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**CORRELATE OF BUSINESS INCUBATORS AND SMALL MEDIUM AND MICRO-ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT (SMMES) IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract.** This research explored the effect of business incubators on Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMES). The objectives of the study were to assess the significant relationship between business incubators and Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMES) and also to determine the significant relationship between entrepreneurs' views and business incubation. 60 incubatees was the population of the study which comprised of Ogun and Lagos State National Board of Technological Beneficiaries (NBTI). The research instrument was questionnaire. The ex-post facto method and Yamane formula was employed. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and correlation coefficient was adopted. The responses gotten from the questionnaire were sorted, coded and the statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was employed. The empirical findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between business incubators and Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMES) development. The findings of hypothesis two show that there is a significant relationship between Business Incubation Program and Entrepreneurs' view. The study found out that fear of failure of business has reduced as a result of business incubation which has benefited startup ventures. It has been revealed in this study that business incubation increases the numbers of startup ventures. The study recommends that Entrepreneurs must make sure they participate in incubation programs to enhance their knowledge acquisition and skills through training and development which will reduce business failure.

**Keywords:** business incubators, small medium and micro-enterprises (SMMES), entrepreneurs' view, demographics of entrepreneurs.

**JEL Classification:** M13, M20, M21.

## INTRODUCTION

The economic development of a nation is channeled towards technology driven based Small and Micro, Medium enterprises (SMMEs) which are found to be an important factor towards regional and national growth (Ndabeni, 2015). Moreover, these enterprises are faced with obstacles and problems such as availability of capital and financial resources, adequate infrastructure, knowledge acquisition and unfavorable government policies (Amabile et al., 2020; NBS, 2014). However, there is great clarion call for programmes targeted at providing these entrepreneurs and start-up enterprises with training, availability of resources in order for them to survive to avoid business discontinuity.

Business Incubation in Nigeria and Africa has been a bone of contention (Kowo et al, 2022; Emeh, 2012). Decades of research has been carried out to prove whether Business Incubation programme has a positive or negative effect on Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises development (SMMEs) Arogundade (2011); Mahmood et al, (2015). Mothibi (2014) found a negative relationship between business incubation and SMMEs performance. However, Elmansori (2014); Li et al, (2011) found a positive result between business incubation and SMMEs. It has been proven that the study on business incubation is inconclusive and under explored. In African countries today, employment growth has being a subject of debate with rapid increase in population rate. For this reason it is of great necessity to promote entrepreneurship studies as a means of reducing the rate of unemployment and reducing poverty in the society (GEM, 2012; Abraham & Knight, 2020).

Joseph Schumpeter viewed entrepreneurship as “new combinations, including the doing of things that are already being done in a new way (Salami, 2011; Elmansori, 2014). This research seeks to reveal the relationship between business incubators and Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMEs). More so, how entrepreneurs’ view affect business incubation programmes will be proven. Several researchers have found a negative effect on Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises development (SMMEs), Agboola (2010); Oshewolo (2010); Lalkaka (2015); Elmansori (2014) and Matuluko (2015).

In the web of science on the study of business incubation there is no research that have examined the effect of entrepreneurs’ views on business incubation programmes (Okafor et al, 2015; Bakaret al, 2015). Others researches focus on the relationship of business incubation on SMEs, innovation and entrepreneurial capabilities (Albort et al., 2016; Tengeh&Choto, 2015; Nwekweaku, 2013). Measuring entrepreneurs view on business incubation will help to determine the negative and positive effect of business incubation on the Nigeria economy. However, this is the first study that will be investigating the effect of entrepreneur’s view on business incubation. Characters and views of entrepreneurs will be measured and how this affect SMMEs will be ascertained.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Small Medium and Micro-Enterprises (SMMEs)

Arogundade (2011) defined micro, small and medium-sized enterprises main factors by determining an enterprise is SMMEs based on the following features and conditions: (1) staff headcount and (2) either turnover or balance sheet total. Small-sized enterprise is a company that comprises of less than 50 employees and a medium-sized enterprise as one that has below 250 employees (Eze&Nwali, 2012; Naude, 2011; Mahmood et al, 2015). SMMEs can be observed as heterogeneous in terms of population whose performance in terms of international competitiveness, productivity, performance, growth and wages differs considerably across different regions, areas firms and sectors. This can be explained by several factors and differences, such as the business environment, the size of the economy, market structures, institutions, business conducts and resource endowment.

In Australia, micro-firms are over-represented; it was revealed that Japan and the United States have relatively more large firms (Nwabueze&Ozioko, 2011; BoothJones, 2012; Jamieson, 2014). However, SMMEs can perform more than large enterprises in the area of services sectors, many new start-up ventures and job creation occurs in sectors that has below average productivity levels (Kowo et al, 2021a). Moreover, new established firms are often start smaller, with increased productivity gaps differences between small and large firms at the aggregate business level. This lower productivity has being as a result of more lower-paid jobs. SMMEs and larger ones were seen paying employees around 20% less than large firms (EU, 2002; Bollingtoft, 2012). Considering the current business dynamics rate on personal income and material well-being, these developments has raise concerns and agitation about education and training of the workforce environment (Almubarak&Busler, 2010).

### **Concept of Business Incubation and SMMEs Development**

Business incubation has been studied for the past decades. Research on business incubations has shown that business incubation has enhanced SMMEs growth and development (Kowo et al, 2022). There is need for training and development through business incubation. SMEs development with the aid of business incubation programme is one of the most important determinants in the management and entrepreneurship research (Kuczmarski, 2020). Continuous growth is the main goal of any enterprise because only through growth, organizations are able to progress. Attaining the SMEs goal depends upon the extent to which its growth is reached (Garrett, 2008). There has being issues on the concept of SMMEs development in the academic literature which has being a subject of debate, over the decades there is not a universal accepted definition of this concept. SMMEs development can be recognized and pointed at by effectiveness (whether an enterprise can attain or achieve its goals aims and objectives), efficiency is regarded (whether an enterprisemake uses of available resources efficiently and properly), customer innovativeness, employees satisfaction, ability of enterprise to maintain human pool and quality of products or services (Sithole&Rugimbana, 2014; Muyengwa et al, 2014).

Different scholars have revealed that business incubators are important element for enhancing SMEs growth and development, it also helps in the creation of enterprises, entrepreneur sustainability, reducing unemployment rate and reducing poverty rate (Al- Mubarak&Busler, 2010; Lesakova, 2012; Mitra et al, 2011; Herrington et al, 2011). The major primary aim of business incubators' is to increase the number of start-ups businesses, eradicating business failure and enhancing SMMEs growth and development (Arokiasamy, 2012; Kowo et al, 2021a). Business incubators has gained popularity in different countries, most especially in Nigeria in recent years, it has been observed as a major tools for increasing successful local companies survival (Emeh, 2012; Adegbite, 2001; Adejimola&Olufunmilayo, 2009). It was discovered that SMMEs growth can be judged by financial availability and stability of business incubation but the possibility of efficiency in this regard is through effective human resources planning and training of entrepreneurs. Other factors cannot be left out such as motivation, satisfaction of employees, trust and effectiveness. (Masutha&Rogerson, 2014; Ntiاملة, 2015).

### **Business Incubation, Training and Its Influence on SMEs Growth**

It has been confirmed by researchers of entrepreneurship studies that incubators are seen by policy makers as tools for promoting economic growth and social development through job creation (European Commission, 2002; Barringer& Ireland, 2018; Dawson & Henley, 2012). Incubator is an avenue for economic development tools in most countries (Al- Mubarak&Busler, 2010; Hernandez &Carra, 2016). Moreover, business incubation is being categorized as a panacea for the business and economic challenges, poverty and youth unemployment. Harmandez and Carra (2016) emphasized that incubator focus more on the physical dimension but it was criticized by Lose and

Tengeh (2015) that found that incubators are business support that facilitates in reducing business failure. However, Moris. Webbs and Singhal, (2013) mentioned that incubators is characterized by service of people through formation of process, people and services rather than physical structure. These include tenant companies and their employees, the management and staff of the incubator facility, external communities, professional services providers and industry contacts. Incubatee is been referred as the beneficiaries of business incubation such as client, tenant companies and portfolio (Mc Adam & Mc Adam, 2008).

Oviame (2010) opined that Business incubator is a vital mechanism and tool that enhances SMMEs productivity and performance. With the aid of training, entrepreneurs and employees develop new skills which enhance effective growth of an enterprise. Amabile et al, (2020) posits that “there is nothing permanent except change”. Change in the course of jobs and activities being performed or carried out which are being done is inevitable. In the path of these new dispensation and evolutionary trend and changes, training and knowledge acquisition in business incubation is the only remedy which can help us in the world of today. Therefore, as the societies expand and move from traditional to industrial, and from industrial to post-industrial, technology driven enterprise is the course of evolution and development, along these changes it was revealed that the importance and features of training and development becomes more relevant (Abraham & Knight, 2020; Jamieson, 2014).

It is being said today that training is in fact the management itself. In the development of human capital in the work place, training has been regarded as a critical source of SMMEs (Kurosawa, 2005). Business incubator is regarded as the most vital instrument and key in the enhancement of SMMEs growth and productivity. Also developing new skills is a prerequisite being achieved through business incubator. Training as a process has enhanced productivity of individuals (EU, 2002) also it was revealed that investing in training of staff and employees on interpersonal relation, customer relation, decision making, problem solving and teamwork, has beneficial impact on the SMMEs’ enhance growth, as well as increasing the performance of employees’. Employees behavior is affected by Training because it affects their working skills and performance (GEM, 2012).

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Performance Regulation Perspective Theory**

This theory postulates that performance regulation perspective takes a different dimension at individual performance and is less interested in person or situational predictors of performance. Rather, this approach determines the performance process itself and conceptualizes it as an action process method. Research on expertise and excellence has being considered having a long tradition within cognitive psychology and is increasingly seen and used within work and business psychology (Garrett, 2008). It is one of the vital aims of expertise research to identify what differentiate individual’s performance at different performance job levels. Furthermore, expertise research pointed out process features of the task accomplishment process and procedures. It focus at a description of the differences between moderate performers high factors while working on a task or performing the tasks job. Findings has revealed and proved that moderate performers are different from high performers in the way they approach their tasks and how they arrive at solutions (Garrett, 2008).

### **Gap in Literature**

The most vital source and major determinant of employment are SMMEs, but it has been found that SMMEs are being affected by capital and technology. Small and medium enterprises usually do not have sufficient knowledge and experience of personnel management practices (Lalkaka, 2015; Kowo et al, 2022). Different programs of training and entrepreneurship programmes have been established in Nigeria as a measure of unemployment reduction. While there are several studies examining the moderating role of business incubation in enhancing SMMEs development, very few studies have studied on how business incubation programme affect Small,

Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMEs) development. More so, the entrepreneur's views on business incubation programmes has not been proved or ascertained which has being a contention in entrepreneurship studies. Therefore this study examined the effect of these variables for proper understanding to enhance SMMEs growth and development. The findings of this research will be useful for policy makers, academicians, entrepreneurs and managers of SMMEs. The need for a comprehensive approach to assessing the contribution of entrepreneurship programmes, taking into cognizance the multiplicity of external and internal factors. Being the first to make use of these variables in the study of business incubation and how it affects SMMEs will provide a new lens in the study of entrepreneurship education.

## METHODOLOGY

The population of this study comprised of 60 incubatees in Ogun and Lagos State National Board of Technological Beneficiaries (NBTI). The study selects Ogun State National Board of Technological Beneficiaries. Questionnaire was the research instrument adopted which was will sent to 60 respondents. The ex-post facto method and the quantitative research design were used. Relevant data was collected at the same instance; a cross-sectional design was adopted well which is the study where the exposure and outcome are observed simultaneously in the population. Yamane formula was adopted to determine the sample size. The study employed relevant statistical tools such as analysis of variance (ANOVA) and correlation efficient. The responds gotten from the questionnaire was be sorted, coded and the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 used for the analysis.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

### Test of Hypotheses and Discussion of Results

#### Hypotheses One

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between Business incubators and Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMEs) development.

Table 1.

*Model Summary of Regression*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.591 <sup>a</sup>	.362	.310	.93432
Predictors: (Constant), Business Incubations has enhanced SMMEs growth and development.				
Source: Computer Computation, SPSS v20.				

According to the results indicated in table 1, Business incubators provide SMMEs with a clear direction and purpose, training enhances Knowledge and skills acquisition. knowledge acquisition provide benchmarks for which performance can be measured and evaluated, training help in prioritizing resource allocation within the organization and encourages SMMEs to engage in strategic planning which shows  $R^2 = .362$  of variance as impacts of Business incubators on Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMEs) development. This show there is significant relationship between Business incubators and Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMEs) development.



Table 2.

*ANOVA<sup>a</sup>*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.312	1	12.265	15.018	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	24.435	198	.873		
	Total	36.700	199			
Predictors: (Constant) Business Incubations has enhanced SMMEs growth and development.						
Source: Computer Computation, SPSS v20.						

The predictors on the criterion was significant (F= 15.018; P > 0.05)

Table 3.

*Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	The economic development of a nation is channeled towards technology driven based Small and Micro, Medium enterprises (SMMEs)	2.173	.539		4.055	.000
	Business Incubations has enhanced SMMEs growth and development.	.581	.156	.578	3.749	.001
Dependent Variable: The economic development of a nation is channeled towards technology driven based Small and Micro, Medium enterprises (SMMEs)						
Source: Computer Computation, SPSS v20.						

**Hypotheses Two**

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between Business Incubation Program and Entrepreneurs view

Table 4.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.008 <sup>a</sup>	.041	.041	.99758
a. Predictors: (Constant), Business Incubation helps in the creation of enterprises, entrepreneur sustainability, reducing unemployment rate and reducing poverty rate				

Source: Computer Computation, SPSS v20.

According to the results indicated in table 4, Business Incubation helps in the creation of enterprises, entrepreneur sustainability, reducing unemployment rate and reducing poverty rate. Effectiveness of training within the SMMEs directly impacts the entrepreneurs view and capabilities. Employee's knowledge and skills enhance SMMEs performance. SMMEs that participate in business incubation program tend to have higher productivity and growth levels. Entrepreneurs view and mindsets achieve from business incubation will enhance the performance of SMMEs positively. SMMEs that participate in business incubation program are flexible and adaptable to organizational structures which makes them to be better positioned to innovate and introduce new products or services in response to changing customer preferences which shows  $R^2 = .041$ . This shows that there's significant relationship between Business Incubation Program and Entrepreneurs view

Table 5.

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.002	1	.002	.036	.941 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	27.915	198	.995		
	Total	27.875	199			

Source: Computer Computation, SPSS v20.

The predictors on the criterion was significant ( $F = .036$ ;  $P > 0.05$ )

Table 6.

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Entrepreneurs' view affect business incubation program	4.238	.676		6.271	.000
	Business Incubation helps in the creation of enterprises, entrepreneur sustainability, reducing unemployment rate and reducing poverty rate	.007	.164	.008	.044	.965
a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurs' view affect business incubation program						

Source: Computer Computation, SPSS v20.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The empirical findings reveal that business incubators affect Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises (SMMEs) positively. Significantly enhance SMMEs growth and development. Research findings have proved that 70% of startup ventures that has survived in Nigeria passed through the incubation programs. The findings of hypothesis two have shown that Business Incubation Programmes affect Entrepreneurs view. Many respondents agreed that incubation programs have aid startup businesses to survive because it gives entrepreneurs a positive view about their environment. Facilities offered by the incubation programs such as business knowledge acquisition, coaching, business knowledge, network mediation were applauded by the entrepreneurs in the research. The study found out that fear of failure of business has reduced which has benefited startup ventures with the aid of business incubation. Business incubators have also contributed to the growth of SMMEs to compete in the global market which has enhanced their training facilities, and it has helped the government to reduce the unemployment rate.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research is an area of entrepreneurship studied that was underexplored. For this reason formulation of robust hypotheses was limited. The results align with the findings of several scholars programmes Okafor et al, 2015; Bakar et al, 2015; Albort et al, 2016; Tengeh&Choto, 2015; Nwekweaku, 2013; Kowo et al, 2022. that found out that business incubators affect SMMEs positively. It has been discovered that knowledge acquisition alone does not guarantee great businesses success and survival. Neither does success in entrepreneurship is as a result of entrepreneurial knowledge alone. Moreover, entrepreneurship programmes established by government and entrepreneurship agencies do not guarantee entrepreneurship performance of a country with a multiplicity of interacting factors. Having observed that in the study of entrepreneurship education, incubators program provide opportunity for relevant and adequate resources which can serve as a vital tools and determinant towards the functionality of entrepreneurs. This study has helped to determine the effects of business incubation on SMMEs performance, SMMEs development and entrepreneur's views finally, it was proven and ascertained in this study that business incubators enhanced economic development of a Nation by increasing start-up enterprises which reduce employment rate.

### **Recommendations**

- i. It has been reveled in this study that business incubation increases the numbers of startup ventures. Entrepreneurs must make sure they participate in incubation programs to enhance their knowledge acquisition and skills through training and development which will reduces business failure.
- ii. Technology incubators should be increased across different regions and states in Nigeria, most specifically regionsthat has high technology potentials. This will assist to duplicate the positive results of business incubation programmes in the country, thereby reducing business failure and increasing employment rate.

### **Limitations of the study**

Small Sample population was explored in this study which resulted to foreclosing the possibility of generalization. Furthermore, respondents who were asked on their view towards business incubation might result to a subjective bias in this study because of self-report measures.

### **Future Research**

Further research shouldstudy on how business incubation program can enhance entrepreneur's capabilities as well as which capabilities approach makes the most effective and difference.



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## **ВЗАЄМОЗВ'ЯЗОК МІЖ БІЗНЕС-ІНКУБАТОРАМИ ТА РОЗВИТКОМ МАЛИХ, СЕРЕДНІХ ТА МІКРОПІДПРИЄМСТВ (МСП) У НІГЕРІЇ**

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У цьому дослідженні вивчався вплив бізнес-інкубаторів на малі, середні та мікропідприємства (МСП). Метою дослідження було оцінити значний зв'язок між бізнес-інкубаторами та малими, середніми та мікропідприємствами (МСП), а також визначити значний зв'язок між думками підприємців та бізнес-інкубацією. 60 інкубатів були вибіркою дослідження, яка складалася з Національної ради технологічних бенефіціарів (НБТБ) штатів Огун та Лагос. Інструментом дослідження було анкетування. Використовувався метод *ex post facto* та формула Ямане. Було застосовано дисперсійний аналіз (ANOVA) та кореляційний аналіз. Відповіді, отримані під час анкетування, були відсортовані, закодовані та оброблені за допомогою статистичного пакету для соціальних наук (SPSS) версії 20.0. Емпіричні результати показали, що існує значний зв'язок між бізнес-інкубаторами та розвитком малих, середніх та мікропідприємств (МСП). Результати другої гіпотези показали, що існує значний зв'язок між програмою бізнес-інкубації та думкою підприємців. Дослідження виявило, що страх невдачі бізнесу зменшився в результаті бізнес-інкубації, що пішло на користь підприємцям-початківцям. У цьому дослідженні було виявлено, що бізнес-інкубація збільшує кількість стартапів. Дослідження рекомендує підприємцям обов'язково брати участь в інкубаційних програмах, щоб покращити свої знання та навички через навчання та розвиток, що зменшить кількість невдач у бізнесі.

**Ключові слова:** бізнес-інкубатори, малі, середні та мікропідприємства (МСП), погляд підприємців, демографічні показники підприємців.