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ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined entrepreneurial innovation as an effective tool for poverty alleviation in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. A survey research design was adopted, and a structured questionnaire was used to elicit response from a sample of 109 respondents, selected through a purposive sampling technique to ensure the inclusion of individuals with relevant experiences in entrepreneurship. The data sourced was subjected to analysis in both descriptive statistics using percentages, and inferential statistics using regression tool from Statistical Product for Social Science (SPSS) version 27. The findings indicated that entrepreneurial innovation significantly contributes to creating employment opportunities for residents of FCT Abuja. The results of the one-sample t-test demonstrated a substantial mean difference from the assumed mean of zero, with a t-value of 23.650 and a significance level of $p<0.001$. Additionally, the study found that entrepreneurial innovation improved access to basic services for residents, evidenced by a t-value of 19.499 and a mean difference of 89.000. The t-test results supported this assertion, with a t-value of 17.504, indicating that innovative practices fostered economic resilience and reduced vulnerability among residents. The findings highlighted that entrepreneurial ventures were crucial in diversifying income sources and promoting sustainable economic growth, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation in FCT Abuja. Policymakers and stakeholders are encouraged to support initiatives that promote entrepreneurial innovation, as these efforts could lead to sustainable development and improved living standards for residents in the region.

Key words: *Entrepreneurial Innovation, Effective Tool, Poverty Reduction*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial innovation has gained recognition around the globe as a pivotal mechanism for driving economic growth and alleviating poverty. The dynamic nature of innovation, coupled with the entrepreneurial spirit, fosters the creation of new businesses, services, and products that can lead to job creation, increased incomes, and improved standards of living (Ali & Ali, 2023). Globally, examples abound of how entrepreneurial innovation has transformed economies and uplifted societies out of poverty. Countries such as the United States, Germany, and China have tapped into technological advancements and innovative business models to spur economic development and reduce poverty rates. In developing economies, particularly within African nations, the role of entrepreneurial innovation in poverty alleviation is becoming increasingly significant. Africa faces high poverty levels, and traditional approaches to poverty alleviation have often fallen short. Here, entrepreneurial innovation serves as a beacon of hope, offering a sustainable pathway out of poverty. The vast majority of Africa's population comprises young people with significant untapped potentials. Leveraging this demographic dividend through entrepreneurship can transform economies. Initiatives such as mobile banking in Kenya and renewable energy startups across the continent are examples of where innovative entrepreneurship has begun to make a tangible difference.

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous country and a leading economic hub, presents a unique context within which to explore the nexus between entrepreneurial innovation and poverty alleviation. Despite its abundant natural resources, Nigeria grapples with significant poverty rates, particularly in urban centres. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, epitomizes the contrasting realities of rapid urban development and persistent poverty. While Abuja is the political and administrative heart of Nigeria, with substantial affluence and modern infrastructure in certain areas, there exists a stark disparity marked by underdeveloped regions struggling with poverty. Within Abuja, entrepreneurial innovation can be a potent tool for bridging this disparity. The city is ripe with opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures given its expanding middle class, increasing consumer demand, and supportive governmental policies. The Nigerian government, recognizing the potential of entrepreneurship, has introduced several programs and policies aimed at fostering innovation and supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Initiatives like the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) and the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria Connect are testament to this strategic shift towards leveraging entrepreneurship for economic development and poverty alleviation. However, challenges such as limited access to finance,

inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient entrepreneurial training hinder the full realization of innovative potential. In conclusion, the global and local contexts underscore the critical importance of entrepreneurial innovation as a pathway to reducing poverty. For FCT Abuja, fostering an environment that supports and nurtures innovative entrepreneurial ventures can lead to sustainable economic growth and significant poverty reduction.

Despite the potential of entrepreneurial innovation to alleviate poverty in FCT Abuja, there is a lack of comprehensive studies specifically examining the role of entrepreneurial innovation in poverty alleviation in FCT Abuja; one key problem that stands out is the lack of tailored support for local entrepreneurs. Many aspiring entrepreneurs in the region face challenges of accessing funding, mentorship, and resources essential for innovation. This lack of support hampers their ability to develop and scale innovative solutions that could address poverty effectively. The existing literature fails to delve deep into the specific needs of entrepreneurs in FCT Abuja, leaving a gap in understanding how to empower them for sustainable poverty alleviation. The review of existing literature on entrepreneurial innovation for poverty alleviation in FCT Abuja reveals a significant gap in scholarly work addressing the unique socio-economic dynamics of the region. While some studies touch on general entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation concepts, there is a lack of in-depth analysis focusing specifically on the challenges and opportunities present in FCT Abuja. Scholars have yet to explore the intersection of local culture, government policies, and entrepreneurial ecosystems in the context of poverty alleviation. The limited literature available often overlooks the intricate relationship between innovation, entrepreneurship, and poverty alleviation within the local context. This gap underscores the need for more targeted research to inform effective strategies for leveraging entrepreneurial innovation in combating poverty in the region.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of this study are therefore to:

1. assess the role of entrepreneurial innovation in creating employment opportunities for the residents of FCT Abuja.
2. investigate the contribution of entrepreneurial innovation in improving access to basic services for residents of FCT Abuja.
3. evaluate the contribution of entrepreneurial innovation in diversifying economic activities and reducing the dependence on traditional sources of income in FCT Abuja.

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1.2 Hypotheses

Based on the objectives, the study hypothesized that:

H_{01}: Entrepreneurial innovation does not significantly contribute to creating employment opportunities for the residents of FCT Abuja.

H_{02}: Entrepreneurial innovation does not significantly improve access to basic services for the residents of FCT Abuja.

H_{03}: There is no significant effect of entrepreneurial innovation on diversification of economic activities and reduction of dependence on traditional sources of income in FCT Abuja.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Poverty Alleviation

Nigeria has been experiencing economic stagnation since the early 1980s, which has resulted in a decline in white-collar occupations; and since reducing poverty is crucial for the general well-being of society, it has emerged as a major economic and political objective for many countries and international organizations worldwide. Among the economic and social development initiatives of governments and other international organizations, poverty alleviation policies and programs continue to be among the most pertinent. For many years, governments, international financial organizations, and non-governmental organizations have been putting forth a lot of effort to raise the standard of living and lower the proportion of the population living in poverty in various nations. The World Bank, the United Nations, and other significant organizations have undertaken a number of projects aimed at reducing poverty, and these initiatives have been doing so for a considerable amount of time. Extreme poverty persists in many areas of developing and undeveloped nations like Nigeria in spite of these advancements (Azamat, Fayzullokh & Nilufar, 2023).

According to World Bank projections 2024, about 40.7 percent of Nigerians live below the international poverty line. One of the current concerns of the world's nations is poverty reduction, as this signal has sparked conversations about the necessity of analyzing, researching, and creating efficient ways to fight and lessen poverty. Additionally, it is regarded as the first Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations (Sachs et al., 2021). Every nation aims to increase the financial well-being of its citizens and investigates the efficacy of various metrics to do so, and it is on this backdrop, that the impact of entrepreneurial innovation on alleviating poverty is examined in this study. In this regard,

entrepreneurial innovation can be viewed as a means of assisting in poverty alleviation. Because entrepreneurship boosts the nation's socioeconomic development, introduces new ideas to increase production efficiency, raises population income, and creates new jobs. Consequently, it helps lower the number of impoverished individuals in the nation.

2.1.2 Concept of Entrepreneurial Innovation

One of the ways of contributing a degree of freshness, newness, and value by an organization to its consumers and suppliers is through innovation; by inventing new solutions, procedures, goods and services. Through the formation of new firms or the growth of already-existing ones, entrepreneurial development helps to eliminate poverty. It also promotes social wealth by spawning new markets, industries, technology, institutional structures, jobs, and net advances in real productivity, which raises income and, ultimately, the population's standard of living (Adeyemi & Popoola, 2022).

A major force behind economic expansion and social change, entrepreneurship is frequently described as the search for opportunities beyond available resources or limitations with the goal of introducing novel value to the market (Adenutsi, 2021). Usually, this process entails spotting and seizing business opportunities, which can lead to job creation, increased productivity, and general economic growth (Ahlstrom & Ding, 2022). Since entrepreneurship can be a means of escaping poverty and traditional employment markets are scarce in emerging economies, its function in promoting economic advancement is particularly important (Akhuemonkhan, Raimi, & Sofoluwe, 2023). Because it fosters innovation, expands consumer choice, and promotes social mobility, entrepreneurship is crucial for both economic empowerment and social transformation (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2022). Entrepreneurs create innovative items and services that can enhance people's quality of life and increase accessibility, frequently at competitive rates (Alvarez, Moreno, & Mataix, 2023). Additionally, by developing self-sustaining business models that can endure market changes, entrepreneurial endeavours can lessen economic reliance on government assistance (Ali & Ali, 2023). There are various types of entrepreneurships, each with its unique role and impact on the economy. Small business entrepreneurship, for instance, encompasses local businesses that primarily serve the community and generate employment on a smaller scale (Ayogu & Agu, 2021). This form of entrepreneurship is often seen in family-owned stores, local restaurants, or small service providers that cater to specific community needs. These businesses contribute to economic stability by creating job opportunities and stimulating local spending (Bagozzi & Yi, 2020). Additionally, small business entrepreneurship provides

foundational skills for individuals to innovate and grow within their sectors, creating a ripple effect on the economy.

Social entrepreneurship, on the other hand, aims to address social issues and create a positive impact, rather than prioritizing profit alone (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Si, 2021). Social entrepreneurs seek to solve problems such as access to education, healthcare, or clean water, often focusing on underprivileged or underserved communities. The success of social entrepreneurship is measured by its societal benefits rather than financial returns (Bruton, Ketchen, & Ireland, 2023). Another emerging type of entrepreneurship is micro-entrepreneurship, which involves small-scale ventures that require minimal investment but can create substantial economic benefits for individuals in low-income areas (Cheng, Chan, & Mahmood, 2021). Micro-entrepreneurs, often supported by microfinance institutions, work in sectors like retail, food services, or small-scale manufacturing. These ventures enable individuals to become financially independent, which is particularly beneficial in developing regions where access to formal employment is limited (Creswell, 2022). This form of entrepreneurship thus contributes to poverty alleviation by empowering individuals to create stable sources of income (Bruton, Khavul, & Chavez, 2021).

The economic impact of entrepreneurship is also evident in its potential for job creation and innovation. Entrepreneurs who bring new ideas or technologies to market often stimulate related industries, creating new employment opportunities and enhancing the overall competitiveness of the economy (Easterly, 2020). For example, the tech sector has seen a surge in entrepreneurial activities that have led to advancements in digital tools and services, benefiting various industries from healthcare to finance (Alvarez & Barney, 2020). In this way, entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in accelerating technological progress and fostering a knowledge-based economy.

2.1.3 Relationship between Entrepreneurial Innovation and Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is a multifaceted issue that affects millions worldwide, defined not only by the lack of financial resources but by limited access to basic needs such as education, healthcare, and adequate housing (Adenutsi, 2021). Traditional understandings of poverty focus on income levels, but modern perspectives recognize a broader scope, including social exclusion, vulnerability, and lack of opportunity (Ahlstrom & Ding, 2022). Poverty's dimensions extend into political disenfranchisement and environmental challenges, as individuals in poverty often face limited social mobility and higher exposure to risks from natural disasters or

economic shocks (Akhuemonkhan, Raimi, & Sofoluwe, 2023). The persistence of poverty has spurred efforts across sectors, with entrepreneurship emerging as a viable tool for poverty alleviation, particularly in developing economies (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2022). By providing individuals with the means to start businesses, entrepreneurship can create sustainable income sources, empower communities, and reduce dependence on government aid (Alvarez, Moreno, & Mataix, 2023). In many low-income regions, fostering entrepreneurship can address unemployment by offering people an alternative path to employment, which directly impacts poverty alleviation (Ali & Ali, 2023). Notably, entrepreneurship not only aids income generation but also fosters skill development and long-term economic resilience, both critical in alleviating poverty.

Entrepreneurship contributes to poverty alleviation by offering people opportunities to generate income and lift themselves and their families out of poverty (Ayogu & Agu, 2021). For example, small-scale business initiatives provide jobs within local communities, which bolsters local economies and stimulates demand for other local goods and services (Bagozzi & Yi, 2020). This cascading effect not only raises individual household incomes but contributes to regional economic stability. When properly supported, entrepreneurship can enhance access to markets, credit facilities, and business development services, which are essential for sustainable poverty reduction (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Si, 2021).

Social entrepreneurship, in particular, plays an essential role in addressing poverty by targeting social issues and providing innovative solutions for underserved communities. Unlike traditional entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship prioritizes social impact over profit, offering services such as low-cost education, healthcare, and financial inclusion (Bruton, Ketchen, & Ireland, 2023). By addressing critical needs and improving access to essential services, social entrepreneurs can help marginalized groups overcome barriers to economic participation. Furthermore, social entrepreneurship fosters local empowerment, encouraging people to become stakeholders in their communities' economic development (Cheng, Chan, & Mahmood, 2021).

Micro-entrepreneurship, which involves very small businesses often operated by a single individual or family, is another effective poverty alleviation tool (Creswell, 2022). Micro-enterprises, particularly when supported by microfinance loans, allow low-income individuals to establish income-generating activities with minimal initial investment (Bruton, Khavul, & Chavez, 2021). For instance, a small retail business can enable a family to achieve economic stability, access basic needs, and contribute to local economic growth. In regions with limited

access to formal employment, micro-entrepreneurship can be a powerful means of achieving financial independence and breaking the cycle of poverty. Moreover, entrepreneurship enhances access to financial resources and encourages savings and investments, which are fundamental in poverty alleviation (Easterly, 2020). Entrepreneurial ventures create opportunities for wealth accumulation, enabling individuals to invest in better healthcare, education, and infrastructure that improve overall quality of life (Alvarez & Barney, 2020). This access to resources can have a transformative impact on communities by reducing poverty over the long term and supporting sustainable economic growth. A well-developed entrepreneurial ecosystem also attracts investment, which can create more jobs and elevate living standards (Envick & Langford, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), formulated by Icek Ajzen in 1991, is adopted as a baseline theory for this study. TPB is a psychological framework that seeks to understand the relationships between beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviours. This theory posits that an individual's intentions to engage in a behaviour are the most significant predictors of that behaviour. TPB extends the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action by adding the component of perceived behavioural control, which reflects an individual's belief in their capacity to perform a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). This inclusion emphasizes the role of external factors that can facilitate or hinder actions, making the model more comprehensive in explaining human behaviour. Critics of the Theory of Planned Behaviour argue that it may oversimplify complex human behaviours by focusing too heavily on cognitive processes while neglecting emotional, social, and environmental factors. Critics assert that the model does not sufficiently account for the myriads of influences that can impact decision-making processes, including situational constraints and the dynamic nature of social contexts (Sniehotta et al., 2014). Despite these criticisms, the Theory of Planned Behaviour remains relevant, particularly in the context of entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation. The theory offers a valuable lens through which researchers can explore how individuals' intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activities can contribute to poverty reduction efforts. By understanding the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control of aspiring entrepreneurs, policymakers can design targeted interventions to foster entrepreneurial intentions among low-income populations (Krueger, et al. 2000).

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2.3 Empirical Review

A review of related literatures shows that entrepreneurial innovation, entrepreneurship development and poverty alleviation and reduction have been given different interpretations arising from different perspectives adopted in the studies. Hussain et al. (2020) employed a qualitative research design, utilizing a systematic review of case studies to analyze the relationship between entrepreneurship development and poverty alleviation. The data analysis involved thematic coding to identify key factors that contribute to successful entrepreneurial initiatives. The findings reveal that fostering entrepreneurial activities significantly reduces poverty levels by creating jobs and increasing household incomes. The authors emphasize that government support, through policy frameworks and financial assistance, plays a crucial role in enhancing entrepreneurial success. Additionally, education and training programs are vital in equipping individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to start and sustain businesses.

Ifeanyichukwu et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study utilizing focus group discussions and interviews to explore effective strategies for developing entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in technology vocational education in Nigeria. The data analysis employed thematic analysis to identify key strategies and their potential impacts. The findings indicate that integrating practical training and mentorship programs significantly enhances students' entrepreneurial competencies, equipping them with the skills necessary to start and manage their own businesses. Such competencies lead to increased job creation, which is vital for addressing unemployment and reducing poverty levels in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and industry stakeholders in providing real-world experiences that reinforce classroom learning.

Misango and Ongiti (2023) conducted a qualitative study examining the impact of women entrepreneurs on poverty reduction in Kenya, utilizing interviews and surveys to gather data on women-led businesses. The findings indicate that women-led enterprises play a crucial role in enhancing household income and fostering community development, demonstrating the significant economic contributions of women to their families and local economies. The study highlights that women entrepreneurs often reinvest their earnings into their households and communities, leading to improved health, education, and overall well-being. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of gender-inclusive entrepreneurial policies that provide women with access to financial resources, training, and support networks. These policies not only empower women but also promote sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation.

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Mitra et al. (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study that examines the relationship between knowledge creation, human capital, and entrepreneurship, utilizing both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys for data collection. The findings underscore that enhancing educational opportunities and providing targeted training for aspiring entrepreneurs significantly influence poverty reduction by fostering a more skilled workforce. The study reveals that individuals equipped with adequate knowledge and skills are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities, leading to increased employment opportunities and economic activity within their communities. Additionally, the authors highlight the importance of creating supportive environments that promote continuous learning and innovation, as these factors are critical for entrepreneurial success. The implications of this research suggest that investing in education and training programs can yield substantial social and economic returns, particularly in low-income regions where entrepreneurial potential is often underutilized. By prioritizing knowledge creation and human capital development, policymakers and educational institutions can better equip individuals to become successful entrepreneurs, ultimately contributing to sustainable poverty alleviation and economic growth.

Manaf and Ibrahim (2017) conducted a quantitative empirical review that analyzes the effectiveness of public policies aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and reducing poverty in Malaysia, utilizing statistical data and policy analysis for their methodology. The findings indicate that supportive regulatory environments significantly enhance entrepreneurial activities, which are crucial for sustainable economic growth. The study reveals that targeted entrepreneurship programs, particularly those tailored to the needs of low-income populations, play a vital role in creating job opportunities and improving living standards. Additionally, the authors emphasize the importance of collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, and the private sector in implementing effective policies that empower aspiring entrepreneurs. The implications of this research suggest that policymakers should prioritize the development of comprehensive frameworks that not only support new business ventures but also facilitate access to resources and training. By fostering an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, Malaysia can leverage its potential for economic diversification and resilience, ultimately leading to more effective poverty alleviation strategies. This approach can serve as a model for other developing nations facing similar challenges in promoting entrepreneurship and reducing poverty.

Kijima and Lanjouw (2021) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the relationship between economic diversification and poverty decline in rural India, employing econometric analysis to examine data from various sectors. Their findings reveal that promoting entrepreneurship across diverse economic sectors significantly contributes to reducing poverty levels in rural areas. The authors highlight that when communities engage in multiple industries—such as agriculture, handicrafts, and services—the risk of economic instability diminishes, leading to more resilient livelihoods. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of creating supportive policies that encourage entrepreneurial activities, such as access to credit and training programs tailored to local needs. This research has critical implications for policymakers, suggesting that fostering a diversified economic landscape can not only enhance income opportunities for rural populations but also bolster overall economic growth. The authors argue that targeted investments in entrepreneurship initiatives can serve as effective strategies for poverty alleviation, ultimately contributing to more equitable economic development.

Kistruck et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative review to examine the role of social intermediation in supporting entrepreneurship in base-of-the-pyramid markets, utilizing case studies to illustrate their findings. The study reveals that social intermediaries play a crucial role in facilitating access to essential resources, such as financing, training, and market opportunities for low-income entrepreneurs. By connecting these entrepreneurs with networks of support, social intermediaries empower them to develop their businesses, which directly contributes to poverty alleviation. The authors emphasize that social intermediaries help bridge the gap between entrepreneurs and traditional financial institutions, thereby enhancing the sustainability of entrepreneurial initiatives. Furthermore, the research suggests that strengthening social intermediation strategies can create a more inclusive economic environment, where marginalized groups can participate actively in the market. This has important implications for policymakers, indicating that investing in social intermediary networks can enhance entrepreneurial capacities in low-income communities. By fostering such support systems, the overall economic development of base-of-the-pyramid markets can be achieved, ultimately leading to improved living standards and reduced poverty levels in these regions.

Olayinka et al. (2021) employed a qualitative research design to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship and social responsibility in Nigeria, utilizing thematic analysis to derive insights from interviews and case studies. The study argues that socially responsible

entrepreneurial practices significantly enhance community welfare and contribute to poverty alleviation by addressing local needs and challenges. Findings indicate that when entrepreneurs engage in socially responsible initiatives—such as providing employment, supporting local education, and investing in health services—they not only foster economic development but also strengthen community ties. The research suggests that integrating social responsibility into entrepreneurial curricula and policies can enhance the overall impact of entrepreneurship on societal issues. By recognizing the interconnectedness of business success and social welfare, this study advocates for a paradigm shift in how entrepreneurship is perceived and practiced in Nigeria, ultimately contributing to more effective poverty alleviation strategies.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study used a quantitative research design. The study's target population comprised 1,200 individuals involved in entrepreneurship within the selected region. This population included established entrepreneurs, aspiring entrepreneurs, and relevant stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, such as support organizations and government agencies. The inclusion of this diverse group was justified as it provided a comprehensive view of the entrepreneurial landscape and its potential impact on poverty alleviation. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select a sample of 120 respondents, constituting 10% of the target population. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was deemed appropriate as it allowed the researcher to select individuals who possessed specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The primary data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire designed to gather quantitative data on respondents' perceptions of entrepreneurship and its impact on poverty alleviation. The questionnaire included a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions, enabling the researcher to quantify responses while also allowing for richer qualitative insights where appropriate. The closed-ended questions were designed to capture specific aspects of entrepreneurship, such as types of entrepreneurial activities, perceived benefits, and challenges faced by entrepreneurs about poverty alleviation. Open-ended questions provided respondents with the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives, offering a more nuanced understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Using the Cronbach's Alpha test, the questionnaire was tested for internal consistency and reliability index which was found to be 0.85, hence the questionnaire was considered reliable enough for the study. Data analysis was performed

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using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the data and provide insights into the respondents' characteristics and perspectives on entrepreneurial innovation and poverty alleviation. Inferential statistical methods, such as correlation and multiple regression analyses, were employed to examine the relationships between the variables, allowing for the testing of the research hypotheses.

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Returned/Completed	109	90.8	90.8	90.8
	Not Returned/Uncompleted	11	9.2	9.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS 27 Output, 2024

The results presented in Table 1 indicate a high response rate for the questionnaire, with 109 out of 120 distributed surveys returned completed, representing 90.8% of the total. This response rate is considered robust, suggesting strong engagement from participants and enhancing the reliability of the findings. The remaining 11 questionnaires, accounting for 9.2%, were either not returned or left incomplete, which is relatively low and unlikely to significantly bias the results.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Data Analysis

Table 2: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
The role of entrepreneurial innovation in creating employment opportunities for the residents of FCT Abuja.	23.650	3	.000	90.25000	78.1055	102.3945
The contribution of entrepreneurial innovation in improving access to basic services for residents of FCT Abuja.	19.499	3	.000	89.00000	74.4742	103.5258
The contribution of entrepreneurial innovation in diversifying the economic activities and reducing the dependence on traditional sources of income in FCT Abuja.	17.504	3	.000	86.7500	70.978	102.522

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Source: SPSS27 Output, 2024

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

4.2.1 Hypothesis 1

A one-sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that entrepreneurial innovation does not significantly contribute to creating employment opportunities for the residents of FCT Abuja, with an assumed mean of 0. The results indicated a t-value of 23.650, which exceeded the critical table value of 2.92 at a 5% level of significance. The significance level was found to be .000, suggesting that the probability of observing such a t-value under the null hypothesis was extremely low. Given that the calculated t-value significantly surpassed the critical value, it provided strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The mean difference of 90.25 further supported this conclusion, indicating a substantial positive perception among respondents regarding the role of entrepreneurial innovation in generating employment opportunities. Thus, it was concluded that entrepreneurial innovation significantly contributes to creating employment opportunities for the residents of FCT Abuja.

4.2.2 Hypothesis 2

A one-sample t-test was conducted to assess the hypothesis that entrepreneurial innovation does not significantly improve access to basic services for the residents of FCT Abuja, with an assumed mean of 0. The results revealed a t-value of 19.499, which was greater than the critical table value of 2.92 at a 5% level of significance. The significance level was .000, indicating that the likelihood of obtaining such a t-value under the null hypothesis was exceedingly low. Since the calculated t-value significantly exceeded the critical value, it provided strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The mean difference of 89.00 further substantiated this conclusion, highlighting a considerable positive perception among respondents regarding the impact of entrepreneurial innovation on improving access to basic services. Therefore, it was concluded that entrepreneurial innovation significantly enhances access to essential services for the residents of FCT Abuja.

4.2.3 Hypothesis 3

A one-sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that entrepreneurial innovation does not significantly diversify economic activities and reduce dependence on traditional sources of income in FCT Abuja, with an assumed mean of 0. The results yielded a t-value of 17.504, surpassing the critical table value of 2.92 at a 5% level of significance. The

significance level was .000, indicating an extremely low probability of observing such a t-value under the null hypothesis. Given that the calculated t-value was significantly greater than the critical value, there was strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The mean difference of 86.75 further reinforced this conclusion, suggesting a substantial positive perception among respondents regarding the role of entrepreneurial innovation in diversifying economic activities and reducing reliance on traditional income sources. Therefore, it was concluded that entrepreneurial innovation significantly contributes to diversifying economic activities and lessening dependence on conventional income sources in FCT Abuja.

4.2.4 Discussion on Findings

In analyzing the findings of this study, several key themes emerged regarding the role of entrepreneurial innovation in addressing critical socio-economic issues in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The results demonstrated a strong consensus among respondents about the positive impact of entrepreneurial innovation on employment opportunities, access to essential services, and economic diversification. One of the most significant findings of this study is the affirmation that entrepreneurial innovation plays a crucial role in creating employment opportunities for residents of FCT Abuja. With an overwhelming majority of respondents agreeing that innovative startups are more effective than traditional industries in generating jobs; it is evident that entrepreneurship has become a vital engine of employment in the region. This aligns with global trends where entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a catalyst for job creation, particularly in developing economies where formal employment opportunities are often limited. The results suggest that fostering a culture of entrepreneurship could be a strategic avenue for addressing high unemployment rates in Abuja. The findings aligns with the study of Hussain et al. (2020), highlighting the importance of supporting entrepreneurial initiatives through policies that encourage innovation, such as access to funding, training, and resources.

Access to basic services was another critical area where entrepreneurial innovation demonstrated a significant impact. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that entrepreneurial innovation improves access to essential services such as healthcare and education. This finding is particularly pertinent in FCT Abuja, where disparities in access to services can have profound effects on residents' quality of life. The emergence of innovative business models has led to the development of affordable solutions to service challenges, bridging gaps that have traditionally existed in service delivery. For instance, health tech startups may provide telemedicine services that enhance access to healthcare, especially in underserved areas.

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Similarly, educational platforms could offer online learning resources that democratize access to quality education.

The positive response regarding the effectiveness of innovative businesses in addressing gaps in basic service delivery underscores the potential of entrepreneurship as a solution to public service challenges. By tapping into local needs and leveraging technology, entrepreneurs can create tailored solutions that improve the welfare of residents. The study's findings suggest that encouraging innovative enterprises could be a strategic approach to achieving broader socio-economic development goals in the FCT. Additionally, the study explored how entrepreneurial innovation contributes to diversifying economic activities and reducing dependence on traditional income sources. The results showed that respondents recognized the significant role of entrepreneurial ventures in broadening the economic landscape in Abuja. Traditional sectors such as agriculture and oil have long dominated the economy, leading to vulnerabilities during economic downturns. However, the rise of startups across various sectors—ranging from technology to hospitality—signals a shift towards a more diversified economy. The findings suggest that fostering a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem can help mitigate risks associated with economic dependence on a few sectors. By promoting innovation and supporting new business ventures, the government and stakeholders can enhance economic resilience, ultimately contributing to sustained growth and development. Furthermore, as entrepreneurs introduce new products and services, they stimulate competition, which can lead to improved quality and lower prices for consumers.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that entrepreneurial innovation is a powerful tool for addressing key challenges in FCT Abuja. The positive impact on employment generation, service accessibility, and economic diversification emphasizes the need for continued support and investment in the entrepreneurial sector. Policymakers should focus on creating an enabling environment for startups, including access to funding, training, and mentorship programs. By doing so, they can harness the full potential of entrepreneurship as a driver of socio-economic development in Abuja. Ultimately, fostering a culture of innovation not only benefits individual entrepreneurs but also contributes to the broader well-being of the community and the economy at large.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the study underscore the significant role of entrepreneurial innovation in addressing key socio-economic challenges in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The hypotheses tested revealed that entrepreneurial ventures substantially contribute to creating employment opportunities, improving access to basic services, and diversifying economic activities. The results indicated a strong consensus among respondents on the positive impact of innovative businesses, emphasizing their effectiveness in generating jobs and enhancing service delivery in sectors such as healthcare and education. Moreover, the research highlighted that entrepreneurial innovation fosters economic diversification, reducing dependence on traditional sectors. Given these compelling findings, it is imperative for policymakers to support and nurture the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Abuja through favorable policies, access to funding, and targeted training programs. By investing in entrepreneurial innovation, Abuja can harness its potential to drive sustainable socio-economic development, ultimately improving the quality of life for its residents.

The following recommendations were proposed:

a. **Promote Entrepreneurial Education and Training Programs**: To further enhance the role of entrepreneurial innovation in creating employment opportunities, it is essential to provide targeted entrepreneurial education and training programs for residents of FCT Abuja. These programs should focus on equipping individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to start and manage innovative ventures. Training should be tailored to the specific needs of various sectors, including technology, healthcare, and education, to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and improve employability.

b. **Increase Access to Funding and Financial Support for Startups**: A significant barrier to entrepreneurial success in Abuja is the limited access to funding. To address this challenge, policymakers should create initiatives that provide financial support to innovative startups. This could include establishing government-backed venture capital funds, microfinance schemes, and business incubation centers that offer seed capital and resources for entrepreneurs.

c. **Create a Favorable Regulatory Environment for Startups**: For entrepreneurial innovation to thrive and contribute to economic diversification, it is critical to establish a conducive regulatory environment. Policymakers should review existing regulations to ensure they are not overly burdensome or restrictive for startups. Simplifying business registration processes, providing incentives for innovation, and

ensuring transparency in tax policies will encourage more entrepreneurs to enter the market. A supportive legal and regulatory framework can foster the growth of new industries and ensure that innovative ventures are able to operate efficiently and sustainably.

d. **Foster Public-Private Partnerships to Drive Innovation**: Encouraging collaborations between the public and private sectors can play a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurial innovation. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can provide the necessary infrastructure, mentorship, and market access that startups need to succeed. By working together, the government and private sector can create an environment where innovative solutions to socio-economic challenges can thrive. Innovation hubs, networking events, and industry conferences could be organized to connect entrepreneurs from various sectors, including technology, agriculture, hospitality, and manufacturing. By fostering collaboration across industries, Abuja can develop a more resilient and diversified economy that is less vulnerable to global economic shifts.

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