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Green Opportunity Recognition and University Education Support as Predictors of Green Entrepreneurial Intention in Edo State

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Abstract: Green entrepreneurship has become essential due to the rise in unhealthful company practices that disregard the environment. The purpose of this study was to determine how much green opportunity recognition and university education support might be used to predict green entrepreneurial intention in Edo State. Two hypotheses were developed and examined at the 0.05 significance level. The study employed a correlational survey research approach. The 421 vocational education students from the University of Benin in Benin City and Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma comprised the study's population. The instrument used was a questionnaire titled: Green Opportunity Recognition, University Education Support, and Green Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (GORUESGEIQ). It was divided into two parts – A and B. Part A was made up of the demographic variables of the respondents such as sex and institution; while Part B was made up of twelve (12) opinion statements designed in a Likert Scale showing: Strongly Agree (SA). Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by two professionals. The instruments' reliability was determined using the Cronbach alpha, which produced reliability coefficients of.81,.85, and.79 for the GEI, GOR, and UES, respectively, after the instrument was given to 25 students enrolled in vocational education at Delta State University, Abraka. To evaluate the data, a simple linear regression analysis was performed. The results showed that vocational education students' intentions to start green businesses in Edo State are significantly predicted by the acknowledgment of green opportunities and university support for education. It was suggested that educational institutions be better positioned to assist students pursuing green entrepreneurship in light of the findings.

Keywords: *Green Entrepreneurship, Green opportunity recognition, University education support, Green entrepreneurial intention, Vocational education*

1. Introduction

Green entrepreneurship (GE) is a relatively new field that is drawing more and more interest from academics worldwide. According to Belz and Binder (2017), GE is focused on building a business that balances the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the triple bottom line. GE is the process of creating and putting into practice solutions to environmental issues while also advocating for societal reforms that ensure the environment is not harmed (Skordoulis,

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Kyriakopoulos, Ntanos, Galatsidas, Arabatzis, Chalikias & Kalantonis, 2022; Ediagbonya, 2023). Yin, Paz Salmador, Li, and Lloria (2022) described GE as the use of entrepreneurial behavior in an enterprise's development of environmentally friendly goods, services, and markets in order to turn a profit while keeping the environment safe. Comparably, GE designates a specific subset of entrepreneurship that seeks to create and implement solutions for environmental problems while simultaneously promoting social changes to guarantee that the environment is not damaged (Skordoulis, Kyriakopoulos, Ntanos, Galatsidas, Arabatzis, Chalikias & Kalantonis, 2022).

The primary objective of GE is to prevent the excesses of entrepreneurs by preventing unfavorable business activities that could have a severe impact on the environment and society. Businesses committed to promoting social change and entrepreneurs are partnered with by GE to establish green enterprises that are more likely to be profitable and have greater sales. The GE tendency has reinforced prospective business owners' intentions even more. According to Cai et al. (2023), a person's preparedness to adopt green entrepreneurial conduct and commit to starting a new company is correlated with their green entrepreneurial intention (GEI). A person's GEI is influenced by a number of factors, including support for higher education and awareness of green opportunities.

A critical quality of a green entrepreneur is opportunity recognition. Opportunities are present everywhere, but it requires extra willpower for people to be able to spot them and turn them into business ventures. Green opportunity recognition (GOR) is the process of identifying, developing, and investigating potential green opportunities to produce future goods and services that will preserve the environment, benefit the public, or both (Zhang & Li, 2021). GOR's primary goal is to identify and honor innovative business concepts and endeavors that have the potential to safeguard the environment while carrying on with the production of goods or provision of services. With the detrimental effects of industrial activity on the environment, interest in this field of study is starting to grow. Without a doubt, the educational options have a big impact on the system. By seizing chances for presumptuous responsibility and addressing the entrepreneurial conundrum by establishing green products, University Education Support (UES) can accelerate rapid growth and create value (Amankwah & Sesen, 2021). Support for university education (UES) is essential for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship because UES can provide the resources and skills needed to foster the emergence of fresh, environmentally friendly ideas. Future-focused courses on green entrepreneurship are in high demand from students, and developing green entrepreneurial abilities is necessary to influence this need (Demirel, Li, Rentocchini, & Tamvada, 2019). It is envisaged that emphasis would be directed toward this area of entrepreneurship in order to promote ecological sustainability, even though the majority of schools have not yet begun to emphasize it.

The link between these characteristics has been the subject of ongoing research. Academics like Alnermer (2021) and Aliedan et al. (2022) have shown a positive correlation between EI and university education support. Similar findings have been made by other experts in green entrepreneurship, including Nordin (2020), Qazi et al. (2021), Yi (2021), Nguyen et al. (2022), Shabeeb, Ammer and Elshaer (2023), Ghodbane and Alwehable (2023), Sharma, Bulsara, Trivedi and Bagdi (2023), Li, Murad, and Ashraf (2023). A positive correlation between GOR and GEI was also discovered by researchers like Suwardi, Machmud, and Endang Supardi (2021), Bapoo, Tehseen, Haider, Yusof, and Motaghi (2022), Santika, Wardana, Setiawan and Widagda (2022), and Wijaya and Tunjungsari (2023). According to the assessment, much of the research conducted thus far has been beyond the purview of this topic, and there are scant, if any, studies that link the identification of green opportunities and university education support to the green entrepreneurial intention of Edo State's vocational education students.

The body of information and publications in the subject of green entrepreneurship has benefited from this study. The study has been able to determine the key factors that predict the green entrepreneurial intention of vocational education students in developing nations like Nigeria, which has several ecological and environmental problems as a result of unethical business practices. Using the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), this study has also been able to explain the GEI of students enrolled in vocational education. by looking at the recognition of green opportunities and university support for education as predictors of the intention of Edo State vocational education students to engage in green entrepreneurship. There was a substantial gap in the literature that this study has filled.

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Table 1: Example of a table

The example of a column heading	**A (*t*)**	**B (*t*)**
And an entry	1	2
And another entry	3	4
And another entry	5	6

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Skip hyphenation at the last line. Symbols which denote vectors and matrices must be written in bold. Names of the scalar variable will usually appear in italics. Refer to the SI unit when describing weight and measures. Provide with a glossary or specified when first stated for all of non-standard abbreviations or symbols.

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- •gr: figure
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2. Theoretical Frameworks

Although it has a major impact, there is a paucity of research on the potential effects of GOR and UES in poor nations like Nigeria. As a result, the goal of the current study is to increase our understanding of how well GOR and UES predict GEI among Nigerian students enrolled in vocational school. Because SCT provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing an individual's activities and the results in relation to behavioral, cognitive, personal, and environmental aspects (Zhai, Hash, Ward, Yuwen, & Sonney, 2023; Islam et al, 2023), the researchers feel that SCT is the ideal theory for this study. SCT can be used to determine students' intentions to start green businesses, which can be influenced by a combination of environmental inputs, personal characteristics, and behavioral outcomes (Biraglia & Kadile, 2016; Cervone, 2023). According to SCT, people act in ways that help them achieve their goals (Bandura, 1986). Numerous environmental and human factors are investigated in connection with UES and GOR, respectively (Biraglia & Kadile, 2016). In terms of behavioral outcomes, we look into the students' plans to launch their own green businesses following graduation. SCT holds that an individual's behavior is the outcome of a three-way reciprocal interaction between their environment, their past experiences, and their personal inputs (Bandura, 1986).

Prior experience can be understood within the context of the current study as previous educational experiences and institutional supports that help students start green companies. This would suggest that graduates would need assistance from their educational institutions in the form of instruction, real-world experience, and other resources in order to launch their own green enterprises. Therefore, when this educational support is available to them, students will be more inclined to start a green business. In actuality, these supports will serve to further pique their attention. The students' capacity to identify green business prospects is the personal component in this framework. Prior experience can be understood within the context of the current study as previous educational experiences and institutional supports that help students start green companies. This would suggest that graduates would need assistance from their educational institutions in the form of instruction, real-world experience, and other resources in order to launch their own green enterprises. Therefore, when this educational support is available to them, students will be more inclined to start a green business. In actuality, these supports will serve to further pique their attention. The students' capacity to identify green business prospects is the personal component in this framework.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Green Opportunity Recognition and Green Entrepreneurial Intention

The initial and crucial phase of the entrepreneurial process is opportunity recognition (Dhahri & Omri, 2018; Amjad, Abdul Ran & Sa’ atar, 2020; Yasir, Mahmood, Mehmood, Rashid, & Liren, 2021). The cognitive phenomenon that takes into account an individual's entrepreneurial decision-making process is opportunity recognition. Possibility comprises a person's capacity to identify, unearth, or create patterns and ideas. Opportunity recognition, according to Sakti et al. (2020), is the process of locating a strategic opportunity or potential for starting a new firm. In other words, a business actor should be able to compare current marketplaces in order to find new business prospects before attempting to expand his or her industry. According to Johnson and Vahlne (2006), opportunity recognition is both a mindset and a method that makes people more conscious of opportunities, changes in resources, and opportunities that may go unnoticed but are still viable. It promotes systematic growth and gives people the ability to classify, arrange, and interpret unprocessed data into several action domains by applying relevant knowledge about emerging business prospects. The core of entrepreneurship research is the identification of new business opportunities (Sher, Mazhar, Abbas, Iqbal, & Li, 2019). The necessity for green opportunity recognition (GOR) has been further underscored by the growing public uproar over environmental issues brought on by unfriendly entrepreneurial activities. Sustainable opportunity recognition (SOR) is another name for the concept known as green opportunity recognition (GOR). The term "green opportunity research" (GOR) describes the process of identifying, developing, and exploring potential green spaces for future products and services that will preserve the environment and benefit society at large (Hanohov & Baldacchino, 2018; Zhang & Li, 2021). In other words, GOR prioritizes social, environmental, and economic performance along three axes. Therefore, GOR pays greater attention to chances that can both support natural sustainable development and increase company performance, as opposed to traditional opportunity recognition, which solely takes economic factors into account (Zhang & Li, 2021). The process a would-be entrepreneur goes through to establish a firm is known as GOR, and it entails thinking, coming up with ideas, and solving problems in the market (Shane & Niclutaou, 2015; Bapoo, Tehseen, Haider, Yusof, & Motaghi, 2022). Studies by scholars have explained the relationship between GOR and GEI. The findings by Suwardi, Machmud and Endang Supardi (2021), Bapoo, Tehseen, Haider, Yusof and Motaghi (2022), Santika, Wardana, Setiawan and Widagda (2022) and Wijaya and Tunjungsari (2023) have established a significant relationship GOR and GEI. We therefore hypothesize as follows:

H1: Green opportunity recognition is a significant positive predictor of vocational education students’ green entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.

3.2 University Education Support and Green Entrepreneurial Intention

A number of prior studies (e.g., Ediagbonya, 2013; Dinis, do Paco, Ferreira, Raposo, & Gouvela, 2013; Martin, McNally & Kay, 2013; Alnermer, 2021; Ediagbonya, 2022a; Ediagbonya, 2022b; Ediagbonya, 2022c;) have established the substantial long-term impact that formal education has on students' entrepreneurial mindsets as well as their attitudes. According to Ediagbonya (2023), encouraging students' business aspirations requires entrepreneurial education, especially at the tertiary level. University Education Support (UES) may solve the entrepreneurial conundrum by establishing green products, which will accelerate rapid growth and produce value (Amankwah & Sesen, 2021). Support for university education (UES) is essential for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship because UES can provide the resources and skills needed to foster the emergence of fresh, environmentally friendly ideas. Future-focused courses on green entrepreneurship are in high demand from students, and developing green entrepreneurial abilities is necessary to influence this need (Demirel, Li, Rentocchini, & Tamvada, 2019). It has been observed that many colleges are pursuing environmentally friendly economic ventures in addition to advancing the green idea in their own unique contexts. Through a variety of techniques, including seminars, theoretical instruction, practical instruction, and entrepreneurial activities, universities can promote students' aspirations to become entrepreneurs. This encourages students to pursue entrepreneurship as a career after graduation. For a variety of reasons, university education has been crucial in fostering entrepreneurship, claims Sanchez (2011). First and foremost, education gives pupils self-reliance, liberty, and confidence. The second is knowledge of professional options and alternatives. Thirdly, education and universities give students the information, abilities, and training necessary to succeed as entrepreneurs. According to a study by Shah et al. (2020), there is a link between students' aspiration to become entrepreneurs and university support. Scholars such as Aliedan et al (2022), Alnermer (2021), Dinis, do Paco, Ferreira, Raposo, and Gouvela (2013), Martin, Mcnally and Kay (2013), Shamsudin, Mamun, Nawi, Nasir and Zakaria (2017) have established positive relationship between university education support and EI. Similarly, experts such as Nordin (2020), Qazi, et al (2021), Yi (2021), Nguyen, et al (2022), Shabeeb, Ammer and Elshaer (2023), Ghodbane, and Alwehable (2023), Sharma, Bulsara, Trivedi, and Bagdi (2023), Li, Murad, and Ashraf (2023), in green entrepreneurship have equally found positive significant relationship between UES and GEI. We therefore hypothesize as follows:

H2: University education support is a significant positive predictor of vocational education students' green entrepreneurial intention in Edo State

4. Methods

Because the primary goal of this study was to determine the extent to which university education support and recognition of green opportunities impact the green entrepreneurial intention of vocational education students in Edo State, a correlational survey approach was used. All of the Vocational and Technical Education students at the University of Benin and Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma, Edo State, make up the study's population. The population was made up of 421 students. The entire population was used, hence there was no sampling strategy. The primary instrument used in the study was a standardized questionnaire. The questionnaire was used in eliciting information from the respondents and it was titled: Green Opportunity Recognition, University Education Support, and Green Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (GORUESGEIQ). It was divided into two parts – A and B. Part A was made up of the demographic variables of the respondents such as sex and institution; while Part B was made up of twelve (12) opinion statements designed in a Likert Scale showing: Strongly Agree (SA). Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The three items that made up the Green opportunity recognition (GOR) component were taken from Ozgen and Baron (2007). A sample of the item reads: 'I can recognize new venture opportunities in environmental protection industries. Four items from Yi (2021) were adapted for the University education support (UES). A sample of the item reads: 'My University motivates students to start a green business'. Five items from Wang et al. (2021) were adapted for the Green Entrepreneurial Intention (GEI). A sample of the item reads: 'I am very interested in Green entrepreneurship'.

We examined the instrument's face and content validity. The final version of the instrument incorporated the feedback provided by business education professionals who reviewed the draft version. The instruments' reliability was determined using the Cronbach alpha, which produced reliability coefficients of.81,.85, and.79 for the GEI, GOR, and UES, respectively, after the instrument was given to 25 students enrolled in business education at Delta State University, Abraka. 338 questionnaires, or 80.28 percent of the sample, were provided to the researcher by the respondents. For the analysis, SPSS version 23.0 was used. The association between each variable was examined using the Pearson Product Moment Correlations. Simple linear regression analysis was utilized to examine the first and second hypothesis.

5. Finding and Discussions

The results of the data analysis are presented in this section with respect to the correlation matrix and hypotheses testing of the study variables.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix showing the relationship among Green Opportunity Recognition, University Education Support and Green Entrepreneurial Intention (N=421)

Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3
GOR	Pearson Correlation			1	.368**	.444**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	3.85	.59		.000	.000
	N			338	338	338
UES	Pearson Correlation			.368**	1	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	3.69	.78	.000		.000
	N			338	338	338
GEI	Pearson Correlation			.444**	.525**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	3.98	.56	.000	.000	
	N			338	338	338

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note. GOR – Green opportunity recognition; UES – University education support; GEI- Green Entrepreneurial Intention

Source: Researcher's Field work (2023)

The relationships between GOR, UES, and GEI are shown in Table 1. The correlation coefficients between the variables range from.368 to.525. The aim of vocational education students to launch a green firm was somewhat correlated with GOR (r=.444, n=338). There was a relatively favorable correlation (r=.525, n=338) between the UES of green entrepreneurs and their intention to become green businesses. The relationship between GOR and UES was weak (r=.368, n=338).

5.1 Hypothesis Test

The results of the data analyses of the hypotheses were presented as follows.

Table 2 Linear regression estimates of the direct relationship between the study variables

Pathways								Bootstrap with BCa 95% CI	
	SE(β)	F	T	Bias	R^2	AdjR^2	P	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
GOR → GEI	.139 (0.012)	82.686	9.093	.000	.197	.195	.000	.115	.163
UES → GEI	.095 (.007)	128.019	11.315	.000	.276	.274	.000	.081	.110

Note: GOR – Green opportunity recognition; UES – University Education Support; GEI – Green Entrepreneurial Intention; AdjR2 – Adjusted R-squared

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 reveals that GOR (F (1, 336) = 82.686, SE = .139, β = 0.012, t = 9.093, 95% LLCI = .115 – ULCI = .163 had a significant positive influence on GEI. The adjusted R-square (.195) reveals that 19.5% of the variance in GEI is influenced by GOR. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for GOR influencing GEI (bias = .000, p = .000) were statistically significant. All in all, the results confirmed the expectations of the author. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected in the study. That is, GOR is a significant predictor of Vocational Education students' GEI in Edo State.

Table 2 reveals that UES (F (1, 336) = 128,019, SE = .007, β = .095, t = 11.315, 95% LLCI = .081 – ULCI = .110 had a significant positive influence on GEI. The adjusted R-square (.274) reveals that 27.4% of the variance in GEI is influenced by UES. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for UES influencing GEI (bias = .000, p = .000) were statistically significant. All in all, the results confirmed the expectations of the author. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected in the study. That is, UES is a significant predictor of Vocational Education students' GEI in Edo State.

According to the analysis of hypothesis one, green opportunity recognition (GOR) strongly predicts the intention of vocational education students in Edo State to engage in green entrepreneurship. It follows that people who are good at seeing possibilities will probably start their own green businesses. The result corroborates the findings by Suwardi, Machmud and Endang Supardi (2021), Bapoo, Tehseen, Haider, Yusof and Motaghi (2022), Santika, Wardana, Setiawan and Widagda (2022) and Wijaya and Tunjungsari (2023) who found that GOR significantly predicted the GEI of vocational education students in Edo State.

The second hypothesis's study showed that university education support (UES) strongly predicts Edo State vocational education students' inclination to engage in green entrepreneurship. This suggests that vocational education students' intentions to establish GEI are influenced by the support they receive from educational institutions. The result corroborates the findings by Nordin (2020), Qazi, et al (2021), Yi (2021), Nguyen, et al (2022), Shabeeb, Ammer and

Elshaer (2023), Ghodbane, and Alwehable (2023), Sharma, Bulsara, Trivedi, and Bagdi (2023), Li, Murad, and Ashraf (2023) who found that UES significantly predicted the GEI of vocational education students in Edo State.

6. Finding and Discussions

The findings suggest that vocational education students' inclination to engage in green entrepreneurship in Edo State is significantly predicted by GOR and UES. As a result, it suggests that students enrolled in vocational education should be thoroughly informed about how to identify green opportunities. Educational institutions also have a big part to play in helping students expand their knowledge about green entrepreneurship prospects and the most effective ways to pursue them. These resources could come in the form of traditional instruction and hands-on training. The stakeholders can help the educational institutions in this way as well by contributing infrastructure and facilities, or by enabling productive cooperation between the schools and important businesses engaged in green entrepreneurship.

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