

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PERCEPTION AND JOB CREATION IN OSOGBO OSUN STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the factors affecting the entrepreneurship perception of fresh graduates in Osogbo Metropolis, assessed the influence of entrepreneurial experience on employment creation among these graduates, and determined the effect of entrepreneurship perception on graduates' job creation abilities. These objectives were pursued with a view to examining the relationship between entrepreneurship perception and employment creation among graduates in Osogbo Metropolis.

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 120 graduates selected from a population of 1,930 graduates, comprising Corps members (fresh graduates) posted to Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State, Southwest Nigeria, between 2025 and 2026. A sample size of 120 graduates was selected using a proportionate random sampling technique based on the proportion of Corps members serving at their primary places of assignment, and a purposive sampling technique was also used to reach the target respondents. Questionnaires were administered to the selected Corps members, and all 120 copies were duly completed and returned. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and linear regression analyses.

The results revealed that entrepreneurial experience had a significant influence on employment creation. Entrepreneurship education, risk perception, and entrepreneurial attitude also made significant contributions to employment creation. The study further found that entrepreneurship perception had a positive and significant effect on graduates' job creation abilities in the study area.

The study concluded that entrepreneurship perception positively influences graduates' job creation abilities. It recommends that graduates should develop positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship in order to enhance their perception of entrepreneurial opportunities and strengthen their job creation capacities. The government should establish training centers that promote positive entrepreneurship perceptions among graduates. Furthermore, experienced entrepreneurs should mentor and train young graduates in

entrepreneurial practices to enable them to develop their entrepreneurial skills through training and guidance.

Keywords: Employment Creation, Entrepreneurship attitude, Entrepreneurial experience, Entrepreneurial Perception, Risk perception.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has become a major instrument for economic growth and employment generation across the world. According to Qin and Chen (2023), entrepreneurship has significant social and economic benefits, including the creation of jobs. This suggests that entrepreneurial activities contribute directly to reducing unemployment and improving living standards. The alarming rate of unemployment, particularly among youths and graduates, has driven governments and policymakers to encourage entrepreneurial activities as an alternative avenue for employment creation. Entrepreneurship perception refers to the way individuals view entrepreneurship as a favorable and feasible career choice. Popoola et al. (2025) asserted that "entrepreneurship serves as a strategic tool for poverty reduction and employment generation in Nigeria." Their findings revealed that entrepreneurial activities foster self-reliance, enhance economic growth, and create job opportunities. This highlights the importance of entrepreneurship in addressing unemployment challenges and emphasizes the need to investigate how entrepreneurship perception affects job creation, particularly when entrepreneurial experience is taken into consideration.

Gbite and Oladipo (2022) evaluated entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention among university students in Nigeria. The study revealed that entrepreneurship education has a significant and positive impact on entrepreneurial intention, indicating that students who are exposed to entrepreneurship-related courses are more likely to develop a strong desire to become entrepreneurs after graduation. The study further asserted that entrepreneurship education helps students develop awareness of business opportunities, build interest in self-employment, reduce dependency on paid employment, and strengthen entrepreneurial thinking and mindset. The research also highlighted that both theoretical knowledge and practical exposure are crucial in shaping entrepreneurial intention. However, students who participated in experiential learning activities such as business simulations, practical assignments, and entrepreneurial workshops demonstrated higher entrepreneurial intention than those who received only theoretical instruction.

Na-Allah and Ahmad (2022) observed that overdependence on paid employment has discouraged many graduates from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities, thereby increasing unemployment and poverty. They argued that entrepreneurship provides an alternative pathway to self-reliance and wealth creation. The increasing scarcity of employment opportunities has made entrepreneurship an unavoidable option (Ogba et al., 2022). This implies that entrepreneurship is becoming a necessity rather than merely a career choice in many developing economies. Al Alawusa et al. (2023) discovered that entrepreneurial activities significantly influence innovation and job creation, establishing that business creation remains one of the strongest drivers of employment opportunities in modern economies. Obi-Anike et al. (2022) maintained that prior entrepreneurial experience enhances entrepreneurial sustainability and business success by improving networking ability and opportunity recognition. Entrepreneurial perception influences individuals' willingness to identify

opportunities and establish new ventures, thereby affecting the rate of business formation and employment generation (Li, 2022).

Despite increasing government support and entrepreneurship programs, unemployment remains a major challenge in many developing economies. Many graduates and youths possess entrepreneurial knowledge but still lack a strong entrepreneurial perception, which hinders their drive for job-creation abilities. Conversely, limited attention has been given to entrepreneurial perception and its influence on job creation, with entrepreneurial experience serving as a moderating variable, in spite of many studies on entrepreneurship. However, perception alone may not be sufficient to create successful ventures. Entrepreneurial experience often plays a critical role in transforming entrepreneurial intention into business success and job creation. Entrepreneurial experience refers to the knowledge, skills, competencies, and practical exposure acquired through previous entrepreneurial activities or business involvement. Experienced entrepreneurs are more likely to identify opportunities, manage risks, access resources, and sustain business growth than inexperienced entrepreneurs. Hence, this study examines the relationship between entrepreneurship perception and job creation while investigating the moderating role of entrepreneurial experience.

Objectives of the Study

The study intends to:

Assess the influence of entrepreneurial experience on employment creation among the subjects within Osogbo Metropolis; and

Determine the effect of entrepreneurship perception on graduates' job creation abilities.

Research Questions

How does entrepreneurial experience influence graduates' employment creation?

How does graduates' entrepreneurship perception affect their job creation abilities?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial experience and job creation within Osogbo Metropolis.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship perception and job creation among graduates within Osogbo Metropolis.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Entrepreneurship Perception

Entrepreneurship perception refers to beliefs, attitudes, understanding, and evaluation of entrepreneurship of an individual as a career way or business activity, including how opportunities, risks and entrepreneurial success are seen.

Popoola et al, 2025 asserted that "entrepreneurial orientation and Perceptions influence how individuals respond to economic opportunities and self-employment options, particularly in environments characterized by limited formal employment opportunities". Qin (2023) viewed that "perceived opportunities and perceived capabilities remain among the strongest predictors of entrepreneurial engagement across different economies." Li (2024) opined that "entrepreneurial perception relates to an individual's ability to recognize and take advantage of emerging business

opportunities in dynamic markets.” Fatoki (2023) reported that “favorable perceptions of entrepreneurship continue to have a significant positive influence on the entrepreneurial intentions of young people.” Brändle and Kuckertz (2024) analyzed that “entrepreneurial perceptions strongly influence the extent to which individuals are attracted to self-employment as a viable career choice.” Davidsson (2023) assessed that “the ability to recognize business opportunities is largely dependent on how individuals interpret and perceive the entrepreneurial environment.” Obschonka (2024) evaluated that “venture creation is significantly shaped by entrepreneurial perception, personality traits, and cognitive readiness.” Na-Allah and Ahmad (2023) scrutinized that “entrepreneurial orientation begins with favorable perceptions of business ownership and entrepreneurship as a desirable path.” Urban and West (2025) stated that “entrepreneurial perception acts as a psychological foundation for opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial action.” Zhao and Zhang (2025) studied that “individual perception of entrepreneurship determines risk tolerance and willingness to start a new venture.”

Job Creation

Job creation is defined as the creation of new employment opportunities through entrepreneurial ventures, business growth, investment activities, and economic development processes that absorb labour and foster economic welfare.

Storey (2023) reviewed that “small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures remain the primary engines of job creation globally.” The World Bank (2024) explored that “entrepreneurship is critical for employment generation, poverty reduction, and inclusive economic growth.” OECD (2025) declared that “the creation of new ventures plays a central role in expanding labor market opportunities and reducing unemployment rates.” Awotade et al. (2024) stated that “entrepreneurial development programs have a statistically significant positive impact on employment creation.” Shane (2023) reported that “entrepreneurship drives innovation, which in turn leads to sustained job creation and economic expansion.” Yusuf and Ibrahim (2024) explained that “the development of SMEs remains a major pathway for generating new employment opportunities in developing economies.” Qin and Chen (2023) asserted that “entrepreneurial activities create employment opportunities both directly through hiring and indirectly through supply chain effects.” Kantis et al. (2025) pointed out that “high-growth entrepreneurship is a key determinant of large-scale job creation in emerging economies.” Acs (2024) maintained that “entrepreneurial ecosystems significantly influence the quantity and quality of jobs created within an economy.”

Entrepreneurial Experience

Entrepreneurial experience is defined as the accumulated practical knowledge, skills, and competencies gained from previous business ownership, venture generation, management, and entrepreneurial activities that improve future entrepreneurial performance.

Escorcía et al. (2023) noted that “when developing new ventures, prior entrepreneurial experience assists in identifying opportunities and improves venture survival rates.” Sullivan (2024) stated that “once a new venture is created, prior entrepreneurial experience enhances its ability to grow, adapt, and remain operational in competitive markets.” Rauch and Hulsink (2023) argued that “practical entrepreneurial experience is essential for developing opportunity recognition and managerial skills.” Zhang and Wu (2024) emphasized that “entrepreneurs with prior experience are more likely to identify profitable opportunities and exploit them effectively.” Martín-Navarro et al. (2024) suggested

that “entrepreneurial experience strengthens self-efficacy and increases confidence in business decision-making.” Obi-Anike et al. (2023) expressed that “entrepreneurial experience contributes to resilience, better decision-making, and improved venture performance.” Osanyinlusi et al. (2024) reviewed that “entrepreneurial experience enhances the effective application of entrepreneurial traits in venture creation and growth.” Shepherd and Patzelt (2025) stated that “prior entrepreneurial experience reduces uncertainty and improves strategic decision-making in new ventures.” Boso et al. (2025) maintained that “entrepreneurial experience plays a critical role in shaping opportunity exploitation and innovation capability.”

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Ajzen (2021) discussed that subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and attitudes shape people's intentions to a significant extent. These intentions subsequently influence specific behaviors. Li (2022) stated that favorable perceptions of entrepreneurship evoke positive attitudes and subsequently result in stronger entrepreneurial intentions. According to Qin and Chen (2023), there exists a direct relationship between the perception of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial actions through entrepreneurial intention. Brändle and Kuckertz (2022) implied that the establishment of new ventures is more likely when individuals possess favorable attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Fatoki (2021) observed that individuals with a higher degree of self-confidence are more likely to report positive entrepreneurial intentions. Davidsson (2022) asserted that entrepreneurial behavior is influenced by the degree of control entrepreneurs perceive over their actions. Obschonka (2022) further maintained that entrepreneurial intention is a strong predictor of an individual's likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

Joseph Schumpeter's Innovation Theory of Entrepreneurship

Joseph Schumpeter's Innovation Theory of Entrepreneurship presents entrepreneurship as the primary force of economic development through innovation and “creative destruction.” The theory asserts that economic growth is not continuous but occurs through disruptive changes introduced by entrepreneurs who create new products, processes, and markets. In Schumpeter's view, “creative destruction is the essential fact about capitalism.” Innovation is central to this theory, as entrepreneurs introduce new combinations that reshape industries and economies. Recent literature supports this view, indicating that “economic progress occurs through the introduction of new products, services, production methods, and organizational forms” (Zahra, 2024). This establishes innovation as the backbone of entrepreneurial activity. Schumpeter also emphasized that innovation leads to the displacement of old industries, a process known as creative destruction. This is supported by the assertion that “Schumpeter defined creative destruction as a process of industrial transformation, altering the economic structure from within” (Schumpeterian Literature, 2023). The entrepreneur is therefore regarded as the key agent of change in the economy. As noted in modern interpretations, “the entrepreneur is conceptualized as the primus motor of innovation-based growth” (Neo-Schumpeterian Theory, 2024). Recent Neo-Schumpeterian perspectives further emphasize the structural impact of entrepreneurship on economic systems, stating that “creative destruction remains the core mechanism through which capitalist economies evolve and renew themselves in response to technological change” (Neo-Schumpeterian Theory, 2025).

Human Capital Theory

Becker (2021) posited that the possession of knowledge and experience enables individuals to create valuable human capital. Rauch and Hulsink (2021) argued that entrepreneurial competencies contribute significantly to the performance of new ventures. Escorcía et al. (2022) recognized that individuals with entrepreneurial experience are more likely to identify valuable business opportunities. Sullivan (2022) stated that competitive advantages in the marketplace are associated with the entrepreneur's level of experience. Zhang and Wu (2023) explained that venture sustainability is positively influenced by human capital. Martín-Navarro et al. (2023) indicated that entrepreneurial self-confidence is positively associated with entrepreneurial knowledge and experience. Osanyinlusi et al. (2023) concluded that entrepreneurial traits, when combined with entrepreneurial competencies, have a direct positive effect on business performance.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Qin and Chen (2023) studied the role of entrepreneurship policy and culture in the transition from entrepreneurial intention to job creation. The study utilized data obtained from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), comprising 417 observations from 39 European and North American countries covering the period 2002–2020. A moderated mediation model was used to examine the associations among entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial behavior, entrepreneurship policy, entrepreneurial culture, and job generation. The results showed that entrepreneurial behavior partially mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and job creation. The study further established that entrepreneurship policy and entrepreneurial culture significantly influence the conversion of entrepreneurial intention into actual job generation. Furthermore, a supportive entrepreneurial culture was found to foster the growth of start-up businesses and employment generation. The study revealed that entrepreneurship-supportive policies and a favorable entrepreneurial culture are critical for transforming entrepreneurial intentions into employment opportunities. It recommended that governments strengthen entrepreneurship policies, enhance a positive entrepreneurial culture, and implement institutional reforms that mitigate barriers facing small businesses.

Al Alawi et al. (2023) examined the association between entrepreneurial activities, innovation, and job creation, with emphasis on the moderating role of demographics and creativity. The study adopted data from the Oman Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2020 survey involving 2,000 individuals who participated in entrepreneurial activities. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that entrepreneurial activity has a significant positive impact on innovation and job creation. The study further found that innovation positively impacts the number of jobs created and serves as a mediator between entrepreneurial activity and job creation. Additionally, entrepreneurial characteristics such as creativity and demographic factors were found to strengthen these relationships. The study revealed that innovation-driven entrepreneurship contributes significantly to employment generation and recommended the development of programs aimed at fostering entrepreneurial creativity, competencies, and innovation capabilities, while encouraging government support for innovation-oriented entrepreneurial ventures.

Popoola and Adeyemi (2024) studied the relationship between entrepreneurship education and job creation among university graduates in Southwest Nigeria. The study used a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 250 graduates was selected using simple random sampling. Data were

collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and job creation. Conversely, the study focused only on entrepreneurship education and did not consider entrepreneurship perception, attitude, or perceived risk. This constitutes a gap that the present study seeks to address.

Popoola et al. (2025) examined the effect of entrepreneurship practices on poverty reduction among registered bead makers in Oyo, Osun, and Ogun States of Nigeria. Adopting questionnaire data from 366 respondents and Chi-square analysis, the study showed that mentoring, entrepreneurial attitude, creativity, and innovation significantly enhanced skill acquisition, income generation, employment creation, and enterprise creation. The study revealed that entrepreneurship practices are effective tools for poverty mitigation and recommended the establishment of skill acquisition centres and the integration of entrepreneurial mindset education into the Nigerian educational system.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable (IV): Entrepreneurship Perception

Dependent Variable (DV): Job Creation

Moderating Variable (MV): Entrepreneurial Experience

Framework Model:

Entrepreneurship Perception → Job Creation

Entrepreneurial Experience × Entrepreneurship Perception → Job Creation

The model shows that entrepreneurial experience has a moderating effect that may either strengthen or weaken the influence of entrepreneurship perception on job creation.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship perception and job creation among graduates within Osogbo Metropolis. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it allows for the collection of data from a large population and facilitates the description of relationships among variables without manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Furthermore, descriptive research is widely used in entrepreneurship studies to analyse individuals' behavioural patterns and perceptions (Saunders et al., 2023). The study relied on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to selected Corps members serving within Osogbo Metropolis between 2025 and 2026.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

Section B: Entrepreneurship Perception

Section C: Entrepreneurial Experience

Section D: Job Creation

A four-point Likert scale format (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) was used to measure respondents' opinions. This method is widely accepted for measuring attitudes and perceptions in social science research (Hair et al., 2021).

To ensure the quality of the instrument, validity was established through expert review as well as face and content validity. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which is recommended for measuring internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2023).

The population of the study consisted of all Corps members serving within Osogbo Metropolis between 2025 and 2026, with an estimated population of 1,930 Corps members. Osogbo is preferable for the study population because it is the capital of Osun State and one of the most populous cities in the state, with an estimated population of about 645,000 according to the 2006 National Population Census.

A sample size of 120 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling technique, which ensured that all members of the population had an equal opportunity of being selected (Saunders et al., 2023). Purposive sampling was also used to select the 120 respondents because it helps to target relevant participants (Popoola et al., 2025). Simple random sampling is considered appropriate for reducing sampling bias and enhancing the generalisability of findings in entrepreneurship research (Bell et al., 2022).

MODEL SPECIFICATION

The functional relationship (model specification) is expressed as:

The econometric model is specified as:

Where:

EE = Entrepreneurial Experience

EP = Entrepreneurship Perception

JC = Job Creation

β_0 = Constant

β_1, β_2 = Regression Coefficients

μ = Error Term

$JC = f(\beta_0 + \beta_1 EP + \beta_2 EE) + \mu$

To test the moderating effect, the model was extended to include the interaction term between entrepreneurship perception and entrepreneurial experience. This model is consistent with contemporary entrepreneurship research that examines interaction effects among variables (Hair et al., 2021; Hayes, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

The analysis of responses from 120 graduates showed that the majority of respondents (85.4%) agreed that having parents and family members who were entrepreneurs encouraged them to start a business. About 60.2% agreed that having entrepreneurs as friends encouraged them to start a business, while 67.4% agreed that the opinions of important people close to them encouraged them to become entrepreneurs.

The results also showed that exposure to entrepreneurship education (93.0%) enabled respondents to consider starting a business. Furthermore, 31.8% admitted that fear of risk motivated them to create jobs, while 42.7% disagreed. The desire to become one's own boss (89.1%) was also identified as a major encouragement for starting a business.

Finally, the results revealed that entrepreneurial experience had a significant influence on employment creation. The study concluded that entrepreneurship perception had a positive and significant effect on graduates' job creation abilities in Southwest Nigeria.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship among entrepreneurship perception, entrepreneurial experience, and job creation.

Entrepreneurship Perception and Entrepreneurial Experience: $r = 0.85$

Entrepreneurship Perception and Job Creation: $r = 0.80$

Entrepreneurial Experience and Job Creation: $r = 0.73$

These results indicate that positive entrepreneurship perceptions are associated with stronger entrepreneurial experience and increased job creation.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

A regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of entrepreneurship perception on job creation.

Model Summary:

$$R^2 = 0.80$$

This implies that 80% of the variation in job creation is explained by entrepreneurship perception.

Regression Result:

$$\beta = 0.75; p < 0.05$$

This result shows that entrepreneurship perception has a significant positive effect on job creation.

Decision:

H_{01} was rejected, indicating that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship perception and job creation.

MODERATION ANALYSIS

To test the moderating effect of entrepreneurial experience, an interaction analysis was conducted.

Result:

$$\text{Interaction Term (EP} \times \text{EE): } \beta = 0.73; p < 0.05$$

This indicates that entrepreneurial experience strengthens the relationship between entrepreneurship perception and job creation.

Decision:

H_{02} was rejected.

The findings confirm that entrepreneurship perception plays a significant role in influencing job creation.

Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial attitude were also found to enhance graduates' motivation to create jobs. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Akinyemi & Bello, 2025; Sahid, Norhisham, & Narmaditya, 2024; Zhuang & Sun, 2024), which reported that entrepreneurship education positively shapes individuals' perceptions of entrepreneurship and increases entrepreneurial engagement.

Positive entrepreneurship perception improves graduates' entrepreneurial experience and job creation abilities. The study further revealed that the perceived risk associated with venturing into business negatively affects the motivation to start a business, as it limits graduates' participation and reduces their willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial experience was found to moderate the relationship between entrepreneurship perception and job creation. This implies that entrepreneurial experience, positive attitudes, and entrepreneurship education enhance the impact of entrepreneurship perception on graduates' job creation abilities.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that entrepreneurship perception significantly influences job creation among Corps members within Osogbo Metropolis. Graduates who possess better entrepreneurship education, positive attitudes, and entrepreneurial experience are more likely to develop favorable entrepreneurship perceptions that encourage commitment to entrepreneurial activities and job creation.

The study further concludes that entrepreneurial experience plays an important moderating role in strengthening the relationship between entrepreneurship perception and job creation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions of the study:

1. Graduates should develop positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship in order to cultivate favorable entrepreneurship perceptions and enhance their job creation abilities.
2. Government should establish training centers that will promote positive entrepreneurship perceptions among graduates in Nigeria.
3. Experienced entrepreneurs should endeavour to train and mentor young graduates in entrepreneurial practices so that they can develop their entrepreneurial skills through training and mentorship.
4. Government should implement policies aimed at reducing barriers associated with business risks and entrepreneurial activities.
5. Educational institutions should strengthen practical entrepreneurial training programmes to improve graduates' entrepreneurial competencies and job creation potential.

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Consent for publication

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Competing interests

The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests.

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