

Entrepreneurship Education as Predictor of Entrepreneurial Intentions of Business Education Undergraduates in Public Universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and answered while one hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The study adopted correlational survey research design. The population of the study comprised 342 Business Education 300-level public university undergraduates from Edo and Delta States with the sample size of 171 using the proportionate sampling technique of 50% of the population. Structured questionnaire was the research instrument titled: "Entrepreneurship Education as Predictor of Entrepreneurial Intentions Questionnaire" (EEPEIQ). Five experts validated the instrument which was pilot-tested on 20 respondents from the study population. Reliability coefficients of 0.87 and 0.89 were obtained for entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions items using Cronbach's alpha statistics. The questionnaire were administered personally with three briefed research assistants. Collected data were analysed using Mean (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation (SD) to answer the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC), Simple and Multiple Linear Regression to test the hypothesis using the statistical package for the social science (SPSS) version 25.

The findings revealed that Business Education undergraduates' level of entrepreneurship education was high. Based on the findings, it was concluded that entrepreneurship education predicts entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in Edo and Delta State, it was recommended based on the findings that the high level of entrepreneurship education should be sustained to increase undergraduates' awareness to foster entrepreneurial intentions.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria has been perceived to be an excellent instrument for effecting national development. The philosophy and general policy framework for educational policy in Nigeria since 1977 till date is based on the content of the National Policy on Education. The main objective of the Nigerian National Policy on Education is to enhance the standard of education at every level, ensuring that the system's graduates are more beneficial to the community and to uphold education as a key driver of progress (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

In 2006 the Federal Government of Nigeria advocated for the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in all fields of study within higher education institutions. As a result, starting from the 2007/2008 academic year, it became compulsory for all undergraduates to participate in entrepreneurship education, regardless of their field of study. This mandate was aimed at combating the escalating rates of unemployment and poverty, as well as nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset among young Nigerians. Generally, entrepreneurship education is still gaining traction in Nigerian universities, with many institutions offering programmes that foster entrepreneurial mindset, spirit and skills. In recent times, some of the key developments as far as entrepreneurship education is concerned includes: increased adoption, practical focus, innovation hubs and incubators. Some public universities with innovation hubs and incubators are University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Benin, University of Delta State, Agbor, University of Nigeria Nsukka, among others.

It is commonly acknowledged that Nigeria's abundant, varied human and natural resources provide numerous possibilities for entrepreneurship, investment and employment. However, the National Bureau of Statistics (2023) showed that the unemployment rate in Nigeria for the second quarter (Q2) was 4.2%, a marginal increase from 4.1 in the first quarter (Q1) of the year 2023. As a result of the ongoing economic challenges and the rising cost of living in Nigeria, these figures underscore the significance of socio-economic issues facing the country, including high levels of youth unemployment and poverty. Thus, the development and transformation of Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa are highly dependent on youth empowerment through entrepreneurship. To this end, entrepreneurship education is a course offered at the tertiary level of education in Nigeria as a part of Business Education.

Business education is an aspect of vocational education that equips recipients with the requisite skills and knowledge required for performance in the business world as entrepreneurs or employees. The National Universities Commission (NUC, 2022) in its Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS) defined business education as a specialised profession designed to provide students with knowledge, skills and competencies leading to employability and advancement in office occupations, pedagogical skills in teaching business subjects at different levels of the educational system as well as employment or being an employer of labour. This forms the main objective of business education and a fundamental component of entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education is the process of providing individuals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to develop, organise and manage a business venture. It involves teaching students how to identify business opportunities, develop business plans and acquire the needed skills to launch and operate a successful enterprise. Some of the skills include: Critical thinking and problem-solving, communication and presentation, teamwork and collaboration, leadership and initiative, adaptability and flexibility, marketing and sales amongst others. Entrepreneurship education could take place in a variety of settings, such as formal classroom instruction, hands-on experience in a real-world business environment or through online learning platforms. Its goal is to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and to empower individuals to create and innovate in their careers or business ventures. The CCMAS (2017) referred to entrepreneurship education as part of broader efforts to address the challenges of unemployment, economic growth and poverty reduction in Nigeria by promoting self-employment and job creation. The promotion of entrepreneurship-based education has the potential to develop students' entrepreneurial attitudes, capabilities, skills and abilities to identify and pursue new entrepreneurial opportunities, which in turn, may enhance their entrepreneurial intentions.

Entrepreneurial intentions (EI) as defined by Nabi, Linan, Fayolle, Krueger and Walmsley (2017) is the immediate, measurable aftermath of entrepreneurship education and students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship. That is an individual's conscious and deliberate decision to start and run a new business venture. It involves the motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities, which are driven by personal and environmental factors such as perceived opportunities, social norms, and self-efficacy. An entrepreneur's intention is crucial in determining whether to pursue an entrepreneurial career path, as it provides a roadmap for setting goals, developing plans, and allocating resources towards the creation and growth of a new business. Entrepreneurial intention may also denote the immediate and quantifiable effect of entrepreneurship education on students' inclination and disposition towards entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Framework

Ajzen (1985) in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), stated that intention towards certain behaviours is the result of three antecedents, which are attitude towards behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. The TPB explains behaviours where individuals do not have complete voluntary control, and it predicts intentions. The TPB is widely used in social psychology and behavioural research to understand and predict human actions based on their intentions and perceived control over those actions. According to Ajzen, attitude mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on one hand and behavioural intention on the other hand. Therefore, if students of Business Education possess strong aspirations for self-employment and becoming job creators, they may be more inclined to pursue entrepreneurial activities.

Subjective norms are an individual's perception of the behaviour, which is influenced by the judgment of significant others. These significant others include peers, parents, spouses, teachers, mentors and people who have a great influence on one's intentions. When students of Business Education perceive their entrepreneurial aspirations as favourable, valued and endorsed by influential figures in their lives, their motivation towards entrepreneurship is likely to be strengthened. Conversely, if such intentions are not regarded positively by these key individuals, the students' drive towards entrepreneurship could be reduced. On the other hand, perceived behavioural control is an individual's perceived ease or difficulty in performing a particular behaviour. Ajzen assumed that the total set of accessible control beliefs determines an individual's perceived behavioural control towards a particular action. Hence, despite the competitive, economic and security challenges within the nation of Nigeria, undergraduates of Business Education programmes could perceive entrepreneurship as a viable and accessible career path.

The theory is relevant to this study because as Business Education undergraduates in public universities are exposed to entrepreneurship education, the students' mindset could be enhanced to embrace entrepreneurial behaviour and actions. As a result, Business Education undergraduates can exhibit positive attitudes, subjective norms and perceive behavioural control, which can lead to strong entrepreneurial intentions. The TPB remains a pivotal model for understanding human behaviours, which could be used to explain entrepreneurial intentions, thus emphasising its relevance in this study.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education (EE) is generally viewed globally as the engine of economic growth and development. It is an education and training that equips students with the creativity to identify and assess business opportunities which could enable students to take initiative, responsibility as well as risk-taking needed for successful entrepreneurial action. Entrepreneurship education is a critical field that equips students with the necessary tools to thrive in entrepreneurial endeavours (European Commission, 2023). Smith and Johnson, 2022 stated that it is made of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds, equipping students with the necessary tools to thrive in entrepreneurial endeavours. UNESCO (2023) acknowledged that education and training are essential in fostering creativity, encouraging initiative, fostering a sense of responsibility and embracing risks. Entrepreneurship education aims to address the shortcomings of the existing education system by fostering a comprehensive re-engineering of learning experiences (Bell, 2021).

Concept of Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention refers to the degree of determination and motivation an individual has towards starting and running their own business. It is a cognitive state that represents a person's readiness to engage in entrepreneurial behaviours and is influenced by a combination of personal, social and environmental factors. These factors may include psychological traits, personal aspirations, cultural norms, perceived opportunities, social support, and access to resources among others. Research has shown that high levels of entrepreneurial intention are a significant predictor of actual entrepreneurial behaviour. A study by Marinov, Mincheva, Hinova-Palova (2021) highlighted the importance of entrepreneurial intentions, the study found that entrepreneurial intentions were impacted by personal motivations, business characteristics, social factors and market opportunities. Thus, the study highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship education in developing the entrepreneurial intention of students. Entrepreneurship is recognized as a major predecessor of entrepreneurial behaviour (Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021).

Entrepreneurial intention is recognized as a primary precursor to entrepreneurial actions (Alferaih, 2022; Oktavio, Mitasari, Sinarta, Kusumawidjaya, Wijaya & Widyawati, 2023), thus it has become a highly researched topic (Youssef, Boubaker, Dedaj & Carabregu-Vokshi, 2021). Creating an entrepreneurial intention is a critical step to becoming an entrepreneur and starting new projects or ventures (Baron & Hmieleski, 2018). Entrepreneurship intention has the greatest impact on startup activities (Maheshwari, Kha & Arokiasamy, 2022) and helps students plan their careers in the era of Industry 4.0. (Adha, Wibowo, Faslah, Ariyanti and Lutfia, 2022). Therefore, understanding the direct and indirect antecedents of entrepreneurship intention of students is essential for understanding the motivations of entrepreneurship (Neneh, 2022). According to the Global

Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2017/2018) report, Nigeria has a high level of entrepreneurial activity with 35% of adults involved in some form of entrepreneurial activity. However, the report also highlighted that Nigeria has a low level of business creation and growth, indicating that there is a need for more effective entrepreneurship education programmes to support the development of successful entrepreneurs. Adeoye, Akinnubi and Tiamiyu (2022) research has showed that entrepreneurship education can positively impact students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship and their intentions to start a business.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship education has been made mandatory for all academic programmes in Nigerian universities for more than a decade. This endeavour aimed to prepare undergraduate students for self-employment upon graduation. Entrepreneurship education is considered a key factor in fostering entrepreneurial intention and behaviour of university students. Despite the increasing demand for entrepreneurship education in universities and the potential benefits of entrepreneurship for economic and social development, the level of entrepreneurial behaviour of university students still appears to be low in Nigeria generally and Edo and Delta States in particular.

Graduates in Nigeria (including business education graduates) frequently find themselves job hunting on the streets due to the persistently high unemployment rates, predominantly among young people. There is a growing concern that graduate unemployment seems to be unabated for more than a decade after the implementation of entrepreneurship education policy in various tertiary institutions. The question therefore is, could it be that entrepreneurship education does not predict the entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates? To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there seem to be no empirical evidence demonstrating entrepreneurship education as predictor of entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States. Against this backdrop, the researcher determined entrepreneurship education as predictor of entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the level of entrepreneurship education of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States?
2. What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Entrepreneurship education does not significantly predict entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive correlational research survey design. The population of the study comprised 342 Business Education 300-level public university undergraduates from Edo and Delta States with sample size of 171 using the proportionate sampling technique of 50% of the population. Structured questionnaire was the research instrument titled: "Entrepreneurship Education as Predictor of Entrepreneurial Intentions Questionnaire" (EEPEIQ). Five experts validated the instrument which was pilot-tested on 20 respondents from the study population. Reliability coefficients of 0.87 and 0.89 were obtained for entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions items using Cronbach's alpha statistics. The questionnaire were administered personally with three briefed research assistants, which were retrieved with a 100% return rate. Collected data were analysed using Mean (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation (SD) to answer the research questions while Pearson Product

Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC), Simple and Multiple Linear Regression to test the hypothesis using the statistical package for the social science (SPSS) version 25.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research Question One

What is the level of entrepreneurship education of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States?

Table 1: Level of entrepreneurship education of Business Education undergraduates in public universities

S/N	Item	N	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Entrepreneurship education at my university has equipped me with the skills needed to start a business.	171	2.90	.91	Agreed
2	The knowledge of entrepreneurship education provides insights into risk management in the business world.	171	3.15	.65	Agreed
3	Entrepreneurship education offers adequate networking opportunities with entrepreneurs and business professionals i.e. SIWES.	171	3.29	.66	Agreed
4	Entrepreneurship education provides leadership and the initiative to start my own business.	171	3.27	.67	Agreed
5	Entrepreneurship education at my university fosters creativity and innovation for business challenges.	171	3.17	.60	Agreed
6	Entrepreneurship education at my university grants access to vital resources like business plans, strategy, incubators and start-up competitions.	171	3.12	.65	Agreed
7	Entrepreneurship education has provided me with knowledge of financial management and accounting principles.	171	3.03	.76	Agreed
8	Entrepreneurship education has empowered me with the confidence to recognise and seize business opportunities.	171	2.93	.95	Agreed
9	Entrepreneurship education has cultivated a forward-thinking attitude, preparing me to accept future challenges eagerly.	171	3.05	.75	Agreed
10	Entrepreneurship education has provided me with communication and presentation abilities.	171	3.19	.62	Agreed
11	I can engage in teamwork and collaborate with others because of entrepreneurship education.	171	3.01	.85	Agreed
12	Entrepreneurship education knowledge enhances adaptability and flexibility in the business world.	171	3.02	.84	Agreed
13	Entrepreneurship education knowledge has exposed me to financial analysis and budgeting.	171	3.16	.66	Agreed

14	I have gained familiarity with various marketing and sales strategies through entrepreneurship education.	171	3.19	.62	Agreed
15	Entrepreneurship education knowledge has provided me with insights into industry trends and market dynamics.	171	3.19	.69	Agreed
	Cluster Mean		3.11	0.11	Agreed

Note: SD (Standard Deviation), N (Sample Size)

Table 1 showed that respondents rated items 1 to 15 as agreed with mean values ranging from 2.90 to 3.29 while the standard deviation values ranging from .61 to .95, with cluster mean of 3.11 indicating that the level of entrepreneurship education of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States is high.

Research Question Two

What is the correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States?

Table 2: Pearson r showing the correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	r	Decision
Entrepreneurship Education	171	3.11	0.55	0.67	Positive Moderate Relationship
Entrepreneurial Intentions		3.25	0.47		

Data analysis in Table 2 shows the correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The result indicate a Mean value of 3.11 and 3.25 as well as a Standard Deviation of 0.55 and 0.47. The correlation coefficients between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of 0.67 is positive and moderate.

Hypothesis One

Entrepreneurship education does not significantly predict entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA on the multiple linear regression estimates between Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	36.088	5	7.218	78.337	.000 ^b
Residual	15.202	165	.092		
Total	51.290	170			

Data in Table 3 indicate that the ANOVA summary of multiple linear regression based on entrepreneurial intentions as predicted by entrepreneurship education is statistically significant ($F(5, 165) = 78.337, p = .000 < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is not retained. This connotes that entrepreneurship education significantly predicts entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States.

Table 4: Multiple linear regression coefficients of entrepreneurship education prediction on entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.504	.167		3.013	.003
Entrepreneurial Attitude	.821	.069	.871	11.900	.000
Entrepreneurial Subjective Norms	-.053	.075	-.056	-.716	.475
Entrepreneurial Perceived Behav. Control	-.040	.025	-.074	-1.584	.115

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intentions

Note. R = .839; R-square = .704; Adjusted R-square = .695; p <.05

Data in Table 4 show that entrepreneurship education significantly predicted entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates, entrepreneurial attitude yielded a p-value of .000 while entrepreneurial subjective norm (p = .475); entrepreneurial perceived behavioural control (p = .115). The adjusted R square value is .695, which indicates that 69.5% of the variance in entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates is explained by entrepreneurship education. From the model analysis, the null hypothesis is not retained.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of research question one revealed that the level of entrepreneurship education of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States was high. This indicated that the knowledge from entrepreneurship education fosters undergraduates' interest in entrepreneurial activities to engage in an alternative career path for self-employment and income generation. The result implied this is possible because entrepreneurship education can equip students with the knowledge, skills and mindset necessary to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, leading to actual entrepreneurial activities. This finding corroborated the view of the European Commission (2023) that affirmed that entrepreneurship education is a critical field that equips students with the necessary tools to thrive in entrepreneurial endeavours. Smith and Johnson (2022) supported that entrepreneurship education is made of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds, equipping students with the necessary tools to thrive in entrepreneurial endeavours. This agrees with Bell (2021), who stated that entrepreneurship education is aimed at addressing the shortcomings of the existing education system by fostering a comprehensive re-engineering of learning experiences. However, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2017/2018) report highlighted that Nigeria has a low level of business creation and growth, indicating that there is a need for more effective entrepreneurship education programmes to support the development of an entrepreneurial mindset.

The result of research question two depicted that the correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States was positively high. Also, hypothesis one revealed that entrepreneurship education significantly predicted entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This indicated that entrepreneurship education is directly linked with entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States. By implication, entrepreneurship education fosters and provides immediate entrepreneurial intentions, which is the degree of determination and motivation an individual has towards starting and running their own businesses, hence predicting students' entrepreneurial intention. This finding aligned with Adeoye, et al (2022), who stated that entrepreneurship

education positively impacts students' entrepreneurial intentions to start a business. Doan and Viet (2023) also stated that entrepreneurship education increased entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which in turn influenced entrepreneurial intention. The finding equally supported Nabi and Linan (2018), who found that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention and behaviour. However, Adebayo and Olokundun (2018) noted that certain social-cultural factors, including the fear of failure, lack of role models and the societal norms favour traditional career choices act as barriers to entrepreneurship education and the entrepreneurial drive among Nigerian university students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that entrepreneurship education predicts entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education undergraduates in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This implies that Business Education undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions can be predicted via exposure to entrepreneurship education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government and universities' curriculum developers should continue to raise awareness and emphasise that entrepreneurship education is a key solution to addressing unemployment in any country, through effective instructional delivery by faculty members.
2. Students need to be encouraged to transition into real entrepreneurs after graduation. This can be achieved through adequate follow-up by the government, policymakers, universities and industry mentors.

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