Investigating the entrepreneurial action of small scale enterprises for sustainable development in Nigeria

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Abstract---The focus of this research was on small-scale firms' entrepreneurial actions for long-term development in Nigeria. As a result, the study looked into the role of SMEs in entrepreneurial success and the extent to which SME owners' entrepreneurial actions might help Nigeria achieve sustainable development. The study was conducted on 100 SMEs from five states in Nigeria making the population of 2,111. The sample size of the study (336) was determined using Taro Yamane sampling techniques, and Bowler's proportional allocation method to allocate sub-sample for each sub-universe. The study adopted multi-stage sampling techniques, and simple random sampling to choose the required samples for the sub-universes. The study gathered its data from the field, and its information through secondary source. This study analyzed the data collected with descriptive method and Likert statistical method. The study revealed that SMEs have made little significant contribution to entrepreneurial success, and that entrepreneurial action of SME owners is insufficient for sustainable development in Nigeria. Thus, the study concluded that sustainable development can only be achieved when SME owners reshape their thinking and improve on their actions towards entrepreneurial engagement in Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that SME owners should cultivate high...
expectation entrepreneurship, as this will enhance improvement on their entrepreneurial action and success for sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Keywords**—entrepreneurial actions, necessity entrepreneurship, high expectation entrepreneurship, poverty, unemployment, sustainable development.

**Introduction**

Many countries around the world, notably in Africa, have recently viewed entrepreneurship as a last resort for improved long-term development. Entrepreneurship appears to be a method taken from industrialized countries (such as China, the United States, Brazil, Russia, and India) based on their capacity to alleviate Siamese economic difficulties in Nigeria (unemployment and poverty). According to Ebiringa (2012), countries with more entrepreneurial initiative had lower unemployment rates and a higher sustainable level of living.

Small firms, for example, account for around 75 percent of net new jobs added to the American economy each year, according to Olusegun, Olaoye, et al. (2015), and account for over 99 percent of all U.S. employers. According to their findings, small business entrepreneurs in the United States frequently ensure the effective transformation of entrepreneurial ideas into commendable entrepreneurial actions. Garga and Bagga (2019) stated that the role of entrepreneurship as the key to economic growth, particularly small-scale entrepreneurs who successfully utilize industrial and commercial opportunities on a small scale, cannot be underestimated.

SME employment accounts for 70% of industrial employment and 60% of agricultural employment in Nigeria (Odubajo, 2001; Lawal, 2011). However, the major backdrop in Nigerian entrepreneurship is linked to how entrepreneurial actions are carried out and the level of psychological elements (personality, emotion, etc.) in some SME owners, which frequently leads in ineffective entrepreneurial practices and eventual failure. Frese's (2015) action theory asserts that psychological factors influence entrepreneurial success, and that intervention programs can provide entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and awareness to transform good entrepreneurial initiatives or intentions into appropriate entrepreneurial actions and results-oriented entrepreneurial practices.

Through their key responsibilities in lowering unemployment in Nigeria, SMEs have been seen to have contributed directly or indirectly to entrepreneurial growth. Over 68 percent of Nigerians now see SMEs as a way out of the country's economic quagmire in both urban and rural areas. Because they are low on options, Ariyo (2015) believes that these Nigerians are entrepreneurship driven, searching for and launching themselves into various business endeavors. These people, according to Mbaegbu (2018), channel their creative energies into business following a time of lethargy and melancholy as a result of a loss of means of subsistence. The majority of small scale entrepreneurs in Nigeria act out
of tension and/or necessity, according to the logical interpretation of these authors' tenets and observations.

Then, to what extent can these small-scale entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial initiatives help Nigeria achieve sustainable development? Meanwhile, governmental meddling in entrepreneurship appears to have exacerbated tensions, hampered the entrepreneurial actions of many entrepreneurs, and resulted in the failure of SMEs in Nigeria's pursuit of sustainable development. This appears to be a response to Oladele (2014)'s presentation that the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector in Nigeria has not performed well in recent years. Is this to say that SMEs haven't played a significant role in Nigeria's entrepreneurial success? The purpose of this research is to provide solutions to the above-mentioned questions.

**Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to investigate the entrepreneurial actions of small scale enterprises for sustainable development in Nigeria. Thus, the study's specific objectives are:

i. To determine the extent at which SMEs have contributed to entrepreneurial success in Nigeria.

ii. To determine the extent at which the entrepreneurial actions of SME owners can facilitate the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

Based on these objectives, the study drew two hypotheses that:

H1: SMEs have not contributed significantly to entrepreneurial success in Nigeria.

H2: Entrepreneurial actions of SME owners cannot facilitate the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Literature Review**

**Entrepreneurial Action, Success and Sustainable Development**

Entrepreneurial success can be difficult to describe as a concept since the author's concentration at a given time may influence the definition. Bosma, Praag, and Wit (2000) examined entrepreneurial success in terms of profitability, employment, and durability in a previous study. These factors can also be used to assess entrepreneurship's performance in order to determine whether or not a country's development is sustainable. The success of entrepreneurship (in terms of employability and poverty reduction) in achieving sustainable development through entrepreneurs' actions is the subject of this study. The literature on entrepreneurial success is mostly based on the performance of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs in any country, including Nigeria, in terms of achieving goals. Entrepreneurial success has been studied in numerous countries, according to Oyeku et al. (2014). Entrepreneurial success, on the other hand, is based on entrepreneurs' activities and focus in order to succeed in their entrepreneurial
engagement and the pursuit of a national economic goal. As a result, entrepreneurial activity can be defined as the amount of entrepreneurial initiative or intention that is put to work or propelled in the direction of desired entrepreneurial and economic goals. Musa, Success and Iyaji, (2014) stated that no amount of entrepreneurial success can be attained without taking some kind of entrepreneurial activity.

The term ’sustainable development’ has become a focal point in today’s dynamic thinking all across the world. Sustainable development, on the other hand, is possibly the most pressing issue of our day. According to Hendrix (2014), sustainability is defined as the practice of storing resources for future generations while avoiding harm to nature and its other components. Because of the link between sustainability and development, much consideration must be given to future generations in the quest of growth. As a result, sustainable development refers to development that fulfills current demands without jeopardizing future generations’ ability to meet their own (UNCSD, 2011) and Musa, Success, and Nwaorgu, (2015).

**Theoretical Framework**

Michael Frese’s Action Theory of Entrepreneurship was used in this research (2009). The adoption of this notion is due to the fact that action is crucial to success. According to Berglund (n.d.), action has generally been characterized as doing anything with a degree of purpose or consciousness, rather than just thinking or mechanical activity. This means that entrepreneurial action requires a certain level of forethought. Action takes happen over time in entrepreneurship, and because the future is unknown, action is necessarily uncertain (Mises, 2017). However, entrepreneurial success may be unrealistic when some essential factors are found missing in the entrepreneurial practice or behavior of SME owners. (Musa, Ifurueze, and Bernard, 2013)

Action theory holds that entrepreneurship is based on the assumption that:

i. Psychological factors (personality, emotion, etc.) affect success in entrepreneurial practices.

ii. Intervention programs can equip entrepreneurs with necessary skills and awareness needed to revolutionize intentions and entrepreneurial actions in entrepreneurial practices.

There is little doubt that entrepreneurial efforts play a role in determining whether a business succeeds or fails. Actions may not be made in the proper proportion in Nigeria, where entrepreneurship is driven by economic pressure (unemployment and poverty) and individual concentrate on how to establish his or her family's strong economic position. As a result, the Action theory explains why SMEs' potential has yet to be completely realized in such a setting.

**Entrepreneurship and the Twin Economic Problems**

The economic Siamese (poverty and unemployment) are without a doubt Nigeria’s problems with long-term development. This is why, according to Oghojafor et al.
(2011) and Musa, Ifurueze, and Success (2013), entrepreneurship is regarded as a primary driver of development, and why nations, regions, and communities that actively promote entrepreneurship development have much higher growth rates and, as a result, higher levels of development than nations, regions, and communities whose institutions, politics, and culture discourage entrepreneurship.

Poverty is a fundamental impediment to achieving long-term human and environmental development, as well as global economic and sociopolitical stability (SNV & WBSCD, 2007). It's no surprise that poverty, according to Okolo et al. (2014), is a complex notion that cuts deep into society in various facets of development. Meanwhile, Ajegi (2012) correctly recognized and warned that Nigeria's poverty situation had reached crisis proportions. The truth is that poverty and unemployment have a tendency to interact, preventing any country from achieving economic and development gains. Poverty is said to be ubiquitous in a country with a high unemployment rate. Taking on the problem of widespread poverty has proven to be a significant challenge for governments in emerging nations such as Nigeria (Onwurafor and Enwelu, 2013).

According to a study by Ogundele et al. (2012), entrepreneurship is one of the government's policies for reducing poverty and unemployment in the country. Olusegun et al. (2015) found that successful small and medium businesses are the primary engine of job creation, income development, and poverty reduction in a recent study.

**Entrepreneurial Actions of SMEs for Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

SME owners' entrepreneurial actions in Nigeria necessitate an examination of the true motivation for engaging in entrepreneurship. It is undeniable that Nigerian economic difficulties have bolstered entrepreneurship to the point where individuals now regard small-scale enterprise as a final alternative for escaping poverty and unemployment. Due to the high prevalence of unemployment in today's Nigeria, Oyeku et al. (2014) argue that it is now the norm for anyone who is unemployed to establish a business, regardless of whether or not they have the right entrepreneurial attitude of innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk taking. Many entrepreneurs lack essential entrepreneurial talent needed to demonstrate the right behavior and outperform others.

According to Oduwole and Fadeyi (2013), many people choose self-employment since it appears to provide them with more independence and flexibility. As a result, the way small-scale entrepreneurs conduct entrepreneurship displays entrepreneurial actions driven by necessity. When certain economic constraints compel entrepreneurs to engage in entrepreneurial activity, this is known as necessity entrepreneurship. High expectation entrepreneurship, which entails engaging in entrepreneurial activities out of a desire for economic progress, is inversely proportional to this type of entrepreneurial mentality. The research on the consequences of necessity versus high expectation entrepreneurship shows that this distinction is critical to consider when employing entrepreneurship to alleviate poverty (Gielnik and Frese, 2013).
Indeed, high-expectancy entrepreneurship emerges from need entrepreneurship only when entrepreneurs adopt dynamic thinking and prioritize sustainable development. According to Ki-Moon (2012), attaining sustainable development necessitates a shift in how people perceive and act. This means that SME owners' myopic thinking may endanger Nigeria's future since they are unconcerned about long-term development and are instead focused on how to succeed in the economic war alone. However, some environmental variables in Nigeria may stifle entrepreneurial activity. However, according to Jemi-Alade (2013), the biggest difficulty facing SMEs in Nigeria is the rising rate of company failure, which he attributes to a lack of entrepreneurial mindset. To some extent, this is correct, yet the explanations of this company failure are insufficient without mentioning Nigerian entrepreneurship's unjust political tactics.

Several governments' administrations, according to Ayodeji and Balcioglu (2010), have used a variety of policies to encourage the expansion and development of the SME sub-segment at various times. In fact, it is estimated that over a hundred and forty businesses failed during this time period (Adegbite, 2019). The government is oblivious to the fact that unethical political meddling in entrepreneurship has hampered the entrepreneurial action and success of many entrepreneurs, limiting Nigeria's chances of achieving the desired long-term growth. Because of the ignorance and selfishness of some hidden political dramatists who could be called ghost entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship has almost no impact in Nigeria.

Instead of competition, these ghost entrepreneurs force SMEs to witness entropy through political influence. As a result, it may be difficult for Nigeria to join the ranks of developed economies without taking into account the growth of the SMEs sector. According to Oyeku et al. (2014), the Asian Tigers were able to join the league of developed economies due to the growth of the small and medium enterprise (SMEs) sector. If SMEs' development potential are not fully exploited, it is vital to consider if entrepreneurship is resilient enough to ensure the country's long-term development. Sustainable entrepreneurship, according to Patzelt and Shepherd (2011), is the discovery, creation, and exploitation of chances to create future commodities and services that sustain the natural and/or community environment while also providing development gain for others. Entrepreneurship is logically sufficient to sustain future generations, especially when all facets of it are not handled lightly.

**Methodology**

The survey research design was used in this study. The survey included 100 SMEs from five Nigerian states (Lagos-35, Ogun-20, Anambra-25, Kogi-10, and Kaduna-10), totaling 2,111 people. The data for this study came from the field, and the information came from secondary sources. To establish the validity of the instrument, the researcher used the pilot test technique as well as criterion-related validity. The researcher also utilized the test-retest method to determine the instrument's dependability. Before administering questionnaires, a test-retest was conducted in the research area, and the findings showed that the instrument was reliable and valid. Following that, the study enlisted the help of three research assistants, who administered the questionnaires for a week. In Kogi and
Ogun States, the researchers distributed questionnaires, while in Lagos, Anambra, and Kaduna States, the recruited researchers met with the selected SMEs. Taro Yamane Several procedures were used to obtain the study’s sample size of 336 participants:

\[
n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad \text{where } n = \text{sample size}; N = \text{population of the study}; e = \text{error estimated at 5% (0.05)}.
\]

\[
n = \frac{2111}{1 + 2111(0.05)^2} = \frac{2111}{1 + 2111(0.0025)} = \frac{2111}{1 + 5.2775} = \frac{2111}{6.2775} = 336
\]

In order to enhance fair distribution of samples, Bowler’s proportional allocation method was used.

\[
n_i = \frac{n(n_i)}{N} \quad \text{where } n = \text{overall sample size}; n_i = \text{population of each area}; and \quad N = \text{Total population}
\]

\[
n_1 = \text{Lagos} = \frac{336(831)}{2111} = 132; \quad n_2 = \text{Ogun} = \frac{336(431)}{2111} = 69
\]

\[
n_3 = \text{Anambra} = \frac{336(598)}{1934} = 95; \quad n_4 = \text{Kogi} = \frac{336(81)}{2111} = 13; \quad n_5 = \text{Kaduna} = \frac{336(170)}{2111} = 27
\]

Furthermore, the study adopted multi-stage sampling techniques, and simple random sampling to choose the required samples for the sub-universes. The choice of these techniques premised on the nature of the subject matter. This study thus analyzed the data collected with descriptive method and Likert statistical method.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Male</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2015
SPSS: Version 17.0
Table I shows that 164 respondents (52.5%) are male gender; and 148 respondents (47.4%) are female gender.

Table II: Years of Business Existence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid 0 - 10</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 &amp; above</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2015
SPSS: Version 17.0

Table II shows that 118 respondents (37.8%) expressed that their business existence falls within the range of at least one month to 10 years; 137 respondents (43.9%) expressed that their business existence falls within the range of 11 to 20 years; 46 respondents (14.7%) expressed that their business existence falls within the range of 21 to 30 years; and 11 respondents (3.5%) expressed that their business existence falls within the range of 31 years and above.

Table III: Industry of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Agricultural</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2015
SPSS: Version 17.0

Table III shows that 49 respondents (15.7%) are from the agricultural industry; 79 respondents (25.3%) are from the manufacturing industry; 103 respondents (33.0%) are from the service industry; and 81 respondents (26.0%) are from other industries.
Table IV: Number of Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid 0–25</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–51</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 &amp; above</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV shows that 164 respondents (52.6%) expressed that their employees fall within the range of 0 to 25; 134 respondents (42.9%) expressed that their employees fall within the range of 26 to 51; and 14 respondents (4.5%) expressed that their employees fall within the range of 53 and above.

Table V: Responses regarding the extent at which SMEs have contributed to entrepreneurial success in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Very Great Extent</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Extent</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Extent</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Extent</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Extent</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table V shows the extent at which SMEs have contributed to entrepreneurial success in Nigeria. 73 respondents (23.4%) opined that it is to a very great extent; 71 respondents (22.8%) opined that it is to a great extent; 35 respondents (11.2%) opined that it is to a moderate extent; 72 respondents (23.1%) opined that it is to a low extent; and 61 respondents (19.6%) opined that it is to a very low extent.
Table VI: Responses regarding the extent at which sustainable development can be achieved through SME owners’ entrepreneurial actions in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Very Great Extent</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Extent</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Extent</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Extent</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Extent</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2015
SPSS: Version 17.0

Table V shows the extent at which sustainable development can be achieved through SME owners’ entrepreneurial actions in Nigeria. 70 respondents (22.4%) opined that it is to a very great extent; 37 respondents (11.9%) opined that it is to a great extent; 28 respondents (9.0%) opined that it is to a moderate extent; 122 respondents (39.1%) opined that it is to a low extent; and 55 respondents (17.6%) opined that it is to a very low extent.

**Test of hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One (From Table V)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Scaling/Rating (F)</th>
<th>Rating (X)</th>
<th>FX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Great Extent</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Extent</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Extent</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Extent</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Extent</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert’s mean score = $\frac{\sum FX}{N} = \frac{959}{312} = 3.074$

Mean Po int of Scale = $\frac{\sum X}{n} = \frac{15}{5} = 3.000$

Cut off Po int = Mean + e = 3.000 + 0.05 = 3.050
**Decision**

The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, because the calculated Likert’s mean score differs little from the cut-off point (as Mean score = 3.074 > Cut-off Point = 3.050). However, we may extrapolate that SMEs in Nigeria have made a minor contribution to entrepreneurial success.

**Hypothesis Two (From Table VI)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Scaling/Rating</th>
<th>FX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Great Extent</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Extent</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Extent</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Extent</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Extent</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert's mean score = \( \frac{\sum FX}{N} = \frac{881}{312} = 2.824 \)

\[
Mean \ Po \ int \ of \ Scale = \frac{\sum X}{n} = \frac{15}{5} = 3.00
\]

\[
Cut \ off \ Po \ int = Mean + e = 3.00 + 0.05 = 3.05
\]

**Decision**

Since the calculated Likert’s mean score is less than the cut-off point (that is, Mean score = 2.824 < Cut-off Point = 3.05), thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis rejected. We therefore deduce that entrepreneurial actions of SME owners cannot facilitate the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Discussion of Findings**

Men are currently more prevalent in entrepreneurship than women, according to this report. The bulk of company ventures, according to the research, are 11 years old or older. The majority of these SMEs are in the service sector. SME commitment to job creation was observed in the survey. As a result, they have undeniably contributed to the lowering of Nigeria's unemployment rate. This suggests that entrepreneurship in Nigeria is a solution for reducing unemployment and poverty. This backs up Ogundele et al (2012) ’s conclusion that entrepreneurship is effective in reducing poverty and unemployment in the country.
In addition, it has been established that SMEs in Nigeria have good aspirations for achieving business success. However, empirical evidence suggests that these SMEs have made only a minor contribution to Nigerian entrepreneurial success. This supports Oladele's (2014) assertion that Nigeria's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector has been underperforming in recent years. This could be due to the way SME owners in Nigeria practice entrepreneurship. Some SME owners are discovered to be lacking in the true entrepreneurial mindset or entrepreneurship passion.

As a result, Mbaegbu (2018)'s argument that these people (SME owners) redirect their creative energies to entrepreneurship simply as a result of a loss of means of living is correct to a degree. SME owners are yet to break out of their comfort zones and engage in high-risk entrepreneurship. In Nigeria, the current study also discovered that SME owners' entrepreneurial actions can promote sustainable development to a limited level. Empirical evidence also demonstrates that SME owners' entrepreneurial practices do not help Nigeria attain sustainable development. Because action identifies the start of success, the findings of this study support Jemi-(2013) Alade's suggestion that a lack of entrepreneurial orientation is the source of the backdrop.

According to Frese's (2019) Action Theory, intervention programs can provide entrepreneurs with the required abilities and awareness to change intents and entrepreneurial actions in their businesses. The hypothesis assumes that appropriate intervention programs will result in entrepreneurial orientation and, as a result, entrepreneurial success. SME owners, on the other hand, must think creatively in order to make sustainable development a reality in Nigeria.

**Conclusion**

There is no doubt that SMEs have aided in the decrease of Nigeria's unemployment rate. Indeed, SMEs have a history of doing so, which is one of the reasons why entrepreneurship is a cure for reducing unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. Furthermore, there is no way to achieve sustainable development when unemployment and poverty are still prevalent. These economic Siamese (poverty and unemployment) are issues that will affect Nigeria's future generations.

However, despite of their potential and good intentions, SMEs in Nigeria are limited in their business operations. This context is linked to the entrepreneurial mindset and behaviors of SME owners. Furthermore, if properly diagnosed, the mindset or enthusiasm of certain entrepreneurs for business is antithetical to what can allow long-term development. Some entrepreneurs' creative energies are clearly imbalanced when it comes to entrepreneurship. This suggests that entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial behaviors are asymmetric to the true expectations of economic experts and other stakeholders on the efficacy of SMEs in achieving Nigeria's long-term economic development. Thus, sustainable development can only be achieved when SME owners (entrepreneurs) reshape their thinking and actions towards entrepreneurial practices in Nigeria.
Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that:

- SME owners should cultivate high expectation entrepreneurship. This will enhance improvement in their entrepreneurial action and success for sustainable development in Nigeria.
- SME owners should focus on entrepreneurial success and also engage concomitantly in dynamic thinking towards making sustainable development a reality in Nigeria.
- Government and/or economic expert should establish and fund intervention programs (entrepreneurship seminar, training, etc.) such that the intentions and entrepreneurial actions of entrepreneurs can be redirected towards sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

References

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