# ENTREPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES AND JOB CREATION: EVIDENCE FROM AGRIBUSINESS CLUSTERS IN KWARA STATE

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## Abstract

The world economy, globalszation and politics are spinning, circling and moving with a remarkable speed just as the globe. As a result, economic instability, resource limitations and environmental uncertainties call for entrepreneurial initiatives as the best option for cluster of small and medium enterprises to get access to financial capital, attain synergy and increase the job creation capacity. The study therefore examined the relationship between entrepreneurial initiatives and job creation evidence from selected agribusiness clusters in Kwara State. The study adopted a survey research design in which questionnaire was used to collect data from 245cluster members. Structural equation model was employed to simultaneously analyse numerous entrepreneurial initiatives variables (networking, entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial technology and public private partnership initiatives) against job creation within the clusters. The findings revealed that that networking initiative (t = 6.46), entrepreneurial orientation (t = 2.10), entrepreneurial technology (t = 2.60) and public private partnership (t = 0.486) which showed that only public private partnership with t value of less than 1, had no significant relationship with job creation . The study recommended that there was the need for sensitszation of investors to see agriculture as businesses that arose out of the willingness to take risks. The study also recommended that technological advancement through research and development and conscious networking with relevant institutions should be encouraged.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Agribusiness, Clusters, Entrepreneuria Initiatives, Networking and Job Creation

## Background to the Study

The world economy, globalisation and politics is spinning, circling and moving wit remarkable speed just as the globe. The global economic instability, resou limitations and environmental uncertainties call for entrepreneurial initiative the best option for cluster of small and medium enterprises to get acces financial capital, attain synergy and increasingly compete in the global econ

attention and recognition accorded to the concept of cluster is derived from the that it is closely related to competitiveness and innovation(Ezirim& Anderson, ). Clusters are conspicuous and universal features of today's economy. In the the idea among countries pursuing growth was to catch the attention of a large to relocate to their country. This perception is challenged by the concept of tering (Greenstone, Richard & Enrico, 2010). Marques, Nunes, Torne and ete-Pinheiro (2012) opine that the particular strength of clusters is their ability ctivate and grow new enterprises as these entrepreneurial businesses can tap a wealth of knowledge and form relationships simply by choosing to locate gside other related businesses. As a result of this characteristic of rapid and ally) sustained growth, developed economies have been quick to support the elopment of clusters (Ogundele & Jiyah, 2017).

awan, Jacob and Duysters (2013) suggest that clusters with higher repreneurial orientation tend to perform better. Similarly, Kuenyehia (2012) its that individuals within the ecosystem be proactive, technologically oriented, h cooperative values, good cultural orientation and ability to sense information thin the environment.

ited Nation Industrial Organization [UNIDO] (2014) identifies clusters' actors as businesses, government, associations, universities or research institutes, ancial institutions and the community. Small and medium enterprises are edominantly common in Africa and they are mostly in traditional and labour- ensive sectors in rural and poor urban areas (Merima, Olivier, Holger& Adnan, 17).Davenport as cited by Abdulazeez, Ajonbadi & Otokiti (2014) note that all r the world, governments are increasingly turning their attention to supporting e globalisation of SMEs in order to increase international competitiveness.

cent diversification policies such as the off taker demand driven agricultural oject, FADAMA programmes and host of other cluster based programmes oduced by the Nigerian government have not had major impacts on the onomic development. Although, the number of agricultural clusters and onomic activities have increased, the enterprises have not developed at the pected pace. Indigenous, international and multinational companies are seeking locate and invest in areas with access to resources, infrastructures, skills, and abling environments that will give them an increased return on investments. sessing entrepreneurial initiatives within the agribusiness clusters in Kwara State comes most appropriate at this time when the government is committed to shing economic empowerment, competitiveness, employment generation,

poverty alleviation and food security among others.

The socioeconomic issue of employment is one of the most decisive elements in Nigeria (Kadiri, Abu & Adebayo, 2017). The agricultural sector in Nigeria has been associated with employment generation, poverty reduction and economic growth. Nigerian policies and programmes for employment creation is yet to yield much impact as there is still a wide gap between the jobs available and the number of job seekers. The twenty first century requires that agribusiness cluster must have entrepreneurial tendencies which could result in generating employment and jobs within the value chain. Today, farmers are faced with the challenges of conflict with herdsmen and hunters who had hitherto co-existed peacefully. Entrepreneurial initiatives, witherto, have been proven to be a mechanism for enhancing sustainable economic growth of a nation (Kriss, 2012;Oviatt& McDougall 2005). Coral-Ingley(2013) argued that some entrepreneurial characteristics, attributes and traits are appeared to be universal, but many others are culturally specific as well. Consequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria had initiated various programmes in a bid to create jobs and encourage agripreneurs, taking cognisance of the pivotal role agricultural business plays in economic development. Hence, the study seeks to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial initiatives and job creation within the agribusiness clusters in Kwara State.

## Research Questions

The following research questions are drawn to navigate the study:

i. To what extent isentrepreneurial initiative related tojob creation within the agribusiness clusters in Kwara State?

## Research Hypothesis

$H_0$Entrepreneurialinitiatives have no significant effect on job creation within agribusiness clusters in Kwara State.

$H_1$Entrepreneurial initiatives have significant effect on job creation within agribusiness clusters in Kwara State.

## Literature Review

The concept of cluster was first coined by Michael Porter, in a seminar work titled "Competitive Advantage of Nations".The work explained the concept of economic

competitiveness and what it represented (Windapo, 2017). This prompted various scientists, academia and practitioners to begin to put forward their own definitions of clusters and clustering. Porter (2000) identifies clustering as a philosophy based on the core principles of integrating activities and collaboration for mutual benefits. These benefits come in three levels; individual level, sector or regional level and wider economy level. Moreso, Ketels (2015) opines that cluster is a geographical concentration of industries which gains advantages through co-location.

Kusumawardhani, McCarthy &Perera (2009) and Awang, Ahmad, Asghar, Subari and Kassim (2011) assert that network plays significant role in influencing the entrepreneurial process.

Sunawan et al, (2013) further argue that clusters seek to improve their competencies by establishing new network ties and existing networks. Entrepreneurs within the cluster need to develop networks in business to consolidate on existing opportunities and also to exploit new opportunities (McCann&Folta, 2011). As a result, Merima, Oliver, Holger & Adnam (2016) agree that entrepreneurship is obviously a networking activity. Network orientation within the cluster is considered as an important (Christopher, 2012; Inkpen & Tsang, 2005; Elfring & Hulsink, 2003).

Mitchell et al. (2007) allude that entrepreneurial orientation research examines entrepreneurs' ways of taking initiatives. The entrepreneurial theory explains the environmental impacts on thinking and behaviour, advocating that a significant modification in environmental factors have a matching change in cognition and behaviour. Mitchell et al.(2000) further assert that the entrepreneur as the focus by explaining the structures of knowledge, assessment, judgment and evaluation of opportunities that lead to venture creation and economic growth Aaron et al (2015) argued that some entrepreneurial characteristics, attributes and traits are appeared to be universal, but many others are culturally specific as well. The study of cultural values is important for Nigerians. Because Nigerians were peasant farmers and fishermen historically, they produce and sell within their domains. Whereas the 21st century requires that the farmer must have entrepreneurial tendencies which could result in generating new forms of businesses within the value chain.

According to FAO (2016), as the Nigerian economy becomes more sophisticated resulting from the diversification of the economy, clusters can play a greater role than even the government in job creations and career development opportunities

for individuals. In doing so, the cluster aids wealth creation. Over 28% of jobs created in Nigeria isagro based (World Bank, 2016). Global unemployment rate currently averages 6 percent (ILO, 2015), but regional and country disparities remain unacceptably wide. Equally wide is the disparity between general and youth unemployment.(ILO, 2015) Scott (2013) observed that structural change has been affecting nation's economy for decades as agriculture and manufacturing employment has given way to employment in service-providing industries.

## Cluster Policies

Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (E.R.G.P) (2017) identifies clusters of agric based entrepreneurs to groups of people with common interest. Shailesh et al (2013) identify a cluster of entrepreneurs as the application of collective energy for initiating and building a cluster. Esiobu, Onubuogu and Ibe (2015) highlighted that developing entrepreneurial cluster of farmers can take two approaches. The first is to consider the individual entrepreneurial orientation or the regional orientation as a whole. In whichever case, the innovativeness, aggressiveness, technological orientation and the cultural frameworks must be considered to stimulate the development of the cluster. The second is the provision of enabling environment such as common facility center and affiliation with Research and Academic institutes, the encouragement of farmers, via their personalities and capabilities to rekindle the development of innovative agribusiness. Olatomide and Omowumi, (2015) suggested that for improved agribusiness performance within the cluster, both approaches have to be considered.

## Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Orientation of Smallholder Farmers in Nigeria

Khalid and Barrientos (2014) posit that smallholder farmers have continued to thrive in Nigeria as they cater for immediate needs of families with little left for the market. Despite several challenges in the sector, smallholder farmers remain principal actors in the nation's agricultural production. Their entrepreneurial acumen have been displayed in their abilities to survive regardless of harsh economic and technological environments (ILO, 2015). Successful nations thrive on the generation and commercialisation of knowledge through apt efforts in innovation-engendered activities. The discovery of oil in the 70"s left the indelible mark of "resource curse"on Nigeria's economy and the agricultural sector was almost forgotten. However, smallholder farmers have continued to thrive in some parts of the country as they cater for immediate needs of families with little for the market (Kadiri, 2012). Despite several challenges in the sector, smallholder farmers

cipal actors in the nation's agricultural production. Development of agriculture has enhanced sustainable growth and development Ajonbadi and Otokiti, 2014). Improvement on the agricultural ong the line of the value chains has been considered part of the r boosting productivities among the smallholders. Diversification of vities along value chains requires efforts which are determined by preneurial orientation and interest.

## Review

### lvantage Theory

59), founded the basics of the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, in *the theory of the growth of the firm,* which visualised the firm as an ve organisation and a collection of physical and productive human oth physical resources and human resources can provide the cluster a efulness. The same resources can be utilised in different ways, based on the clusters and the strategies of applying them (Curado, 2006 and omas, Donald & David, 2012). Resource advantage theory emphasises re able to create and sustain high performance through the collection ration of resources that are rare, valuable, inimitable, and arney, 1991; Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland & Gilbert, 2011).

itt, Kai and Christina (2016) state that the expansive applicability of dvantage Theory to multiple disciplines, and these extensions and ling theoretical approaches led to increased use of this theory in all areas ment sciences.

### ntrepreneurship theory

mic entrepreneurship theory is based on the premises that eurship is a phenomenon based on systemic and requires a high level of n and integration among specialised actors within the system eem, 2017). Mueller and Thomas (2000) posit that a community is a ich comprises of actors. The actors within the system must be willing to . The individual entrepreneurs determine when the system is new, but fades out as the system matures and the need for efficiency within the kes over. Although, the theory posits that actors are in strata, that is middle and top, cluster system did not recognise strata within the

The theory was partly developed by Parson. Inspired principally by the reto, Weber, Marshall, and host of others, Parsons' theory was designed rate theories of social action and social structure, with a particular developing a view of how social systems work towards a state of and cooperation a more or less effective state of equilibrium in classic erms.

to Parsons, every social system faces four basic functional imperatives – (A), Goal Attainment (G), Integration (I) and Latent Pattern Maintenance n Management (Latency- L). Central to Parsons' system theory is the y of these four functions model. Entrepreneurial system, simple or aces these four functional imperatives. The ways in which a given system e and coordinate the means of satisfying these imperatives, however, epending upon the size and level of complexity of the system, upon the of the environment and the goals developed with regard to how to best operly) relate to the environment, and finally upon the effectiveness and nts of the other functional imperatives. Each system is further divided nctional subsystems and each subsystem may further be divided into the conceptual functions and so on down levels of analysis.

**Review**

npirical studies have been carried out on entrepreneurial initiatives and rformance. Many of these works are carried out on the technological in the small scale industrial set up. Efforts have been made to sample ndings of some of these research works to enable the study make

rch conducted by Urban and Kali (2016), they examine the business ent with a view of statistically initiating clusters from 79 Slovak regions. g revealed that creation of business competitiveness was based on knowledge, development of mutual relationship, prosperity, innovation onment quality. The study further presented cluster as a tool for veness of regions. Their findings were based on theoretical analysis and llustrations. Five clusters were created from 79 regions of Slovakia based sub-indices in the environment quality: Economic activity, cultural n, legislation, technology and infrastructures, education and human and the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the environment created clusters.

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... questionnaire to collect data from members of All Farmers ...geria who had benefited from Off taker Demand Driven Strategy in ... biometric data capturing in 2017 farming season identified three ...ua Dam Belt Farm Cluster, Edu Patigi Farm Cluster and Ifelodun ...ayeri, all in Kwara State. The study employed two sets of variables: ... initiatives with networking as the construct (independent) ...b creation (dependent) variables. Multiple regression analysis was ...e study.

...ation

...model of the study is presented in equations where the dependent ...e agribusiness cluster performance, which is measured using four ...siness competiveness, employment generation, cluster excellence ...ess sustainability. The study followed the approach of Wabungu et al. ...asure business competiveness. Items on the scale of Premaratne ... adopted (within the context of the study) to measure networking, ...measuring cluster performance were adopted from the works of Khan ...d (2012).Entrepreneurial orientation was measured using the model ... Gunawan, Jacob and Duysters (2013).Public private partnership was ...ng Anderson, Bjerre, and Wise-Hansson,.(2006) model. The structural ...fies the relationships between latent variables. A latent variables (LV) is ...genous if it is supposed to depend on other LVs in the model and ... otherwise. In the study structural model, a generic endogenous job ...ithin the clusterse$_n$ (m = bm, eg, ce and as), is linked to corresponding ...dictors ; entrepreneurial initiatives βm0= (ni, eo, et and ppp) by the ...multiple regression model:

$$\text{..... } \beta m0 + _\ \beta_m \varepsilon_k + \varepsilon_m \text{ ..... } 1$$

...r Hypothesis

$$\text{... } \beta eo, \beta et + \beta ppp + _\ \beta_m \varepsilon_k + \varepsilon_m \text{ ..... } 2$$

$$k=m$$

where;
$e_g$ = Employment Generation
$n_i$ = Networking Initiatives
$e_o$ = Entrepreneurial Orientation
$e_t$ = Entrepreneurial Technology
$\varepsilon_t$ = Error term
$\beta_{ot}$ = Path coefficient

**Population of the Study.**

The population of the study consists of members ofthe Association of Farmers of Nigeria (AFAN) that are registered and operating under the cluster schemes. The cluster schemes have different numenclure across these States namely; Off taker Demand Driven Strategy(ODDS), Association of Cluster Farmers and Cooperative Off taker Group Farming and in Kwara, Kogi and Niger States respectively. The population of the Association as at 2018 according to Nigerian States Farmers, totaled 310 members drawn across the three States. Robson (2005) asserts that it is unusual to be able to deal with the whole population in a survey, thus, a sample is essential. Furthermore,(Oyesiku, 2005; Asika, 2006) state that carrying out a physical census of the entire population could be practically unachievable, especially given the size and diversity of the target population.

**Table 1. Population of the Study**

| STATE | NO OF COOPERATIVES | NUMBER OF MEMBERS |
|---|---|---|
| Asa Dam Belt Farm | 12 | 120 |
| EduPatigi | 9 | 90 |
| Amberi | 10 | 100 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | 310 |

**Source: Kwara Farmers, Data 2017**

**Sample Size Determination and Sampling Techniques**

The sample size was determined using the Epiinfostatcalc software. Amugune (2014) posits that a good sample size is determined by level of precision, level of confidence or risk, degree of variability in the attributes being measured and external validity. In general, an increased sample size is associated with the decreased sampling error in a quantitative research. Based on this, the sample of 250 respondents were selected.

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The study adopted stratified random sampling, which is a type of probability sampling technique that enables an equal chance of selecting each unit from within particular stratum (group) of the population. The sampling methods are informed by the relative heterogeneity of the association of farmers in the three senatorial districts in Kwara and the residential structure of the enterprise under study.

### Method of Data Analysis

In order to evaluate the spillover effect of entrepreneurial initiatives; networking, entrepreneurial orientation, public private partnership and entrepreneurial technological towards agribusiness cluster performance; competitiveness, employment generation, cluster excellence and sustainability, the study employed partial least squares approach to analyse the data collected. Barclay, Higgins & Thompson (1995) submit that the PLS is a structural equation modeling tool (SEM) that allows the study to simultaneously analyse numerous variables and predictor constructs and analyse unobservable theoretical variables.

### Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument of data collection for this study was close ended questionnaire. The data was collected with the aid of multiple choice self-administered copies of questionnaire using the five (5) likert scale.A Likert scale is an orderly scale from which respondents choose the option that best supports their opinions. It can be used to measure someone's attitude by measuring the extent to which they agree or disagree with a particular question or statement (Likert,1932).

### Findings and Discussion

This study distributed 250 copies of questionnaire for the respondents and a total of 245 copies of questionnaire were finally retrieved, giving a response rate of 98%. The raw data collected were subjected to examinations which were in line with opinions of Cooper and Schindler (2007) who believed that assessment should be done to ascertain the completeness, accuracy, consistency and eligibility of the respondents. Based on that, this study was able to discover eleven (11) copies of questionnaire that were not eligible to be considered due to incompleteness and outliers.

This accounted for 94% valid response rate. Therefore, a response rate of 94% is considered adequate for the analysis in this study because Sekaran (2003) suggests

*Response Rate of the Questionnaire*

| e | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| f Questionnaire | 250 | 100 |
| naires returned | 245 | 98 |
| naires not returned | 5 | 2 |
| naires not Valid (Due to outliers and ete) | 11 | 4 |
| estionnaire | 234 | 94 |
| ponse rate | | 94% |

Author's Field Survey (2018)

dents Profile by Gender

e 234 valid responses used in this study, 212 (90.6%) of them were male remaining 22 (9.4%) were female. The number of respondents by vas a reflection of the total number of male and female on agribusiness State, Nigeria. The summary is presented in Table 3.

*Respondents by Gender*

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| | 212 | 90.6 |
| | 22 | 9.4 |

Author's Field Survey (2018)

dents Profile by Years as a Member of Cluster

nt between 6 – 10years, 2 (0.9) respondents had spentbetween 11 – , and finally, only 1(0.2%) respondents had spent between 16 – 20years. nary of this profile is presented in Table 4.

*Respondents by Years as a Member of Cluster*

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| yrs | 108 | 46.2 |
| | 123 | 52.6 |
| | 2 | 0.9 |
| | 1 | 0.4 |

: Author's Field Survey (2018)

ndents Profile by Age

ealed in the descriptive analysis, 10 (4.3%) of the respondents were between 6-25 years, 140 (59.8%) were between 26-35 years of age, 83 of the ndents representing 35.5% were in the age of brackets 36-45 years. And 1 of

...respondent representing 0.4% was between 46-55yrs years of age. See Table 5.

...Respondents by Age

| | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| ...yrs | 10 | 4.3 |
| ...-35yrs | 140 | 59.8 |
| ...-45yrs | 83 | 35.5 |
| ...-55yrs | 1 | 0.4 |

...Author's Field Survey (2018)

...Profile by Educational status

...in Table 6, 177 (75.6%) of the respondents are secondary school; education; ...(6.4%) possessed post secondary school qualifications such as ND, NCE etc, while ...respondents representing 17.9% of the total number of valid questionnaire were ...duates. The details are shown in Table 6..

...Respondents by Educational Status

| ...s | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| ...ondary School | 177 | 75.6 |
| ...t secondarysch | 15 | 6.4 |
| ...duate | 42 | 17.9 |

...Author's Field Survey (2018)

...Profile by Years as a Member of AFAN

...the 134 valid respondents, the highest number of them 22 (9.4 %) had spent below five (5) ...as members of AFAN. 121 (51.7%) had spent between 6-10 years, 91 (38.9%) are between ...15 years. See Table 7 for the summary of the years as a member of AFAN..

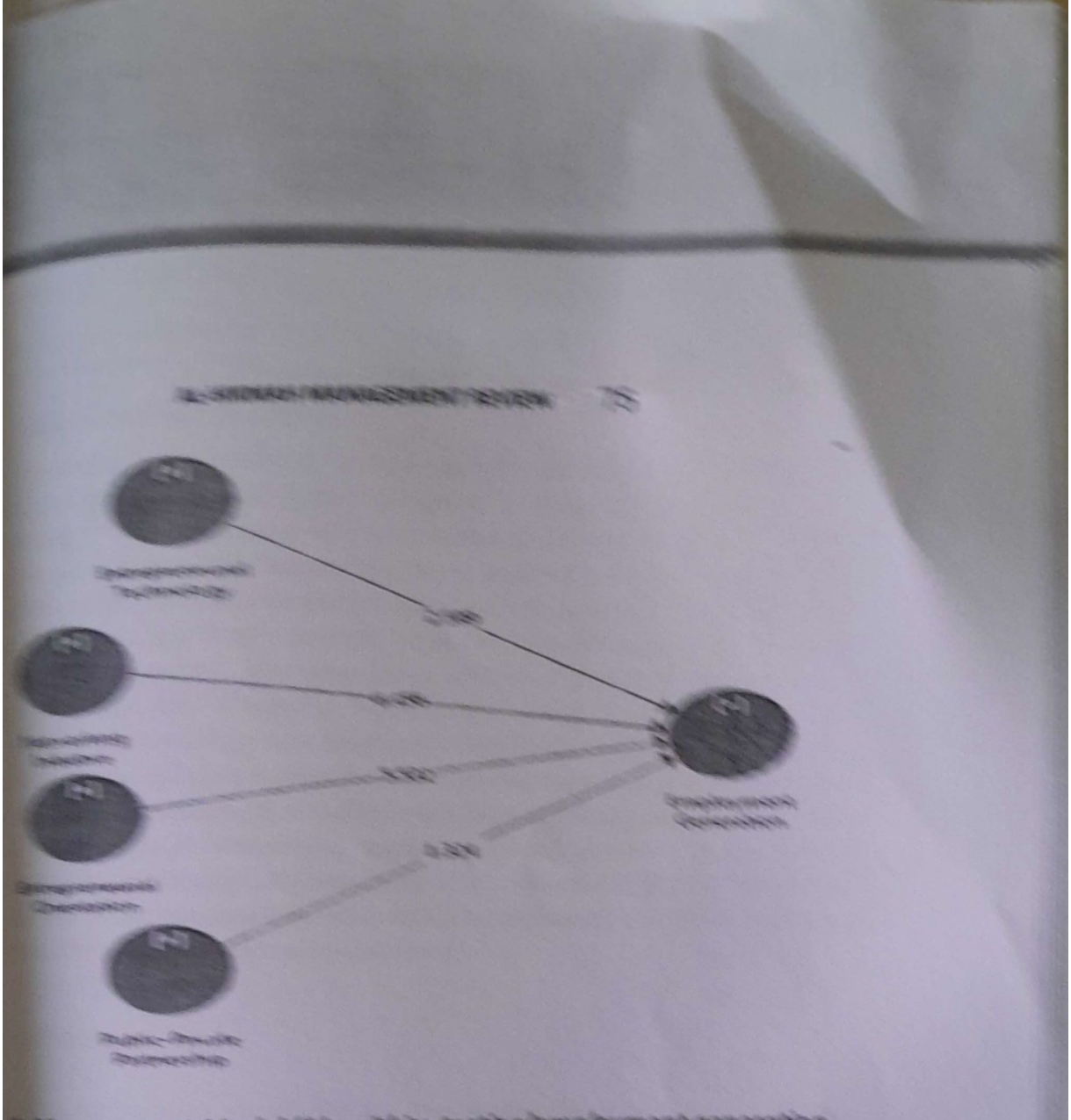
...Respondents by years as a member of AFAN

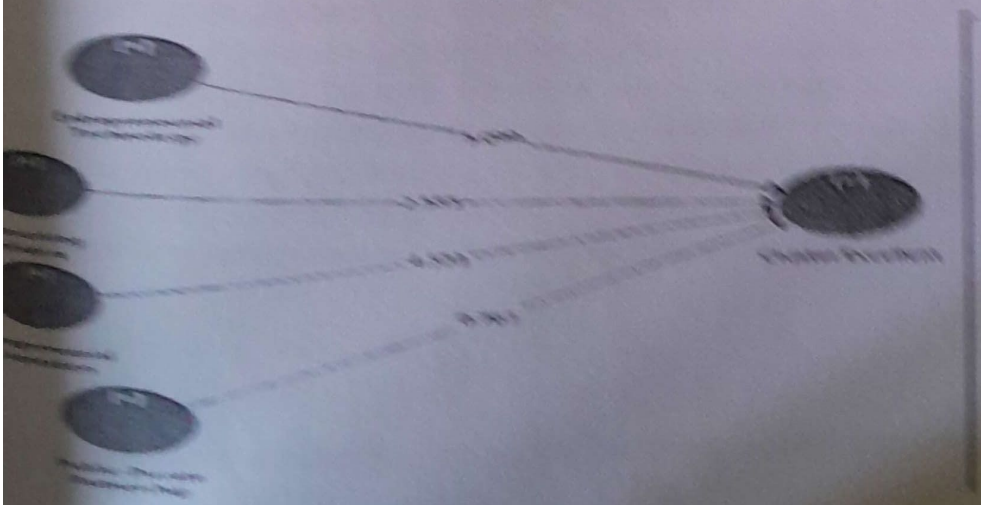
| ...s | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| ...ew5yrs | 22 | 9.4 |
| ...-10yrs | 121 | 51.7 |
| ...-15yrs | 91 | 38.9 |

...Author's Field Survey (2018)

...ive:Entrepreneurial Initiative and Employment Generation

...objective examined the impact of entrepreneurial initiatives onemployment ...ation. This predicted the relationship between entrepreneurial initiativesand ...oyment generation. The results of the hypothesis are as follows:





e 8. Structural Model Result for the Job Creation

| structs | Original Sample | Sample Mean | Standard Deviation | T Statistic | P Values |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| epreneurial Orientation ->Job tion | 0.395 | 0.397 | 0.071 | 5.532 | 0.000 |
| epreneurial Technology ->Job tion | 0.229 | 0.230 | 0.088 | 2.599 | 0.010 |
| working Initiative ->Job creation | 0.492 | 0.492 | 0.076 | 6.456 | 0.000 |
| lic-Private Partnership ->Job tion | 0.104 | 0.110 | 0.079 | 1.324 | 0.186 |

rce: Author's Field Survey (2018)

the hypothesis, it was predicted that entrepreneurial initiative was positively d to job creation. Result (Table 8, Figure 2) indicated that networking tivehad significant relationship with job creation ($\beta = 0.492$, $t = 6.46$, $p < 0.000$), e, the result supported the hypothesis. In the same vein, the result of the SEM ated that entrepreneurial orientation was positively related to job creation. As n in Table 8, a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial tation and employment generation ($\beta = 0.154$, $t = 2.10$, $p < 0.036$), the result supported for the alternate hypothesis. Also, the SEM indicated ntrepreneurial technology was positively related to employment generation. t (Table 8 Figure 2) indicated that entrepreneurial technology had significant onship with job creation ($\beta = 0.229$, $t = 2.60$, $p < 0.010$), hence, the result orted the hypothesis. Conversely, regarding the influence of public private ership on job creation, result (Table 8, Figure 2) indicated that of public private ership had no significant relationship with job creation ($\beta = 0.028$, $t = 0.486$, $p <$ ), hence, the null hypothesis was supported.

### ussion of Findings

study through the SEM, supported the entrepreneurial orientation as having g linkage with job creation, Networking initiatives (corroborated by the studies firing and Hulsink, 2003; Ishiwata, et al. 2014; Huanmei, et al., *2015),*and epreneurial technology (Boltanski. & Chiapello, 1999; Mitton, et. Al. 2007; nas et al., 2016) equally have strong relationships in job creation capacity of the ers in North central Nigeria. The study identified collaboration with research tutes and universities as instruments for networking initiatives. Equally, the ption of technology was found to have significantly contributed to job creation acity. Entrepreneurship orientation attempted to develop in the participants ntention to perform entrepreneurial behaviors, risk taking and desirability of

vities which ultimately led to job creation.

## mendations

dy through structural equation model, revealed that the ation as having strong linkage with job creation; Networking preneurial technology equally had strong relationships in ion capacity of the clusters. In an attempt to determine the eurial initiatives on job creation, the study found that eneurial orientation and entrepreneurial technology had with job creation within the clusters in Kwara State. The study reneurial orientation, networking, and entrepreneurial s of promoting job creation within agribusiness clusters. There nsitization of investors to see agriculture as businesses that arise ss to take risks. The study also recommended that technological ugh research and development and conscious networking with s should be encouraged.

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