

## Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Students' Innovation and Creativity in Nigerian Public Universities



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**ABSTRACT:** Entrepreneurship education is designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge required to start and run successful businesses, as well as to foster an entrepreneurial mindset. Through entrepreneurial courses, students are expected to learn how to identify market opportunities, develop business plans, and acquire the necessary resources to bring their ideas to fruition. They also learn about risk management, financial management, and marketing strategies, which are essential skills for any entrepreneur. Hence, this study examined the influence of entrepreneurship education on students' innovation and creativity. Multiple regression analysis was employed to analyse the data collected from 244 undergraduate students in federal universities in north-central geo-political zone, Nigeria. The findings revealed that (1) there is a positive significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' innovation; (2) entrepreneurship education has a significant influence on students' creativity. Therefore, it is broadly recommended that universities should not see entrepreneurship education as the courses that must be passed through test, presentations and examinations, rather the courses should be assessed based on success recorded by students in their chosen areas of business or ingenuity (practical evaluation).

**KEYWORDS:** Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship education, Innovation, Creativity.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education can be traced back to Harvard Business Institution in 1947, when the school offered the topic to a class of 188 MBA students. Since then, public policy makers have recognized the significance of entrepreneurship education in the development of the world's socio-economic infrastructure, and interest in the subject has continued to increase. Velasco (2013) noted that entrepreneurial education could be regarded as a primary driver of economic growth in developing countries. Entrepreneurship education is the most important driving force behind the development of a country's income and capacity, as the number of successful entrepreneurs will have a significant impact on the nation's overall development and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). When it comes to the most dynamic countries in the world, Saiz-Alvarez and Ruiz (2016) stated that the quality or quantity of entrepreneurship is particularly important, especially when expansive fiscal policies are limited, consumption is reduced, and investment have an impact on the labour market in terms of employment and poverty.

In Nigeria, the government instructed that Entrepreneurship education classes be added to the curriculum of universities in 2002 in order to develop students' mindset of entrepreneurship and self-reliance, and this was implemented in 2003. This was done in order to encourage self-employment and poverty alleviation as well. The initiative is in accordance with the European Union's recommendation that entrepreneurship education should be included as a core component of university education. Despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education, the projected increase in innovation and creativity as a result of the entrepreneurship education is a long way off. It is observed that jobs are not a good match for the skills and experience which could be attributed to the implementation of curriculum in schools. According to economist Michael J. Handel, job mismatch occurs when the volume of labour force in the labour market is either over or underqualified in comparison to the skill levels of positions supplied by businesses.

Many students have attempted to become successful entrepreneurs, but have failed to get the results they hoped for. Many variables contribute to the failure of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, this includes the substance of the courses taught in universities, the parties involved, the delivery methods used, and the organization of the courses themselves. Student entrepreneurs faced issues that were beyond their control due to the fact that the majority of them were not taught to be

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innovative entrepreneurs through the entrepreneurship education programmes offered at their respective schools, which hampered their ability to grow their firms. According to Corte and Gaudio (2017), Creative Entrepreneurship is similar to an overall process of creation, both in the face of possibilities and threats, as well as in the context of resources, their combinations, and changes in the environment. Creative thinking and innovation are two fundamental components of entrepreneurship education, and they are two unavoidable aspects of it. Both notions, which have diverse definitions, are essential to the operation of any organization. Dimnwobi, Ekesiobi, and Mgbemena (2016) stated that while creativity and innovation appear to be the same thing, they are actually two very separate things. Creativity and innovation are inextricably linked, and both can be enhanced through appropriate entrepreneurship training. Without creativity, there can be no innovation; and creativity is the driving force behind innovation and the incorporation of looking at things from a fresh perspective, as well as the freedom from limits imposed by rules and unwritten or written standards, among other things. Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is being misunderstood by different schools of thought. The government regarded it as a form of empowerment that lacked the necessary mentoring element. Without the much-needed practical simulation and coaching, our educational institutions consider it to be a merely academic course that students from all faculties should take in order to meet specific guidelines or requirements to be fulfilled while in schools. Although, there are many studies conducted on entrepreneurial education but the most of them have not taken into account their impact on creativity and innovation. Among the studies were Li and Wu (2019); Weinberger, Wach, Stephan & Wegge (2018); Al Qudah (2018); Grecu & Denes (2017); Gontur, Davireng & Gadi (2016); Welsh, Tullar & Nemati (2016); Rytkola, Seikkula-Leino & Pihkala (2015); Lorz, Mueller & Volery (2013); Velasco et al. (2013); Lorz, Mueller & (2013). Even though, Wei, Liu, and Sha (2019) investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' innovation, the study was not conducted in Nigeria. Thierry Volery, Michael Lorz and Susan Mueller (2013) noted that most studies that have examined the impact or role of Entrepreneurship Education on entrepreneurial attitudes, intentions, and venture activities reported a positive influence, but that the outcomes were questioned regarding the research methods employed in the studies. As a result, the purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of entrepreneurship education on students' innovation and creativity in Nigeria. Hence, the research is built on the following hypothetical statements:

H1: Entrepreneurship education has significant influence on students' innovation.

H2: Entrepreneurship education has significant influence on students' creativity.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Definitions of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education

The word entrepreneur is derived from the French word 'entreprendre,' which literally translates as 'to undertake,' referring to persons who take on the risk of starting a new business. The term "entrepreneur" first arose in the French language at the start of the sixteenth century. The term was also used to refer to the leaders of military expeditions of the time. Richard Cantillon, an Irishman who lived in France at the time, was the first person to use the term "entrepreneur" to refer to someone who engages in commercial activity. Entrepreneurs, according to Cantillon, 'are those who purchase factor services at predetermined rates with the intention of selling their output at unpredictably high prices'. Thus, entrepreneurship is a mechanism by which society converts technical information into these products and services (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). In a developing economy, the development of entrepreneurial skills is extremely important as unemployment and underemployment are affecting the economic development of the underdeveloped countries. The success or failure of a country's economic development is essentially determined by its entrepreneurial development. The key areas of Entrepreneurship education are as follows:

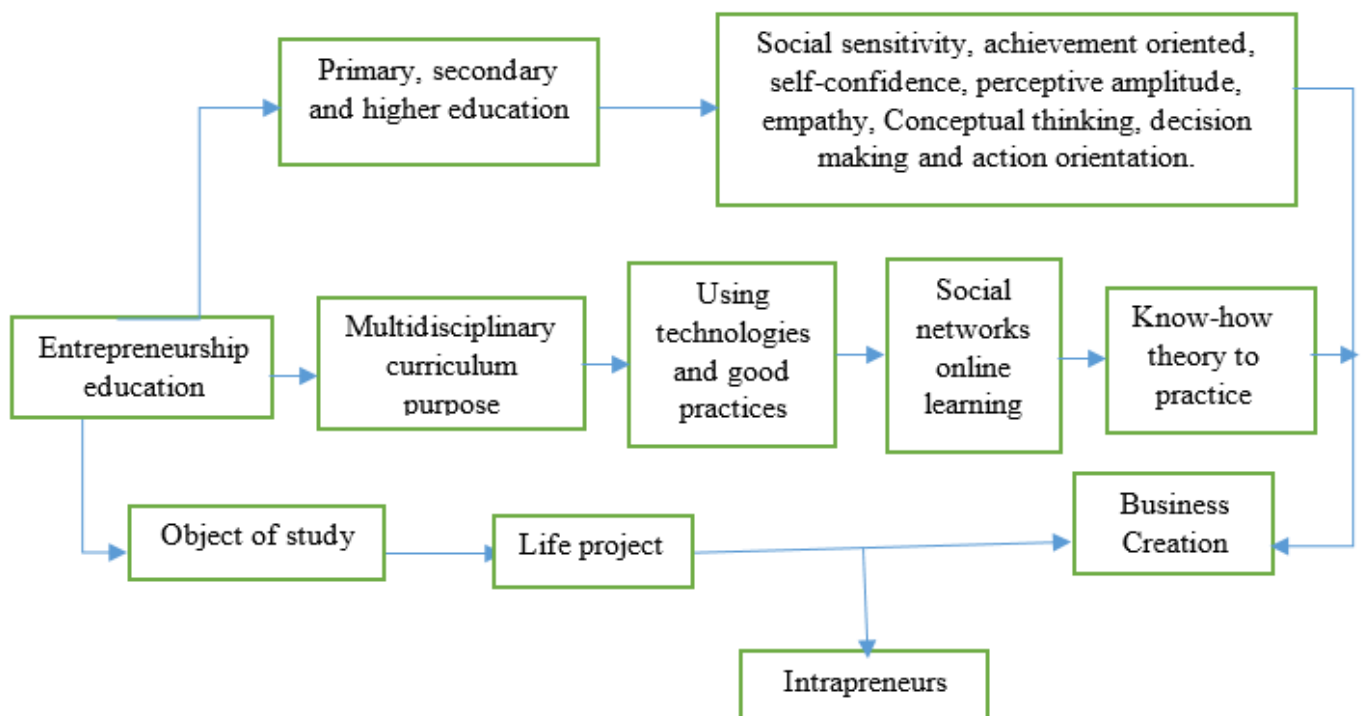
#### Key Areas in Entrepreneurship Education

S/N	Key Areas	Components of Key Areas
1.	Program Content (What)	Entrepreneurial mindset Self confidence Out-of-box thinking Managing complexity and unpredictability Business skills and Literacy Opportunity identification Negotiating skills Building relationship: Networking and social capital
2.	Organisation (Where)	Formal school system At all levels Across discipline

	Compulsory and Elective courses Informal system Local schools, Training Institution Community Business Centres & NGOs Government Agencies and Banks Workplace-based training programmes Life-Long Learning
3. Stakeholders (Who)	Students Teachers and School Administrators Trainers Business people and leaders in other sectors Entrepreneurs Mentors, Coaches and Advisors
4. Method of delivery (How)	Interactive learning pedagogies Multi-disciplinary programs and projects Case studies, games, simulations, business plan competition Extensive use of visuals, digital tools and multi-media Projects, internships and start-ups Mentoring and Coaching Interaction with entrepreneurs

**Source:** Adapted from Velasco (2013)

From the above table, Velasco (2013) analysed four key areas in entrepreneurship education which include program content (courses); organisation (Universities); stakeholders (lecturers and students); and method of delivery (teaching).

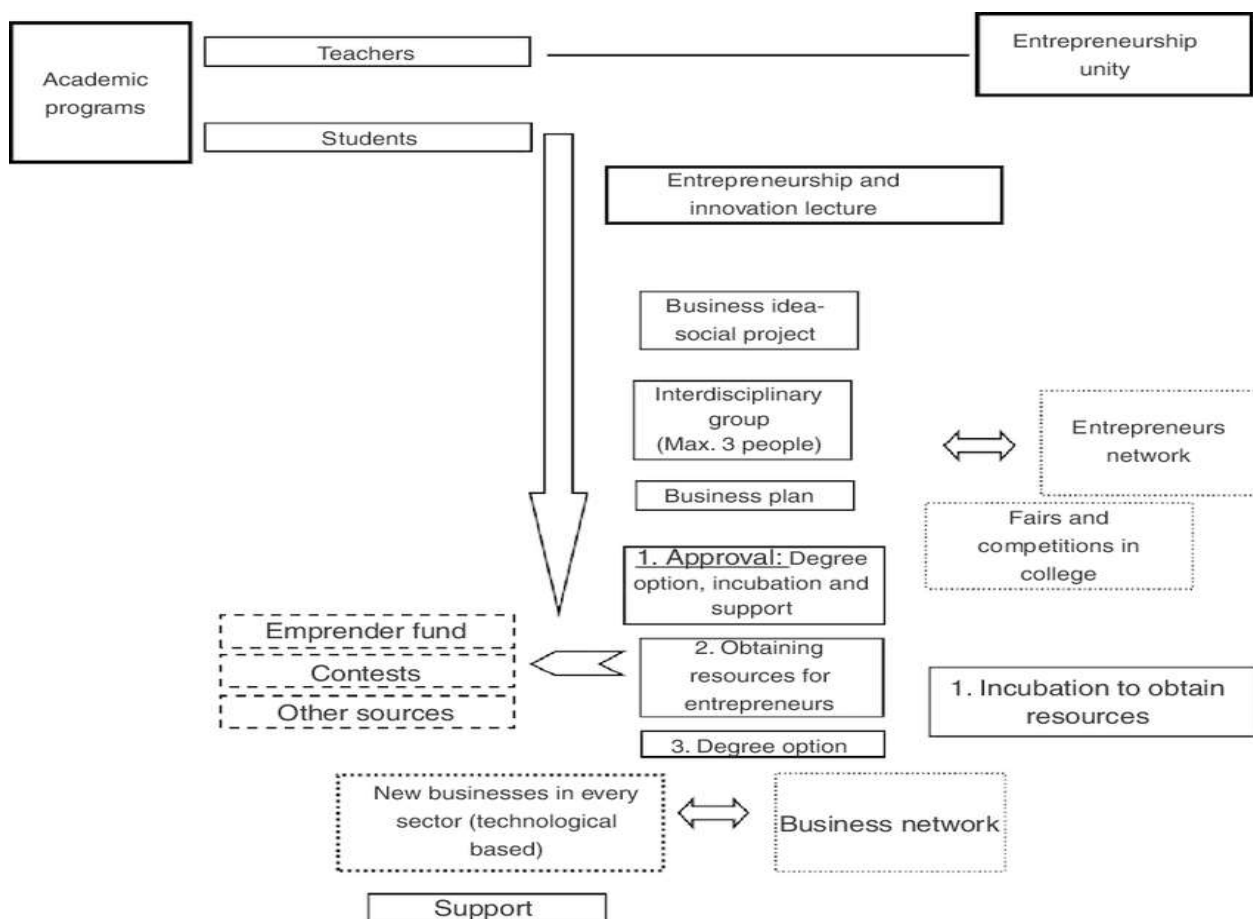


**Figure 1. Entrepreneurship Education**

**Source:** Gámez Gutiérrez, & Garzón Baquero (2017).

The above model connotes that entrepreneurship education manifests in primary, secondary and higher education through multidisciplinary curriculum, use of technologies and good practices, social networks and online learning, know-how theory to practice, study objective, life project to develop intrapreneurs and bring about business creation.

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**Figure 2. Entrepreneurship education model**

**Source:** Gutierrez & Garzon Baquero, (2017).

Above model analyses entrepreneurship education to include processes from Academic programme to business idea-social project, interdisciplinary group that will lead to approval of degree option, incubation and support, as well as obtaining resources for entrepreneurs to form new businesses in every sector for business network. In a nutshell, this model underscores the need for academic courses that teach entrepreneurship to apportion 1/3 of the concentration to theory, while 2/3 to practice (largely practical).

### 2.3. Synopsis of Sample of Entrepreneurship Courses Taught in Nigerian Institutions

The Federal Ministry of Education recognizes auto-mechanics, basic electronics, plumbing and pipe fittings, refrigerators and air conditioning, auto-body repair, spraying and painting as opportunities for entrepreneurship skills in 2007, the curriculum for senior secondary schools was revised to include entrepreneurship skills opportunities in 2007. At the university level, all undergraduate students are required to take entrepreneurship courses as part of pre-requisite to complete university education. Students are expected to enroll in the Innovation and Product Development Course during the first semester of the 200-level curriculum. The course material includes the following topics: Overview of Creativity and Innovation; Idea, Ideate, Ideation Process and Opportunity Recognition; Creativity and Innovation in Modern Organizations; Distinction between Creativity and Innovation; Misinterpretations of Innovation; Sources of Innovative Opportunities; Creativity and Product Development Process; Market, the Target, the Customer; and Creative Management and the Creative Managers are all covered in this course. At the end of the second semester, students are required to enroll in Enterprise Creation & Development, which includes the following courses: Business Models; Managing Money; Managing Risks; and the Process of Establishing a Business and Practical Registration of a Business Enterprise are some of the topics covered in this course.

In the first semester of 300-level, students are required to participate in Entrepreneurship Mentorship, which includes the following topics: a refresher course on what entrepreneurship is and how it can be developed; the Entrepreneurship Mentoring Model, which involves the practical grooming of young entrepreneurs; and a final project. Student assignments and presentations on the topic of developing entrepreneurs (entrepreneurial mentoring, entrepreneurial coaching, etc.). Enterprise Resource Planning is taught in the second semester, with the emphasis on the most effective way for writing an excellent business plan. Enterprise Resource Planning, New Business Concepts, Evaluating the Feasibility of Businesses, Business models, Business

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Development Plan, Production Analyses, Market and Industry Analyses, Cost and Financial Analyses, and Business Plan Appraisal and Submission are some of the topics covered in this course. Assessment for all these courses is done through an assignment, a group presentation/attendance, a Continuous Assessment Test (CAST), and a final Examination.

### 2.4 Contribution of Entrepreneurship Education to the Development of Creativity and Innovation

Wei, Liu, and Sha (2019) emphasized that entrepreneurship education cultivates inventive talents which are vital driving force for future development, since innovation-driven development strategies place new demands on entrepreneurship education at the present time. Entrepreneurship is characterized by its ability to innovate. Nnadi (2014) viewed innovation as both a mechanism by which entrepreneurs may better utilize existing resources with more potential for wealth creation and a means by which new wealth-producing resources can be created. Creative and innovative thinking, according to Gontur, Davireng, and Gadi (2016), occur at different stages of the creative process and overlap. The strategist observes people and figures and uses analytical skills to develop an invention that meets the needs of the opportunity. Alternatively, the Schumpeterian school of thought regards innovation as a criterion of entrepreneurship characterized by the ability to achieve things that have never been done before. A feedback loop exists between entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, in that entrepreneurship fosters innovation and creativity while also encouraging creativity and innovation in the other direction. According to Weinberger, Wach, Stephan, and Wegge (2018), creativity is a stable personality attribute that is inherited and does not change significantly over the course of a person's life span. As a matter of fact, entrepreneurship has been characterized as a notion that involves both the creation as well as the exploration of opportunities, and is often regarded as the most effective method of developing innovation and creativity.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive and cross-sectional survey. It has two constructs, entrepreneurship education (independent variable) and creativity and innovation (dependent variable).

### 3.1 Population and Sample Size

The population of the study comprised undergraduates from federal universities in the north-central, Nigeria; viz University of Abuja; Federal University of Technology, Minna; Federal University, Lafia; Federal University, Lokoja; Federal University, Markudi; University of Jos; and University of Ilorin, this unit of analysis is in line with what one of the extant studies did (Madugu, & Manaf, 2019). Hence the total number of undergraduates in the above university is over fifty thousand students (50,000).

The sample size comprised three hundred and eighty-one ( $n=381$ ) undergraduates as derived via Krejcie and Morgan formula (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The data were generated through administration of questionnaires which was done randomly using quota sampling technique. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was employed – ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, to 5 – Strongly Agree. The instrument consists of 20 items to assess the two (2) variables. The survey questionnaire is made up of two (2) parts. The first part elicited the demographics of the respondents, while the second part elicited responses measuring the dependent and independent variables. On analysis, linear regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine whether the independent variable - entrepreneurship education has a significant influence on students' innovation and creativity.

## 4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

From 381 questionnaires administered, two hundred and seventy-one (271) were filled out and returned i.e., a response rate of 71 percent approximately was attained from 381 respondents; however, 29% percent was not retrieved representing 110 questionnaires. From the 271 questionnaires returned, 244 were valid and usable for the analysis which accounted for response rate of 90% approximately. The data were adequately and sufficiently cleaned. Therefore, linear regression analysis was employed to measure the influence of entrepreneurship education on students' innovation and creativity. The results are depicted in the following tables:

**Table 1: Linear Regression Analysis (Model Summary)**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.467 <sup>a</sup>	.219	.215	3.099

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Creativity (SC)  
b. Predictor: (Constant), Entrepreneurship Education (EE)

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**Table 2: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> Test Results**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.	Regression	652.529	1	652.529	67.949	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2333.577	243	9.603		
	Total	2986.106	244			

a. Dependent Variable: SC

b. Predictor: (Constant), EE

**Table 3: Regression Coefficients Test Result**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			T	Sig,
		B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta		
1.	(Constant)	5.713	1.426		4.006	
	EE	.351	.043	.467	8.243	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: SC

**Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis (Model Summary)**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.368 <sup>a</sup>	.135	.132	3.210

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Innovation (SI)

b. Predictor: (Constant), Entrepreneurship Education (EE)

**Table 5: ANOVA<sup>a</sup> Test Results**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.	Regression	391.122	1	391.122	37.961	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2504.331	243	10.306		
	Total	2896.453	244			

a. Dependent Variable: SI

b. Predictor: (Constant), EE

**Table 6: Regression Coefficients Test Result**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			T	Sig,
		B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta		
1.	(Constant)	8.611	1.477		5.828	
	EE	.272	.044	.368	6.160	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SI

**Table 7: Model Summary**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.466 <sup>a</sup>	.218	.214	4.124
2	.473 <sup>b</sup>	.224	.217	4.116

Predictor: (Constant) EE

**Table 8: ANOVA**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1153.797	1	1153.797	67.864	.000
	Residual	4149.020	244	17.004		
	Total	5302.817	245			
2	Regression	1186.721	2	593.361	35.030	.000



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Residual	4116.096	243	16.939
Total	5302.817	245	

a. Dependent Variable: SC, SI  
b. Predictors: (Constant), EE

**Table 9: Coefficient**

Coefficient <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	21.475	1.480		14.509	.000
	.529	.101	.397	5.254	
	.142	.102	.105	1.394	.000

Dependent Variable: EE

**Table 10: Structural Model (Hypothesis Testing Summary)**

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	t value	P - value	Decision
H1	EE -> SI	.368	6.160	.000	Supported
H2	EE -> SC	.351	8.243	.000	Supported

Note: **EE** – Entrepreneurship Education; **SI** – Students' Innovation; **SC** – Students' Creativity.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The regression coefficient table shows the intercept, which is the predicted value of the dependent variable when the independent variable is zero. In this case, the intercept is 8.611 (table 6). The coefficient for the independent variable (EE), which represents the change in the dependent variable for every one-unit change in the independent variable is .272 (table 6). Also, the standardized coefficient (beta), which is a measure of the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is .368 (table 6), which indicates a moderate positive relationship between EE and SI. The t-value measures the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, while the p-value measures the statistical significance of the relationship. In this case, both the t-value (6.160) and the p-value (.000) for the EE coefficient are statistically significant, indicating that there is a significant positive relationship between EE and SI. In summary, the results of the regression analysis concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between Entrepreneurship Education (EE) and Students' Innovation (SI). The regression coefficient table shows the intercept, which is the predicted value of the dependent variable when the independent variable is zero. In this case, the intercept is 5.713 (table 3). The coefficient for the independent variable (EE), which represents the change in the dependent variable for every one-unit change in the independent variable is 0.351 (table 3). The standardized coefficient is 0.467, which indicates a moderate positive relationship between EE and SC. The t-value (8.243) and the p-value (0.000) for the EE coefficient are statistically significant, indicating that there is a significant positive relationship between EE and SC. The tolerance value for the independent variable is 1.000, which suggests that there is no issue of collinearity or multicollinearity with the independent variable. In summary, the results of the regression analysis concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education (EE) and students' creativity (SC). For every one unit increase in EEC, there is a predicted 0.351 increase in SC, and the relationship is moderate in strength. The p-value for the coefficient of the independent variable is less than 0.05, then the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is statistically significant. Therefore, the relationship between EE and SC is statistically significant, it is concluded that EE has a significant influence on the dependent variables (SC & SI).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Maxwell, Falola, Ibidunni and Inelo (2014) noted that the present entrepreneurship programme in Nigerian universities covers the required content, but the method of teaching is not practical oriented and void of real-life situations. Entrepreneurship education should be taught as a separate subject with practical approach. Entrepreneurship education is a new field that should be formally developed in Nigerian universities with well-structured guidelines in multi-discipline approach to achieve its purpose. This approach can be done through the collaboration between the academe, industry, and the government. An interdisciplinary

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approach should be set in place to enhance the collaboration with different parties (system, structures in business, science, and technology programs). The government should encourage the formation of business incubators within the university system supported by legislation. Entrepreneurship education will transform a conventional university into an entrepreneurial university. However, this is not an easy task, especially for universities that are still struggling to build a culture of research among its faculties and students. Collaboration among business, science, and engineering programs should be carried out to support the start-up and growth of business ventures. Hence, Programs and innovations needed to form an entrepreneurial university will create a new breed of faculty called academic entrepreneurs.

### 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, Nigerian Universities should consider the following in improving purpose of entrepreneurship education to be beneficial to the students, Universities, and Nigeria at large:

- i. Universities should not see entrepreneurship education as the courses that must be passed through test, presentations and examinations, rather the courses should be assessed based on success recorded by students in their chosen area of business (practical evaluation).
- ii. Multidisciplinary curriculum premised on networking among the students at various universities across different disciplines, use of technology, online learning, know-how, paradigm shift from theory to practice, should be designed for entrepreneurial courses.
- iii. Universities should leverage on Central Bank of Nigeria, Bank of Industry and other Government interventions to provide start-up capital for students of entrepreneurship education which must be paid back before or after graduation.
- iv. Universities should provide practical mentorship and incubation centres for students in their chosen area of business.
- v. Universities should create one-stop shops to provide market for all the products produce by students.

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