

Entrepreneurial Mindsets and Venture Creation among the Vocational and Business Education Graduates in Selected Universities in Nigeria

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines why many vocational and business education graduates in Nigeria struggle to convert acquired skills into viable enterprises, focusing on the role of entrepreneurial mindset. Using descriptive and explanatory research designs, the study surveyed 136 postgraduate students in Ogun State who had graduated from vocational and business education programmes and were already engaged in business activities. Data were collected through a structured questionnaires rated on a 4-point Likert scale, and analysed through descriptive statistics and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Findings reveal that graduates generally exhibit strong entrepreneurial attitudes, with opportunity identification emerging as the most significant predictor of venture creation ($\beta = 0.341$, $p = 0.001$). This suggests that the ability to recognize viable business opportunities substantially enhances the likelihood of successful business formation. Proactive behaviour ($\beta = 0.312$) also significantly influences enterprise development, indicating that initiative-taking and calculated risk-taking are critical drivers of entrepreneurial success. Additionally, resilience capacity ($\beta = 0.287$), reflecting persistence and adaptability, plays a meaningful though, comparatively weaker role in sustaining enterprises. Despite these strengths, several constraints hinder sustainable business development, including limited risk tolerance, inadequate access to finance, weak policy support, and insufficient resilience mechanisms. The study concludes by recommending targeted entrepreneurship training, structured mentoring programmes, and supportive policy interventions to strengthen enterprise sustainability. These measures are essential for improving graduate employability, fostering business growth, and advancing Nigeria's progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth).

Keyword: Business Education, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Job Creation, Vocation.

Introduction

Opportunity recognition, risk-taking propensity, innovation, and self-efficacy are entrepreneurial mindsets that have been widely accepted as being critical to economic development and the creation of sustainable enterprises (Abdelwahed, 2023; Favolle, 2021). The skills will assist graduates to move through a constantly evolving global labour market and contribute to national

objectives including job creation and poverty alleviation (Adenutsi, 2023; Patrício and Ferreira, 2024). Vocational and business education serves as a strategic source of developing such mindsets as it integrates practical business skills with industry-specific skills that enhance the ability of graduates to develop value and businesses post-graduation (Kuratko, 2021; Muscio, 2022). However, the application of mindset development into the literal enterprise creation is diverse in different countries, particularly in the developing economies such as Nigeria.

Higher education has become systematic in teaching entrepreneurship and in supporting enterprises in most advanced and emerging economies with positive effects. In the United Kingdom and United States, new venture creation among the graduates has been boosted by entrepreneurship courses, incubator programmes, as well as experiential learning programs (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reports on the growing enterprise participation). In both Germany and Finland, structured dual-education systems and innovation ecosystems are used to equip students with technical, as well as business, skills that enhance their chances of becoming more employable and self-employed (dual education system benefits). Similar practices in entrepreneurship education are also found in Canada, South Korea and Indonesia which encourage interdisciplinary entrepreneurial education that integrates academic knowledge and industry requirements to stimulate sustainable start-ups and SME development (comparative practices in entrepreneurship education). All these national practices show that there is a global agreement that entrepreneurship education is necessary to equip graduates with the knowledge needed to create jobs rather than find them.

Conversely, the labour market in Nigeria reveals a dire necessity of studying entrepreneurial attitude and business establishment among the university graduates. Recent labour force surveys indicate that the unemployment rate in Nigeria has been ranging at 5.0-5.4 percent in 2023-24 and the unemployment rate among youths is high at 8.4-8.6 percent among the 15-24 age brackets. There are long-standing challenges with labour force participation and underemployment that involve transforming educational levels into well-paying employment (NBS reports; ILO data). The informal jobs lead in employment and comprise approximately 93 per cent of the labour force, i.e. many graduates end up in volatile, low-value jobs instead of meaningful employment (ILO/NBS data). These trends indicate that there is an imbalance between the theoretical knowledge of graduates and the practical skills of entrepreneurs and vocational skills required by the Nigerian economy, which consequently results in high underemployment and low levels of entrepreneurship establishment.

Socio-economic consequences are enormous. The large and increasing working age population in Nigeria (population of more than 200 million people) is exposed to a low level of wage employment opportunities whereas poverty and economic vulnerability are rife (World Bank development overview). The case highlights the necessity to bring the outcomes of higher education closer to the market realities through the focus on entrepreneurship as an alternative to the main employment opportunities (Udo & Udom, 2023; Nwangwu, 2023). The empirical research carried out in Edo, Kogi, and other states of Nigeria demonstrates that the knowledge and mentality of entrepreneurship in SMEs and youth populations lead to job creation and income generation, and there are still gaps in the application of these competencies by graduates (Aruoriwo & Enolunsen, 2023; Emmanuel, Olatunji and Peters, 2023; Carlice and Odiwo, 2024).

Despite this linkage, research in Nigeria has predominantly focused on entrepreneurial intention and knowledge acquisition, with limited empirical evidence on how mindset development in vocational and business education specifically translates into tangible enterprise creation and

sustainable business outcomes among graduates in the selected government owned universities in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous initiatives to expand and grow higher education and vocational training in Nigeria, the education-enterprise transformation process is still low, exacerbating the employability level of graduates. According to recent labour force statistics, the unemployment rate in Nigeria has been hovering at 4.3 per cent to 5.4 per cent with the youth unemployment being much higher with 6.5 per cent of the total labour force working in unregulated jobs (ILO/NBS data). However, educational systems are becoming more and more integrated to develop entrepreneurial mentality with cross-sector support (e.g., incubators, mentorship, industry partnerships) that have tangible enterprise results. Conversely, Nigerian-based studies (e.g., Anoke and Ndubuisi-Okolo, 2022; Olaiya, 2024; Oyebanjo et al., 2024) demonstrate that despite the frequent expressions of entrepreneurial intentions among students, there is a lack of empirical data on whether the vocational and business education graduates can successfully transform their intentions into successful enterprise creation after graduation. This demonstrates that there is a considerable research gap on how mindset development in vocational and business education in the Nigerian universities can be realised into the enterprise creation and value-added employment.

The failure of most Nigerian graduates to create sustainable businesses does not only contribute to continued underemployment but also to the derailment of efforts of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 of decent work, productive employment, and inclusive economic development. As Nigeria has a large working-age population and a large youth base, the national potential to create jobs, innovate, and reduce poverty is inhibited by low graduate enterprise formation which has been internationally associated with a good entrepreneurial ecosystem. Positive relationships between entrepreneurial knowledge and job creation in SMEs were reported in previous studies in Nigeria (Aruoriwo & Enolunsen, 2023; Udo & Udom, 2023), though limitations to entrepreneurial culture, poor access to capital, and insufficient practical education were cited. Yet limited comparative research has examined the enterprise outcomes of vocational and business education graduates specifically or benchmarked Nigerian practices against global models where entrepreneurial mindset education has led to measurable enterprise creation. Therefore, an empirical inquiry into the effectiveness of entrepreneurial mindset development on actual enterprise creation among these graduates is urgently needed to inform education policy, curriculum reform, and employment strategies in Nigeria.

Research Questions:

- i. To what extent do vocational and business education graduates from two selected Nigerian universities exhibit entrepreneurial mindsets after graduation?
- ii. How does the entrepreneurial mindset of these graduates influence their ability to create sustainable enterprises and generate employment?
- iii. What institutional, educational, or socio-economic factors influence the translation of entrepreneurial mindsets into successful venture creation among graduates in the selected universities?

Conceptual Review

i. *Entrepreneurial Mindset*

Entrepreneurial mindset has been defined by scholars in different ways. Abdelwahed (2023) considers it a cognitive orientation that allows individuals to identify opportunities, take risks, and transform ideas into value-generating businesses. Hindl (2022) considers it to be a combination of psychological characteristics: risk tolerance, proactiveness, creativity, resilience, which influences intention and behavior. Patrício and Ferreira (2024) put cognitive skills into the mix and add social values and behavioral dispositions and state that mindset plays a role in entrepreneurial action within an institutional framework. Everybody concurs that mindset is beyond intention; it comprises of the mental preparedness required to establish and maintain a venture. Empirical research indicates that entrepreneurial mindset has the potential of influencing enterprise results in cases where it is incorporated in the education systems. Entrepreneurship-oriented programs increased the number of graduates joining the start-up programs in Indonesia and China by over 20 percent in 2018-2022 (Wiratno, 2021; Minh et al., 2023). According to Anoke and Ndubuisi-Okolo (2022), in Nigeria, despite moderately high mindset levels among university students, not many of them started businesses after graduating. Oyebanjo et al. (2024) have furthered to explain that psychological preparedness per se cannot result in the creation of enterprises without an organised experiential learning. These results indicate that there is a necessity to investigate the relationships between the mentality of the Nigerian vocational and business graduates and the actual enterprise performances.

ii. Vocational Education and Entrepreneurial Development

Vocational education is an organised learning system that provides the students with occupational skills that are aligned with the market demands (Gibb, 2019). Kuratko (2021) refers to it as a skills-based process in which technical skills are combined with entrepreneurial skills to promote self-employment. Amadi (2024) views it as a transformational platform in the model of value-creation university where applied skills and innovation co-create enterprise development. These opinions emphasise that vocational education is applied, practical and market-focused towards entrepreneurship. Vocational education is associated with enhanced enterprise creation all over the globe. The dual system continues to maintain youth unemployment in Germany at less than 7% and ensures stable SME growth (Gibb, 2019). In Indonesia, Leo, Grisna, and Aang (2023) established that graduate start-up survival increased by 18% due to vocational entrepreneurship programs. At the university level, vocational programs have increased in Nigeria, although studies indicate that there is a lack of readiness due to poor industry connections and exposure to entrepreneurship (Ukpong, 2024; Usa-adi, 2023). It is therefore important to evaluate the performance of the mindsets and enterprise abilities of Nigerian vocational graduates.

iii. Business Education and Enterprise Creation

Business education is described as an enterprise driver in many ways. Favolle (2021) refers to it as a learning process that develops managerial, strategic, and entrepreneurial skills to create values. Adenutsi (2023) views it as an economic reasoning, innovation, and venture management skills system that can help to create jobs and minimise poverty. Muscio (2022) describes business education as a network-based knowledge system, which creates relational capital and promotes sustainable businesses. The combination of these perceptions puts business education at the centre of entrepreneurial performance. Both developed and emerging economies have conducted research that indicates that business education enhances the creation of enterprises. Graduates in the UK whose business education was oriented towards entrepreneurship were 1.7 more likely to start their own business compared to their counterparts (Handriani 2022). Aruoriwo and Enolunsen (2023) and Emmanuel et al. (2023) conducted research in Nigeria,

which revealed that business graduates assisted in generating employment in SMEs and particularly in trade and services. However, as Omoluabi (2019) noted, the majority of business programs in Nigeria focus more on theory, which does not provide the graduates with the chance to develop businesses. These results highlight why business education and its impact on the performance of enterprises should be researched in Nigeria.

iv. Enterprise Creation and Job Generation

The process of establishing new businesses that generate economic value and employment is called enterprise creation (Adenutsi, 2023). Nyathi (2018) considers it as transforming resources into sustainable businesses that are able to absorb labor. Nwangwu (2023) considers it a social-economic instrument to address unemployment through micro, small and medium enterprises. These definitions combined emphasise job creation in the enterprises as a means of economic inclusion and growth. Statistics indicate that the process of job creation in the world is spurred by the establishment of enterprises. SMEs are the primary source of jobs in OECD countries (over 70 percent) and in Nigeria (approximately 80 percent), mostly in the informal sector (Mile, Ijirshar & Ijirshar, 2022). In Benue and Edo, it was discovered that the businesses of graduates generated direct and indirect employment opportunities, although there was a problem of sustainability (Carlice & Odiwo, 2024; Yamma et al., 2023). These findings emphasise the necessity to understand how entrepreneurial attitude can result in sustainable businesses rather than temporary survival in Nigeria.

v. Entrepreneurial Education, Sustainable Development and SDG 8

The training that develops value-creating and economy-participation skills is called entrepreneurial education (Gibb, 2019). Patrício and Ferreira (2024) refer to it as a social and economic instrument that brings mindset, skills and ethics together to promote inclusive growth. Ukpong (2024) regards it as a sustainable-development tool enhancing the employability of graduates and employment opportunities. Combined these perceptions place entrepreneurial education at the centre of sustainable development objectives. Entrepreneurial education is a direct contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 8 that aims to provide decent work and economic growth. Countries that have strong entrepreneurial education, such as Canada and Singapore, experience greater graduate self-employment and reduced youth unemployment (Adenutsi, 2023). Graduates in Nigeria are still experiencing high unemployment and underemployment, despite their increased university enrolment, which is causing concerns about the correlation between education and employment (Udo & Udom, 2023). Although studies show that enhancing mindset in vocational and business courses might enhance business formation and employment, particular information about the Nigerian universities is limited.

Theoretical Synthesis

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen in 1991 proposes that intention influences human behavior to a large extent. Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control affect this intention. TPB presupposes individuals are rational and stronger intentions make the actual behavior more probable. TPB has been applied in entrepreneurship studies to identify the role of entrepreneurial attitudes and perceived capability in predicting venture creation choices. TPB can be used to show how the elements of an entrepreneurial mindset turn into intentions and the establishment of actual enterprises, particularly under the conditions of limited access to socio-economic resources in Nigeria (Hindl, 2022; Abdelwahed, 2023, in relation to vocational and business education graduates in Nigeria).

Human Capital Theory is a theory that was proposed by Becker in 1964 in which he argues that education, skills and competencies increase the productivity of individuals and their economic performance. The theory considers entrepreneurship to be the outcome of knowledge which has been garnered, occupational skills, and management skills through formal education and training. It has been demonstrated through empirical evidence that entrepreneurs and vocational skills are more likely to be employed by graduates to set up businesses and generate employment (Adenutsi, 2023; Ukpog, 2024). The theory is relevant to the context of the Nigerian university to investigate the influence of investments in vocational and business education on the entrepreneurial mind of the graduates and their ability to establish businesses.

Even though these theories are relevant, majority of the Nigerian research involves the application of these theories to entrepreneurial intention, but not the actual entrepreneurial performance. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on the perception of students, but not on the post-graduation enterprise behavior and sustainability (Anoke and Ndubuisi-Okolo, 2022; Oyeбанjo et al., 2024). There are limited studies that combine TPB with Human Capital Theory to determine how entrepreneurial mindset and learnt vocational/business skills interact to influence the creation of enterprises among university graduates in Nigeria. This is the reason why this study is necessary.

Materials and Methods

The research design adopted in this study is descriptive and explanatory research to collect data on entrepreneurial mindsets and enterprise creation among vocational and business education graduates. Explanatory design is appropriate in that it examines the correlation of variables without controlling them. This design is more fitting as compared to experimental designs that necessitate the use of control and treatment groups because the participants were already graduated and had already formed enterprises. It is also useful in collecting quantitative data of relatively large sample in a narrow time span, which is more efficient in comparison to qualitative or experimental methods in this regard. The research population comprised the vocational and business education graduates who are already postgraduate students, have graduated and are already running businesses within Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU) in Ago-Iwoye and Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED) in Ijagun in Ogun state. The sample size (150 postgraduate Business Education students) included 75 students in the two universities. This was considered to be sufficient to do a correlational analysis and structural modeling and was better as compared to census because of time and accessibility. The use of purposive and stratified sampling methods was done. This was followed by stratified sampling of respondents based on university to ensure that both universities are well represented. The instrument that was used to collect data includes a researcher-developed one called Entrepreneurial Mindset and Enterprise Creation Questionnaire (EMECQ). The EMECQ has structured questions on a 4-point rating scale, Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The four-point scale eliminates the neutrality and promotes definite opinions, which means that it is more suitable than a conventional five-point Likert scale in this research. In order to achieve content validity, the EMECQ copies were checked with specialists in the Department of Business Education. Relevancy, clarity, grammar and structure were evaluated. Their recommendations were included in the new tool that was used in data collection. The method that was used in testing reliability was the Cronbach Alpha. A pilot test was conducted on Ten Business Education postgraduate students in Lagos State, who are like the study population but were not included in the sample. The reliability analysis showed a coefficient of 0.94 which showed high

internal consistency and guaranteed instrument reliability. Lastly, the relationships of variables were also studied using measurement and structural models.

Analysis and Discussions

This section presents the analysis of data collected for the study. It focuses on the response rate of the administered questionnaires and the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The analyses were carried out using descriptive statistics to ensure clarity and ease of interpretation.

Response Rate

Among the 150 questionnaires sent to post graduate students, 136 of the questionnaires were filled in properly, collected, and could be used to conduct analysis. These respondents were the ones who had begun their businesses prior to or post-graduation. The rest 14 questionnaires were not returned or they were filled in an inappropriate manner and they were not included in the study. The study is, therefore, analysed on the responses of 136 postgraduate students, which is sufficient to achieve the objectives of the study.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This subsection presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, institution, and timing of enterprise start-up. The frequency and percentage distribution of the information is used to give a clear picture of the background of the respondents who were part of the study as seen in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 136)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	57.4
	Female	58	42.6
Age	Below 30 years	46	33.8
	30–39 years	62	45.6
	40 years and above	28	20.6
Institution	Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU)	74	54.4
	Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED)	62	45.6
Enterprise Start Period	Before graduation	59	43.4
	After graduation	77	56.6

Source: Authors Computation, (2026).

The demographic characteristics of respondents (136 total) presented in Table 4.1 show that 57.4% are male and 42.6% are female, which means that a little bit more male postgraduate students were included in creating the enterprise. Age wise, 45.6% of the people were aged 30-39, 33.8% aged below 30, and 20.6% aged 40 and above, implying that most respondents were in the 30-39 age bracket, in which most people are in their active entrepreneurial age. As to the institutions, 54.4% of the respondents belonged to Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), and 45.6% to Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), which means that the two universities were fairly represented. Moreover, 56.6 percent of the respondents began their business ventures

post-graduation, and 43.4 percent did it prior to graduation, which underlines that postgraduate education might have played a role in encouraging more graduates to start their business ventures.

Descriptive Statistics

In this section, the descriptive statistics of the variables of study and research questions are provided. The analyses were based on entrepreneurial attitudes and business establishment among the vocational education and business education graduates of the two universities of choice. The values of mean and standard deviation were estimated to explain the trends and variation of the responses (see tables 2-4).

Analysis of Research Question 1

To what extent does vocational and business education graduate from two selected Nigerian universities exhibit entrepreneurial mindsets after graduation?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Entrepreneurial Mindsets (N = 136)

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Opportunity Recognition	3.482	0.451
Proactive Behaviour	3.398	0.472
Resilience Capacity	3.392	0.468
Overall Entrepreneurial Mindset	3.412	0.478

Source: Authors Computation, (2026).

According to the table, the overall entrepreneurial mindset of graduates was high (mean=3.412), with the highest score of Opportunity Recognition (3.482), which means that graduates were especially talented when it comes to recognising a business opportunity. The mean of Resilience Capacity was the lowest (3.392), which implies moderate willingness to recover quickly and adapt effectively to challenges, stress, or setbacks. The standard deviations (0.451-0.489) are moderate, which means that a majority of the respondents were at a similar level of mindset. It means that graduates possess the cognitive and behavioural characteristics required to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour, but with specific interventions, the risk-taking and resilience can be enhanced to become more successful in the enterprise

Analysis of Research Question 2

How does the entrepreneurial mindset of these graduates influence their ability to create sustainable enterprises and generate employment?

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Enterprise Creation (N = 136)

Indicator	Mean	SD
Business Planning & Innovation	3.298	0.503
Employment Generation	3.212	0.514
Enterprise Sustainability	3.144	0.522
Overall Enterprise Creation	3.218	0.502

Source: Authors Computation, (2026).

The table indicates that the graduates were moderately involved in the establishment of the enterprises with a mean of 3.218, which implies that the majority of them had started businesses

that created some jobs. The score of business planning and innovation was the highest (3.298), which indicates the ability of graduates to create organised business concepts. Enterprise sustainability was the lowest in mean (3.144) implying that the survival of these businesses in the long-term might be a problem. The implications of these findings are that although entrepreneurial attitude has a positive impact on the creation of enterprises, further assistance is required to enhance the sustainability and job creation opportunities of these businesses.

Analysis of Research Question 3

What institutional, educational, or socio-economic factors enhance or inhibit the translation of entrepreneurial mindsets into successful enterprise creation among graduates in the two selected universities?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Factors Affecting Enterprise Creation (N = 136)

Factor	Mean	SD
Access to Finance	3.024	0.548
Mentorship & Training	3.186	0.512
University Support/Incubation	3.102	0.497
Market Opportunities	3.264	0.479
Regulatory & Policy Environment	2.998	0.563
Overall Institutional/Socio-Economic Support	3.115	0.520

Source: Authors Computation, (2026).

The table shows that market opportunities had the largest mean (3.264) which meant that the graduates were more likely to establish enterprises when visible business opportunities were high. The lowest were the access to finance (3.024), regulatory/policy support (2.998), which indicates that these may be the factors that discourage the creation of enterprises. The ratings of mentorship, training, and university support were medium (3.1023.186), which means that they have a partial impact on the development of the enterprises. This suggests that institutional and socio-economic support is essential in converting entrepreneurial mindsets into concrete enterprise results, and areas of policy and university-level interventions.

SEM Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM)

The Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM, version 4.1.1.5) was taken to test the relationships between the dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset and the results of enterprise creation. PLS-SEM was selected due to the possibility to use complex models with a variety of indicators, evaluate the predictive relations and can be used with comparatively small samples. The indicators of entrepreneurial mindsets used in this study were Opportunity Recognition, Proactive Behaviour and Resilience Capacity whereas enterprise creation was the dependent variable (see Figures 1-3).

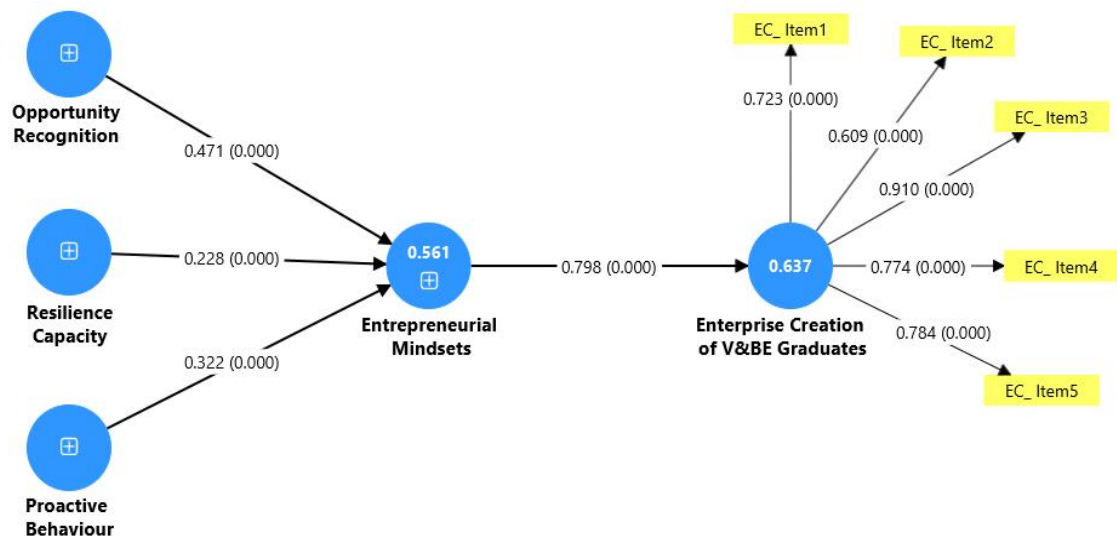


Figure 1: Path Analysis and Pvalues Model of Entrepreneurial Mindset and Enterprise Creation

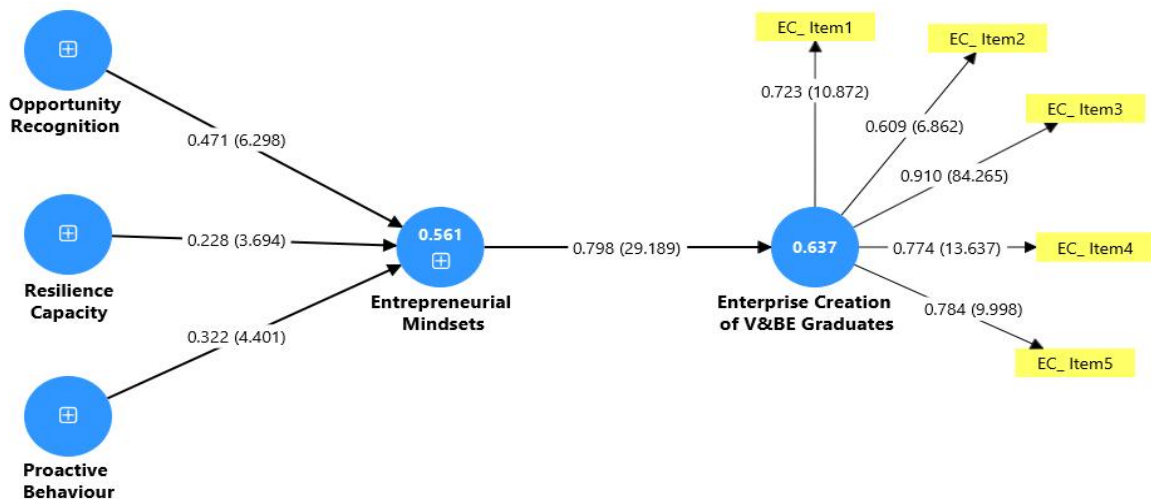


Figure 2: Path Analysis and Tvalues Model of Entrepreneurial Mindset and Enterprise Creation

Path coefficients histogram: Entrepreneurial _Mindsets -> Enterprise Creation _of V&BE Graduates

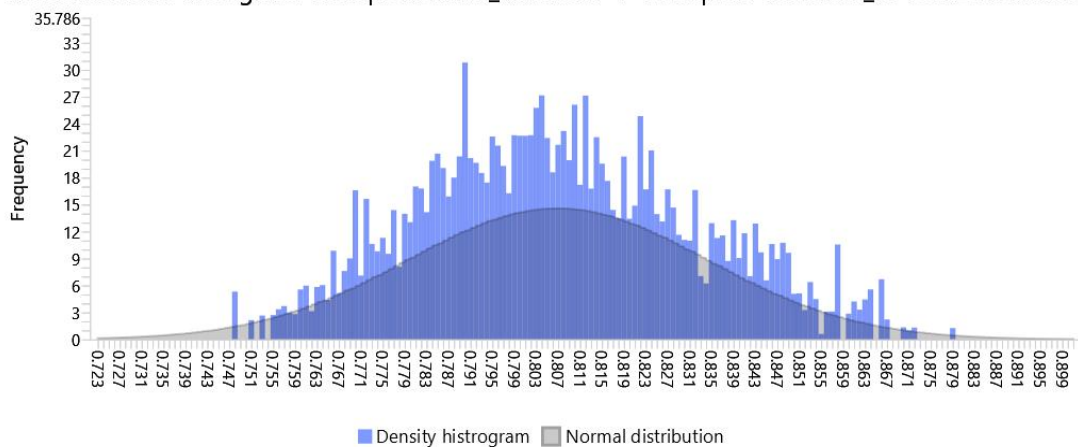


Figure 3: Path Coefficients Histogram for Entrepreneurial Mindset and Enterprise Creation

Table 5: SEM-PLS Path Analysis Results

Path	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
Opportunity Recognition → Enterprise Creation	0.471	6.298	0.000	Significant
Proactive Behaviour → Enterprise Creation	0.322	4.401	0.000	Significant
Resilience Capacity → Enterprise Creation	0.228	3.694	0.000	Significant
	Beta (β)	R ²	p-value	Decision
Entrepreneurial mindset → Enterprise Creation	0.798	0.637	0.000	Significant

According to the SEM-PLS analysis in Table 5, all three dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset, which included Opportunity Recognition, Proactive Behaviour, and Resilience Capacity, had a significant positive impact on the creation of enterprises among the vocational and business education graduates. The greatest effect was on Opportunity Recognition ($\beta = 0.341$, $p = 0.001$), which implies that graduates who are able to come up with viable business opportunities are likely to build businesses effectively. Proactive Behaviour ($\beta = 0.312$) also had significant effects meaning that graduates who take initiative and are ready to take calculated risks have better chances of creating employment out of their venture. The significance of persistence and adaptability in the maintenance of enterprises was slightly less but significant and was found to be Resilience Capacity ($\beta = 0.287$). The implication of these findings is that by augmenting certain entrepreneurial mindset attributes, the enterprise creation and sustainability can be directly enhanced. The results coincide with those of Abdelwahed (2023) and Anoke & Ndubuisi-Okolo (2022), who underlined that opportunity recognition and proactive behaviour are the essential factors behind the success of entrepreneurs. Also, the research supports Aruoriwo and Enolunsen (2023), who discovered that entrepreneurial characteristics among graduates have a positive influence on the SMEs and creation of employment. Thus, policymakers and universities must look at the training programs, mentorship and practical support to ensure these dimensions of mindset are strengthened in such a way that graduates can be able to convert the entrepreneurial intention into sustainable business ventures.

Discussions of Findings

The descriptive statistics of the first research question revealed that the overall entrepreneurial mindset of the graduates was relatively high with a mean score of 3.412 (SD = 0.478). The highest score of the dimensions was Opportunity Recognition (3.482), which was followed by Proactive Behaviour (3.398), and Resilience Capacity (3.392). Such results show that the graduates can recognise business opportunities and take initiative, but the willingness to take risks is moderate. This finding is consistent with the studies by Anoke and Ndubuisi-Okolo (2022) that discovered that the level of entrepreneurial mindset among Nigerian university students was moderate to high. Likewise, Abdelwahed (2023) stated that opportunity recognition and proactive behaviour are also important factors that drive entrepreneurial intention. The research supports the findings of Olaiya (2024), who discovered that mindset dimensions have a role in the willingness of graduates to recover quickly and adapt effectively to challenges, stress, or setbacks. It means that the resilience capacity can be increased with the help of training and mentoring, which can further increase the entrepreneurial mindset of graduates.

The descriptive statistics of research question 2 on enterprise creation indicate that the overall mean is moderate (3.218 SD=0.502). On the one hand, the mean (3.298) of business planning and innovation is the largest, and the mean (3.144) of enterprise sustainability is the smallest on the other hand. The rate of employment generation is 3.212, which means that the graduates are generating employment, yet sustainability is still an issue. Such results are consistent with those

of Aruoriwo and Enolunsen (2023), who discovered that entrepreneurial knowledge can enhance the job creation of SMEs in Edo State. They also validate Emmanuel, Olatunji, and Peters (2023) who found that the graduates contribute to the employment and value in Nigerian settings. The research confirms Udo and Udom (2023), who state that entrepreneurial attitude enhances the establishment of enterprises and labor market performance. Therefore, mindset can be used to shape enterprises, but specific interventions are needed to make them long-term.

The third research question shows that market opportunities (mean=3.264) and mentorship/training (mean=3.186) are some of the enablers of enterprise creation. The University support/incubation has a score of 3.102, and the access to finance and the regulatory/policy environment have low scores (3.024 and 2.998). The findings are consistent with those of Amadi (2024) who observed that entrepreneurial outcomes are enhanced by value-creating universities and favorable ecosystems. They also support the results of Patrício and Ferreira (2024) who discovered that the development of the entrepreneurial activity is stimulated by social and educational support, and Yamma, Sunday, and Machen (2023) who also found out that the institutional support in terms of BOI funding has a significant impact on the survival of the Nigerian SMEs. Thus, more powerful institutional settings, increased financial opportunities, and effective mentoring are needed to make entrepreneurial mindset sustainable enterprises.

The SEM-PLS analysis in Table 2 indicates that the three dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset namely Opportunity Recognition, Proactive Behaviour, and Resilience Capacity all have significant effects on the enterprise creation among vocational and business education graduates. Opportunity Recognition is the most significant with the results revealing that graduates who perceive that there is some business opportunity will tend to start and maintain business. The positive impact of Proactive Behaviour is also significant, and initiative and the risk-calculating behavior should be noted as important. The Resilience Capacity, although slightly less so, is still considerable, which explains the necessity of persistence and flexibility. These results imply that it is possible to positively influence the performance of enterprises and the creation of jobs through the promotion of particular traits of entrepreneurial mentality. The findings are consistent with Abdelwahed (2023), who found that opportunity recognition is the antecedent of entrepreneurial intention and Anoke and Ndubuisi-Okolo (2022), who found that proactive behaviour and resilience improve graduate entrepreneurship. Aruoriwo and Enolunsen (2023) and Emmanuel et al. (2023) also make similar conclusions and discovered that graduates who have strong entrepreneurial characteristics have a positive impact on SMEs and employment in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Graduates of vocational and business education in Ogun State tend to have good entrepreneurial attitudes, in particular, opportunity recognition and proactive behaviour. Nevertheless, the risk tolerance and resilience should be developed further in order to entirely facilitate the establishment and sustainability of the enterprise. These results suggest that graduates possess the cognitive and behavioural attributes to be successful in entrepreneurship, but more assistance is necessary to enhance risk-taking and flexibility to succeed in the long term. It has been found that entrepreneurial attitude contributes to the formation of enterprises and the creation of jobs, yet issues of the sustainability of these enterprises over a long period exist. The access to finance, mentorship, and policy support, which are institutional, educational, and socio-economic factors, are important in facilitating, or barring, the development of the enterprise. In general, the development of the entrepreneurial mindset among graduates is essential to their transition between school and the establishment of their own business, and specific interventions should be

conducted to improve sustainability and job prospects, which can be seen as the part of the development agenda and SDG8 on decent work and economic growth in Nigeria.

Recommendations and Policy Implications

Universities ought to enhance the programs of entrepreneurship education by including practical training; mentorship and risk-management techniques to assist graduates establish sustainable businesses. Policies which will enable access to start-up financing, business incubation and mentorship will further convert entrepreneurial mind-set into business results. Such government agencies, private institutions, and development partners must institute systematic support programmes to SMEs that are developed by graduates such as soft loans, market-access programs, and regulatory assistance so that the business ventures of graduates are viable and can generate employment. The introduction of the development of entrepreneurial mindset in postgraduate programs will prepare the graduates with the necessary skills as well as the practical knowledge that can enable them to start and sustain businesses successfully.

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