Entrepreneurial Education and Employment Generation: Evidence from Management Science Graduates in South-East Nigeria

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DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.vol.11no10.2025.pg23.41

Abstract
This study examined the effect of entrepreneurial education on employment generation among management science graduates in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, it sought to ascertain the effect of practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content on employment generation. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted to collect data at a single point in time from the targeted population. The population comprised all management science graduates from public and private universities in South-East Nigeria, with a sample size of 384 respondents determined using Cochran's formula. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring practical skills training, entrepreneurial curricula content, and employment outcomes. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis at a 5% significance level. It was found that: practical skills training has a positive and significant effect on employment generation among management science graduates ($\beta = 0.573$, $p = 0.000$); entrepreneurial curricula content has a positive but non-significant effect on employment generation among management science graduates ($\beta = 0.047$, $p = 0.375$). In conclusion, practical skill acquisition contributes to the creation of micro and small enterprises, enhancing local economic activities and encouraging innovation-driven employment. The study recommended that university management and program coordinators should prioritize the design and delivery of experiential learning modules that equip students with hands-on skills relevant for self-employment and job creation.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial education, employment generation, Management science graduates in South-east Nigeria*

1.0 Introduction

Entrepreneurial education has gained considerable attention in recent years due to its potential to transform graduates from passive job seekers into proactive creators of economic opportunities. Globally, the labor market has experienced increasing competition, technological disruption, and shifting industry demands, which have made traditional employment less certain. In this context, management science graduates in Nigeria face the challenge of securing meaningful employment immediately after graduation. South-East Nigeria, which is home to several universities producing thousands of management science graduates annually, has witnessed rising graduate unemployment, leading to economic and social consequences (Ugobueze & Okwunmuo, 2024). The conventional approach of seeking salaried employment has proven insufficient in addressing these challenges, highlighting the

need for educational systems that equip students with practical skills, innovative thinking, and entrepreneurial capabilities. Universities are increasingly being called upon to integrate entrepreneurial education into their curricula to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and employability skills (Alabi, 2025). By understanding the role of entrepreneurial education in shaping graduates' readiness for self-employment and business creation, stakeholders in education and policy can better design interventions that stimulate economic growth and reduce unemployment.

Employment generation remains a critical aspect of economic development, particularly in regions where unemployment rates are high and labor markets cannot absorb the influx of new graduates (Nor, 2024). In today's business environment, entrepreneurial education is viewed as a strategic tool for equipping graduates with the competencies needed to identify business opportunities, develop viable ventures, and contribute to job creation (Nwangbo & Ede, 2025). This form of education goes beyond theoretical knowledge, emphasizing practical skills such as financial management, marketing, problem-solving, and decision-making, which are essential for launching and sustaining businesses. For management science graduates, possessing these competencies can transform potential career obstacles into opportunities for income generation, innovation, and community development. Governments and educational institutions have increasingly recognized the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among students as a way to address structural unemployment and stimulate local economies (Aneke & Aduaka, 2022). In the South-East region of Nigeria, initiatives to integrate entrepreneurial education into university programs have sought to empower graduates to become self-reliant and capable of creating employment not only for themselves but also for others.

In the words of Ibecheozor et al. (2021), entrepreneurial education has the potential to influence employment generation by equipping graduates with the skills, knowledge, and confidence required to establish businesses and engage in productive ventures. Practical skills training, which forms a significant part of entrepreneurial education, enables students to acquire hands-on experience in areas such as business planning, innovation, and operational management, directly enhancing their employability (Ugobueze & Okwunmuo, 2024). Exposure to comprehensive entrepreneurial curricula content provides graduates with an understanding of market dynamics, risk assessment, and strategic decision-making, which are essential for successfully launching and managing enterprises. Studies have shown that graduates who undergo structured entrepreneurial education are more likely to start businesses, diversify income sources, and contribute to local employment creation (Ayo-Sobowale, 2021; Oboreh & Nnebe, 2019). In addition, entrepreneurial education fosters critical thinking, creativity, and self-efficacy, attributes that encourage graduates to take calculated risks and explore new avenues for generating income. In South-East Nigeria, where many graduates encounter limited formal employment opportunities, entrepreneurial education can serve as a catalyst for job creation, enabling graduates to respond to market demands, create innovative solutions, and establish enterprises that employ others.

Graduates of management sciences in South-East Nigeria are expected to possess the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to contribute meaningfully to the economy through employment creation. Higher education institutions are meant to provide students with both theoretical knowledge and practical training that prepares them to compete effectively in the labor market or establish their own businesses (Chukwuma-Nwuba, 2019). Entrepreneurship education, when properly integrated into university curricula, has the potential to equip graduates with the ability to identify opportunities, innovate, and apply practical skills to generate income. This ensures that graduates can engage in productive ventures, create jobs for themselves and others, and contribute to the overall development of the region. In reality,

many management science graduates struggle to secure employment after completing their studies. The labor market in South-East Nigeria is highly saturated, and formal job opportunities are limited. While universities offer programs in entrepreneurship, many of these programs focus more on theoretical aspects than practical skill development. Graduates often leave school without sufficient exposure to business planning, innovation management, or practical entrepreneurial experience. As a result, their capacity to establish and sustain businesses or generate employment remains low, leaving a significant number of graduates dependent on scarce formal job opportunities (Ojiako & Ndubuisi, 2025; Umoh et al., 2023).

The consequences of this situation are significant for both individuals and the broader economy. High graduate unemployment leads to financial insecurity, underutilization of talent, and increased social challenges, including frustration and loss of motivation among young people (Ugobueze & Okwunmuo, 2024; Ibecheozor et al., 2021). Communities and local economies also suffer as potential sources of innovation and job creation remain untapped. Without targeted interventions to strengthen entrepreneurial skills and curricula content, management science graduates may continue to face difficulties in creating employment, limiting their contributions to economic growth and development in South-East Nigeria.

1.1 Objective of the study

The main aim of the study is to examine the effect of entrepreneurial education on employment generation among management science graduates in South-east Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the effect of practical skills training on employment generation among management science graduates in South-east Nigeria.
2. To examine the effect of entrepreneurial curricula content on employment generation among management science graduates in South-east Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Entrepreneurial Education

Entrepreneurial education refers to the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to identify business opportunities, take risks, and manage ventures successfully (Nwangbo & Ede, 2025). It involves structured learning experiences designed to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, enabling learners to think creatively, act proactively, and adapt to changing economic environments. This form of education is not limited to the study of business theory but encompasses experiential learning that encourages problem-solving, innovation, and decision-making within real-world contexts (Umoh et al., 2023). Through entrepreneurial education, students are exposed to challenges and scenarios that simulate the demands of starting and managing a business, fostering self-confidence and self-reliance in professional pursuits (Ojiako & Ndubuisi, 2025). The purpose of entrepreneurial education is to prepare individuals to engage in activities that create economic value, whether through self-employment, business establishment, or the introduction of innovative practices within existing organizations. It equips learners with the ability to analyze market needs, develop viable solutions, and implement strategies that lead to business growth and sustainability. By focusing on both cognitive and behavioral development, entrepreneurial education promotes the formation of habits, attitudes, and ways of thinking that support initiative and resilience in the face of uncertainty.

Entrepreneurial education extends beyond the classroom through mentorship, internships, and exposure to entrepreneurial networks (Ugobueze & Okwunmuo, 2024). Such experiences

reinforce the theoretical principles learned and provide practical understanding of market dynamics, business planning, and resource management. Umoh et al. (2023) argued that individuals who undergo entrepreneurial education often demonstrate a greater propensity to identify opportunities where others see obstacles, and they develop the confidence to act on these opportunities. This prepares them not only to create enterprises that contribute to personal income but also to contribute to broader economic growth by generating employment and fostering innovation in society. Thus, entrepreneurial education fosters a proactive approach to career and business development (Nwangbo & Ede, 2025). It encourages learners to take initiative, make informed decisions, and develop resilience in managing risks associated with entrepreneurial ventures. By integrating knowledge, experience, and skill development, it prepares individuals to participate actively in economic activities that extend beyond traditional employment pathways, positioning them as creators of opportunities for themselves and others.

2.1.2 Practical Skills Training

Practical skills training involves structured activities aimed at equipping individuals with the hands-on abilities required to perform specific tasks effectively (Akinola et al., 2023). Unlike theoretical learning, practical skills training emphasizes direct engagement with tools, processes, and techniques relevant to particular fields of study or professional practice. It provides learners with the experience of applying knowledge in real-world situations, allowing them to develop competence and confidence in performing tasks accurately and efficiently. The training focuses on the development of measurable abilities that can be demonstrated and evaluated, ensuring that individuals are capable of contributing productively in professional or entrepreneurial settings (Ugobueze & Okwunmuo, 2024). Practical skills training is designed to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and real-life application. It exposes learners to activities that replicate actual work scenarios, enabling them to practice techniques, troubleshoot problems, and refine their abilities through repetition and feedback. This type of training often incorporates simulations, workshops, laboratory exercises, or supervised work placements that allow learners to experience the demands of specific roles. By engaging in practical exercises, individuals internalize procedures and methods, which enhances their overall proficiency and prepares them to respond effectively to workplace or business challenges.

The value of practical skills training lies in its capacity to foster adaptability and self-reliance. Participants develop not only technical expertise but also confidence in executing tasks independently. They learn to apply critical thinking and problem-solving in real-time situations, which strengthens their overall competency (Alabi, 2025). Through continuous practice and exposure to realistic conditions, learners become familiar with industry standards, operational requirements, and professional expectations. Practical skills training also contributes to personal and professional development by instilling discipline, attention to detail, and a sense of responsibility for outcomes (Akinola et al., 2023). Individuals trained in practical skills are better equipped to perform tasks efficiently, innovate within their roles, and maintain consistent standards of quality. This form of learning prepares them to contribute meaningfully to economic activities, whether as employees, self-employed professionals, or entrepreneurs, by ensuring they possess the technical and operational expertise necessary for success.

2.1.3 Entrepreneurial Curricula Content

Entrepreneurial curricula content refers to the structured educational materials and

instructional programs designed to impart knowledge, attitudes, and competencies that support the development of entrepreneurial abilities (Ibecheozor et al., 2021; Ojiako & Ndubuisi, 2025). This encompasses the theories, principles, case studies, and practical exercises integrated into academic programs to guide learners in understanding business creation, management, and innovation. Such content provides students with a foundation for analyzing market opportunities, evaluating risks, and making informed decisions in the pursuit of entrepreneurial ventures. By embedding entrepreneurial thinking within curricula, learners are prepared to approach challenges creatively and strategically (Aneke & Aduaka, 2022). The materials included in entrepreneurial curricula content aim to develop both cognitive and behavioral skills necessary for successful business engagement. They provide hints into how enterprises operate, the strategies required to sustain growth, and the methods for translating ideas into viable economic activities. The content often includes modules on opportunity recognition, resource mobilization, business planning, financial management, and innovation processes. By presenting structured knowledge alongside practical examples, the curricula enable learners to connect theoretical principles with real-world applications, fostering understanding that is relevant to employment generation and enterprise creation (Ojiako & Ndubuisi, 2025).

Entrepreneurial curricula content also encourages learners to develop a proactive attitude toward business and employment challenges. It emphasizes decision-making, problem-solving, and strategic thinking, equipping students with the ability to navigate uncertainties and seize opportunities in dynamic environments. Through this content, learners acquire the skills to anticipate market trends, manage resources efficiently, and adapt to changing economic conditions, which enhances their readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities or contribute innovatively within established organizations (Ibecheozor et al., 2021). Thus, entrepreneurial curricula content provides a systematic framework through which students gain the knowledge, competencies, and confidence necessary to initiate and sustain economic activities (Ojiako & Ndubuisi, 2025). It prepares graduates to contribute to employment generation by creating businesses, developing solutions to market needs, and fostering innovation. By grounding learners in both theory and practical application, the curricula equip them to become economically productive, self-reliant, and capable of supporting broader community and regional development.

2.1.4 Employment Generation

Employment generation refers to the process through which individuals, organizations, or initiatives create opportunities for people to engage in productive work that earns income and supports livelihoods (Nor, 2024). It involves the availability of jobs, business ventures, or economic activities that allow individuals to apply their skills, knowledge, and talents to contribute meaningfully to economic growth (John, 2021). Employment generation can occur through formal structures such as private or public sector jobs or through self-employment, business creation, and entrepreneurial activities. It is a fundamental component of economic development, as it ensures that human resources are effectively utilized to enhance productivity and promote social well-being (Obianuju& Nworie, 2024). Employment generation is influenced by a range of factors, including the capacity of individuals to acquire skills, the accessibility of business opportunities, and the responsiveness of the labor market to economic demands. It involves not only creating positions but also equipping individuals with the ability to fill those roles effectively. Through employment, people gain financial independence, develop professional experience, and contribute to the production of goods and services that support economic stability (Meshack et al., 2022). The process is essential for reducing unemployment, alleviating poverty, and promoting social cohesion, as it

provides avenues for individuals to participate in economic activities that sustain livelihoods. The generation of employment also contributes to community and regional development by fostering entrepreneurship, encouraging innovation, and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises. When individuals create businesses or engage in productive work, they contribute to local economies, stimulate trade, and provide opportunities for others to participate in income-generating activities (John, 2021). Employment generation is thus a continuous process that links education, skill development, and economic activity, ensuring that human potential is transformed into productive output (Nor, 2024). Thus, employment generation represents the practical outcome of equipping individuals with the capabilities to engage in meaningful work. It reflects the ability of education, training, and entrepreneurial activities to translate knowledge and skills into economic opportunities that improve individual livelihoods, strengthen communities, and contribute to sustainable economic growth. By fostering the creation of work opportunities, employment generation ensures that human capital is fully utilized for the benefit of both individuals and society.

2.2 Theoretical Framework and Development of Research Hypothesis

The study is underpinned by the Theory of Planned Behavior which was developed by IcekAjzen in 1991 as an extension of the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen proposed this theory to explain how individuals' attitudes and perceptions influence their intentions to engage in specific behaviors. The theory was designed to provide a framework for predicting deliberate actions in situations where individuals have control over their behavior (Conner, 2020). It has been widely applied in studies of human decision-making, behavioral intention, and actions across various disciplines, including education, health, and entrepreneurship. By linking beliefs and intentions to actual behavior, the theory offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors that motivate individuals to undertake particular activities, such as starting a business or pursuing employment-generating initiatives.

The Theory of Planned Behavior postulates that human behavior is guided by three main determinants (Ajzen, 1991. First, an individual's attitude toward the behavior, which reflects personal evaluation of whether performing the behavior is favorable or unfavorable. Second, subjective norms, which represent the perceived social pressure from family, peers, or society to perform or avoid the behavior. Third, perceived behavioral control, which refers to an individual's perception of their ability to perform the behavior successfully, considering available resources and potential obstacles. According to the theory, these three components collectively shape behavioral intentions, which in turn influence actual behavior. The stronger the intention and the higher the perceived control, the more likely an individual is to perform the behavior, providing a structured way to understand how beliefs translate into actions (Conner, 2020).

The relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior to this study lies in its application to entrepreneurial education and employment generation among management science graduates. Entrepreneurial education can influence graduates' attitudes by fostering positive evaluations of business creation and self-employment. It also affects subjective norms by exposing students to role models, mentors, and peers who support entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, practical skills training and exposure to entrepreneurial curricula enhance graduates' perceived behavioral control by increasing confidence in their ability to establish and manage businesses successfully. By applying this theory, the study hypothesised that:

Ha1. Practical skills training will positively affect employment generation among management science graduates in South-east Nigeria.

Ha2. Entrepreneurial curricula content will positively affect employment generation among

management science graduates in South-east Nigeria.

2.3 Empirical Review

Alabi (2025) explored how entrepreneurial skills acquisition and business education can empower students for employability in the South-South and South-East regions of Nigeria. The study was guided by three objectives, three research questions, and three hypotheses. A descriptive survey design was used, targeting 106 postgraduate students from selected universities in the regions. Since the entire population was included, no sampling was conducted. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Business Education Students Empowerment for Employability Questionnaire" (ESABESEEQ), which employed a four-point scale ranging from Very High Extent to Very Low Extent. Mean and standard deviation were used to address the research questions, while T-tests tested the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Findings indicated that problem-solving skills enable individuals to maximize their potential. The study recommended that university curricula should cultivate graduates who are critical and creative thinkers, willing to challenge norms, make mistakes, and learn from them, while entrepreneurship education should receive adequate funding.

Nwangbo and Ede (2025) investigated entrepreneurship education as a factor influencing employment opportunities among university students in Abia State, Nigeria. Using a correlational research design, the study addressed two research questions and tested two null hypotheses. The sample included 305 undergraduate students selected through stratified random sampling from two public universities. Data were gathered via the Entrepreneurship Education as Determinant of Employment Opportunities Questionnaire (EEDEOQ), validated with a reliability estimate of 0.76 using Cronbach's alpha. Pearson Product Moment Correlation, ANOVA, and multiple regression analyses revealed a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurship education, employment opportunities, and students' contributions to economic growth. Recommendations included ensuring that all undergraduates are exposed to entrepreneurship courses and acquire at least one employable or marketable skill before graduation.

Ojiako and Ndubuisi (2025) examined the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the reduction of unemployment in Anambra State, Nigeria, focusing on curriculum content and teaching strategies. A descriptive survey design was used, with a population of 766 final-year students in Business Administration. Using Borg and Gall's method, the sample size was determined to be 147. Test-retest reliability and face and content validity were applied. Data were analyzed using frequency tables, arithmetic means, and Pearson product-moment correlation at 0.05 significance. Results showed a strong association between entrepreneurial education and lower unemployment rates, with both curriculum content and teaching strategies contributing positively. The study recommended developing entrepreneurial curricula that integrate practical, creativity-enhancing elements and adopting hands-on teaching methods to foster innovative behavior among students.

Ugobueze and Okwunmuo (2024) assessed the effect of entrepreneurship education on unemployment in Southeast Nigeria, covering the five states of Anambra, Imo, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Abia. A survey research design was employed, targeting SS3 students using a validated questionnaire on entrepreneurial skills. Data analysis involved Cronbach's alpha, simple regression, and T-tests. Findings highlighted that entrepreneurship education significantly reduces unemployment, particularly by enhancing skills in identifying market needs and creating solutions. Networking opportunities and practical skills training also contributed positively, while business creation and youth empowerment showed lower influence. The study emphasized the role of entrepreneurship education in economic

empowerment and recommended policies to strengthen these initiatives.

Umoh et al. (2023) investigated how entrepreneurship education supports employability skills acquisition among undergraduates at the University of Uyo, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey-based descriptive design guided by five objectives, research questions, and hypotheses. The population consisted of 200-level students from the 2019/2020 session in the Faculty of Business Administration, with a sample of 475 selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using the "Students' Employability Skills Acquisition Scale" (SESAS) and analyzed using mean scores and chi-square tests. Reliability ranged from 0.7 to 0.78. Findings revealed that entrepreneurship education enhances employability skills, and the study recommended government support to provide equipment and facilities for practical-oriented teaching across universities.

Aneke and Aduaka (2022) examined the effect of entrepreneurship education on the career intentions and aspirations of tertiary students in Enugu State, South-East Nigeria. The study focused on curriculum content, teaching methods, and academic qualifications as factors influencing the generation of business ideas, identification of business opportunities, development of business plans, and establishment of student-led startups. Anchored on Experiential Learning Theory, the study sampled 353 participants from a population of 4,313 using Cochran's finite population correction. Data were collected through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed with descriptive statistics and multiple regression. Results indicated that curriculum content and teaching methods significantly affected business idea generation, business opportunity identification, development of business plans, and the establishment of startups.

Ayo-Sobowale (2021) investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduate students in selected universities in South-West Nigeria. The study focused on three key objectives: the effect of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial performance, employment creation, and enterprise creation. The sample included all final-year undergraduate students who had taken entrepreneurship courses across nine universities (federal, state, and private) in Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo States, selected through a combination of sampling techniques. Demographic data were analyzed using frequency tables, percentages, means, and standard deviations, while multivariate regression tested the hypotheses. Findings indicated significant relationships between entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial performance ($F(3, 3078)=3218.486$; $p<0.001$; $R^2=0.758$), employment creation ($F(3, 3078)=3455.633$; $p<0.001$; $R^2=0.771$), and enterprise creation ($F(3, 3078)=4938.134$; $p<0.002$; $R^2=0.828$). The study concluded that entrepreneurship education strongly influences the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria.

Ibecheozor et al. (2021) explored the role of entrepreneurship education in enhancing entrepreneurial skills to address graduate unemployment in South-East Nigeria. Data were collected via questionnaires from a population of 57,710 students, with a sample of 399 selected through purposive sampling. Hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level using ANOVA in SPSS version 21. Results revealed a significant relationship between entrepreneurship curriculum content and students' entrepreneurial skills. The study concluded that entrepreneurship skills acquisition is crucial for reducing youth unemployment by promoting self-reliance and employment creation. It recommended making entrepreneurship skill acquisition mandatory for all final-year students.

Oboreh and Nnebe (2019) examined how entrepreneurship education influences skill acquisition among graduates of public universities in South-East Nigeria. The study focused on technical innovation, creativity, risk-taking, and opportunity recognition as determinants of graduates' skills. Anchored on cognitive theory, the research adopted a descriptive design

and collected primary data from 7,951 students across eight universities, representing 10% of the population. A structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was employed, with reliability assessed using test-retest and Cronbach's alpha. Multiple regression analysis revealed that technical innovation, creativity, risk-taking, and opportunity recognition positively influenced graduates' skill acquisition. The study concluded that entrepreneurship education significantly enhances skill acquisition among public university graduates in South-East Nigeria.

Chukwuma-Nwuba (2019) assessed the effect of entrepreneurship education programs on the entrepreneurial intentions of graduates in Nigeria using a sequential explanatory mixed-method design. The quantitative component included 409 graduates as an experimental group and 402 undergraduates as a control group, while the qualitative component involved in-depth interviews with six lecturers from six universities. Guided by the theory of planned behavior, the study applied structural equation modeling (SEM-AMOS) to examine the effects of entrepreneurship education. Results indicated that teaching methods only partially influenced entrepreneurial intentions, while cultural values indirectly affected intentions through personal attitude and subjective norm. Overall, the program had limited impact on graduates' entrepreneurial intentions and no effect on their personal attitudes.

Odewale et al. (2019) investigated how entrepreneurship education, specifically communication skills, technical knowledge, and innovation, shapes students' views on self-employment. The study involved 260 postgraduate students from Universiti Utara Malaysia, analyzed through descriptive and regression methods. Findings showed that technical knowledge and innovation significantly influenced students' perspectives on self-employment, while communication skills did not. The study recommended that educators and policymakers prioritize technical knowledge and innovation to improve the performance of aspiring entrepreneurs across diverse populations.

Okeke et al. (2016) studied the entrepreneurial inclination of students at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University and Imo State University, Owerri. Using a survey design, 90 respondents were randomly selected and administered a 12-item Likert-scale questionnaire. Reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84. Hypotheses were tested using z-tests at a 0.05 significance level. Results indicated that entrepreneurship education fosters entrepreneurial inclination, and both male and female students in business-related courses show readiness for self-employment. The study recommended promoting entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities to encourage graduate self-employment.

2.4 Gap in Literature

Despite the wealth of research on entrepreneurship education and its impact on employability and skill acquisition, several gaps remain, particularly regarding employment generation among management science graduates in South-East Nigeria. Previous studies by Alabi (2025), Nwangbo and Ede (2025), and Ojiako and Ndubuisi (2025) primarily focused on the empowerment of students through entrepreneurial skills and curriculum content, often emphasizing employability or unemployment reduction without directly linking these outcomes to employment generation. Similarly, Ugobueze and Okwunmuo (2024), Umoh et al. (2023), and Aneke and Aduaka (2022) highlighted the importance of practical skills and curricula in enhancing employability, but these studies targeted undergraduates or secondary school students rather than graduates who have completed their management science programs. Research by Ayo-Sobowale (2021) and Ibecheozor et al. (2021) investigated entrepreneurial intentions and skills acquisition, yet their findings did not explore the relative contributions of practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content on actual employment creation among graduates. Further, studies such as Oboreh and Nnebe (2019),

Chukwuma-Nwuba (2019), Odewale et al. (2019), and Okeke et al. (2016) examined technical skills, innovation, and entrepreneurial inclination, but largely within the context of skill development or self-employment perspectives, leaving a limited understanding of how these educational interventions translate into measurable employment generation outcomes. Taken together, the literature suggests a strong influence of entrepreneurship education on knowledge, skills, and employability, yet there is insufficient empirical evidence that directly measures its effect on employment creation specifically among management science graduates in South-East Nigeria. This study addresses this gap by focusing on practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content as key factors influencing employment generation, thereby providing a targeted evaluation of how education translates into real economic opportunities for graduates.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopts a cross-sectional survey design to examine how entrepreneurial education influences employment generation among management science graduates in South-east Nigeria. The design is appropriate because it permits the collection of data at a single point in time from a wide range of respondents, making it possible to assess the present realities of graduates with respect to their exposure to entrepreneurial education and employment outcomes (Nworie & Odah, 2024). Through this method, the researcher can gather information on variables such as practical skills training, entrepreneurial curricula content, and employment generation, which can then be analyzed to determine their effect. The use of a cross-sectional survey also aligns with quantitative analysis, which is necessary for measuring the extent to which identified aspects of entrepreneurial education contribute to employment opportunities for graduates.

The population of the study consists of all graduates of management science disciplines in South-east Nigeria. Because it is practically impossible to identify the exact number of such graduates within the region, the population is treated as theoretically infinite. The study targets individuals who obtained degrees in management-related fields such as business administration, accounting, marketing, and related areas from public and private universities. To ensure that responses reflect recent experiences, emphasis is placed on graduates who completed their studies within the past five years. This focus helps the study capture more reliable data on how entrepreneurial education is currently shaping their employment opportunities.

Given the infinite nature of the population, Cochran's formula for determining sample size from an infinite population was applied. The formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{(Z)^2 \, X \, p \, X \, q}{(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

Z = standard normal deviation (1.96 for 95% confidence level)

p = estimated proportion of the population with the characteristic (0.5 assumed)

q = 1 – p

e = margin of error (0.05)

Applying the formula:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \, X \, 0.50 \, X \, 0.50}{(0.05)^2}$$

n = 384

Thus, a minimum sample size of 384 respondents was established for the study. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select respondents who meet the criteria of being management science graduates from the region and who are either employed, self-employed,

or seeking employment after graduation.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to the respondents across the South-east region. The instrument was designed to elicit information on practical skills training, entrepreneurial curricula content, and their effect on employment generation. A five-point Likert scale was employed to measure respondents' level of agreement with specific statements relating to their entrepreneurial education experience and employment status. The questionnaires were electronically administered. To ensure the validity of the instrument, reviews were sought from academic experts in entrepreneurship and business education as well as practitioners with experience in graduate employment and enterprise development. Their feedback was used to refine the items, ensuring they were clear, relevant, and adequately covered the constructs under study. A pilot test was also conducted among 20 management science graduates outside the main sample to assess clarity and interpretation of the questions.

The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate internal consistency. A coefficient of 0.7 or higher is generally accepted as reliable for social science research. The reliability test conducted during the pilot phase produced a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.829 for 12 items, demonstrating that the questionnaire had high internal consistency and was dependable for data collection.

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize demographic characteristics and provide an overview of the responses. To test the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the effect of practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content on employment generation. The regression model used is:

$EG=\beta0+\beta1PST+\beta2ECC+\varepsilon$

Where:

EG = Employment Generation (dependent variable)

PST = Practical Skills Training

ECC = Entrepreneurial Curricula Content

$\beta0$ = Constant

$\beta1,\beta2$ = Regression coefficients

ε = Error term

The hypotheses were tested at the 5% significance level. A p-value greater than 0.05 indicates that the independent variable does not have a significant effect on employment generation, while a p-value less than 0.05 suggests that the variable has a statistically significant effect. This procedure provides the basis for drawing valid conclusions about the influence of entrepreneurial education on the employment opportunities available to management science graduates in South-east Nigeria.

4.0 Data Analysis

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The data presented in Table 4.1 provides a descriptive analysis of responses to items grouped under two main sections: Practical Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Curricula Content, in relation to Employment Generation. Respondents' answers were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Very Low Extent (VLE) to Very High Extent (VHE). For each item, the mean score was calculated to indicate the average response, showing the overall perception of graduates regarding the extent to which practical skills and curriculum content influence their ability to generate employment.

Table 1 Descriptive Analysis

S/N	Practical Skills Training	VLE	LE	N	HE	VHE	Mean
1	I acquired practical entrepreneurial skills during my undergraduate program that can help me create employment.	16	24	47	173	124	3.95
2	I am confident in applying the vocational or business skills I gained in school to real-life situations.	51	132	41	97	63	2.97
3	I received formal or informal training on how to start and manage small business ventures.	21	85	95	103	80	3.35
4	I developed the ability to apply practical knowledge, such as project execution and business planning, to employment-related activities.	58	94	52	95	85	3.14
S/N	**Entrepreneurial Curricula Content**	**VLE**	**LE**	**N**	**HE**	**VHE**	**Mean**
5	The entrepreneurial courses I took were relevant to employment creation and self-reliance.	21	70	51	140	102	3.60
6	The curriculum provided me with adequate knowledge of opportunity recognition and innovative business ideas.	15	61	55	157	96	3.67
7.	I was exposed to real-life case studies or examples of entrepreneurs through the curriculum.	28	39	67	149	101	3.67
8.	The entrepreneurial courses offered enhanced my ability to understand how to establish and sustain a business.	25	105	41	90	123	3.47
S/N	**Employment Generation**	**VLE**	**LE**	**N**	**HE**	**VHE**	**Mean**
9.	The entrepreneurial education I received has improved my chances of securing employment.	19	39	40	160	126	3.87
10.	The practical skills training I acquired has enhanced my ability to become self-employed.	13	34	95	102	140	3.84
11.	Entrepreneurial courses I studied have contributed to my capacity to create jobs for others.	17	50	38	150	129	3.84
12.	The entrepreneurial knowledge I gained has increased my ability to generate income after graduation.	17	47	39	147	134	3.87

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 1 presents a descriptive analysis of responses regarding Practical Skills Training, Entrepreneurial Curricula Content, and Employment Generation among management science graduates. The first item under Practical Skills Training shows that a majority of respondents, 173 out of 384, agreed to a high extent and 124 to a very high extent that they acquired

practical entrepreneurial skills during their undergraduate program that can help create employment. This is reflected in a high mean score of 3.95, indicating that respondents generally acknowledged the value of these skills. The second item indicates a lower confidence in applying vocational or business skills, with 132 respondents selecting low extent and only 97 and 63 selecting high and very high extent, respectively, resulting in a mean of 2.97. This suggests that while graduates acquired skills, not all feel confident applying them in real-life situations. The third item shows that 103 respondents indicated high extent and 80 very high extent for receiving formal or informal training on starting and managing small businesses, producing a mean of 3.35. The fourth item shows a more moderate perception of practical application abilities, with 95 respondents selecting high extent and 85 very high extent, yielding a mean of 3.14, reflecting some gaps in translating knowledge to practice.

Under Entrepreneurial Curricula Content, the fifth item indicates that most respondents found their entrepreneurial courses relevant to employment creation, with 140 selecting high extent and 102 very high extent, resulting in a mean of 3.60. Similarly, item six, regarding knowledge of opportunity recognition and innovative business ideas, received strong agreement with 157 and 96 respondents selecting high and very high extent, respectively, yielding a mean of 3.67. The seventh item, exposure to real-life case studies, shows 149 respondents selecting high extent and 101 very high extent, also producing a mean of 3.67, suggesting that graduates valued practical examples in the curriculum. Item eight shows 123 respondents selected very high extent and 90 high extent for enhanced understanding of business establishment and sustainability, with a mean of 3.47, indicating that the courses effectively strengthened graduates' business knowledge.

For Employment Generation, item nine shows that 160 respondents agreed to high extent and 126 to very high extent that entrepreneurial education improved their employment chances, reflected in a mean of 3.87. Item ten, on the effect of practical skills training on self-employment, shows 102 and 140 respondents selecting high and very high extent, with a mean of 3.84, demonstrating a strong perception of skills translating to entrepreneurial outcomes. Item eleven indicates 150 and 129 respondents acknowledged that their entrepreneurial courses contributed to creating jobs for others, also with a mean of 3.84. Finally, item twelve, concerning the ability to generate income post-graduation, had 147 and 134 respondents selecting high and very high extent, yielding a mean of 3.87, confirming that graduates perceive a strong link between their entrepreneurial knowledge and income generation. In all, Table 1 demonstrates that respondents generally recognize the impact of practical skills and curriculum content on employment generation, although confidence in applying some skills varies.

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

H01. Practical skills training has no significant effect on employment generation among management science graduates in South-east Nigeria.

H02. Entrepreneurial curricula content has no significant effect on employment generation among management science graduates in South-east Nigeria.

Table 2 Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.647[a]	.418	.415	2.973

a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial Curricula Content, Practical Skills Training

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2419.837	2	1209.919	136.871	.000[b]
	Residual	3367.973	381	8.840		
	Total	5787.810	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Employment Generation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial Curricula Content, Practical Skills Training

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	7.058	.570		12.385	.000
	Practical Skills Training	.573	.054	.609	10.683	.000
	Entrepreneurial Curricula Content	.047	.053	.051	.888	.375

a. Dependent Variable: Employment Generation

Source: SPSS 26 Output (2025)

Table 2 presents the regression analysis of the effect of practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content on employment generation among management science graduates in South-East Nigeria. The model summary shows an adjusted R^2 of 0.415, indicating that approximately 41.5% of the variation in employment generation can be explained by the combined effect of practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content. This value suggests a moderate level of explanatory power for the model, implying that while other factors may also influence employment generation, the variables included in this study significantly account for a substantial portion of the variance. The ANOVA results indicate that the overall model is statistically significant at the 5% level (Prob(F-Statistics) = 0.000), confirming that the combination of predictors reliably explains differences in employment generation among the respondents.

The constant term (7.058) is statistically significant at the 5% level (p = 0.000), indicating that when practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content are zero, the baseline level of employment generation is positive and substantial. This suggests that even without the influence of the independent variables, graduates have some capacity for employment generation, likely due to other unmeasured factors or prior experiences. It sets a benchmark against which the effects of the independent variables can be assessed.

Regarding the first hypothesis (H01), the coefficient for practical skills training is 0.573 and is statistically significant (p = 0.000). This implies that for every one-unit increase in practical skills training, employment generation increases by 0.573 units, holding

entrepreneurial curricula content constant. The positive beta coefficient indicates a direct and substantial effect of practical skills training on employment generation, showing that graduates who receive higher levels of practical skills are more likely to generate employment opportunities for themselves and others. Therefore, H01 is rejected, confirming that practical skills training has a significant positive effect on employment generation among management science graduates in South-East Nigeria.

For the second hypothesis (H02), the coefficient for entrepreneurial curricula content is 0.047, and the effect is not statistically significant ($p = 0.375$). This suggests that, although there is a slight positive effect, increasing entrepreneurial curricula content by one unit would only increase employment generation by 0.047 units, holding practical skills training constant. The marginal effect is minimal and statistically insignificant at the 5% level, indicating that the content of entrepreneurial curricula alone does not substantially influence graduates' ability to generate employment. Therefore, H02 is not rejected, showing that entrepreneurial curricula content does not have a significant effect on employment generation in this context.

In sum, the regression results indicate that practical skills training is a strong and significant predictor of employment generation ($\beta = 0.573$, $p = 0.000$), highlighting the importance of hands-on, experiential learning for graduates seeking to create jobs. Entrepreneurial curricula content shows a positive but insignificant effect ($\beta = 0.047$, $p = 0.375$), suggesting that merely having entrepreneurial courses in the curriculum is not sufficient to drive employment generation without complementary practical skill acquisition. The model as a whole is significant and explains 41.5% of the variance in employment generation, reinforcing the critical role of practical skills in empowering graduates to translate education into tangible employment opportunities.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The finding that practical skills training has a positive and significant effect on employment generation among management science graduates ($\beta = 0.573$, $p = 0.000$) underscores the critical role of hands-on learning experiences in equipping graduates with the competencies necessary to secure jobs or create employment opportunities. This outcome can be explained by the fact that practical skills training provides students with relevant technical abilities, problem-solving capabilities, and applied knowledge, which enhance their employability and readiness to meet labor market demands. Alabi (2025) supports this conclusion, highlighting that problem-solving skills gained through entrepreneurial skills acquisition enable individuals to maximize their potential in real-world contexts. Similarly, Nwangbo and Ede (2025) found that entrepreneurship education, including practical components, strongly enhances students' employment opportunities and economic contributions, reflecting the benefits of experiential learning. Ugobueze and Okwunmuo (2024) also reported that practical skills, alongside networking opportunities, positively influence graduates' ability to generate employment, reinforcing the notion that skill application is crucial for employability. Additionally, Umoh et al. (2023) demonstrated that practical entrepreneurship training strengthens undergraduates' employability skills, enabling them to respond effectively to job market needs. The convergence of these studies indicates that equipping management science graduates with practical skills significantly enhances their capacity to generate employment, whether through direct employment, self-employment, or entrepreneurial ventures, thereby fostering economic productivity.

In contrast, the finding that entrepreneurial curricula content has a positive but non-significant effect on employment generation among management science graduates ($\beta = 0.047$, $p = 0.375$) suggests that mere exposure to theoretical or structured curriculum content

may not be sufficient to translate into tangible employment outcomes. This may be because curriculum content without effective practical application or engagement does not adequately develop the hands-on skills, adaptability, or entrepreneurial initiative needed to navigate the job market successfully. Ojiako and Ndubuisi (2025) noted that while curriculum content contributes positively to employment, its effectiveness is closely tied to the teaching strategies employed, implying that theoretical knowledge alone may not significantly impact employment generation. Aneke and Aduaka (2022) similarly observed that curriculum content influences business idea generation and startup activities when combined with effective teaching methods, further emphasizing the limited standalone effect of curriculum content. Ibecheozor et al. (2021) found that while curriculum content enhances entrepreneurial skills, its contribution to direct employment creation is more indirect, often mediated by experiential learning or practical training. Finally, Chukwuma-Nwuba (2019) reported that structured entrepreneurship programs alone had limited influence on graduates' intentions and attitudes toward self-employment.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The significant effect of practical skills training on employment generation highlights the critical role of hands-on learning and applied knowledge in shaping graduates' capacity to create employment opportunities. This emphasises that equipping management science students with practical, real-world skills is essential not only for their individual career advancement but also for broader economic development, as graduates become active contributors to the labor market and drivers of entrepreneurial initiatives. Furthermore, the presence of a positive but non-significant effect of entrepreneurial curricula content suggests that while theoretical knowledge and course exposure are somewhat beneficial, they alone may not be sufficient to substantially influence employment generation without integration with practical, experiential learning components. Collectively, these findings imply that the education system, employers, and policy-makers should recognize the subtle nexus between practical training and curriculum content in fostering employable and self-reliant graduates. It also indicates that graduates who receive a combination of skills-oriented instruction and exposure to entrepreneurship theory are likely to be more adaptable, resourceful, and capable of translating knowledge into concrete employment outcomes. Beyond the immediate academic environment, the results imply that practical skill acquisition contributes to the creation of micro and small enterprises, enhancing local economic activities and encouraging innovation-driven employment. Additionally, the minimal effect of curricula content points to potential gaps in current educational approaches that could be addressed to maximize the utility of entrepreneurial programs. In all, the findings highlight that strategic investment in applied skills development has a tangible influence on employment opportunities, while theoretical knowledge alone provides limited leverage in driving employment generation among management science graduates.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Based on the significant effect of practical skills training, university management and program coordinators should prioritize the design and delivery of experiential learning modules that equip students with hands-on skills relevant for self-employment and job creation.
2. Given the non-significant effect of entrepreneurial curricula content, curriculum developers and educational policy makers should review and enrich entrepreneurial courses to ensure they are more aligned with practical applications that directly facilitate employment

generation among graduates.

5.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature by directly examining the effect of entrepreneurial education on employment generation among management science graduates in South-East Nigeria, addressing a gap left by previous research. While earlier studies by Alabi (2025), Nwangbo and Ede (2025), and Ojiako and Ndubuisi (2025) focused on employability and skill empowerment, they did not link these outcomes explicitly to employment creation. Similarly, the work of Ugobueze and Okwunmuo (2024), Umoh et al. (2023), and Aneke and Aduaka (2022) highlighted the role of practical skills and curricula but concentrated on undergraduates or secondary students rather than graduates. Research by Ayo-Sobowale (2021) and Ibecheozor et al. (2021) explored entrepreneurial intentions and skills acquisition, yet did not assess how practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content contribute to actual job creation. Studies by Oboreh and Nnebe (2019), Chukwuma-Nwuba (2019), Odewale et al. (2019), and Okeke et al. (2016) examined technical skills, innovation, and entrepreneurial inclination, but mainly in relation to skill development or self-employment, leaving the impact on measurable employment generation largely unexplored. By focusing specifically on management science graduates and assessing the influence of both practical skills training and entrepreneurial curricula content on employment outcomes, this study provides empirical evidence that connects entrepreneurial education to tangible employment creation, offering a clearer understanding of how educational interventions can translate into economic opportunities in the South-East Nigerian context.

5.4 Limitations of the Study and Suggestion for Further Studies

A limitation of this study is that it relied on a cross-sectional survey, which collected data at only one point in time. This approach may not capture changes in graduates' employment status or entrepreneurial activities over a longer period. Additionally, the study focused only on management science graduates in South-East Nigeria, so the findings may not be fully applicable to graduates in other regions or fields. Self-reported data from questionnaires could also be influenced by personal biases or inaccurate recall, which might affect the accuracy of the responses and the conclusions drawn from the analysis.

For further studies, researchers could consider using a longitudinal design to track graduates over time and observe how entrepreneurial education influences employment generation in the long run. Expanding the study to include graduates from different regions or academic disciplines could provide a broader understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurial education and employment outcomes. Future research could also incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to explore graduates' personal experiences, challenges, and strategies in applying entrepreneurial skills to create employment opportunities.

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