

Hands-On Entrepreneurship Training and Entrepreneurial Intentions: A Study among Undergraduate Students in Lagos State University

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to investigate the influence of fully practical entrepreneurship training on entrepreneurial intention. With the aid of a cross-sectional design, 1,662 undergraduates of Lagos State University, who were selected through a combination of systematic and stratified sampling techniques, responded to an 11-item Entrepreneurial Intentions Questionnaire (EIQ). Results, from analyses with the Chi-Square and Kruskal-Wallis H tests, reveal strong associations and relationships between approach to training and entrepreneurial intentions; such that more 300 level students who had hands-on entrepreneurship training had higher entrepreneurial intentions scores than 200 level students who had theoretical entrepreneurship training. Furthermore, practically trained students generally had stronger entrepreneurial intentions compared to theoretically trained students. This pragmatic nature of hands-on approach to entrepreneurship training which, for the most part, differs from other forms of entrepreneurship training appears to be able to stimulate much more entrepreneurial intentions, and consequently more start-ups.

INTRODUCTION

The role of entrepreneurship in reducing unemployment, alleviating poverty, and fostering economic growth is immeasurable and global. Apart from being considered a means by which the African population can alleviate poverty (Mead, 2012; Ortmans, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Devine & Kiggundu, 2016), entrepreneurship has, unarguably, shaped the face of national development in Nigeria. It is evident from statistics around the world (e.g., GEM, 2015), that a country's development can be determined, generally, by her entrepreneurial development and specifically, by the number of entrepreneurs that emerge and are successful from time to time. Even the layman, anywhere in the world, knows that his/her country would fare better when more people can be employed by virtue of new companies springing up and existing ones expanding.

The act of embarking on creation and production of goods and services, popularly known as "start up" is preceded by entrepreneurial intention, a strong willingness and readiness to 'start up'. There are many precursors and predictors of entrepreneurial intention. These include entrepreneurship interest (Passaro et al, 2018), entrepreneurship attitude (Mahendra et al. 2017), entrepreneurial ability (Seun & Kalsom, 2015b), entrepreneurial motivation (Olugbola, 2017), entrepreneurial dispositions (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017), risk propensity (Jayeoba, 2014), entrepreneurial personality (Obschonka et al., 2017), entrepreneurial alertness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Ho et al, 2018), entrepreneurship development (Passaro, 2018), entrepreneurship education (Seun, 2017), and entrepreneurship training (Seun & Kalsom, 2015b). The last two, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship training, are conceptually

complementary and are understood to be crucial to start ups (Obschonka et al., 2017). There, in fact, exists a longstanding understanding that the act of creating products and services, and of setting up enterprises to create them can be effectively taught to people (Drucker, 1985; Timmons & Spinelli, 2007; Chimucheka, 2014). Entrepreneurship education and training have therefore been widely studied, in part and especially, for their relationships to other key parameters of entrepreneurship, including entrepreneurial intentions (Ho, 2018).

The possibility that entrepreneurship can be developed in people by exposing them to theoretical and practical curricula in entrepreneurship is instructive. While this study investigates how much of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs can actually be produced by such training, not all that need to be known about the impacts of various types of entrepreneurship curricula currently in use in entrepreneurship training are yet understood. Some peculiarities of existing training programmes are that they are theory or model-oriented; comprehensive with clear definitions, descriptive, explanatory, procedural, and illustrative of what constitutes effective entrepreneurship. They also articulate how to produce resilient entrepreneurs, facilitate leadership and teamwork in entrepreneurship, and best approaches to entrepreneurial risk management. Some may also teach and even simulate the step-by-step procedures for carrying out specific services or for creating and producing goods.

While it is evident that these existing methods have produced results in form of entrepreneurial intentions and start ups, it is plausible that combining or replacing them with the “hands-on” method will produce better results. The present study conceives of the “hands-on” method of entrepreneurship training as one involving 100% practicality and raw demonstrations of all the procedures involved in the creation and production of goods. This may entail the totality of activities carried out – from instrumentation, through creation or manufacture, to production – in the making of goods.

Theoretical Framework

This study proposes to advance the frontiers of knowledge on the relationship between hands-on entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial intentions by examining the extent to which exposures of individuals to entrepreneurship education can engender and improve their proclivity towards entrepreneurship across the periods of the education. Specifically, we sought to know the extent to which exposures of people to theoretical and practical, particularly “how-to-do-it” type of entrepreneurship trainings will increase their willingness and readiness to embark on business ventures or start-ups.

The influence of entrepreneurship trainings on entrepreneurial intentions may be better understood with emphasis on four processes of attention, retention, production, and motivation. These processes, according to the Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1977), drive learning, which, accordingly, takes place largely through observation, a concept describing a learner watching a trainer with a view to acquiring the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) that the latter has to offer. The trainer, in this transaction, can be referred to as a model to the learner, suggesting that the mechanism of modeling or imitation is the driver of the entire interface.

In order to effectively render a service or successfully create/modify products as a basis for a start-up or business enhancement, a potential entrepreneur must be attentive to the details and cues from a trainer about the requisite KSAs for his/her planned set-up and start-up. This requirement underlies the strong analogy between modeling and mentoring as it sometimes necessitates that the learner is in close proximity and strong cordiality with the trainer to be able to devote requisite level of attention to the KSAs from the trainer for acquisition of same to be effective.

The extent to which a potential entrepreneur can retain, and then remember the acquired KSAs is the next and crucial process. Even if all other factors remain the same, ability to retain or remember what is acquired

can set significant limits on entrepreneurial intentions. Nevertheless, ability to retain or remember is not a guarantee for production or reproduction of knowledge. It is conceptually plausible that the acquisition of KSAs in entrepreneurship training and learning relies significantly on attention and retention. We, however, propose in this study that production or reproduction of KSAs is a practically-oriented process requiring hands-on training. We, therefore, expect that the use of entirely practical entrepreneurship training curricula to train potential entrepreneurs in requisite, hands-on KSAs will facilitate stronger entrepreneurial intentions. This is premised on the reasoning that fully practical or hands-on curricula should enhance his/her ability to produce or reproduce the KSAs.

However practical and reproducible an individual's KSAs may be, these may not translate to enterprise set-up or start-up if there are no both internal (personal to the individual) and external (existing in his/her environment) factors to push the employees towards this goal. As such, we expect that the hands-on training, being entirely practical, will – in the reckoning of trainee entrepreneurs – constitute external motivating factors propelling them to wanting to start-up, hence strong entrepreneurial intentions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One factor that might play a prominent role in innovativeness and willingness to set up business enterprises but which does not seem to have received much attention, especially in Nigeria, is entrepreneurship training. According to Gielnik et.al (2016), entrepreneurship training can be part of the solution to address the problem of high unemployment rates that many African countries face. In their Ugandan study, Gielnik et.al (2016) found that short and vocational entrepreneurship training did not only boost entrepreneurship among youths; it also created jobs, and generated incomes. With a more comprehensive entrepreneurial training that is enshrined in a university curriculum, one can expect better results here in Nigeria.

Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial intentions. Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2017) assessed the entrepreneurial intentions of 423 engineering students (comprising 219 industrial engineering students and 204 computer engineering students) before and after subjecting them to entrepreneurship training. They found that the entrepreneurial intentions of the industrial engineering students and computer engineering students increased from 35.4% to 67.2% and 41.5% to 70.5%, respectively. Both disciplines require high-level hands-on training, and the differences in their pre and post training entrepreneurial intentions does not seem sufficient to expect similar differences in entrepreneurial intentions across disciplines. However, the result further strengthens the expectation that hands-on entrepreneurship training will much more enhance entrepreneurial intentions than extant approaches to entrepreneurship training.

In a survey of the influence of a previous entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions among 230 Tanzanian University students, Mahendra et al. (2017) found that although entrepreneurship education had no direct relationship with entrepreneurial intentions, it, nevertheless, boosted entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial motivations each of which in turn enhanced entrepreneurial intention. In a similar study, Seun (2017), who surveyed 490 Malaysian university students, found that entrepreneurship training enhanced entrepreneurial opportunity identification, ability, and motivation – all of which are crucial to start up.

Passaro et al. (2018) also investigated the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention among two different student samples: undergraduates and postgraduates. They found a trend similar to many others' that since entrepreneurial intention is strongly related to personal attributes, such as personal attitudes and motivation, these attributes largely determine whether entrepreneurship education positively influences entrepreneurial intentions. This particular outcome needs to be critically analysed before interpretation in the light of Aries et al.'s (2020) finding that just 45% of all university graduates of

entrepreneurship studied were entrepreneurs following completion of their studies. Previous exposure to an entrepreneurship curriculum, for example, at the undergraduate level, may well moderate outcomes of further exposures to entrepreneurial training, e.g., at the postgraduate level. Apart from this, however, the finding points to the likelihood that less than 50% of individuals exposed to entrepreneurship curricula actually nurse entrepreneurial intentions strongly enough to venture into a start-up.

Ho et al. (2018) subjected 328 secondary school adolescents to a specialized, entrepreneurial training bordering on interpersonal, innovative thinking, and financial and marketing communications skills, and then tested them for their entrepreneurial self-efficacy, the level of confidence individuals have in their entrepreneurial capabilities (Chen et al., 1998; Ho et al., 2018) and entrepreneurial alertness, the ability to recognize new opportunities that were previously not available (Baron & Ensley, 2006; Ho et al., 2018). Respondents who were subjected to the entrepreneurship training reported significantly higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial alertness compared to their counterparts who did undergo the training (Ho et al., 2018).

In the light of the foregoing, the relationship between entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial intentions appears to be an indirect one. In most of the reviewed studies, entrepreneurship training led to increase in entrepreneurial intentions through the instrumentalities of key entrepreneurial dispositions, such as entrepreneurial interest, entrepreneurial personality, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and so on. It seems conceptually sound to attribute this trend to the nature and strength of previous approaches to entrepreneurship training. We therefore expect stronger entrepreneurial intentions as a product of hands-on entrepreneurship training given the pragmatic nature of this approach compared to other approaches.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

Cross-sectional survey design was employed in this study. Respondents were classified in a manner to establish a basis for classifying them into three broad but distinct groups. The first was the group of 100 level students who were compulsorily offering GNS 102 and had not received any university-level entrepreneurial training at all. This was the control group for the study. The second group comprised 200 level students who were compulsorily offering ENT 202. The third group was 300 level students who were compulsorily offering ENT 302 and for the very first time. While the 200 and 300 level students received entrepreneurship training, 100 level students did not receive entrepreneurship training at all. Furthermore, 300 level students received Hands-on (or practical) entrepreneurship training while 200 level students received theoretical entrepreneurship training. Entrepreneurship intentions was surveyed in students across the three groups so as to know whether entrepreneurship training was associated with entrepreneurial intention, on the one hand, and whether Hands-on training stimulated more entrepreneurial intention than theoretical entrepreneurial training, on the other hand.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

A combination of systematic and stratified sampling was employed. The systematic sampling was aimed at ensuring that a total of 300 undergraduates were selected from each of ten faculties/colleges/schools in the university, and that 100 students were selected from each of 100, 200, and 300 levels – for a total of 1000 students per level and a total sample of 3000 students. The stratified sampling was targeted at achieving equitable numbers of male and female students in the sample. The number, 3000 students, was sampled as planned.

However, participants in this study were 1,662 undergraduates from the same faculties/colleges/schools of the university. They comprised 716, 145, and 801 students in 100, 200, and 300 levels, respectively; these

numbers were those of participants whose responses were successfully retrieved after the survey (out of a total of 3000 students (comprising 1000 students from each of 100, 200, and 300 levels students) who had been originally sampled), a response rate of 55.4%. Their ages ranged from 16-46 years.

– **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:** Students' information and enrolment records with the Directorate of Information and Computer Technology (DICT) of the university were used both to establish the inclusion and exclusion criteria and select participants. All the 100 level students in the sample had not been exposed to any form of entrepreneurial training since enrolling in Lagos State University. All the 200 level students in the sample had completed all lectures, continuous assessments, and preparations for examination in ENT 202: Basic Principles of Entrepreneurship. However, all direct entry students (in 200 level who were taking GNS 102), and carry-over students (who though were in 200 and higher levels but were repeating GNS 102) were exempted from the study. Furthermore, all the 300 level students in the sample were compulsorily offering, and had completed all practical (i.e., vocations) involved in the course, ENT 302: Practical Entrepreneurship (including preparations for examination), for the first time. All students repeating the course were exempted.

While ENT 202 is theoretical in nature and delivery, ENT 302 is a fully practical, hands-on course, involving different vocations one of which each student is allowed to specialize. All Participants who had consented to participate in the study reported at designated ICT facilities of the university to access and respond to the e-questionnaire.

Ethical Consideration

The consent of each of the selected participants was sought after they had been comprehensively informed about the study. Most of them gave their consent to participate in the study by signing the prescribed document for this purpose. The few whose informed consent could not be obtained were exempted from the study. Approval to conduct the entire study was sought and obtained from the Health Research and Ethics Committee of the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH)

Instruments

The instrument for the study was mainly a comprehensive questionnaire which was divided into two sections A and B. Section A comprised the demographic information of the participants and asked questions to tap responses as to their age, sex, level of study, faculty/college/school, department, etc.

Section B comprised an Entrepreneurship Intention Questionnaire (EIQ). The EIQ is a six-item subscale of the Measures of Core Entrepreneurial Intention Elements, authored by Liñán and Chen (2009). A tool for measuring Entrepreneurial Intentions, responses to the EIQ were done on a 7-point format. Sample items on the EIQ include “I will make every effort to start and run my own firm” and “I am determined to create a firm in the future”. According to Liñán and Chen (2009), the psychometric properties of the EIQ are acceptable. The DICT of Lagos State University was consulted, and helped with the design of the survey. The EIQ was also found to be psychometrically sound by Jayeoba (2014) and Lawal (2016, 2017) who, in separate studies, found it reliable and valid.

Data Collection

Data was collected in the second semester of the 2020/2021 session, and was strategically scheduled to take place at a time not too distant from the commencement of examinations for that semester to ensure that students had just completed entrepreneurial trainings. Staff of the ICT units at the three campuses of Lagos State University also assisted with the administration of the electronic survey.

Research assistants employed for the purpose of data collection were on hand to guide selected students to respond to the survey across faculties in the university as the exercise had to take place in the various ICT centres, simultaneously. Participants had 20 minutes each to respond to the survey items.

RESULTS

The imperative of understanding the trend of entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates who are undergoing entrepreneurship training necessitated a descriptive computation of the proportion of students at various levels of entrepreneurial intentions and their corresponding percentage scores in the variable. This is presented in table 1.

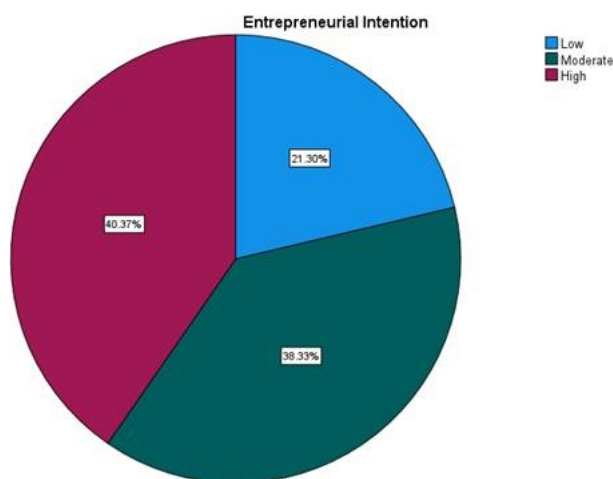
TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION AND RATES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION SCORES AMONG LASU UNDERGRADUATES

	N	%
Low (11 – 48)	354	21.3%
Moderate (49 – 69)	637	38.3%
High (72 – 77)	671	40.4%

Table 1, depicting the rates and distribution of Entrepreneurial Intention scores, shows that out of the total sample size of 1,602 undergraduates, three hundred and fifty-four (354) amounting to 21.3% had low (11-48) entrepreneurship intention scores; six hundred and thirty-seven (637), that is, 38.3%, had moderate (49-69) entrepreneurial intention scores; while six hundred and seventy-one translating to 40.4% scored highly (72-77) on entrepreneurship intention. This result is suggestive of a generally higher rate of entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates which is likely due to their exposure to entrepreneurship training.

Figure 1 further illustrates the distribution and rates of entrepreneurial intention by representing each rate/distribution with a segment within a circle and coding same with a distinct colour.

FIGURE 1: PIE CHART ILLUSTRATING DISTRIBUTION AND RATES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG LASU UNDERGRADUATES



A major proposition of this study was that hands-on entrepreneurship training would stimulate more entrepreneurial intentions than theoretical entrepreneurship training, while theoretical entrepreneurship training would trigger more entrepreneurial intentions than lack of entrepreneurship training. In testing for normality we utilized the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk's W test which revealed that the assumption of normality was violated ($W = .95$, $df = 105$, $p = .004$, $K-S = .143$, $df = 105$, $p = .004$). We also carried out an evaluation of the normality of histograms and Q-Q plots and found that the distribution was

positively skewed. The homogeneity assumption was not met. All these became expedient due to the inadequacy of the data obtained for the 200-level/ENT 202 students, which was responsible for the violation of the normality and homogeneity of distribution of scores in entrepreneurship intentions. We therefore resorted to using the Kruskal-Wallis H test, in lieu of the One-way Analysis of Variance, to test the above-stated proposition. Results of these tests are in table 2, figure 2, and table 3 below.

TABLE 2: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING AND SCORES ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTENTION

		Entrepreneurship Course						Total	
		Control (100 Level)		ENT 202		ENT 302			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Entrepreneurial Intention	Low	156	21.8%	41	28.3%	157	19.6%	354	21.3%
	Moderate	296	41.3%	48	33.1%	293	36.6%	637	38.3%
	High	264	36.9%	56	38.6%	351	43.8%	671	40.4%
Total		716	100.0%	145	100.0%	801	100.0%	1662	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	12.489 ^a	4	.014
Likelihood Ratio	12.227	4	.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.545	1	.019
N of Valid Cases	1662		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 30.88.

The pattern of association between entrepreneurship training and scores on entrepreneurial intentions shows that the differences in entrepreneurial intentions between and among the different levels had to do with the differences in the type of entrepreneurial training received. As can be seen from the Table 2, the proportion of students exposed to training who had higher scores on entrepreneurship intention was significantly more (ENT 202 = 38.6%; ENT 302 = 43.8%) than the proportion of students who were unexposed to any form of entrepreneurship training (36.9%).

FIGURE 2: HISTOGRAM DEPICTING THE FREQUENCY OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING AND THEIR ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION SCORES

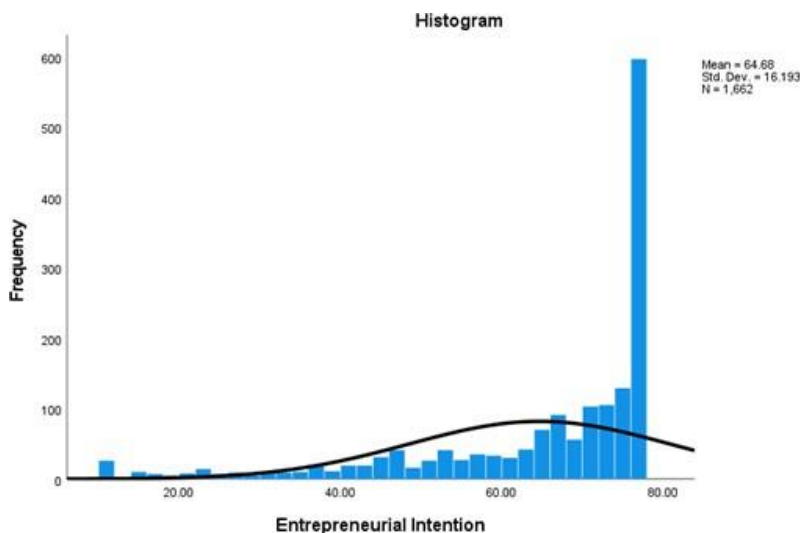


Table 3: Summary Kruskal-Wallis H test showing the effect of training on entrepreneurial intention

	Entrepreneurship	N	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Sig.
Entrepreneurial Intention	100 Level	716	802.13			
	ENT 202	145	795.28	7.488	2	.024
	ENT 302	801	864.31			
	Total	1662				

Post-hoc analysis (Conover)

Factor	n	Average Rank	Different (P<0.05) from factor nr
(1) 1	716	802.13	(3)
(2) 2	145	795.28	
(3) 3	801	864.31	(1)

The Kruskal-Wallis H test conducted to determine if entrepreneurial intention was different for the three groups: (a) 100-level students who that did not receive any entrepreneurship training [$n = 716$]; (b) 200-level students who received theoretical entrepreneurship training in ENT 202 (Principles of Entrepreneurship) [$n = 145$]; and (c) and 300-level students who received Hands-On entrepreneurship training in ENT 302 (Practical Entrepreneurship) [$n = 801$]. Results in table 3 reveals a significant influence of entrepreneurship training on entrepreneurial intention [$H=7.49$, $P < 0.05$]. As further highlighted on the table, the mean rank of the 300-level students (864.31) who received hands-on (practical) entrepreneurship training was higher than those of the 200-level students (795.28) who received theoretical entrepreneurship training, and the 100-level students (802.13) who did not receive any form of entrepreneurship training.

DISCUSSION

To a large extent, the results of this study turned out as expected in spite of slight inadequacy in the data from one of the sub-samples. The major proposition was that practical entrepreneurship training would result in stronger willingness to start-up a business or service than theoretical entrepreneurship training or no entrepreneurship training. To start with the result of the Chi-Square test exemplifies a stronger association between entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial intentions in that most of the students who reported HIGH (i.e., the highest) entrepreneurial intentions were from the group of students who underwent hands-on entrepreneurship training. This suggests that the practical components and undertakings within the curriculum of the hands-on method may be much more potent motivators for entrepreneurial intentions manifesting as start-ups. Besides, the further suggestion by the result (in table 2) that more of the students who underwent theoretical entrepreneurship training, compared to students who did not receive entrepreneurial training at all, reported more entrepreneurial intentions underscores findings in previous studies (e.g., Mahendra, 2017; Passaro, 2018; Ho, 2018; Seun, 2017) that entrepreneurship training enhances entrepreneurial intentions, whether directly or indirectly.

A seemingly obvious confirmation of the above is the results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test in table 3. With students who underwent hands-on training exhibiting stronger entrepreneurial intentions than students who underwent theoretical training, or students who did not undergo any entrepreneurship training, the hands-on training can be said to be better than the theoretical training in stimulating entrepreneurial intentions. One factor that may have played an additional enhancing role in the reported entrepreneurial intentions of students who received hands-on training is that they all had previously undergone the same theoretical

entrepreneurial training (ENT 202) while in 200 level. This must given them substantial leverage and possible boost to their entrepreneurial intentions compared to the current 200 level students who, presumably, were undergoing their very first exposure to entrepreneurship training.

Nevertheless, this finding seems quite novel as it strongly suggests that the inclusion of raw practical entrepreneurship training in entrepreneurship-education curricula should be a priority. Furthermore, the potentials for start-ups due to strong entrepreneurial intentions appears strong considering that hands-on training triggered –in this study- significantly more entrepreneurial intentions, compared to the theoretical approach. This finding is quite consistent with findings in similar previous studies (e.g., Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017; Mahendra, 2017; Passaro, 2018; Ho et al., 2018; Seun, 2017; Aries et al, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this study slightly departs from findings in previous studies most of which opine that entrepreneurship training most significantly influences entrepreneurial intentions through various entrepreneurship dispositions (e.g., Mahendra, 2017; Olugbola, 2017; Passaro, 2018; Ho et al., 2018; Seun, 2017). This departure was explained by the pragmatic nature of the hands-on approach to entrepreneurship training which, for the most part, differs from other forms of entrepreneurship training. Since there are sufficient reasons to situate Hands-on entrepreneurship training as an approach that can strengthen entrepreneurship intentions beyond the levels facilitated by other approaches, it follows that this training may be able to stimulate more start-ups than previously seen. The study therefore surmises that well standardized, hands-on entrepreneurship training, within well-developed institutional curricula has potentials for strengthening entrepreneurial intentions, as well as strongly facilitating start-ups.

On the strength of the forgone, entrepreneurship scholars and researchers need to explore frontiers of knowledge in entrepreneurship research, particularly in practical entrepreneurship. Involvement of entrepreneurship practitioners and trainers needs to also be prioritized to allow for the development or creation of close-to-actual ways of undertaking various production and service-oriented activities across societies.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Only One hundred and forty-five (145) 200 level students represented the population of 200 level students offering ENT 202 in Lagos State University. This was far lower than the one thousand (1000) students initially sampled for this group in the study. Besides, the response rate, compared to those of 100 level students (n = 716) and 300 level students (n=801), is too low. According to the DICT, this happened because the server bearing most of the 200 level students' response data had been irreversibly damaged, and the data irretrievable.

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