

## Entrepreneurship Competencies and Creation of Employment Opportunities by Business Education Graduate Students in Rivers State University

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### **Abstract**

*The goal of this study is to find out the extent to which entrepreneurial competences can influence the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. Two objectives and two research questions were raised to guide the study while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The researcher adopted the correlational survey research design for the study. The population of the study comprised the entire 90 Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. No sampling was carried out for the study because of the manageable size of the population. Data for the study were gathered through the use of self-designed questionnaires. The questionnaire were validated by three experts. Two in Business Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation all from the Faculty of Education in Rivers State University. The reliability of the instrument was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and the computation yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81 and 0.89. The collected data was used for analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions while z-ratio transformation associated with the correlation coefficients for each research questions was used to test the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that innovative-thinking, pro-activeness, strategic-thinking and moderate risk-taking rates to the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University to a high extent. It was recommended among others that there should be a more practical approach to the teaching of entrepreneurial competences such as innovative-thinking in schools to enable the students develop a critical thinking mindset after graduation from school.*

**Key words:** *Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Competencies, Employment, Employment Opportunities, Business Education*

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### **Introduction**

An entrepreneur is someone who has innovative ability, creates something new and different, seeks opportunities, starts a business, takes risks, develops ideas and manages available resources to succeed. Entrepreneurs are agents that overcome obstacles to build their enterprises in an entrepreneurial relationship by being change agents through recognition of opportunities, exploring it through innovation and creativity (Okute, 2020). Anyone who has the knowledge, skills and possess such personal qualities, attitudes, values, and behaviors necessary to perform activities and task to be self-reliant is known as an entrepreneur. The core of entrepreneurship is

to create new values, which enhances different creative thinking and innovative actions as well as create opportunities needed in the society. It is needful for an entrepreneur to be competent because customers are looking for satisfaction which cannot be achieved without it.

To be competent as an entrepreneur according to Onstenk in Alam, Masroor, Sultana and Rahman (2016) means the possession of skills, knowledge, motivations and attitudes as facets that entrepreneurs must be capable of practicing. Going further, Hogg in Khan (2021) opined that competence is constituted by a set of underlying characteristics of a person, including the person's traits, motive, aspects, skill of one's social role or self-image or a body of knowledge that may result in successful performances in an occupational area.

Entrepreneurial competence can be described as the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals that directly affects performance (Filthri & Sari, 2016). Further explaining the concept of entrepreneurial competence, Kiggundu in Khan (2021) stated that entrepreneurial competence can be defined as the entrepreneurial attributes such as beliefs, attitude, knowledge, abilities, skills, personality, behavioural tendencies and skills required to sustain. Bird in Khan (2021) also carefully defined the concept of entrepreneurial competence. In his definition, he noted that entrepreneurial competence can be seen as individual traits, such as knowledge, motives, features, self-image, social roles, and abilities that will make a business organization to be successful.

From divergent points of view, it may interest you to note that various researchers have contributed in identifying various dimensions of entrepreneurial competence (James, Ernesto, Christopher, Lai, Chee, Mustafa, Hernandez & Mahon, 2016; Sanchez, 2012; Wirda, Herri, Rivai, & Herizon, 2019; Wirda, Azra, Trinanto & Herizon, 2023). James et al. (2016) revealed that there are five dimensions of entrepreneurial competence which are as follows: identification and definition of viable market riches, product and service development according to the entrepreneur's chosen market, idea generation, concern for the environment, recognizing and exploring opportunities, and formulating strategies to take advantage of opportunities.

On their own part, Wirda, Herri, Rivai and Herizon (2019) identified the following as the components of entrepreneurial competence: innovation, risk-taking, proactive learning, networking, and autonomy. More so, Sanchez (2012) identified the following variables as the competencies needed by entrepreneurs to function effectively: opportunity, relationship, analytical, innovative, operational, human, strategic, commitment, learning, and personal strength competencies. On a similar note, Man and Lau in Khan (2021) also outlined some specific areas which he described as being the possible competencies that must be possessed by an entrepreneur to include the following: relationship competencies, opportunity competencies, conceptual competencies, commitment competencies, strategic competencies and organizing competencies.

Employment can be regarded as a paid work agreement between an employer and an employee. Employment is basically an official written or unwritten agreement between interested parties (employer and employee) for the purpose of having the employee provide certain services to the organization for a pay (Heathfield, 2020). Employment agreement for an individual employee can be a verbal exchange, written email or job offer letter. The offer of employment can also be either implied in an interview or written in a formal, official employment contract. Although employees have the inalienable right to negotiate certain items in the employment pact, it remains the sole responsibility of the employer to determine the terms and conditions of the contract. It is pertinent to note that more of the employment relationship between an employer and employee is governed

by the employer's needs, profitability and management philosophy. Thus, the employment relationship is that which is also propelled by the availability of employees and their expectations from the organization. Employment gives employees the opportunity to control various aspects of employee's job, including work location, resources, responsibilities, hours and wages (Heathfield, 2020).

Employment opportunity is created in most cases when new products, new firms, innovative technologies and organized methods are introduced into a given industry. It is also pertinent to affirm that a good employment opportunity has to be technologically attainable, economically sustainable, commercially sustainable and environmentally reliable. Thus, employment opportunity identification also remains a very relevant entrepreneurial competence which represents one of the intellectual topics in the entrepreneurial world. Therefore, employment identification can be developed through training and education in a similar way that those Entrepreneurs develop other capacities such as management capacities, social network and building capacities (Ohaka, 2022).

However, it is imperative to note that employment opportunity creation is part of the essential focus of Business Education programme as a course of study. Business Education is a branch of education that involves teaching the skills and operations of the business industry. This field of education occurs at multiple levels, including secondary and higher education institutes. Education in business has many forms, mainly occurring within a classroom of a school. A business education has many components, as there are many different areas of the business industry as a whole. An education in business varies greatly in its curriculum and popularity around the world. Career development is often an integral part of an education in business. Business Education generally refers to the plethora of courses designed to provide students with any number of skills needed for success in business, especially those related to launching and running businesses.

Business educators play a prominent role in preparing students to become responsible citizens, capable of making the astute economic decisions that will benefit their personal and professional lives. Business Education teachers introduce students to the basics of personal finance, the decision-making techniques needed to be wise consumers, the economic principles of an increasingly international marketplace, and the processes by which businesses operate. In addition, these standards provide a solid educational foundation for students who want to successfully complete college programs in various business disciplines. The standards are based on a vision and a set of competencies designed to prepare students to become knowledgeable and ethical decision makers as they fulfill their roles as consumers, workers, and citizens (Okolo, 2015). These competencies over the years, have been seen to be indispensable and strategic considering the pivotal role they play in the entrepreneurial growth and development of entrepreneurs.

Strategic competencies on the other hand, refer to well planned, premeditated, tactical and calculated business skills an entrepreneur requires to enable him manage his business effectively. There are required for sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. Business Education students are expected to be strategic in their quest for a successful business. Every entrepreneur will not succeed without strategic competencies. Because each level of responsibility has its own requirements, competence can occur at any stage of his or her business. In the same manner, strategic competencies acquired by entrepreneurs would help

them lead a successful and responsible business and would help them sustain and grow their new businesses once developed.

The curriculum of Business Education in many universities including those under study do not contain courses in entrepreneurship at the undergraduate level while a few contain entrepreneurship courses only at masters' level (Igbeka, 2018). Although these universities offer entrepreneurial training courses at undergraduate level as a general course, there is the need to introduce these courses at the departmental level so that the specific aspects of the course peculiar to each discipline could be addressed at the undergraduate level. In order to bridge the gap and provide entrepreneurship skills, it becomes imperative to identify relevant entrepreneurship skills required for the establishment of small scale businesses by students of universities in Nigeria. It is based on this premise that the researcher intends to examine how entrepreneurial competencies can create job opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Business Education graduate students by their education and training ought to possess the relevant entrepreneurial competencies that could enable them establish and run their own businesses successfully. However, it has become disheartening to note that many Business Education graduates that set their businesses come out with high rate of failure and after few years of establishment many of the enterprises do liquidate. This uncertainty of success among Business Education graduates in running their businesses is a major concern to prospective entrepreneurs.

This challenges may be as a result of graduates not having the required entrepreneurial competencies needed for them to successfully run and manage their businesses. Again, the scourge of graduate unemployment in Nigeria is blamed on the university curriculum which has been geared towards stereotyped goals and jobs without adequate development of relevant entrepreneurial competencies such as; innovative-thinking, pro-activeness, strategic-thinking and moderate risk-taking. In other words, it appears that when Business Education students graduate from Universities, they only acquire theoretical knowledge without relevant practical entrepreneurial competencies such as innovative-thinking, pro-activeness, strategic-thinking and moderate risk-taking which would enable them, on graduation to practice what was learnt in school, create jobs for themselves and also participate actively in Nigeria's economy. This study therefore, tends to find out the extent to which entrepreneurial competencies could be used for employment opportunity creation among graduate students in Rivers State University.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which entrepreneurship competencies relates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence correlates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduates students in Rivers State University
2. Determine the extent to which pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence correlates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduates students in Rivers State University.

### **Research Questions**

The following corresponding research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence correlates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduates students in Rivers State University?
2. To what extent does pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence correlates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduates students in Rivers State University?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University.
2. There is no significant relationship between pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University.

### **Theoretical Review Employment Opportunity Identification and Development Theory (Dubin, 1978)**

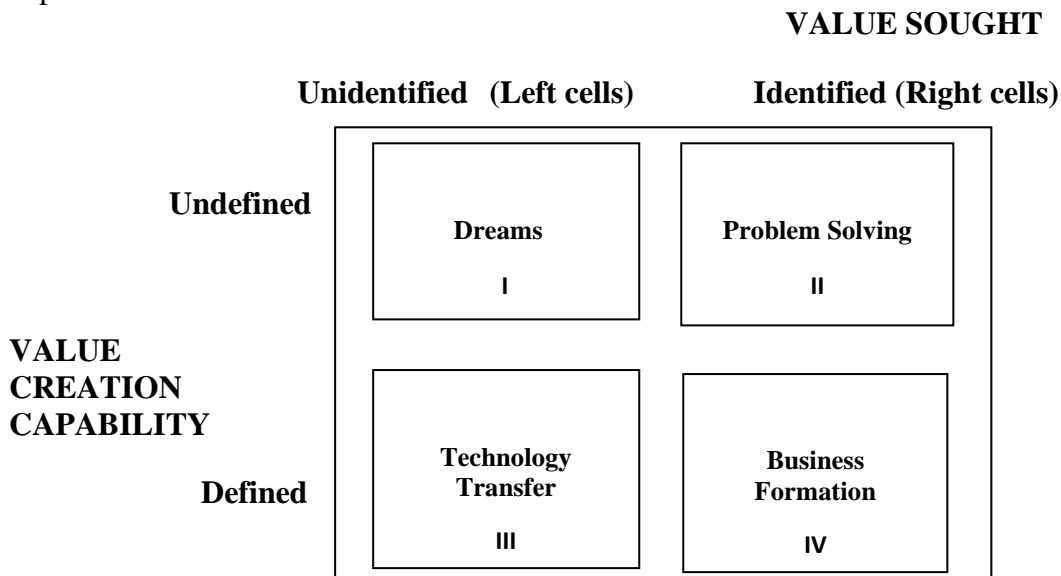
The theory of employment opportunity identification and development was popularized by Dubin in 1978 through the development of his “Law of Interaction” which sought to prove how changes in market trends or situations can lead to the creation of employment opportunity. Supporters of this theory explain that employment opportunity identification is one of the defining tasks of entrepreneurship (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001; Busenitz, West, Page, Shepherd, Nelson, Chandler & Zacharakis 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). On a similar note, the proponents argued that entrepreneurs are distinguished by their ability to adjust to employment opportunity identification such as counter-factual and scenario thinking, pattern recognition and heuristics which is also defined as cognitive short-cuts (Baron, 2004; Gaglio, 2004; Palich & Bagby, 1995).

In the same vein, theorists such as Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) and Bhide (2000) believes that individuals typically identify and select new employment opportunities in uncertain environments with limited resources and information and where they are constantly faced with dynamic situations. More so, the propositions and arguments of the employment opportunity identification and development theory can be encapsulated in the following ways (Dubin, 1978): a high level of psychosocial adjustment abilities is associated with successful employment opportunity identification and development; successful employment opportunity identification is associated with the existence and use of an extended social network, which includes the following four elements: weak ties, action set, partnerships and inner circle.

The lack of any of these elements reduces the possibilities of such success; for there to be successful employment opportunity identification, a convergence of both the knowledge domains – special interest knowledge and industry knowledge – is critical. Without this convergence there is a lower probability of such success; prior knowledge of markets, customer problems and ways to serve market increases the likelihood of successful employment opportunity recognition; high levels of entrepreneurial alertness are related to high levels of entrepreneurial creativity and

optimism (based on high self-efficacy) and the employment opportunity identification process results in enriching the individual’s knowledge-base and increases their alertness to identification of future employment opportunities.

The theory explicated how a successful employment opportunity identification process shows how identification of an opportunity, its evaluation and development can lead to the creation of a business venture (Ardichvili, Cardozo & Ray, 2003). The employment opportunity identification and development theory also proposes four types of employment opportunity for productive venture creation. These four opportunity types are captured in the matrix of Getzels (1962) as depicted in the theoretical framework below:



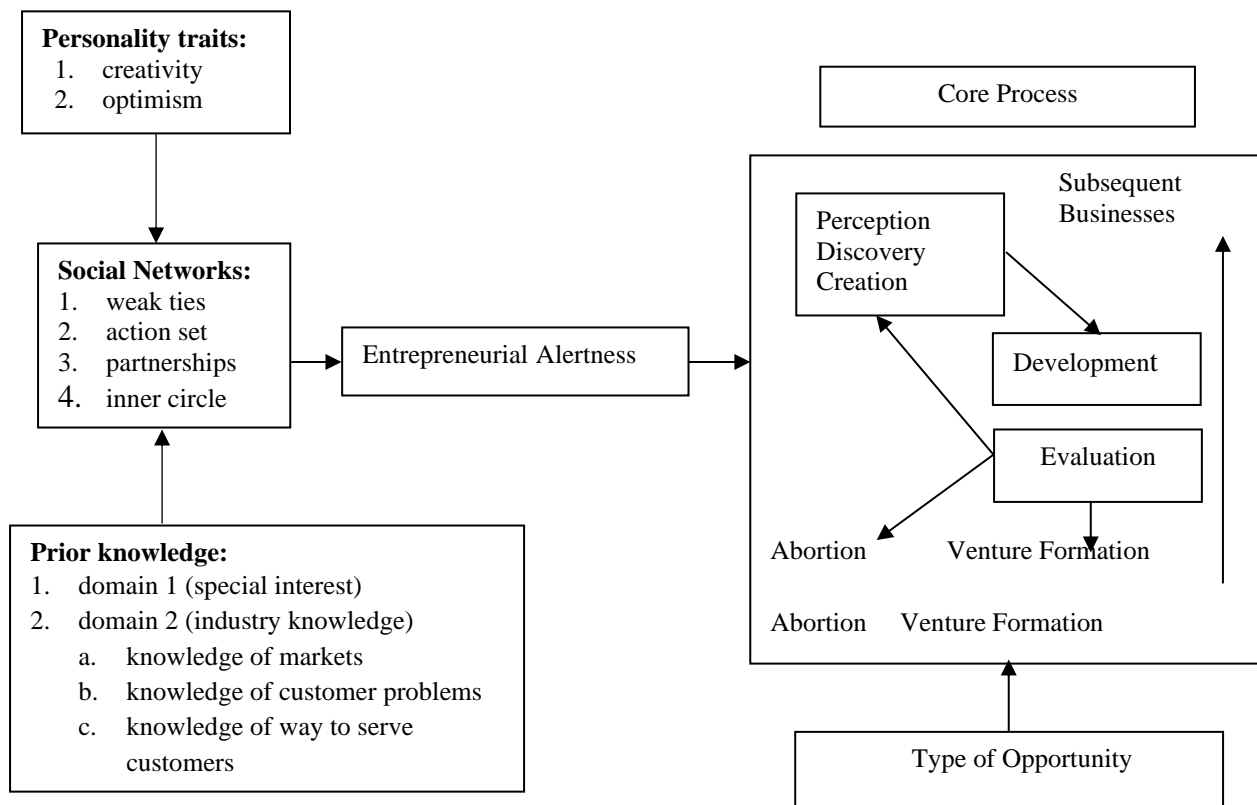
**Fig 1:** Types of Opportunities

Retrieved from Getzels, J. (1962:24). *Creativity and intelligence*. London: Routledge Publishing

From the matrix provided above, the following implicit explication of the cells can be given as follows: **The upper left cell** – This cell captures or talks about a given scenario where there is an unidentified value sought and value creation capability. That is; in this case, the societal problems that can bring about the generation of employment opportunity and its solutions are not known to the individual. This may be the case in the kind of creativity we associate with some designers and inventors who are seen to be interested in moving their personal knowledge in a new direction or pushing technology past its current limits. **The upper right cell** – This cell captures or talks about a given situation where the need for the creation of value for the society is identified but the required productive capability is not certain. The problems are known but the solutions are not defined. Also, in this case, the goal of employment opportunity development is usually to design a specific product/service to address an expressed market need (Ohaka, 2022).

Similarly, **the lower left cell** – This cell describes a particular situation in which there is an unidentified need to create a product with value for the members of the society amidst the availability of the required capability to drive the processes. That is to say that, in this instance, there is no clear-cut signal for the creation of a business venture in order to solve societal problems amidst the fact that the solutions are readily available. Employment opportunity identification here emphasizes search for applications more than product/service development. **In the lower**

**right cell** – This cell describes a given case whereby both the value sought is identified and capability defined (both problems and solutions are known) – employment opportunity identification involves matching known resources and needs to form businesses that can create and deliver value (Ardichvili, Cardozo & Ray, 2003; Ohaka, 2022). However, the theory of Employment Opportunity Identification and Development can be further explicated as shown in the framework below:



**Fig 2:** The Model and Units for the Opportunity Identification and Development Theory  
 Retrieved from Dubin, R. (1978:56)

From the figure above, we could see that the “core process” begins when the individual has an above-threshold level of entrepreneurial alertness. The alertness of an entrepreneur to the availability of employment opportunity identification is likely to be heightened when there is a coincidence of several factors: certain personality traits, relevant prior knowledge and experience and social networks. In this case, personality traits like creativity and optimism are critical determinants of psychosocial adjustment to employment opportunity identification. The nature of social networks (weak ties, action set, partnerships, and customer market), determine the level of entrepreneurial alertness (Ohaka, 2022).

However, the following are further hypothesized about the theory of employment opportunity identification and development: there is a significant relationship between social networks and alertness. This is to say that the larger an entrepreneur’s network the higher is her/his alertness to potentially successful entrepreneurial opportunities (Hills, Lumpkin & Singh, 1997); the stronger an individual’s specific or personal interest, the higher the propensity of that individual to adjust to an identified employment opportunity (Singrict in Ardichvili, Cardazo & Ray, 2003); when the

entrepreneur's interest and knowledge or experience converges it tends to increase the alertness of the individual to employment opportunity (Singrist, 1999); there is a discontinuous interaction between one's knowledge base and the opportunity development process. This interaction results in an iterative learning process, described by Argris and Schoen (1978) as double-loop learning and in the development of a knowledge corridor, described by Ronstadt (1988), which leads to heightened alertness to new employment opportunities.

As has been critically analyzed and explored above, the three theories such as: psychological theory of entrepreneurship (McClelland, 1961), sociological theory of entrepreneurship (Reynolds, 1991) and employment opportunity identification and development theory (Dubin, 1978) that have been reviewed above, seem to be very relevant, related and contributory to the development of the study. These theories provides a more critical theoretical explanations to the study. The reviewed theories also gives the basis upon which this work was conceived. However, the researcher has deemed it very appropriate to anchor this work on the psychological theory of entrepreneurship and the employment opportunity identification and development theory. This is sequel to the fact that, the researcher considers the theories as having the capacity to give a vivid interpretation of the study through a theoretical approach.

### **Review of Basic Variables: Entrepreneur, Employment, and Employment Opportunities Creation**

The definition of an entrepreneur has evolved overtime as the world's economic structure has changed and become more complex. It has been refined and broadened to include concepts that are related to the person rather than the occupation. Risk taking, innovation and creation of wealth are examples of the criteria that have been developed as the study of business creation evolved. An entrepreneur is one who has possession of a new enterprise, venture or idea and assumes significant accountability for the inherent risks and the outcome (Cantillon, 2014). He is the planner and risk-taker and is considered by many economists to form the fourth factor of production called „enterprise without which the other three cannot be effective.

An entrepreneur is one who undertakes an enterprise, acting as intermediary between capital and labour. Nelson and Leach (2018) explained that owners of small business firms can be called entrepreneurs because they have chosen to assume risks, identify business opportunities, gather resources, initiate action, and establish organizations to meet some demand or market opportunity. Creativity and innovation are important techniques that help the entrepreneur to see things in a different perspective and come up with new approaches to the business. Hisrich & Peters (2020) stated that creativity is the act of thinking new things and coming up with new ideas. It is also concerned with new ways of looking at opportunities and approaches to solving problems while innovation is the implementation of newly created ideas. Indeed, innovation, the act of introducing something new is one of the most difficult tasks for the entrepreneur. It takes not only the ability to create and conceptualize but also the ability to understand all the forces at work in the environment.

The concept of employment has been variously defined by experts in the field of economics and business. These conceptualizations as provided by these experts have been predicated on their various backgrounds and standpoints. In one of such explications, employment was perceived as a contract carried out between an individual known as employer and another individual known as employee and the agreement helps to determine the task, the job role, the way of service and the contribution the employer must provide to the business organization. These job roles and tasks



being performed by the employee attract some form of remuneration from the employer. It may interest you to note that the agreement between the employer and the employee is usually carried out through an official document referred to as offer letter (Human Resource Help Board, 2022). The International Labour Organization (2021) posited that an employed person is a person aged 15 years or older who have worked (for pay or profit for at least one hour during a given week or having a job from which being absent under conditions on the reason of absence – holidays, sick leave, maternity leave, etc) or duration.

Employment Opportunity creation includes three distinct processes: sensing or perceiving market needs and/or underemployed resources, recognizing or discovering a fit between particular market needs and specified resources and creating new fit between separate needs and resources in the form of a business concept. Opportunity identification and creation can be seen as the starting point from which all else in the entrepreneurial process follows (Shane & Venkataraman in Karlesky 2015) and also a complex phenomenon following the heated debates that have surrounded it from concerned scholars (Gregoire, Shepherd & Lambert, 2010). Employment opportunity identification and creation is a process in which an individual has the ability to identify, see, recognize and find the opportunities and then generate new business ideas that are potentially profitable (Soelaiman & Liediana, 2020). Employment opportunity is seen as a good or favourable change available to run a specific business in a given environment at a given point in time (Shinha (2015).

## METHODOLOGY

The design that was adopted for the study is correlational survey research design. The population of the study was made up of the entire post-graduate Business Education students in Rivers State University from 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic session which comprises of 90 Business Education post-graduate students (**Source:** RSU Departments of Business Education, 2023). The population is further broken down as shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Population Distribution Table**

S/N.	Programme	2021/2022	2022/23
1.	M.Sc.	26	35
2.	Ph.D	16	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>48</b>

The choice of the population was informed by the fact that majority of the respondents are either owners of business or employees of different organizations or have the intention of venturing into businesses for self-employment. Thus, the researcher considered the choice of population to be appropriate and suitable for the research. The sample size for this study was 90 post-graduate Business Education students in Rivers State University. The researcher adopted the entire population for the study. Reason being that the researcher had considered the population to be small and also of a manageable size. The sampling technique that was adopted for the study was census method. Data for this study was gathered through the means of two self-designed questionnaires. The questionnaires were titled: “Entrepreneurship Competencies Questionnaire (ECOQ)” and “Creation of Employment Opportunity Questionnaire (CEOQ)”. The two questionnaires consisted of a total of 10 and 8 questionnaire items respectively. The questionnaire adopted a 5-point rating scale which are: Very High Extent (VHE: 5points), High Extent (HE: 4points), Moderate Extent (ME: 3points), Low Extent (LE: 2points) and Very Low Extent (VLE:

1point). The questionnaires were face and content validated by three experts in the field of education. Two of the experts were taken from the Department of Business Education and the other one from the field of Measurement and Evaluation all from the Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt. The reliability of the instrument was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) statistical tool. An overall reliability coefficient of 0.81 and 0.89 respectively was established. The entire copies of the questionnaire were administered out of which 81 were completely filled and retrieved by the researcher.

The completed copies of the research instrument were coded to correspond to the weight assigned to each of the questionnaire items. The collected data was used for analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions while z-ratio transformation associated with the correlation coefficients for each research questions were used to test the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the decision rule for the tested hypotheses were based on the z-value obtained which are highlighted as follows: 0.8 – 1.0 = Very Strong Relationship; 0.6 – 0.79 = Strong Relationship; 0.4 – 0.59 = Moderate Relationship; 0.2 – 0.39 = Weak Relationship and 0.0 – 0.19 = Very Weak or No Relationship.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence correlates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduates students in Rivers State University?

**Table 2: Relationship Analysis between Innovative-thinking as an aspect of Entrepreneurial Competence and Creation of Employment Opportunities by Business Education Graduate Students in Rivers State University**

Variable	N	$\frac{\sum X}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	r <sub>cal</sub>	Rmks
<b>Innovative-thinking (X)</b>	81	5747	100223	0.72	<b>Strong Positive Correlation</b>
<b>CEO (Y)</b>	81	5726	99074		

**Source:** Field Survey, (2024). *Keys: X- Innovative-thinking; Y- Creation of Employment Opportunities (CEO)*

Table 2 presents the relationship analysis between innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. Based on the decision rule of correlation analysis, the r-value obtained 0.72, indicated that the relationship between innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. Therefore, the data gathered proved that .....

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence correlates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduates students in Rivers State University?

**Table 3: Relationship Analysis between Pro-activeness as an aspect of Entrepreneurial Competence and Creation of Employment Opportunities by Business Education Graduate Students in Rivers State University**

Variable	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$r_{cal}$	Rmks
Pro-activeness (X)	81	5623	96807	0.59	<b>Moderate Positive Correlation</b>
CEO (Y)	81	5723	99074		

**Source:** Field Survey, (2024). *Keys: X- Pro-activeness; Y- Creation of Employment Opportunities (CEO)*

Table 3 presents the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the relationship between pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. That is, there is a moderate correlation between pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. The implication of this finding is that if entrepreneurs are forward-looking in their daily dealings there is the great possibility for employment opportunities to be created.

**Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University.

**Table 4: z-Transformation Analysis on the Relationship between Innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and Creation of Employment Opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University**

Variable	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	Df	$\alpha$	$r_{cal}$	z-cal	z <sub>crit</sub>	Rmks
IT(X)	81	10543	27760	85359	79	0.05	0.72	12.94	1.96	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
CEO (Y)	81	16502	42902							

**Source:** Research Data Output (2024). *Keys: Innovative-thinking (IT); Creation of Employment Opportunities (CEO)*

Table 4 showed the z-transformation analysis on the relationship between innovative-thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. The r-calculated value (0.72) was transformed to z-value using the z-transformation formula which resulted to 12.94. With degree of freedom 79 and 0.05 level of significance, the z-critical value obtained was 1.96 which is way less than the z-calc. The result implies that there is a significant relationship between innovative-

thinking as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University.

**Table 5: z-Transformation Analysis on the Relationship between Pro-activeness as an aspect of Entrepreneurial Competence and Creation of Employment Opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University**

Variabl e	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	Df	$\alpha$	r <sub>cal</sub>	z-calc	z <sub>crit</sub>	Rmks
LMC (X)	81	12058	32112	84474	79	0.05	0.59	12.94	1.96	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
ETBV (Y)	81	16502	42902							

**Source:** Research Data Output (2024). *Keys: Pro-activeness (P); Creation of Employment Opportunities (CEO)*

Table 5 presents the z-transformation analysis on the relationship between pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. The z-transformation yielded z-calculated value of 12.94. Comparing the z-cal (12.94) with z-crit value of 1.96 that was obtained through 79 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the null hypotheses is adjudged to be significant. Thus, the relationship between pro-activeness as an aspect of entrepreneurial competence and creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University.

### Discussion of Findings

The result in Table 2 above showed the extent to which innovative-thinking relates to creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. The findings showed that the tendency to venture into a business that creates employment opportunities is dependent on the individual's ability to take moderate risk; an individual's proclivity to work in moderate risk situations also enhances the individual's capacity to create employment opportunities; the inclination of a student to take moderate risk as a business man increases his or her chances of creating an employment opportunity; having the natural disposition for carrying out a business task amidst the dangers involved promotes the individual's ability to create employment opportunities; having the intrinsic predisposition to run a business that is full of uncertainties gives the student the competence required to create an employment opportunity and possessing the inner proclivity to get involved in hazard related business activities gives the student the capacity to create a business. The findings of the tested hypotheses also showed that there is a significant relationship between planned regular vacation and lecturers' job performance in faculties of education in Rivers State Universities.

This finding is in consonance with the findings of Schumpeter in Adokiye, Alagah and Onuoha (2017) who noted that innovation encompasses the practice of making known a unique transformation to organizational products declared by consumers as having added value, thereby giving the organization competitive advantage. It is also important to note that the findings of this study aligns with the work of Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin, and Frese (2009) who maintained that innovative-thinking involves pursuit of novelties or a creative behaviour that seeks to find new solutions to challenges confronting organization and an attempt to change the existing status quo of a given area of an organization. They further affirms that creativity is the starting point of innovation and a means to exhibit the entrepreneurial behaviors of managers in the organizations. Innovativeness reflects sets of actions created through which organization seeks to benefit from entrepreneurial behaviors that rival competitors have not spotted or identified. The implication of this is that the formation and successful running of a business organization begins and ends with thinking innovatively. Thinking innovatively as a business owner or entrepreneur is essential and pivotal in business creation and survival in all ramifications of the business.

The result in Table 2 above showed the extent to which pro-activeness relates to creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. The findings showed that having the mental skill to take action urgently without doubt when the need arises especially in turbulent times enhances the students ability to create an employment opportunity; the students' ability to be farsighted increases the possibility for the student to create an employment opportunity thereby achieving organizational success; having awareness of and preparing for the future enables the student to act in advance of a future business venture; my ability to foresee future events increases the students' chances of seizing business initiative that promotes employment opportunity creation and having the competence to act in terms of emergency especially in an unconducive situation increases my chances of becoming successful in Entrepreneurship. The findings of the tested hypotheses also show that there is a significant relationship between pro-activeness and lecturers' job performance in faculties of education in Rivers State University.

The findings made in this study is in consonance with the findings of Sebor and Theerapatyong (2010) where it was reported that pro-activeness is an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking perspective involving introducing new products or services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand to create change and shape the environment. They also stated that pro-activeness of a firm determines the attitudes of new product developers toward generation of innovative ideas and bringing these ideas into reality. The findings of this study also agrees with the work of Okpara (2009) who reported that pro-activeness is the mental skill to take action urgently and without doubt when the need arises both in conducive and turbulent time in an attempt to pursue business opportunity.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that: innovative-thinking relates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University; it was concluded that pro-activeness relates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University. It was also concluded that strategic-thinking relates with the creation of employment opportunities by Business Education graduate students in Rivers State University.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be a more practical approach to the teaching of entrepreneurial competences such as innovative-thinking in schools to enable the students develop a critical thinking mindset after graduation from school.
2. Since the act of being proactive is an essential attribute or competence of an entrepreneur, it is pertinent for students to develop this competence in order to boost their tendency to create employment opportunities in the world of work.

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