----------------|---|---------|
| Teachers technical correlation skills | Pearson | 1 | 0.80* |
| | sig(2- tailed) | | .11 |
| | P- value | 172 | 172 |
| | N | | |
| Quality Instructional Delivery correlation (tailed) | Pearson | 0.80* | 1 |
| | sig(2 tailed) | 0.64 (64%) | |
| | R ² | .11 | 172 |
| | P. value | 172 | |
| | N | | |

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (2 tailed) N = Number of respondents

Table 1 shows a correlation index of .80 which is positive and within ± 70 to 1.00 correlation coefficient of Rumsey (2016). This indicates that teacher’s technical vocational skills relate to quality delivery of business studies to high extent. The coefficient of determination skill contribution R^2 0.656 indicate that teachers technical vocational skills contribute to 64% of the variance observed in quality instructional delivery. The table also shows a p-value of .11 which of greater than the alpha value of .05. Therefore, the hypotheses showed that there is a significant relationship between teacher’s technical skills and quality instructional delivery was not rejected. This implies that teacher’s technical vocational skills significantly relate to quality instructional delivery of business studies

.Table 2: Correlation matrix of teachers’ computer skills and quality instructional delivery business studies in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

| Business studies | Teacher computer skills and delivery of Business Studies | Quality instructional delivery of Business Studies |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Teachers technical skills | 1 | .76* |
| Pearson correlation | | 000 |
| sig(2- tailed) | | .19 |
| P- value | 172 | 172 |
| N | 000 | |
| Quality Instructional Delivery | 0.578 (58%) | |
| Pearson correlation | .19 | |
| R ² | 172 | 172 |
| P. value | | |
| N | | |

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (2 tailed) N = Number of respondents

Table 2 shows a correlation index of 0.776 which is positive and within ± 0.70 to 1.00 correlation of Rumsey (2016). This indicates that teachers’ computer skills relate to quality instructional delivery of business studies to high extent. The coefficient of determination (R²) 0.624 indicates that teachers’ computer skills contribute to 58% of the variance observed in quality instructional delivery of business studies. The table also shows P-value of .19. Which is greater than the alpha value 0.05? Therefore, the hypotheses that there is a significant relationship between teacher’s computers skills and quality instructional delivery of business studies were not rejected. This implies that teachers’ computer skills significantly relate to quality instructional delivery of business studies.

DISCUSSIONS

Extent to which teachers’ technical skills relate to quality instructional delivery of Business studies.

The finding of the study revealed that teacher's technical skills positive relate to quality instructional delivery of Business Studies to a high extent. Meanwhile the corresponding hypothesis indicated that there is a significant relationship between teacher's technical skills and quality instructional delivery of business studies in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state. This finding aligns with the findings of Bello (2016) which stated that when a teacher has mastery of the subject, he exhibits confidence and boldness in guiding, directing and issuing instructions during the lesson. The finding also agrees with Emeasoba (2015) which asserted that there is a significant relationship between teachers' vocational skills and the teaching of typewriting, book-keeping and computer studies. Thus, for teachers to effectively deliver quality instructions there is need for mastery of the components of business studies.

Extent teachers' computer skills relate to quality instructional delivery of business studies

Table 1 revealed that teachers' computer skills positively to a high extent relate to quality instructional delivery of business studies while the corresponding hypothesis indicated that there is a significant relationship between teachers' computer skills and quality instructional delivery of business studies in public junior secondary schools in Ebonyi state. Supporting this finding, Akphogere (2015) revealed that computer skills gives teachers the ability to effectively use and navigate computer hardware, software and applications to complete task and solve problems. Computer skills enhance teacher's instructional functionality and students' activity in learning. This implies that it is very important in quality instructional delivery. Thus, it can then be concluded that teachers' computer skills has significant relationship with quality instructional delivery.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study that teachers' technical and computer skills have significant correction with quality instructional delivery of Business studies in Junior Secondary schools, it was concluded that posting teachers of the subject who lack these skills to the schools will defeat the aims and objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. Only teachers with vocational skills such as technical, computer, keyboarding among others should be posted to public secondary schools to teach Business studies.
2. Government as well as principals of public schools should plant necessary equipment such as keyboarding/computer studio to ensure practicum in business studies for students to improve their skills for effective instructional deliver.

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