

IMPACTS OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ENUGU STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (ESUT), ENUGU NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study sought to ascertain the impact of creativity and innovation on entrepreneurship in ESUT. The objectives of the study were to examine the role of creativity in enhancing entrepreneurial development and to analyze the impact of innovation on the success rate of entrepreneurial ventures initiated by traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. Related literature was reviewed under conceptual framework, theoretical framework and empirical studies. The study targeted a population of approximately 300 individuals within the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) community, categorized into three main groups: traders, artisans, and business people. The target sample size was 200 participants, selected from the total population of 300. The primary data for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire administered to the selected participants. The questionnaire was closed-ended and utilized a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of creativity, innovation, and their relationship to entrepreneurial activities. Using SPSS, Regression Analysis was utilized to assess the influence of creativity, innovation, and other predictor variables on entrepreneurial outcomes. The findings from results of data analyses showed that creativity has a positive impact on the entrepreneurial growth of traders, artisans, and business people within the ESUT community and innovation-related factors significantly impact the success of entrepreneurial ventures among traders, artisans, and business people. It was recommended among others that provide traders, artisans, and business people with resources and guidance for developing and implementing creative ideas.

Keywords: creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation, impact, esut.

Introduction

Creativity's and innovation are essential components of entrepreneurship, contributing significantly to the development of enterprises and the broader economy. In the Nigerian context, where entrepreneurship plays a critical role in addressing high unemployment and fostering economic diversification, the integration of creativity and innovation has become a driving force for business success. As global markets become increasingly competitive, entrepreneurs are required to adopt innovative strategies to maintain relevance, grow their businesses, and contribute meaningfully to national development (Juliana, Hui, Clement, Solomon & Elvis, 2021).

The role of entrepreneurship in economic development cannot be overstated, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria, where the formal sector struggles to absorb the growing labor force. Entrepreneurship, defined as the pursuit of innovative business ventures with the aim of creating economic value, stands as a cornerstone of economic growth, job creation, and societal development. The significance of entrepreneurship lies not only in its potential to drive individual success but also in its broader impact on local and national economies. As entrepreneurs innovate, take risks, and bring novel ideas to fruition, they contribute to the dynamism and resilience of economic landscapes (Ibrahim, Alabi & Ibrahim, 2022; Okoro, Achonu & Okoli, 2019). (Idam 2014) views entrepreneurship as the process of finding better opportunities through the creation of new ideas, in an uncertain condition, in order to create either a new business, or rearranging the accessible one that can create employment for other people and also give worth to owners of business.

Creativity, which refers to the generation of novel ideas, is the foundation of innovation and serves as the primary engine for entrepreneurial success. Entrepreneurs who harness creativity are able to identify unique opportunities, develop innovative solutions, and distinguish their businesses from competitors (Poncet, 2020). In Nigeria, where businesses often face complex challenges such as infrastructural deficits, limited access to capital, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, creativity becomes a valuable tool for overcoming these obstacles. Nurturing a culture of creativity and risk-taking will be pivotal in positioning Africa as a hub for innovation (Ajayi-Nifise, Tula, Asuzu, Mhlongo, Olatoye & Ibeh, 2024).

Innovation, on the other hand, involves the practical application of creative ideas to develop new products, services, or processes that add value to both the business and its customers (Ariffin, Baqutayan & Mahdzir, 2018). In Nigeria, innovation has the potential to reshape industries, foster competition, and improve the overall quality of goods and services available in the market. For example, the rise of fintech companies in Nigeria has revolutionized the banking and financial services sector, providing innovative solutions for digital payments, mobile banking, and financial inclusion.

The Nigerian government's efforts to foster innovation and entrepreneurship through initiatives like the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN) and the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) aim to support business growth, especially among startups and small enterprises (Agbonna, Shoge, Okun & Olorunlomu, 2022). However, the impact of these programs in cultivating a strong culture of creativity and innovation remains a topic of ongoing research. Similarly, within the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) community, creativity and innovation play crucial roles in driving entrepreneurial success among traders, artisans, and business people. Beyond government interventions, the influence of private sector initiatives, such as innovation hubs, incubators, and accelerators, parallels the role of creative spaces in ESUT.

Justification

The justification for this study on the "Impact of Creativity and Innovation on Entrepreneurship in Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)" is grounded in the growing global recognition of entrepreneurship as a key driver of economic growth and development. In Nigeria, particularly within the context of ESUT, entrepreneurship has emerged as a vital strategy for addressing unemployment and promoting self-reliance among individuals. However, the influence of creativity and innovation—crucial components of entrepreneurial success—has not been thoroughly investigated within this specific setting. This study is crucial because it seeks to bridge the gap between entrepreneurial education and practical entrepreneurial outcomes by examining how creativity and innovation among traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community impact their entrepreneurial activities. Gaining insights into this relationship will offer valuable information on how institutions can better support these individuals in becoming successful entrepreneurs.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the role of creativity in enhancing entrepreneurial development among traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community.
2. To analyze the impact of innovation on the success rate of entrepreneurial ventures initiated by traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community.

Research Questions

1. How does creativity influence the entrepreneurial development of traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community?
2. What is the relationship between innovation and the success rate of entrepreneurial ventures among traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community?

Scope

The scope of this study focuses on assessing the influence of creativity and innovation on entrepreneurial development among traders, artisans, and business people within the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) community. It aims to examine the role of creative thinking and innovative practices in enhancing entrepreneurial skills, business ideation, and startup initiatives among these groups. The study will explore how creativity and innovation contribute to the success and sustainability of ventures undertaken by traders, artisans, and business people at ESUT. Data collection will involve surveys with these entrepreneurs, providing insights into how creativity and innovation impact their entrepreneurial activities and overall business success within the ESUT environment.

Significance

The study on the Impact of Creativity and Innovation on Entrepreneurship within the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) community holds significant value in understanding how creative and innovative practices influence entrepreneurial success among traders, artisans, and business people. By exploring this relationship, the study aims to reveal the extent to which creativity and innovation contribute to the entrepreneurial activities of these individuals, potentially fostering a more dynamic and successful entrepreneurial ecosystem at ESUT.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have broader implications for the development of entrepreneurship support and policy-making in Nigeria and beyond. By highlighting the impact of creativity and innovation on entrepreneurial outcomes, the research provides valuable evidence for institutions and policymakers to design interventions and resources that nurture these qualities among aspiring entrepreneurs. This can lead to the creation of more robust and resilient entrepreneurial ventures, contributing to economic growth and job creation. In essence, the study not only benefits ESUT by informing its strategies but also offers a framework for other institutions and regions seeking to enhance their entrepreneurial capacities through creativity and innovation.

Limitations

The study on the Impact of Creativity and Innovation on Entrepreneurship within the ESUT community presents several limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the study's scope is confined to a specific geographic location and institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or communities with different socio-economic and cultural contexts. This localized focus restricts the broader applicability of the results and may not fully capture the diverse factors influencing entrepreneurship across various settings. Additionally, the study's reliance on self-reported data from survey respondents introduces the potential for response bias, as participants may overestimate their engagement in creative and innovative activities or misrepresent their entrepreneurial outcomes.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is anchored in the interplay between creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship within the context of Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT).

Creativity

Creativity is the cognitive process that allows individuals to generate new, original, and valuable ideas. It involves thinking outside the box and making unique connections between disparate concepts. Defined by Agbonna, Shoge, Okun and Olorunlome (2022) as a process involving originality and appropriateness, creativity is the bedrock of innovation and entrepreneurship. As Puccio, Cabra and Schwagler (2018) defined Creativity as a transdisciplinary area of study –it cuts across all areas of intellectual pursuit and human endeavor. The ability to think creatively is beneficial, and necessary, in all jobs and in many aspects of life”. Similarly, Consequently, Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow in Obialo (2020) contend that “Creativity is the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both

novel and useful as defined within a social context”. In essence, creativity is not only a cornerstone of innovation and entrepreneurship but also a universal skill that transcends disciplines, enabling individuals to produce novel and valuable solutions across various contexts.

At Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), creativity is stimulated through diverse mechanisms including academic curricula, research initiatives, and collaborative projects. The university environment is structured to encourage creative thinking by offering platforms such as brainstorming sessions, creative workshops, and interdisciplinary projects. This nurturing environment is hypothesized to enhance students' ability to generate innovative ideas, which are essential for addressing complex challenges and seizing entrepreneurial opportunities.

Innovation

Innovation is the practical application of creative ideas into tangible products, services, or processes that create value and address specific needs. Janszen in Obialo (2020) conceives innovation as the successful introduction of fresh technologies, the discovery of new applications for current products and services, establishment of new markets and growths of new organisational forms. In essence, the above conception of innovation influences the presentation of innovation “as the translation of new ideas into commercial products, processes and services” (Bessant and Tidd, 2007:29). For Dawson and Andriopoulos (2014), this model of innovation underscores innovation as a fundamental renewal process in which ideas or thoughts are turned into a reality that captures business value. For innovation to take place, therefore, creative ideas must become actionable.

Creativity and innovation are closely interconnected, with creativity serving as the foundation for innovation. Creativity involves generating novel and useful ideas, while innovation is the process of realizing those ideas and introducing them into the market or an organization to challenge the status quo. As Dawson and Andriopoulos (2014) explain, creativity sparks the initial concept, but it is innovation that transforms it into a tangible product, service, or business model. Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, and Herron in Obialo (2020) emphasize that creativity is essential for innovation, though creativity alone is not enough.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship involves the hand, heart, height, hero, hoe and the head to function. Marire, (2021). As defined by Clow in Juliana, Hui, Clement, Solomon and Elvis (2021), entrepreneurship is the process of mobilizing and sacrificing resources (land, capital, and human resources) to use a business opportunity or execute an idea in a way that meets society’s needs for products and services, creates employment, and benefits the venture’s owner. Both new and established businesses are involved in this process, but the focus is usually on new products or services and new businesses.

Creativity and entrepreneurship form a dynamic feedback loop, where each promotes and reinforces the other. Entrepreneurship drives innovation and creativity, while innovation, as described by Acs and Audretsch (2005), is the process of transforming ideas into practical applications. This involves developing new technologies, supply sources, products, and even new markets and business models. Entrepreneurship, in turn, is about discovering and exploiting opportunities, often considered the most effective way to stimulate innovation and creativity. Essentially, entrepreneurship thrives on creativity and innovation, as entrepreneurial efforts can generate new ideas and innovative solutions.

The study examines how creativity and innovation within the ESUT community lead to entrepreneurial activities, such as the formation of start-ups and business expansion. By analyzing performance metrics like the number of start-ups, business growth, and market penetration, the study aims to provide insights into how these elements contribute to entrepreneurial success and sustainability.

Relationship between Creativity and Innovation

Before discussing how to foster creativity and innovation within an organization, especially in a business setting, it is essential to clarify the connection between the two. As Dawson and Andriopoulos (2014) explain, creativity involves generating novel and useful ideas, while innovation is the process of turning those ideas into reality. Organizational innovation, therefore, is the transformation of a creative idea into a new element within the marketplace or an organization, aimed at altering the status quo. Obialo (2020) reinforce that creativity is the starting point for innovation, though it is not sufficient on its own—it must lead to practical application to achieve innovation. Puccio, Mance, Switalski, and Reali (2012) further explain this relationship through "creative change," where an idea is first implemented by an individual, and innovation occurs when the idea is commercialized or successfully adopted by an organization. This underscores Akinboye's in Obilao (2020) view that innovation is the commercialization of creativity, taking ideas to market. Janszen (2000) highlights innovation as a critical factor in building a prosperous and growing company. As Puccio, Mance, Switalski and Reali (2012) conclude, fostering innovation requires the right interaction between people, processes, and environments.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, the theoretical framework is grounded in two key theories: Schumpeter's Innovation Theory and Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity. These theories provide a foundation for understanding how creativity and innovation influence entrepreneurial activities in the context of higher education institutions, particularly in ESUT (Enugu State University of Science and Technology).

Schumpeter's Innovation Theory

Schumpeter's Innovation Theory (1934) remains a foundational framework emphasizing the pivotal role of innovation in entrepreneurship. Schumpeter argued that economic development is primarily fueled by innovations, which encompass the introduction of new products, production techniques, market strategies, or organizational structures. He posited that entrepreneurs act as crucial agents of change, driving economic progress through a process he termed "creative destruction," where outdated practices are replaced by more effective and novel approaches (Schumpeter, 1934). Recent studies have expanded on Schumpeter's ideas, reinforcing the notion that innovation is integral to entrepreneurial success and economic growth (Drucker, 2020; Christensen, 2021).

In the context of ESUT, Schumpeter's theory suggests that entrepreneurial success among traders, artisans, and business people is closely tied to their ability to innovate. Innovation—through the introduction of new services, technologies, or business models—drives entrepreneurial ventures that contribute significantly to the economic development of the university and its surrounding community.

Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity

Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity (1983) offers a psychological perspective on the role of creativity in entrepreneurship. According to Amabile, creativity arises from three essential components: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic motivation. In this framework, creativity is viewed as the foundation for innovation, with entrepreneurs relying on their creative abilities to generate novel ideas that can be developed into innovative products or services (Amabile, 1983). Recent studies have expanded on this model, emphasizing the importance of integrating creativity with strategic and operational factors to enhance entrepreneurial success (Gibson, 2022; O'Connor & Roper, 2021).

Within ESUT, Amabile's theory can be applied to understand how the creative abilities of traders, artisans, and business people impact their entrepreneurial potential. The university environment, by providing resources and experiential learning opportunities, equips these individuals with domain-relevant skills and fosters intrinsic motivation. This implies that nurturing creativity within this context can significantly enhance their capacity to

engage in entrepreneurial ventures. Creative thinking, encouraged through targeted programs and support, can improve their ability to solve problems and create value through innovation.

Together, these theories form a comprehensive framework for understanding the impact of creativity and innovation on entrepreneurship in ESUT. Schumpeter's Innovation Theory emphasizes the importance of innovation in driving entrepreneurial success, while Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity highlights the role of creativity as a precursor to innovation. By integrating these theories, this study will explore how creative and innovative abilities are nurtured within the academic environment and how these abilities translate into successful entrepreneurial ventures.

Empirical Studies

Juliana, Hui, Clement, Solomon and Elvis (2021) carried out a study titled "The Impact of Creativity and Innovation on Entrepreneurship Development: Evidence from Nigeria". This study employed a survey design with a valid sample size of 257, determined using the Yemane formula. Data analysis was conducted using the Ordinary Least Square method and ANOVA Test. Out of the five hypotheses tested, H2 and H5 were accepted due to their significant relationship with the measured variable, while H1, H3, and H4 were rejected due to their lack of significant impact on entrepreneurship development. The most influential variables identified were technological advancement and strategy. These findings differ from previous research by Ali Al Qudah (2018), suggesting that technological advancement and strategy are critical for innovation and entrepreneurship development. The matrix analysis revealed a strong relationship between creative thinking, innovation, and technological advancement, though the latter had a negative estimate on entrepreneurship development, suggesting its indirect role.

Salem and Beduk (2021) carried out a study titled "The Effect of Creativity and Innovation on Entrepreneurship". This study aimed to find out the relationship and impact of Creativity and Innovation on Entrepreneurship for foreign students at the Turkish Universities in Konya. The study used a questionnaire consisting of (44) items as a tool to collect data from respondents. Data has been collected from 252 respondents and analyzed by SPSS in order to present the statistical indicators for variables. This study found the relationship between Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship is a mutually beneficial relationship. Each of them needs to other. Innovation is affecting Entrepreneurship more than Creativity. Because the main task of innovation is to add value to products and services by producing new products and services or improving them in order to meet customers' needs and expectations effectively and efficiently.

Yusuf, Chukwuma, Araga and Usman (2024) carried out a study titled "Entrepreneurship and Innovation in The Digital Age". This research investigated the impact of various factors on entrepreneurship development, focusing on the correlation between technological advancement, strategies, creativity and innovation, resources, and government/management support. The study found that technology advancement and strategies significantly contribute to entrepreneurship development and economic growth, while resources negatively impact this development. The findings highlight the importance of considering critical factors that either propel or hinder entrepreneurship development, emphasizing the need for policy support and a comprehensive framework.

Azharuddin and Al-Kahtani (2024) carried out a study titled "The effect of entrepreneurial intention, innovation, and perceived creative behavior on entrepreneurship: Government support is a mediating variable". This study investigates the indirect effects of entrepreneurial intention, innovation, and perceived creative behavior on entrepreneurship, with government support as a mediator. Data were gathered from 140 employees in industrial companies within the private sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over a two-month period. Structural equation modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis was applied through the Smart Plus 4 program. Findings reveal that entrepreneurial intention positively affects entrepreneurship but does not directly influence government support. The findings highlight the complex interactions between entrepreneurial intention, innovation, creative behavior, and government support in fostering entrepreneurship.

Methodology

The study targeted a population of approximately 300 individuals within the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) community, categorized into three main groups: traders, artisans, and business people. These groups represent those actively engaged in various forms of entrepreneurship around the university's vicinity. The observed entrepreneurial activities within these categories include retail and trading (traders), artisan services (artisans), and technology and IT services, food and beverage, transportation services, education and training, and beauty and personal care (business people). This diverse population offers an ideal setting for examining the impact of creativity and innovation on entrepreneurial development.

Sampling

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure fair representation across the different business sectors in the ESUT community. The target sample size was 200 participants, selected from the total population of 300. The population was divided into strata based on the type of business (e.g., artisans, traders, business people). A proportionate sampling method was used to allocate the appropriate number of participants to each stratum, reflecting their proportion within the overall population. From each stratum, a simple random sampling method was applied to select participants, ensuring an unbiased and representative sample.

Method of Data Collection

The primary data for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire administered to the selected participants. The questionnaire was closed-ended and utilized a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of creativity, innovation, and their relationship to entrepreneurial activities.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), employing two primary analytical techniques to thoroughly examine the relationships between creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Regression Analysis was utilized to assess the influence of creativity, innovation, and other predictor variables on entrepreneurial outcomes. This technique helps in understanding the extent to which each factor contributes to the entrepreneurial success and identifying significant predictors of business growth and performance. Complementing this, a Correlation Matrix was used to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationships between creativity, innovation, and various entrepreneurial outcomes. This method provides insights into how closely linked these variables are, highlighting both positive and negative associations. Together, these analytical tools offered a comprehensive view of how creativity and innovation impact entrepreneurship within the ESUT community, allowing for robust testing of research hypotheses and deriving meaningful conclusions about their contributions to entrepreneurial success.

Results

Research Question 1: How does creativity influence the entrepreneurial development of traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community?

Regression Model Summary:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.85	0.72	0.71	0.55

ANOVA Table:

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	120.45	3	40.15	58.30	0.000
Residual	46.32	196	0.24		

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	166.77	199			

Regression Coefficients:

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.20	0.45		2.67	0.008
Creative Idea Generation	0.30	0.07	0.40	4.29	0.000
Problem-Solving Skills	0.25	0.08	0.35	3.12	0.002
Innovation in Business	0.28	0.09	0.38	3.11	0.002

The model accounts for 72% of the variance in entrepreneurial development among traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community ($R^2 = 0.72$). All predictors—creative idea generation, problem-solving skills, and innovation in business—are statistically significant with p-values below 0.05. The positive coefficients suggest that greater levels of creativity, problem-solving skills, and innovation are linked to more favorable entrepreneurial development. These results indicate that creativity has a positive impact on the entrepreneurial growth of traders, artisans, and business people within the ESUT community.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between innovation and the success rate of entrepreneurial ventures among traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community?

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.75	0.56	0.54	0.78

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	125.67	6	20.94	28.56	0.000

Coefficients

Variable	Un-standardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	1.20	0.55	2.18	0.031
Innovation Implementation	0.35	0.08	4.38	0.000
Business Performance	0.22	0.07	3.14	0.002
Competitive Edge	0.15	0.09	1.67	0.096
Customer Satisfaction	0.30	0.08	3.75	0.000
Profitability	0.28	0.09	3.11	0.002
Market Expansion	0.25	0.10	2.50	0.013
Customer Attraction	0.20	0.08	2.50	0.013

The analysis shows that about 56% of the variation in entrepreneurial success can be attributed to the innovation-related factors included in the model, as indicated by an R^2 value of 0.56. Specifically, Innovation Implementation, Customer Satisfaction, Profitability, and Market Expansion are significant predictors of entrepreneurial success, with p-values less than 0.05. Although Competitive Edge and Business Performance also positively relate to entrepreneurial success, they are less significant in this model. The SPSS regression analysis reveals that innovation-related factors significantly impact the success of entrepreneurial ventures among traders, artisans, and business people. Specifically, Innovation Implementation, Customer Satisfaction, Profitability, and Market Expansion all have a strong and positive influence on entrepreneurial success. This means that efforts to enhance innovation, improve customer satisfaction, increase profitability, and expand market reach are likely to lead to more successful business outcomes. Although Competitive Edge and Business Performance are positively related to entrepreneurial success, they are less significant in this analysis.

Findings

The findings from results of data analyses shows that:

1. Creativity has a positive impact on the entrepreneurial growth of traders, artisans, and business people within the ESUT community.
2. Innovation-related factors significantly impact the success of entrepreneurial ventures among traders, artisans, and business people.

Discussion

How creativity influences the entrepreneurial development

The finding that the model accounts for 72% of the variance in entrepreneurial development among traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community highlights the significant role of creativity, problem-solving skills, and innovation in fostering entrepreneurial success. The statistical significance of all predictors, with p-values below 0.05, reinforces the strong relationship between these factors and entrepreneurial development. Specifically, the positive coefficients suggest that higher levels of creativity, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and greater innovation contribute positively to entrepreneurial growth within the ESUT community.

Recent studies support this finding, emphasizing the crucial role of creativity and innovation in entrepreneurial success. For instance, a study by Kuckertz and Wagner (2010) found that creativity significantly impacts entrepreneurial performance by enabling the development of unique business models and solutions. Similarly, research by Wang and Li (2018) highlighted that problem-solving skills are essential for overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities in entrepreneurship, aligning with the positive impact observed in the ESUT study.

Conversely, some studies offer a more nuanced view. For example, a study by Haase and Franco (2017) found that while creativity is important, it is not always sufficient on its own for entrepreneurial success. They argue that other factors, such as market conditions and access to resources, also play a critical role. Additionally, research by Matzler, Veider, V., & Kathan (2014) suggests that while innovation is vital, its effectiveness can be influenced by the level of entrepreneurial experience and organizational support, which may vary among individuals. While creativity and innovation are critical drivers of entrepreneurial success, as supported by recent studies, they must be complemented by other factors such as market conditions, resource access, and experience. A holistic approach that integrates these elements will more effectively enhance entrepreneurial outcomes and address the complex challenges faced by entrepreneurs.

The relationship between innovation and the success rate of entrepreneurial ventures

The analysis reveals that approximately 56% of the variation in entrepreneurial success can be attributed to innovation-related factors, with an R^2 value of 0.56. Key predictors identified include Innovation Implementation, Customer Satisfaction, Profitability, and Market Expansion, all of which significantly impact

entrepreneurial success, as indicated by p-values less than 0.05. Although Competitive Edge and Business Performance also show a positive relationship with success, they are less prominent in this model.

Recent studies support these findings, highlighting the critical role of innovation in entrepreneurial success. For example, a study by DeJordy and Jansen (2023) found that innovative practices and market expansion strategies are crucial for sustained business growth and competitive advantage. Their research aligns with the current finding that Innovation Implementation and Market Expansion are strong predictors of success.

Conversely, some studies challenge this perspective. For instance, Johnson and Lee (2022) argue that while innovation is important, factors such as strategic leadership and operational efficiency can play a more significant role in entrepreneurial success. Their research suggests that focusing solely on innovation may overlook other critical components that contribute to business outcomes, potentially explaining why Competitive Edge and Business Performance, though positively related, are less significant in the current analysis.

Overall, while innovation-related factors such as Innovation Implementation, Customer Satisfaction, Profitability, and Market Expansion are undeniably influential in driving entrepreneurial success, it is important to consider a broader range of factors and their interplay. This comprehensive approach can provide a more nuanced understanding of what drives success in entrepreneurial ventures, especially within the context of the ESUT community.

Conclusion

The study on the impact of creativity and innovation on entrepreneurship at Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) provides significant insights into how these practices affect entrepreneurial success within this academic environment. The findings indicate that factors related to innovation—such as Innovation Implementation, Customer Satisfaction, Profitability, and Market Expansion—are crucial in driving entrepreneurial success, collectively accounting for about 56% of the variance in outcomes. This underscores the necessity of cultivating a supportive environment that fosters creativity and innovation. Although Competitive Edge and Business Performance are positively related to success, their influence is comparatively less significant. The study suggests the need for targeted interventions, such as strengthening support systems, improving resource access, and enhancing entrepreneurial education, to better support creativity and innovation among traders, artisans, and business people in the ESUT community. These findings offer valuable implications for developing effective strategies and policies to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem, not just at ESUT but in similar academic and business settings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. innovation hubs and incubators should be established within the ESUT community to provide traders, artisans, and business people with resources and guidance for developing and implementing creative ideas.
2. the availability of essential resources (such as funding, technology, and market information) should be increased, to support the practical application of innovative ideas.
3. entrepreneurial education programs should be revised and enhanced to better equip individuals with the skills and knowledge required to effectively leverage creativity and innovation in their ventures.

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