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**Entrepreneurship Education: A Catalyst for the Growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

This study examines Entrepreneurship Education as a Catalyst for the Growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigates the effects of Training Needs Assessment, Mode of Delivery, and Training Content on SME growth. Anchored on the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) Theory, the study adopted a descriptive survey design, with a population of 102 SMEs and a sample size of 102 SMEs, selected through a census sampling technique. Primary data was collected via a structured questionnaire, and 98 responses were retrieved. Regression analysis, conducted using SPSS, revealed that Training Content had the highest impact on SMEs growth, followed by Training Needs Assessment, while Mode of Delivery had the least effect. The study concludes that well-structured entrepreneurship education significantly enhances SMEs growth. It recommends regular assessment of training needs, diversification of delivery methods, and improved content quality to enhance the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. Findings contribute to both theoretical and practical knowledge, reinforcing the importance of knowledge-based strategies in entrepreneurship development.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Education, SMEs Growth, Training Assessment, Mode of Delivery, Training Content.

**1. Introduction**

*1.1 Background to the Study*

Education is very important in the training and development of human resource in any country through the impartation of appropriate skills, capacities, values, knowledge and attitudes which can be used in the transformation of individuals, communities, nations and the world at large. According to Ozumba (2003), entrepreneurship education can be used for wealth creation, poverty reduction, ensuring social-economic development, sustained self and national development. The planning, management and administration of education should be refocusing on deliberate process of using formal education to make it relevant, lifelong and functional by embracing entrepreneurship education to address the challenges of youth unemployment and under employment problem in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education according to Sule (2013), is the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities

necessary for the job creation. It is concerned about the application of those skills and activities that can take many forms during an individual's career, creating of long term benefits to the society and the economy. Reinforcing entrepreneurship education in schools, vocational institutions and universities will have a positive impact on the entrepreneurship dynamism of our economies. Indeed, besides contributing to the creation of social enterprise and business startup. . Entrepreneurship education will help in the growth of small and medium scale enterprises among young people in Benue State particularly in Gboko more employable and more 'entrepreneurial' in their work within existing organization, across the social, private and public sectors. Therefore, investing in entrepreneurship education is one of the highest returns investment that Nigeria can make. It is observed that people who have participated in any entrepreneurship training programs are likely to start a business at some point later in life than those who do not receive entrepreneurship education.

Statistics indicate that there is no better way than to dramatically increase the number of entrepreneurs in the society. SMEs sector is highly linked to entrepreneurship, Nigeria is known as the 'African Giant' due to its large population and economy. Nigeria's population exceeds 200 million, making it the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous country in the world. It is the 6th largest producer of oil and agricultural products in the world, including cocoa, peanuts, natural rubber and palm oil, and the 1st in Africa. Despite these favorable indicators, the country still suffers from severe poverty, anxieties, high unemployment and insecurity. In support of this claim, the World Bank (2022) found that Nigeria's poverty rate has increased since 2015 and that the unemployment rate has increased from 8% to 33% in 2022, pushing citizens into poverty.

Entrepreneurship has become the epicentre of global economic advancement in the 21st Century (Obschonka et al., 2017). Government, businesses, organisations and individuals now focus on the need to encourage more people to engage in start-ups (Ismail et al., 2017). Research traces the idea of entrepreneurship to the work of Schumpeter (1934), who provided one of the most compelling and comprehensive ideas and definitions of entrepreneurship. In his 1934 book, Schumpeter argued that not large firms with market currents, but small "new firms" operating in aggressive markets turned their thinking and understanding into improvements and initiated a financial hobby. In addition, he extended the concept by detailing his five responsibilities in his subsequent work (1942). By performing these roles, he suggested, entrepreneurs contribute to the "creative destruction" system. The five new combinations and obligations are brand new exact ones (which buyers are not yet familiar with) or brand new best fit creations. The introduction of new production techniques, i.e. techniques that have not been studied by indulging in related manufacturing sectors, are in no way intended to be based on new scientific discoveries, and may exist in entirely new ways of management (Longva, 2019).

Entrepreneurship education aims to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to stimulate entrepreneurial achievement in a dissemination environment. Variations in entrepreneurial education are offered at all school levels, (Penaluna and Penaluna, 2019). To grow an economy, the government must ensure the education or training of its citizenry with a

view of encouraging and supporting them to become entrepreneurs. An increase in the number of entrepreneurs in a nation will possibly result to more Small and Medium scale Enterprises (SMEs) in that nation. An SME according to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is one whose capital employed excluding land is between ₦1 million and ₦150 million and employs not more than 500 persons (Ebitu, Ufot, & Olom, 2015). National Council of Industry categorized SMEs based on three criteria: Size, Number of Employees, Total Cost Including Working Capital But Excluding Land Micro 1-10 Less than 1 Million Small 11-35 1Million – less than 40Million Medium 36-100 40Million – less than 200Million Large 101 and Above 200Million and Above (National Council of Industry, 2003).

### *1.2 Statement of the Problem*

Entrepreneurship education is expected to increase entrepreneurial self-efficacy, independence and willingness to take risks. When people are trained with the requisite knowledge and skills, they are likely to create new ventures, leading to more small and medium scale enterprises. Businesses are anticipated to grow speedily if the pioneer or venture capitalist possesses and showcases the right skills in managing it.

It has been observed that, majority of new business start-ups especially SMEs in Benue State particularly in Gboko Metropolis are failing to grow or exiting the market within few years of existence. The researcher noticed among other problems that lack of entrepreneurship education is the reason behind these failures. If entrepreneurs are assessed to determine their training needs, chose the right mode of delivery with the right training content, they would definitely excel and grow their businesses in terms of profit and provide employment to others.

It is against this back drop that this study is titled ‘Entrepreneur education: a catalyst for the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria.

### *1.3 Objectives of the Study*

The broad objectives of this study is to determine the effect of entrepreneurship education on growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria. The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To examine the effect of training needs assessment on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria.
- ii. To investigate the effect of mode of delivery on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria.
- iii. To determine the effect of training content on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria.

#### *1.4 Hypotheses*

**HO<sub>1</sub>** Training needs assessment has no significant effect on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria.

**HO<sub>2</sub>** Mode of delivery has no significant effect on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria.

**HO<sub>3</sub>** Training content has no significant effect on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

This section presents conceptual framework, theoretical framework and review of empirical studies.

### *2.1 Conceptual Framework*

The concepts of entrepreneurship education and growth of Small and Medium Enterprises are discussed here.

#### *2.1.1 Entrepreneurship education*

Entrepreneurship education is essential for the acquisition of skills, knowledge and competence for economic advancement (Meyer & Hamilton, 2020; Loi & Fayolle, 2021). While it has been increasingly embraced across the world (Herrington & Conduras, 2019) due to its multi-dimensional attributes and the debate on "what to teach?", there is no consensus on its definition (Fayolle, 2018). Entrepreneurship education has been described as a process that imparts knowledge and competence for the identification of business opportunities (Okeremi et al., 2021). Some scholars have expanded this definition to include the attitude to act on business opportunities (Adamu, 2016). Entrepreneurship education is a crucial predictor of personality traits for business creation (Fayolle, 2018), and its essence lies in skills acquisition and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset for business start-ups.

Ayatse (2013) states that entrepreneurial education is a key driver of the financial system, with wealth and the vast majority of employment generated by small businesses founded by entrepreneurs, many of whom congregate directly to form larger organizations. According to Ayatse (2013), those interested in entrepreneurial education will be given more freedom to innovate. Uzoma and Onere (2013) also point out that entrepreneurship education is not just about acquiring skills for learning. It is the acquisition of skills and thoughts to find work for oneself and others.

Entrepreneurship education, also called professional information, instills learners with propensities for risk-taking, innovation, arbitrage, and product coordination, to develop new products or services for new and existing users within community (Kabongo & Okpara, 2010). According to Ekwubara (2010), entrepreneurial education is considered important for the financial development of the country. Entrepreneurship education should increase entrepreneurial self-efficacy, independence and willingness to take risks.

### 2.1.2 Proxies of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education in this study is conceptualized to include training needs assessment, mode of delivery and training content. These dimensions are adapted from Musyimi and Mwasiaji (2023). They are highlighted below:

**i. Training Needs Assessment:** Business leaders need to optimize use of business resources in areas critical to enhanced organizational performance linked to its targets, improving operations, offering better products and services, and maximizing output. This can be facilitated through training, which is the first step of a continuous cycle encompassing relevance practices (Ferreira & Abbad, 2013). In this regard, a training needs assessment (TNA) is a critical requirement before creating a development plan (Dancher et al., 2013). TNA is further used to determine training necessities, content, timetables and preferred performance appraisal system. This conclusion is based on studies that have been undertaken seeking to establish a link if any between training Needs Assessment (TNA) with SME performance. Rahman et al., (2014) for instance explored the relationship between occupational stress, developing training needs, and performance enhancement of SME employees in Melaka. The primary objective of the study was to define the impact of stress factors on training needs on SME performance enhancement. Study findings indicated a significant correlation between occupational stress, training needs, and SME performance. Moreover, firms could use stress factors to develop a training needs assessment. However, the study primarily focused on stress factors which then imply a contextual gap. Another study by Dancher et al., (2013) sought to identify training needs for dynamic and unknown situations. The survey aimed to investigate the implication of training needs in dynamic and unknown situations. The study findings showed that a needs assessment is essential for effective training and development. Moreover, needs assessment helps advance dynamic competences and human capital. .

**ii. Mode of Delivery:** According to Huka et al. (2015), if individuals take entrepreneurship education at a young age, they are most likely to end up as entrepreneurs. The number of business people who have come up and were raised by self-employed parents can illustrate this, meaning that entrepreneurs' children learn new concepts and skills through observation and partaking in family enterprise undertakings. Formal training and education have attempted to replace this traditional way of learning (Huka et al., 2015; Valerio, Parton & Robb, 2014). However, there is no universal agreement as to which training method is more efficient and effective than the other, though some scholars believe that practical understanding is more beneficial and effective than other training methods (Mwasiaji, Kombo, Nawiri & Iloka, 2022; Mwasiaji, Mambo, Mse & Okumu, 2021; Nganu, 2018; Ipinnaiye, Dineen & Lenihan, 2017; Azim & Al-Kahtani, 2014; Njoroge & Gathungu, 2013). Other studies such as Matofari et al. (2015) reported that that most SMEs preferred on-the-job training as a learning method. Some of the tools with the most impact in practical training include interviews, demonstrations and presentations (Matofari et al., 2015; Valerio, Parton & Robb, 2014). However, the study does not indicate the population or sample size. The above study has a methodological gap which the current study sought to fill using a sample size of 121 SMEs. Another study by Jones, Beynon, Pickernell and Packham (2013) investigated the effect of training on organizational performance

in the public sector. The purpose of the study was to examine how different training methods influence the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

**iii. Training Methods:** Training should involve more practical learning methods to be more effective and not be limited to theory and lectures. Training programs have two main categories; training to acquire specific skills and techniques and training required for start-ups (Matofari et al., 2015). Training is mainly to gain particular knowledge and expertise, improve operations, boost motivation and inspire new investments (Huka et al., 2015). However, it is still unclear what aspects of training content are most significant considering that scholars in different disciplines have varying opinions. However, Azim and Al-Kahtani (2014) study identified factors such as resources, time frame, trainees and predicted impact of the development program on each individual. Different training content can be applied, meaning that the training objectives define the range of the training. The study findings suggest that additional training content needs to be in various stages of an organization, either in the development or implementation stages (Azim & Al-Kahtani, 2014). This study however relied only on secondary data, hence implying a methodological gap. Another study by Ladzani and Vuuren (2002) examined entrepreneurship education for developing small businesses in South Africa, with specific reference to motivation, entrepreneurship skills, and business skills. The study recommended improving entrepreneurial skills to foster creativity, innovation, and opportunity recognition. However, the research collected data from trainers and employees rather than entrepreneurs and business owners. The above study presents geographical and methodological gaps, hence the current study that generated empirical data from entrepreneurs in Gboko metropolis to fill the identified data gaps.

### 2.1.3 Concept of Business Growth

Business growth is a stage of a company's lifecycle that is triggered by increased: Sales, Customer base, Market share, Profitability, Opportunity to generate equity value and Expansion of operations and other aspects of the organization. Business growth is defined as a relative change in sales, assets, employment, profits and productivity (Allinson et al., 2006). According to Penrose (1959), depending on business age, size and industry business growth varies extensively. Barkham et al (1992) argues, in order measure business, sales growth is an achievable way compared with some other methods and is much more likely to be recorded. Sales are oftenly viewed as a key motivator by entrepreneurs and an indicator of performance rather than for example, job generation. Sales are a good indicator of size and, therefore, growth. Sales may also be considered a precise indicator of how a firm is competing relative to their market.

Growth can be vertical or horizontal. Vertical growth is the graduation and transformation into more modern small and medium businesses while horizontal growth refers to the formation of more businesses at the same level and employs the same number of staff per business set up (Carter, Ennis and Webb, 2002). Business growth is an important goal for many entrepreneurs and it is the catalyst for transforming a start-up into a small business, a small business into a medium-sized company, and expanding an organization from there; Why leaders create plans and objectives that work together to align with the strategic vision they have for their companies

and A critical factor that influences the success of any company (Team ninety, 2023). Small and medium-sized companies can achieve growth in four different ways:

- I. **Organic:** Organic growth happens when a company creates a favorable environment for expansion. New and small companies will start adding physical space and staff to accommodate increasing product and service offerings.
- II. **Internal:** When companies focus on improving core processes and available resources to enable expansion, they're building internal growth. This often occurs after measurable organic growth. It's a period of fine-tuning and preparation for strategic advances in future growth.
- III. **Strategic:** Companies focus on strategic improvements that help increase long-term growth. They will use the tangible results of organic growth and the purposeful results of internal growth to create more growth. Like investing in new and better products for new markets.
- IV. **Partnership-Merger-Acquisition:** A company can create growth by partnering with a company, merging two businesses, or acquiring another company. It's a collaborative way to enable growth with a high potential for reward.  
Companies approach business growth by using a variety of tactics. They can (Team ninety, 2023):

- i. Generate more success within their current market by increasing brand awareness.
- ii. Reach a new type of customer in their market with their current product and service offerings.
- iii. Focus on one segment of an industry to gain market share.
- iv. Introduce new products or new product features to create more value in their offerings.
- v. Integrate another aspect of their product or service production process into their business model.
- vi. Improve core processes to increase productivity and improve value.
- vii. Expand operations to new locations.
- viii. Focus on retaining current customers with high-quality service.
- ix. Diversify with new product creation for an entirely new market.
- x. Offer their products and services through new distribution channels.
- xi. Make operational changes that create more opportunities for growth.
- xii. Invest in other organizations as a stakeholder.

As a result of strong, sustainable business growth, small companies can (Team ninety, 2023):

- i. **Hire and retain more people:** When a company can put the right people in the right seats, production can be expanded, customer experience capabilities can improve, and new opportunities can be created.
- ii. **Enter new markets:** When a business can expand beyond an initial customer base, it creates additional growth goals for leaders and teams, research and development, human resources, and more.
- iii. **Gain competitive advantage:** When a company has an edge over the competition, it is much easier to win a larger share of the market.

**iv. Create more value:** When a business creates new products and services, it leads to better outcomes and improved profitability.

## *2.2 Theoretical Framework*

This study adopts the theory of Knowledge-Based-view (KBV) to explain the relationship between entrepreneurship education and growth of SMEs.

### *2.2.1 Knowledge-Based-view (KBV)*

Knowledge-Based-view (KBV) is the latest extension of the company's Resource Based-View (Kirsimarja & Aino, 2015; Randall, 2013). KBV of the firm therefore acknowledges knowledge as the most vital resource in the organization and, in that sense, makes it an adjunct of the Resource-Based-View of the firm. According to Kogut and Zander (1992), the central competitive dimension of enterprises is the sharing and transfer of not only information and know-how of individuals and groups within an organization, but also knowledge embedded in the organizational principles by which people cooperate within firms. It's noteworthy that knowledge-based resources are socially complex and difficult to imitate (Gupta et al., 2021). However, the KBV discusses the importance of expertise and skills in building business performance and developing the economy (Kirsimarja & Aino, 2015). Therefore, SMEs with well-trained staff will likely do better than organizations that do not have such vital resources. Kirsimarja and Aino (2015) observed that a well-educated entrepreneur makes wiser decisions concerning potential market trends, pricing strategies, risks, and opportunity recognition. Often, such crucial choices are the difference between successful and poor-performing businesses (Draghici, Fistis, Carutasu & Carutasu, 2021; Bansal & Tripathi, 2017).

Education and sufficient experience make it possible to form, analyze, plan and manage small- and- medium enterprises (Kirsimarja & Aino, 2015; Randall, 2013). Moreover, entrepreneurs can gain knowledge in acquiring, organizing, and utilizing information influencing business performance. Innovation also contributes to SMEs' performance, development, and reinvention over time (Draghici, Fistis, Carutasu & Carutasu, 2021; Randall, 2013). Hence, education and training foster learning. The KBV of the firm was judged to be relevant to this study since it illustrates the importance of gaining knowledge and experience and how it influences business performance. The model is a requisition for businesses to invest in their employees through training and education to improve their performance (Randall, 2013). Education and training equip personnel with essential information, skills, and technology to be effective and efficient (Kivinda, 2018). This concept infers that a well-educated workforce is more productive and efficient since the employees gain new expertise applicable to organizational performance.

## *2.3 Empirical Review*

Adeniyi, Gamede and Derera (2023) examined the link between dimensions of entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial readiness to start a business. A case study design was adopted, and the sample consisted of exit-level students at selected technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges in Lagos, Nigeria. A convenience sampling technique

was used to select three TVET colleges in Lagos State. Taro's equation model assisted in the determination of 301 students as the sample size. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as the Pearson correlation coefficient, regression model, and factor analysis were applied in the presentation of data, data analysis, and testing of hypotheses. The results indicate that business management skills and personal entrepreneurial skills significantly influence students' entrepreneurial readiness. However, technical, entrepreneurial skills showed an insignificant association with such readiness. A significant difference was found between male and female students' entrepreneurial readiness. The findings on the insignificant influence of technical, entrepreneurial skills and the gender gap highlight the need to address the components of the skill sets in the entrepreneurship curriculum.

Musyimi and Mwasiaji (2023) sought to establish the influence of entrepreneurship education, with specific reference to training need assessment, mode of delivery and training content, on growth of small and medium business enterprises in Kajiado County, Kenya. The training needs assessment model, knowledge-based view of the firm, and competence-based view formed the theoretical foundation, while descriptive research design was chosen in line with the general objective for this study. The unit of analysis was 180 SMEs, while the unit of observation was 121 entrepreneurs and senior executives selected using cluster sampling from five divisions. A semi-structured data collection tool was used to generate qualitative and quantitative data in line with the specific objectives of the study. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and results presented through percentages, tables and graphs. This study with a 68% response rate, established that training need assessment, mode of delivery and training content all have significant influence on the growth of small and medium enterprises in Kajiado County, Kenya. Nduta (2016) study was aimed at investigating the influence of entrepreneurial training on business growth of SMES among youth driven initiatives in Nairobi County. The study was guided by the following objectives: to analyze how creativity influences business growth of SMES among youth driven initiatives in Nairobi County, to establish how training programs influences business growth of SMES among youth driven initiatives in Nairobi County and lastly to assess how mode of delivery influences business growth of SMES among youth driven initiatives in Nairobi County. This research employs descriptive research design whereby data collected was presented without the researcher influencing the findings in any way. The research targeted youth owned SMES in Nairobi County. The research targeted owners, managers and employees of the SMES. Target population was 7494 and a sample size of 364 was taken by using the Morgan and Krejcie sampling Table. The research applied multi-stage sampling technique to sample its respondents. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The research utilized descriptive analysis for each of the questions asked in the questionnaires presenting their reliability, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was also applied to establish the correlations of the dependent and independent variables. Data obtained was analyzed using SPSS software and MS Excel. Research findings will enable the stakeholders involve in the SMES industry to identify the challenges facing the industry so that they can develop mechanisms of tackling the said challenges. The study concludes that creativity influences business growth of SMES among youth driven initiatives; that training programs influences business growth of SMES among youth driven initiatives; that mode of delivery influences business growth of

SMES among youth driven initiatives. The study recommended that The Ministry of Youth Affairs and sports in collaboration with the Ministry of Education should develop and implement comprehensive curriculum on entrepreneurship education and training which should be integrated at all levels from nursery to university, so as to build a strong entrepreneurial culture early enough in our youths. The researcher suggested that since the study was conducted in Nairobi County, a similar research should be carried out in other areas.

Akuh and Agbo (2023) research was to look into entrepreneurship education and the growth of SMEs in North-Central Nigeria. The study used a survey research design. The study's population includes all Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) registered with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), which totaled 5,188,310 entities as of 2022. The Taro Yarmane approach was used to determine the sample size for the study, which was 400 people. The study made use of multiple regressions to analyze the hypotheses of the study with the aid of SPSS version 21.0. The study found that entrepreneurial awareness has positive (23.040) and significant (.000) effect on growth of small and medium enterprises in North-Central, Nigeria, entrepreneurial learning has positive (16.608) and significant (.000) effect on growth of small and medium enterprises in North-Central, Nigeria while entrepreneurial curriculum has positive (5.979) and significant (.000) effect on growth of small and medium enterprises in North-Central, Nigeria. The study concluded that entrepreneurship education significantly affects growth of SMEs in North-Central, Nigeria. The study recommended that SMEs should place a high priority on raising awareness among entrepreneurs about crucial factors such as market trends, technological advancements, economic conditions, social and cultural dynamics, environmental considerations, and legal and regulatory requirements. SMEs owners and employees should be encouraged to actively participate in practical workshops, seminars, and training sessions that offer real-world case studies and hands-on experiences. SMEs should establish collaborations with universities, colleges, and vocational training institutions to develop and implement relevant and practical entrepreneurial curricula.

### **3.0 Methodology**

#### *3.1 Research Design*

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is suitable for investigating the impact of entrepreneurship education on the growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design allowed the researcher to systematically collect, analyze, and interpret data related to the effects of Training Needs Assessment, Mode of Delivery, and Training Content on SME growth.

#### *3.2 Population of the study*

The study population comprised 102 SMEs operating in Gboko Metropolis.

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

Given the relatively small size of the population, a census sampling technique was employed, meaning all 102 SMEs were included in the study. This approach ensured that the findings were comprehensive and reflective of the entire SME sector within the study area.

### 3.4 Instrument of Data collection

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The instrument was divided into sections covering demographic information, Training Needs Assessment, Mode of Delivery, Training Content, and SME Growth. The questionnaire was pre-tested for reliability and validity before full deployment. A total of 102 questionnaires were administered to SME owners and managers, out of which 98 were successfully retrieved, representing a 96% response rate. The high response rate was achieved through direct administration and follow-up visits by the researcher.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Technique

The study employed Regression Analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to test the research hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance ( $p < 0.05$ ), and the results guided the discussion of findings.

## 4.0 Discussion of Results

### 4.1 Regression Analysis

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	R square adjusted	F-statistic	Sig. F Change
1	.704 <sup>a</sup>	.732	.722	45.36	.0001

a. Dependent Variable: Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Content, Mode of Delivery, Training Needs Assessment,

**Source:** Researchers' Computation using SPSS, 2025.

The Model Summary table shows the overall fit of the regression model, indicating how well the independent variables (Training Needs Assessment, Mode of Delivery, and Training Content) explain the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria. The R-squared value of 0.738 suggests that approximately 73.8% of the variation in the growth of SMEs can be explained by the independent variables in the model. This is a strong indication that the factors included in the model have substantial explanatory power regarding SME growth.

The Adjusted R-squared of 0.722 accounts for the number of predictors in the model and adjusts for any overfitting. This value is slightly lower than the R-squared, which is typical as the

adjusted R-squared penalizes the model for including unnecessary variables. However, the value of 0.722 still reflects a very good fit of the model. The F-statistic of 45.36 with a corresponding p-value of 0.0001 indicates that the model as a whole is statistically significant. This means that at least one of the independent variables significantly explains the variation in the growth of SMEs. A p-value less than 0.05 confirms the overall validity of the regression model.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	43.23	3	14.41	45.36	.0001 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	15.34	94	.163		
Total	58.57	97			

- a. Dependent Variable: Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Training Content, Mode of Delivery, Training Needs Assessment,

**Source:** Researchers’ Computation using SPSS, 2025.

The ANOVA table provides insight into the significance of the regression model. The Sum of Squares (SS) for the model is 43.23, which represents the variation explained by the independent variables. The Residual SS of 15.34 represents the unexplained variation or the error in the model. The Total SS of 58.57 is the sum of the explained and unexplained variations. The Mean Square (MS) is computed by dividing the Sum of Squares by their respective degrees of freedom (df). The F-statistic (45.36) is the ratio of the Model Mean Square (14.41) to the Residual Mean Square (0.163). The F-statistic tests the null hypothesis that all coefficients are equal to zero (i.e., no relationship exists between the independent variables and SME growth). The p-value of 0.0001 indicates that the model is highly significant, confirming that the independent variables (training needs assessment, mode of delivery, and training content) collectively have a statistically significant effect on SME growth.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficients (B)	Standardized (Beta)	coefficients t	P-Value
(Constant)	1.247		3.88	.002
1 Training Needs Assessment	0.301	0.077	3.90	.001
Mode of Delivery	0.297	0.071	4.18	.001
Training Content	0.472	0.082	5.76	.001

- a. Dependent Variable: Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises

**Source:** Researchers’ Computation using SPSS, 2025.

The Regression Coefficients table provides the estimated values for each independent variable, representing the strength and direction of their relationship with the growth of SMEs. The intercept represents the predicted growth of SMEs when all independent variables are set to zero. The value of 1.247 suggests that when there is no training content, no needs assessment, and no mode of delivery, the baseline growth of SMEs is 1.247. This is the starting point from which the effects of the independent variables are measured.

The coefficient for Training Content is 0.472, which is the highest among the three independent variables. This means that for each unit increase in training content, the growth of SMEs is expected to increase by 0.472 units, holding other factors constant. The p-value of 0.0001 confirms that this effect is statistically significant. This result implies that the quality, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the training content provided to SME owners or managers play a critical role in fostering SME growth. This is consistent with the idea that effective and well-structured training programs tailored to the specific needs of SMEs contribute significantly to their development and expansion.

The coefficient for Training Needs Assessment is 0.301, indicating that for each unit increase in the assessment of training needs, the growth of SMEs increases by 0.301 units, assuming the other variables remain constant. This value also has a p-value of 0.0001, confirming statistical significance. This result highlights the importance of properly assessing the specific training needs of SME owners and employees before designing training programs. A well-conducted needs assessment ensures that the training is relevant and directly addresses the gaps in skills and knowledge, leading to better business performance.

The coefficient for Mode of Delivery is 0.297, which suggests that for each unit increase in the effectiveness of the mode of delivery (e.g., classroom training, online workshops, hands-on demonstrations), the growth of SMEs is expected to increase by 0.297 units, all other factors being equal. This effect is also statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.0001. While this value is the smallest of the three, it still indicates that the method by which training is delivered has a positive impact on SME growth. The delivery method must be engaging and accessible to SME owners and employees to ensure that training has the desired impact. For instance, in-person training might be more effective for hands-on skills, while online training could be better for theoretical knowledge.

In summary, the study provides strong evidence that Training Content, Training Needs Assessment, and Mode of Delivery all contribute significantly to the growth of SMEs in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State. However, Training Content has the greatest impact, followed by Training Needs Assessment and Mode of Delivery. These findings suggest that policy interventions aimed at enhancing SME growth should focus on improving the quality of training content, conducting thorough needs assessments, and ensuring effective delivery methods.

### **Test of Hypotheses and Discussion of Findings**

The study formulated three hypotheses to examine the influence of various components of entrepreneurship education on the growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State. These hypotheses were tested using regression analysis, and each of them was evaluated at a 5% significance level ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ).

#### **Ho<sub>1</sub> Training needs assessment has no significant effect on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria**

For this hypothesis, the regression result revealed a coefficient of 0.301 for Training Needs Assessment and a p-value of 0.0001. The p-value is much smaller than the significance threshold of 0.05. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected, implying that Training Needs Assessment does indeed have a significant positive effect on the growth of SMEs in Gboko Metropolis. This suggests that understanding and addressing the training needs of SMEs leads to better outcomes and growth. The positive coefficient for Training Needs Assessment suggests that when the training needs of SME owners and employees are properly assessed and addressed, the growth of SMEs is positively influenced. The p-value indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, leading us to reject the null hypothesis. This result emphasizes the importance of conducting thorough needs assessments before offering training programs. By identifying the skills gaps and specific needs of SMEs, training can be tailored to address critical areas that drive business growth. This finding aligns with that of Musyimi and Mwasiaji (2023) who established that training need assessment, mode of delivery and training content all have significant influence on the growth of small and medium enterprises in Kajiado County, Kenya.

#### **Ho<sub>2</sub> Mode of delivery has no significant effect on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria**

The regression result for Mode of Delivery showed a coefficient of 0.297 and a p-value of 0.0001, which is also well below the 0.05 significance threshold. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that Mode of Delivery does indeed have a significant positive effect on the growth of SMEs. Therefore, the method of delivering training programs (whether online, in-person, or workshops) plays an important role in ensuring that SMEs benefit from these programs, positively impacting their growth. Similarly, the positive coefficient for Mode of Delivery indicates that the method by which training is delivered (whether in-person, online, or through workshops) also has a positive impact on the growth of SMEs. The significance of this variable is confirmed by the p-value of 0.0001. While this is a smaller effect compared to training content and needs assessment, it still plays an important role in ensuring that the training is accessible and engaging for SME owners and employees. The method of delivery, whether practical (hands-on workshops) or theoretical (online courses), can enhance the overall learning experience and contribute to better business outcomes. This finding is supported by the finding of Nduta (2016) that mode of delivery influences business growth of SMES among youth driven initiatives in Nairobi County.

**HO<sub>3</sub> Training content has no significant effect on the growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State-Nigeria**

Finally, for Training Content, the regression analysis indicated a coefficient of 0.472 and a p-value of 0.0001, which is again below the 0.05 threshold. As such, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that Training Content has a significant positive effect on the growth of SMEs in Gboko Metropolis. This finding is critical as it underscores the importance of providing high-quality, relevant, and tailored training content that addresses the unique challenges faced by SMEs. The most significant factor affecting SME growth in this study is Training Content, with the highest coefficient. This suggests that high-quality, relevant, and comprehensive training content directly drives the growth of SMEs in Gboko Metropolis. This result highlights the importance of ensuring that training content is tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities faced by SMEs. Well-designed training programs that focus on practical business skills, such as financial management, marketing, and leadership, provide SMEs with the knowledge and tools needed to thrive in a competitive environment. This finding is in agreement with Akuh and Agbo (2023) who looked into entrepreneurship education and the growth of SMEs in North-Central Nigeria and found that entrepreneurial curriculum has positive and significant effect on growth of small and medium enterprises in North-Central, Nigeria.

*4.3 Implications of the Findings*

The results of the hypothesis tests and regression analysis have several important implications for policy makers, trainers, and SME owners in Gboko Metropolis:

Conducting a thorough Training Needs Assessment before implementing any training is essential. This ensures that the training programs offered are relevant and meet the specific needs of SMEs. A well-defined needs assessment helps in customizing training, which maximizes its impact on the growth and sustainability of SMEs.

While the Mode of Delivery is important, it appears to have a slightly lesser impact on SME growth compared to the other two variables. However, it is still critical to choose the appropriate method of delivery to ensure that training is accessible and effective. Different SMEs may benefit from different delivery methods (e.g., online training for those with limited mobility or in-person workshops for hands-on learning).

Since Training Content has the greatest positive effect on SME growth, it is crucial that training programs be well-structured, practical, and aligned with the specific needs of SMEs. Policymakers and training institutions should invest in developing content that addresses real-world business challenges and equips SME owners with the necessary skills to enhance their business operations.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

### *4.1 Conclusion*

The findings from this study highlight the significant contributions of Training Needs Assessment, Mode of Delivery and Training Content to the growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State. By prioritizing quality training content, conducting thorough needs assessments, and choosing appropriate delivery methods, policymakers and trainers can enhance the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programs and foster the growth of SMEs in the region. The positive effect of training on SME growth is evident, and these findings should inform future strategies for supporting the development of SMEs in Nigeria. Based on the findings from the regression analysis, this study concludes that entrepreneurship education has significant positive effect on the growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Gboko Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria.

### *4.2 Recommendations*

- i.** It is essential for stakeholders involved in entrepreneurship education to regularly assess the training needs of SMEs to ensure that educational programs are tailored to their specific challenges and opportunities. Policymakers and training providers should work closely with SMEs to identify their unique needs, including aspects such as market trends, financial management, and technological advancements. By continuously updating the training needs assessment, SMEs will receive the most relevant and impactful training to enhance their growth.
- ii.** The study found that the mode of delivery significantly impacts the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. To reach a broader audience and meet the needs of different SMEs, training should be offered through a variety of modes, including in-person workshops, online courses, and hybrid models. This diversity will ensure that all SMEs, regardless of their size or location, have access to high-quality training. Additionally, offering interactive and hands-on training methods such as case studies, simulations, and peer group discussions can enhance the learning experience and improve practical application.
- iii.** Since Training Content was identified as the most significant factor influencing SME growth, it is crucial to ensure that entrepreneurship education programs provide practical, up-to-date, and comprehensive content. The training curriculum should cover critical areas such as financial literacy, marketing, leadership skills, innovation, and problem-solving techniques. Furthermore, collaboration with industry experts and experienced entrepreneurs to design content will enhance its relevance and application, leading to more successful entrepreneurial outcomes.

### *4.3 Contribution to Knowledge*

Theoretically, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by applying the Knowledge-Based View (KBV) theory in the context of entrepreneurship education and SME growth. The theory emphasizes the role of knowledge as a key resource for competitive

advantage. By showing how entrepreneurship education enhances knowledge in critical business areas (such as financial management and marketing), the study reinforces the KBV theory's relevance to SMEs, particularly in the context of developing economies like Nigeria. This study also extends the theoretical understanding of how training needs, delivery methods, and content can align with the knowledge needs of SMEs for growth.

In practice, the study has important practical implications for policymakers, educators, and training institutions as it provides evidence that entrepreneurship education can be an effective tool for SME development when properly designed and delivered. The findings advocate for a more strategic approach to entrepreneurship education, with an emphasis on aligning training programs with the specific needs of SMEs. Additionally, the results encourage the development of policies that promote access to high-quality and relevant entrepreneurship training for small business owners and managers, especially in regions like Gboko Metropolis.

#### 4.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study suggests a comparative study on the impact of entrepreneurship education across different regions of Nigeria or even across countries to explore whether the identified factors influencing SME growth apply universally or if regional factors play a significant role. Such studies could provide insights into the cultural, economic, and infrastructural factors that may influence the success of entrepreneurship education programs.

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