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Moderating role of vocational guidance on the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention among final year students of public universities in north-western Nigeria

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Abstract

This study aims at examine the moderating role of vocational guidance on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention in north-western Nigeria. Literature suggested many factors as determinant of entrepreneurial intention. But, few studies have been attempted to consider the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention in Nigeria. These few studies came up with mixed findings. Hence, this study aims to fill up the gap that exists in the extant literature by employing quantitative survey method, using 654 final year students from 12 public universities in north-western Nigeria. PLS-SEM was used for the data analysis. It has found that, entrepreneurship education has a direct significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, the findings revealed that vocational guidance (VG) fail to moderates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. Implication of the finding and suggestion for future research were also discussed.

Keyword: Entrepreneurial intention; Entrepreneurship Education; Vocational Guidance

1. Introduction

Among the challenges fronting most of the emerging countries of the world today (Nigeria inclusive) is how to engage their teeming youths gainfully employed. The growing rate of unemployment among the Nigerian graduate as a result of obstructions in getting jobs that is in line with their professions and eagerness has therefore become the main goal of intense to both academicians as well as manager evaluation (Aliman & Jalal, 2013). Likewise, a disproportionateness that exists between percentage of demand for labour and that of the total number of graduates seeking for jobs also causes to a strong level of the rate of unemployed youth (Ismail, 2011). This becomes a major challenge facing developing nations. For example, in Nigeria, every year myriad of youths is graduating from various colleges and universities without matching job opportunities for them (Akanbi, 2013). The issue of entrepreneurship movement in Nigeria could be imputed to instability within a political setting and poor executions of socioeconomic policies of consecutive government, which contributed to the problem of high level of unemployment in Nigeria (Ogundipe, Kosile, & Ogundipe, 2012). Therefore, this pushed the government to inaugurate diverse policies (the introduction of entrepreneurship education inclusive) as well as programs aimed to reduce poverty by encouraging skill attainment, inspire innovation spirit, as well as self-

independent among youth (Kabir, Adam & Tangaza, 2021).

Several authors have quoted the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as a interesting factor in studies relating to entrepreneurial intentions (Kabir, Adam & Tangaza, 2021, Shiri et al., 2017, Qamari, Azizah & Farahdiba,2022). Ajzen's approach is based on the TPB, claiming that attitudes can predict entrepreneurial intentions, perceived behavioural control, and subjective standards . Several studies discuss the factors that encourage a person to start, maintain and develop themselves in entrepreneurship, individually and in groups. Factors coming from within or the most basic, such as self-efficacy, motivation, and a tendency to take risks, are driven by desire and belief in oneself. Marques et al., (2018) stated that the driving factors for entrepreneurial intentions from within the individual consist of psychological factors, cognitive factors, motivation, and entrepreneurial skills. However, the most influential driving factors are motivation and entrepreneurial skills . In addition to internal factors, external factors can influence the intention to become entrepreneurs, namely entrepreneurship education (Jena, 2020) and advances in information technology, which can shape student behaviour and attitudes to direct career choices as entrepreneurs . This condition allows knowledge about entrepreneurship to be obtained by taking advantage of opportunities from technological advances (Santoso & Oetomo, 2016) .

Investigations on entrepreneurial intention (EI) are becoming a promptly progressing dome of study (Kabir, Adam & Tangaza, 2021, Swarupa & Goyal, 2020, Linan & Fayolle, 2015). Nevertheless, the low level of entrepreneurial intention among Nigeria graduate link with persistent increase in unemployment and population growth is of great concern to Nigerian government and other policy makers (Akanbi, 2013). Despite these efforts, but still the majority of the student who undergo entrepreneurial programs do not implement their education into self-reliance due to lack of experience and or exposure (Ekpe & Mat 2012). This indicates that being self-reliant is relates to individuals' intention rather than education. Therefore, investigating and understanding individuals' intention to start his or her own business would be significant to both academics as well as policy makers. The presence of all these practical issues is motivation for conducting various studies on Entrepreneurship Education (EE) and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI).

Considerable evidence has accumulated regarding the antecedents of Entrepreneurial Intention. A comprehensive review of literature has identified Entrepreneurship Education as a factors influencing Entrepreneurial Intention (Jena, 2020, Qamari, Azizah & Farahdiba,2022, Dohse & Walter, 2010, Fatoki, 2014, Lubada, Kusumojanto, & Indrawati, 2021). But they came up with inconsistence findings; however, the interactive mechanisms that will enhance this relationship have not been adequately addressed in the literature. This serves as the major important gap in the literature. Therefore, this study extends the existing literature by examining EE as a key factor influencing EI. Hence, it is theoretically imperative to pay greater attention to understanding the integrative mechanisms that straighten the relationship between EE and EI. To address this major imperial gap in the literature, the present study proposes to examine the underlying process through which this relationship will enhance by focusing on vocational guidance (VG).

Given the inconsistent findings in previous studies, this study proposes the moderating role of vocational guidance and counselling in explaining how and when EE influence EI, this is in line with the suggestion of Baron and Kenny (1986); Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004), that where ever there is inconsistency in the findings of the

previous study moderating variable is suggested.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to fill in these important gaps by examining the moderating role of vocational guidance on the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention using the final year students from the public universities in north-western Nigeria. This paper is organized as follows. Section two presents the literature review on study constructs, the research model, and the hypotheses proposed in this work. Section three describes the methodology used in this article. Section four highlights the results of the research. Section five proposes a discussion of the results and outlines the theoretical and practical implications of this work.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurial Intention

Intention is a predictor of individuals' action (Ajzen, 1991). Intention catches motivational factors which stimulate individuals' behaviour, showing the individuals' effort in planning to convert his/her behaviour into action/practice (Linan & Chen, 2009). Thus, the chances of having a performance of any behaviour depend upon the intention to perform such behaviour. According to Lubada, Kusumojanto, and Indrawati, (2021) intentions are the only most important predictor of any planned behaviour, entrepreneurial behaviour included. This means having knowledge about the antecedents of intentions would lead to the understanding of any intended behaviour. Entrepreneurial intention refers to as the willingness of a person to execute entrepreneurial behaviour, to involve in entrepreneurial activities, or to be self-reliant (Dohse & Walter, 2010). Entrepreneurial intention serves a vital role as a component that affects the seriousness of a person's entrepreneurial behavior (Wu, 2010). An individual's intention to become an entrepreneur is demonstrated by actions that are measured to lead to a person's desirability to turn into an entrepreneur and belief that the desire for entrepreneurship will be realized (Solesvik et al., 2014). Intention is indication of an individual's readiness to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). Entrepreneurial intention is the planning and implementation of business ideas, which originates by a mental process (Gupta &Bhawe, 2007). These entrepreneurial intentions help to develop entrepreneurial activities and lead to become an actual entrepreneur (Mohd Rosli et al., 2013). Entrepreneurial intentions are immediate predecessor to entrepreneurial behaviour. Thus, TPB can be used to explain entrepreneurship behaviour (Autio et al., 2001; Carr and Sequeira, 2007; Gird & Bagraim, 2008). TPB can be thus considered as the basic model for studying entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurial behaviour (Fayolle & Linan, 2014; Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014). The theory of reasoned action (TRA) developed by Ajzen & Fishbein (1979) is fundamental in explaining behavioural studies. This theory connects belief, attitude, intention, and behaviour. Intention or desire is the best predictor of behaviour, meaning that when we want to know what someone will do to know the will or desire. However, one can make judgments based on entirely different (not always voluntary) reasons. Therefore, an essential concept in this theory is to focus on salience by considering something important.

2.2 Entrepreneurial education and Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurship education is explained in broad and narrow meanings. The narrow definition equates entrepreneurship education with specific courses designed to train young people to start their businesses. In contrast, the broader definition equates entrepreneurship education with general skills that all students must learn, interpreted as assisting in general preparation for life (Rafiq & Rahim, 2021). With varying definitions of what

entrepreneurship education truly entails, teachers and lecturers have the issue of modifying the theoretical curriculum content and the necessity for entrepreneurial practice (Aldianto et al., 2018). By obtaining theory, material, experience, and knowledge about the business world, one's self-confidence will be higher. Especially when students attend seminars and hear firsthand the experiences of resource persons who have failed and then succeeded in becoming successful people, it will make students more motivated and excited to start doing business with a mindset when the resource persons who fail finally succeed. These will make the intention or desire of students to become entrepreneurs higher. Previous studies by Sipitanou and Papagiannis (2013) showed that teaching entrepreneurship through practice in Greece was vital to acquiring skills.

However, Entrepreneurship Education (EE) in many studies has shown a positive influential role toward starting up a business (Rauch & Hulsink 2015; Souitaris et al. 2007; Rafiq & Rahim, 2021; Utomo et al., 2014; Fayolle, & Gailly, 2015).

The research conducted by Elmansori (2014) in Jordan & United Arab Emirates also explained that entrepreneurship education as a business incubator was critical in supporting business services, innovation, and entrepreneurship development. Utomo et al., (2014) said that entrepreneurship education in the family, entrepreneurship education in schools, and self-efficacy significantly affected students' interest in entrepreneurship. Likewise, research conducted by Lestari et al., (2014); Utomo et al., (2014) and Rafiq and Rahim, (2021) stated that entrepreneurship education significantly affected an interest in entrepreneurship). In contrast some studies observe a negative relationship (Auken Van 2013) or do not find any significant relationship (Diaz-Casero et al. 2012; do Paço et al. 2015). Therefore, it was learned by this researcher that there is inconsistency in the findings of the previous researches. So based on the literatures reviewed, this study hypothesized that:

H_1: Entrepreneurship education significantly influenced entrepreneurial intentions.

2.3 Vocational guidance as Moderator

In other to get a clearer picture of the meaning of guidance and counseling, there is the need to give a brief explanation of the general meaning of guidance and counseling.

Guidance and counseling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting individuals to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and their world (Egbochuku 2008; Oniye and Alawane 2008; Eyo, 2010; Lunenburg 2010). Vocational guidance is focused upon the choice of occupation and is distinguished from educational guidance, which focuses upon choice of courses of study. Career guidance brings the two together and stresses the interaction between learning and work (Bezanson & Turcotte, 2004). Vocational education refers to systematic learning experiences which are designed to fit individuals for gainful employment in recognized occupations as semi-skilled workers or technicians or sub-professionals. It includes guidance and counseling in relation to training and giving other instruction directly associated to an occupation (Osuala, 1987).

Recently, the concept of intention has acknowledged in entrepreneurship research for its effectiveness in determining entrepreneurial behavior (Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2016). Now a days, theory of planned behavior as mentioned earlier is undoubtedly one of the most widely used models of intention. In line with this approach, previous literature has shown numerous effects of EE on the antecedents of EI, but the evidence they find is not strong. Though some studies Rauch and Hulsink (2015); Souitaris et al. (2007);

Rafiq and Rahim, (2021); Utomo et al., (2014) and Fayolle, and Gailly, (2015) find a positive relationship between EE and attitudes and perceived behavioral control (PBC), in contrast some studies observe a negative relationship (Auken Van 2013) or do not find any significant relationship (Díaz-Casero et al. 2012; do Paço et al. 2015).

In some measure, the cause might be found in that the impact of EE may go elsewhere its direct effects on EI. EE may interact with other variables to generate a more appropriate climate for entrepreneurship or it may have a moderation effect on the influence of other variables on the generation of entrepreneurial behavior (Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2016). These potential interactive or moderating effects particularly with Vocational Guidance (VG) on the antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions have not been studied.

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004), vocational education is seen as an integral part of general education; a means of preparation for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work; an aspect of lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship; an instrument for promoting environmentally sound, sustainable development and a method of alleviating poverty and entrepreneurship. Therefore, this proves the moderating ability of VG on the relationship between EE and EI. In line with the above literature, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H_2: There is significant moderation effect of Vocational Guidance on Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurship Intention.

The focus of this study is to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention, with the moderating role of vocational guidance. Figure below presents the research conceptual framework:

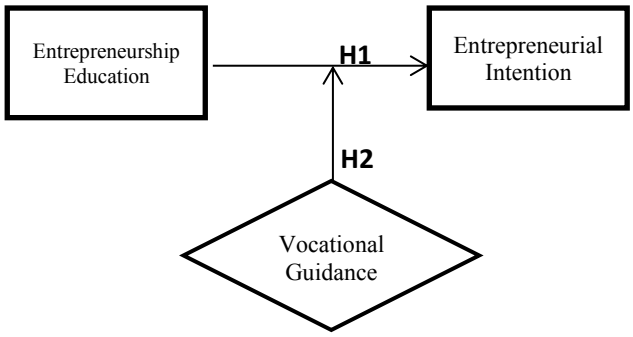

Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

Considering the present research's hypotheses and framework, a quantitative approach was employed. A single cross-sectional survey design was used for data collection, i.e. the researcher collects data at a single point and time and only once during the whole study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The cross-sectional survey method is appropriate here to achieve the overall goal of the study. The target population comprises final year students of faculty of social and management sciences from the public universities in North-western Nigeria. A total 673 questionnaires were distributed among twelve (12) Nigerian public universities from the Northwest geopolitical zones of Nigeria using stratified proportionate sampling followed by simple random sampling technique in a personally administered approach, , as this is the best method to collect all the complete responses in a short period of time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2011). It enabled the researcher and research assistant to distribute questionnaires to a large number of targeted respondents at one time, in different places. Out of which 472 were duly completed and returned which represent 70.1% response rate.

3.1 Measurement of Variables

Variables under study were measured using the adapted items from the prior literature. Specifically, this study measured three variables: Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), Entrepreneurial Education (EE) and Vocational Guidance (VG) all in 5-point

Likert scale where '1' denotes 'strongly disagree' and '5' denotes 'strongly agree'. EI measured as dependent variable in this study adapted from the study of Qamari, Azizah and Farahdiba (2022) using five items. EE is an independent variable it measured using eight items from the scale of Qamari, Azizah and Farahdiba (2022). Finally, is the moderating variable (VG) which measured using Six items adapted from the scale of Agi (2013).

3.2 Data Analysis Techniques

After collection, the data was coded and keyed in to statistical software (SPSS vn 22) for screening and other preliminary analysis. Subsequently, PLS-SEM (PLS 4.0) was employed to examine the relations between the constructs of the theoretical model. As a second-generation method, SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) is acknowledged as an influential substitute to first-generation approaches, including, for example, multiple regressions. In multiple regressions only one dependent/criterion variable is allow in the model, but SEM can simultaneously handle multiple criteria/dependent variables. The inclusion of multiple predictors/independent variables is allowed in both techniques (Chin, 1998). SEM is widely used by behavioural science researchers (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000), offering the ability to integrate unobserved (latent) variables in the analysis and use them to execute path-analytic modeling (Chin, 1998). Latent variables are those variables which are not being observed or measured directly in the study, but which need to be estimated by other measures (i.e. indicators or items) (Chin, 1998). In this study, all the variables are latent variables which need to be measured through some indicators. SEM combines a measurement model (i.e. an outer model) with a structural model (inner model) (Chin, 1998; Petter et al., 2007). This organises the distribution of measures into latent variables, where the structural model integrates the relationships among predictor/independent and criterion/dependent latent constructs. This technique enables the researcher to explain, predict and measure the level of interrelationships among the constructs under investigation (Chin, 2010; Chin & Newsted, 1999).

4. Analysis and Findings

4.1 The Measurement Model

The main objective of measurement model is to filter the data, which is to assess and confirm the constructs validity and reliability before establishing the goodness of measures. The data were examined through the indicator's reliability, with 0.4 is accepted. While for internal consistency, using composite reliability, 0.7 is considered accepted level. Convergent validity using average variance extracted (AVE), which must be 0.5 and above (Chin, 1998). For discriminant validity using factor loading, any item loading on the other construct higher than their loadings should be deleted (Chin, 1998; Hair, 2010). Hence, in order to satisfy the measurement model, one item were deleted: VG4 because it did not meet with the minimum benchmark (Chin, 1998; Hair, 2010). Hence, it is resolved that the instrument adapted in this study is reliable, since none of the items is with less than 0.4.

All items loaded on their respective construct ranges from 0.557 to 0.902, which is deemed acceptable since all values range above the cut-off point of 0.4 (seeChin, 1998; Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). Equally, the composite reliability, value ranges from 0.781 to 0.941 which are also greater than the recommended value of 0.7 (Hair et al, 2011). To determine the convergence validity, AVE was used. The AVE ranges from 0.518 to 0.606, which are above the minimum cut-off point of 0.5 (Hair et al, 2011). Lastly, to determine the discriminant validity, the AVE is compared to correlation squared of the interrelated variables of concerned constructs which indicates adequate discriminant validity. Table 1 presents factor loading, Table 2

presents the discriminant validity and Figure 2 shows the measurement of the model. (see, Appendices)

4.2 Structural Model

After attaining the requirement of the measurement model (construct validity and reliability), the next step was to test the proposed hypotheses of the study by running PLS Algorism and Bootstrapping in Smart PLS 4.0. Table 3 and Figure 3 present the hypothesis testing results (see Appendix). Table 3, predicted the statistical analysis proved that H1 is supported where entrepreneurial education or EE is significantly and positively related to EI (β=.637; t=16.708). (see Figure 3 in Appendix section).

4.3 Testing the Moderating effects of Vocational Guidance

In testing the moderating effects of VG on the relationship between EE and EI, this study used PLS in estimating the indirect effects among the variables at 0.05 level of significance. (see Table 4 and figure 4 in Appendices section). It has indicated from table 4 that, there is no moderating effect of VG on the relationship between EE and EI (β=.051; t=0.282). Hence, H2 is not supported.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The primary objective of this study is to examine the moderating role of VG on the relationship between EE and EI using the final year students from the public universities in north-western Nigeria. Generally, this study has succeeded in advancing the current understanding of the key determinant of EI by testing the above-mentioned research hypotheses. The first objective was therefore to examine the relationship between EE and EI, that is to determine whether EE can be a good predictor of the EI among final year students in Nigeria. It was proved that EE is significantly related to EI. The relationship was found to be positively significant. This empirical finding agrees with the results of earlier studies (Rauch & Hulsink 2015; Souitaris et al. 2007; Rafiq & Rahim, 2021; Utomo et al., 2014; Fayolle, & Gailly, 2015), which argue that EE significantly influences EI. This finding also supports TPB, this theory connects belief, attitude, intention, knowledge and behaviour. Likewise, the result of this study also shows that entrepreneurship education in public universities was able to increase entrepreneurial intention through increasing the self-perception about student entrepreneurship ability . The result of this study also implies that entrepreneurship education at public universities is still awareness education. It also confirms the results of previous studies (Linan, 2004; Walter and Dohse, 2009) that only active mode of entrepreneurship education will have effect on entrepreneurial intention, such as creating a business plan. Reflective entrepreneurship education as theory presentation in lectures does not have effect on entrepreneurial intention. To increase student's entrepreneurial intention, manager of entrepreneurship education at public universities can more focused to improve self-perception of willingness and student entrepreneurship ability.

VG refers to systematic learning experiences which are designed to fit individuals for gainful employment in recognized occupations as semi-skilled workers or technicians or sub-professionals. This study has proved VG as a moderator on the relationship between EE and EI. In theory, Abraham Maslow devised the Hierarchy of Needs Perspective, in which he divided the needs related to career life into five theories. These theories are: physiological, safety, social, ego or self-esteem, and self-actualizing. The educational attainment of an individual, as well as their prior knowledge and vocational and work experience, play a significant role in the course of opportunity exploitation and entrepreneurial intentions development.

Therefore, to test the moderating effect of VG H2 were formulated and tested. H2 stated that VG significantly moderates the

relationship between EE and EI. The findings show that there is no significant moderating effect of VG on the relationship between EE and EI. Hence, H2 is not supported. But this result of H2 was not as expected. The direct relationship between EE and EI was positively significant, so it was expected that if students with a high level of EE have access to vocational guidance, they will perform better than those that do not have VG. In contrast, the statistical results reported that VG does not enhance the relationship between EE and EI in Nigeria public universities. Hence, H2 is rejected. However, the result of this study indicated the opposite, and it may require further explanation to place this finding in its proper context. Equally, the literature revealed that VG appears to play a significant role and may produce different effects on EI depending on the specific configuration (degree of environmental dynamism); VG has a less pronounced effect on EI in stable environments (Bagheri & Pihie, 2014). Further clarification for the results of this study is based on issues is the infrastructure problems range from shortage of water and inadequate transport systems to lack of electricity. This implies that significant resources have been expended in providing such infrastructure, which could otherwise be channelled for productive purposes in entrepreneurial activities (Mohammed and Obeleagu-Nzelibe, 2014).

The findings of this study contribute in both theory and practice. Theoretically, this study contributes by extending the existing literature by jointly investigate the moderating relationship of VG on EE and EI which is not been given much consideration by the previous studies and supported the theory of plan behavior of Ajzen. In practical contribution the results of this study will help stake holders (i.e. agencies and governmental organizations) in taking appropriate decisions as regards to the execution and implementation policies on education. It would also be significant to the youth, especially undergraduates on their career choice, thereby keying out their strengths and weaknesses and of course their intention to become entrepreneurs. This would give a better choice for students' career development. They are capable to identify their attributes and their perceptions of entrepreneurial program, this will help in keying out their intentions to become entrepreneurs. Moreover, the findings of this study would be significant to the government as well as other agencies for policy implementation regarding entrepreneurial development programs within and outside the Universities. By keying out the antecedence of students' entrepreneurial intention, policy makers would find it easy to provide necessary support for them.

This study suggests for the conduct of similar empirical studies and should cover the entire six geo-political regions of Nigeria if the findings are to be generalised to the whole country.

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Appendices

Table 1: Factor Loading

Items	Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE
EE	0.784	0.904	0.592
	0.749		
	0.787		
	0.801		
	0.825		
	0.662		
	0.726		
	0.806		
EI	0.786	0.839	0.598
	0.854		
	0.664		
	0.758		
	0.791		
VG	0.538	0.815	0.563
	0.791		
	0.900		
	0.714		
	0.716		
	0.856		
	0.668		
	0.712		
	0.791		
	0.649		

Table 2: Discriminant validity

Constructs	EE	EI	VG
EE	0.769		
EI	0.679	0.773	
VG	0.219	0.224	0.750

Table 3: *Hypothesis Testing Results (Direct Relationship)*

	Hypotheses	Beta V	STDEV	T statistics	P values	Decisions
H1	EE -> EI	0.637	0.038	16.708	0.000	Supported

Table 4 Moderation Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Relationships	Beta	SE	T Statistics
H2	EE*VG-> EI	0.051	0.069	0.282

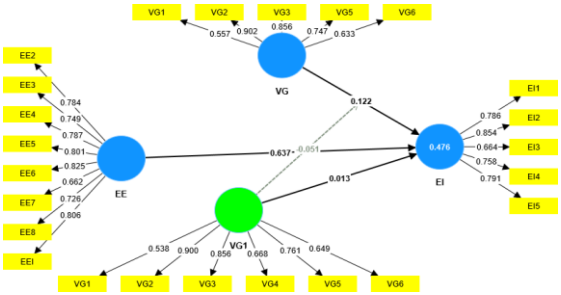

Figure 2: Measurement of the model

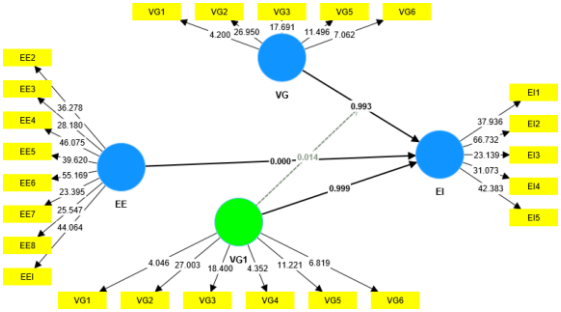

Figure 3: Structural Model