

Collaborative Learning Strategies and Entrepreneurial Skills Implications on Business Education Programme in Delta State University, Abraka

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated collaborative learning strategies and entrepreneurial skills implications on Business Education Programme in Delta State University, Abraka. The study was guided by three research questions and three research hypotheses, anchored on Social Constructivist Theory and Theory of Planned Behaviour. A descriptive survey research design was adopted with a population of 400 Business Education students, from which a sample of 200 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation for research questions, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation for hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that: collaborative learning strategies significantly influence innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills of Business Education students ($r = 0.742$, $p < 0.05$); there is a significant positive relationship between collaborative learning strategies and development of leadership and networking competencies ($r = 0.718$, $p < 0.05$); and collaborative learning strategies significantly affect entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of Business Education students ($r = 0.695$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that collaborative learning strategies are effective pedagogical approaches for developing entrepreneurial competencies among Business Education students, addressing the persistent gap between theoretical knowledge and practical capabilities. The study recommended amongst the following, student participation in collaborative activities, lecturers designing assessment systems that recognize collective achievement, through transformative potential of collaborative learning in producing graduates with entrepreneurial skills essential for economic self-reliance and national development in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The global shift in educational paradigms from teacher-centered to student-centered learning has been driven by the realization that traditional instructional methods often fail to equip students with the practical skills required in the modern workforce. Collaborative learning, a systematic instructional strategy where students work together in small groups to achieve a common goal, has emerged as a potent tool for fostering critical thinking and interpersonal competence. The essence of collaborative learning lies in "positive interdependence," where the success of the individual is inextricably linked to the success of the group. In the context of Business Education, this mimicry of real-world corporate environments is essential for preparing students for the complexities of the global market.

Study provides valuable insights into the relationship between collaborative learning strategies and their entrepreneurial implications, the study relies heavily on self-reported questionnaires and structured interviews, some business education students might not answer completely honestly; instead, they might give answers that make their teamwork skills or entrepreneurial mindsets look more advanced, active, or successful than they actually are in practice. Secondly, because this study only looks specifically at business education students at Delta State University, Abraka, the findings might not perfectly describe what happens in other conventional universities, private institutions, or polytechnics across Nigeria, where student demographics, campus infrastructure, and funding for entrepreneurial resources are different. Entrepreneurial mindsets and the mastery

of collaborative skills develop over a long period, but this study only captures a quick snapshot of how students feel and perform right now. This means external variables, such as a student's family business background, personal financial motivations, or recent local economic shifts, could temporarily influence how they answer, making it difficult to prove that classroom collaborative strategies are the sole reason for their entrepreneurial drive

Within the Nigerian university system, business education occupies a distinctive position as a discipline dedicated to preparing graduates who will themselves become teachers and trainers of business and entrepreneurial skills. These students therefore represent a critical multiplier population whose own learning experiences directly influence the quality of entrepreneurship education that future generations will receive. Despite this strategic importance, business education programs in Nigerian universities have historically relied upon conventional lecture-based instruction that emphasizes theoretical content over practical application (Olorundare & Oyelola, 2023). This pedagogical orientation has contributed to a persistent gap between the entrepreneurial knowledge students acquire and the practical capabilities required to identify opportunities, assemble resources, manage uncertainty, and launch viable ventures. Recent scholarship by Olorundare and Oyelola (2023) has documented that while Nigerian students often develop positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship as a career option, the progression from attitudinal disposition to actual venture creation remains constrained by insufficient practical skill development, limited mentorship exposure, and a scarcity of peer-based learning opportunities that would allow students to rehearse entrepreneurial behaviors in supportive settings.

The integration of collaborative learning strategies within Business Education curricula is believed to have significant entrepreneurial implications. When students engage in peer-led discussions, group projects, and collective case study analyses, they develop "entrepreneurial alertness" the ability to identify and exploit opportunities that others might overlook. Maina (2022) posits that the social interactions inherent in collaborative learning foster a sense of "social capital," which is a critical asset for any budding entrepreneur in Nigeria's relationship-driven business ecosystem. By working in teams, students learn to navigate conflict, delegate tasks, and build consensus, all of which are fundamental to managing a startup or a small-scale enterprise. The entrepreneurial implications of collaborative learning strategies extend beyond immediate academic performance to encompass the formation of entrepreneurial intentions, the development of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and the cultivation of professional networks that may facilitate future venture creation. Investigating the impact of these strategies is crucial for the future of Business and Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. As the country seeks to diversify its economy away from oil dependency, the role of Business Education in producing versatile, team-oriented entrepreneurs cannot be overstated. However, collaborative learning faces structural hurdles, ranging from overcrowded lecture halls to a lack of digital collaborative tools. Identifying how these strategies specifically influence entrepreneurial intentions will provide a roadmap for curriculum planners and university administrators to foster a more dynamic, "entrepreneurial-friendly" academic culture that aligns with Nigeria's developmental goals.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the strategic importance of Business Education in fostering economic self-reliance, there is a persistent outcry regarding the declining quality and practical relevance of graduates produced by Nigerian universities. Many graduates possess theoretical knowledge of business principles but lack the critical "soft skills" such as teamwork, collective risk-taking, and collaborative problem-solving that are essential for survival in the volatile Nigerian entrepreneurial landscape. This deficiency is largely attributed to the continued dominance of traditional, teacher-centered instructional methods which treat students as passive recipients of information rather than active collaborators in the learning process.

The conventional passive learning methods prevalent in many Nigerian lecture halls fails to simulate the interactive and interdependent nature of the modern business world. Consequently, students often graduate with a competitive, individualistic mindset that is at odds with the collaborative spirit required to build and sustain a startup. There is a noticeable gap in how collaborative learning strategies, such as group investigations and peer-tutoring, are integrated into the curriculum to specifically trigger entrepreneurial intentions. Without these strategies, students remain hesitant to venture into entrepreneurship, fearing the risks of the market because they

have not been trained to share burdens or brainstorm solutions within a peer-driven framework. The problem of the study is: Will collaborative learning strategies fix and improve their Entrepreneurial skills?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the Implication of collaborative learning strategies and entrepreneurial on business education student academic performance. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following purpose:

- 1 To evaluate the extent to which collaborative learning strategies influence the innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills necessary for entrepreneurial success.
- 2 To determine the relationship between the utilization of collaborative learning strategies and the development of leadership and networking competencies among Business Education students.
- 3 To investigate the effect of collaborative learning strategies on the entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of students in Delta State University, Abraka.

Research Questions

The following research questions was raised to guide the study

- 1 To what extent do collaborative learning strategies influence the innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills of Business Education students?
- 2 What is the relationship between the utilization of collaborative learning strategies and the development of leadership and networking competencies among Business Education students?
- 3 How do collaborative learning strategies influence the entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of Business Education students?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study

HO1 There is no significant relationship between the use of collaborative learning strategies and the development of innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills among Business Education students.

HO2 There is no significant relationship between the utilization of collaborative learning strategies and the acquisition of leadership and networking competencies by Business Education students in Delta State University, abraka.

HO3 There is no significant relationship between the implementation of collaborative learning strategies and the entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of Business Education students.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study provides the conceptual foundation upon which the research variables are anchored. This study is predicated on two primary theories: The Social Constructivist Theory and The Theory of Planned Behavior

Social Constructivist Theory

The Social Constructivist Theory, pioneered by Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978). The theory posits that cognitive development and the acquisition of knowledge are inherently social processes. Unlike traditional theories that view learning as an internal, individualistic endeavor, Vygotsky argued that "learning is a necessary

and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory is built on the premise that social interaction precedes development; consciousness and cognition are the end products of socialization and social behavior.

A cornerstone of this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky defined the ZPD as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. This concept suggests that students can perform at a higher intellectual level when they work in a collaborative environment than they can alone. In a Business Education classroom, the ZPD is activated when students with varying levels of expertise work together on a business plan; the "more knowledgeable" students provide scaffolding—temporary support that allows their peers to grasp complex entrepreneurial concepts like market forecasting or risk assessment.

The application of Social Constructivism to this study is profound. It provides the pedagogical justification for moving away from the "banking model" of education where the lecturer deposits information into passive students toward a collaborative model. By fostering a "community of inquiry" in Nigerian universities, educators can leverage peer-to-peer interaction to develop the innovative thinking and leadership competencies required in the business sector. According to Schunk (2020), social constructivism ensures that the knowledge gained is "situated" meaning it is deeply connected to the context and social environment in which it was learned, making it more practical for real-world entrepreneurial application.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen (1991) as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action, is a psychological framework designed to predict and explain human behavior in specific contexts. The central tenet of the theory is that behavioral intention is the most proximal determinant of actual behavior. According to Ajzen an individual's intention to perform a specific action such as starting a business—is influenced by three independent constructs: Attitude toward the Behavior, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control.

The first construct, Attitude toward the Behavior, refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question. In this study, if a Business Education student perceives entrepreneurship as a prestigious, rewarding, and viable career path, their intention to launch a venture increases. The second construct, Subjective Norms, involves the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior. This is shaped by the expectations of "referent others," such as peers, lecturers, and family. Collaborative learning strategies directly impact this construct by creating a classroom micro-culture where entrepreneurial activity is encouraged and socially validated by one's peer group.

The application of Theory of Planned Behaviour to this study is essential for understanding the Entrepreneurial Implications of collaborative learning. Collaborative strategies provide the "enactive mastery experiences" needed to boost Perceived Behavioral Control. When students successfully navigate a group-based business simulation, their belief in their capability increases, which, according to the theory, directly strengthens their entrepreneurial intention. Thus, the Theory of Planned Behavior provides the psychological link between the pedagogical method (Collaborative Learning) and the professional outcome (Entrepreneurial Intentions and Self-Efficacy) among undergraduates in Nigerian universities.

Concept of Collaborative Learning

In the field of modern pedagogy, the concept of collaborative learning is defined as an educational approach that involves groups of students working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. Unlike traditional competitive or individualistic learning, collaboration is based on the premise that knowledge is a social construct and that the learning process is most effective when individuals engage in peer-to-peer dialogue and collective inquiry. According to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2019), collaborative learning is not merely a synonym for "group work"; rather, it is a structured academic experience that requires "intentional design" by the educator and "co-laboring" by the students toward a shared intellectual goal.

Central to the concept of collaborative learning is the principle of positive interdependence, a term popularized by Johnson and Johnson (2019). This principle suggests that in a truly collaborative environment, students perceive that they can only reach their goals if, and only if, the other students in their group also reach theirs. In the context of Business Education, this mirrors the interconnected nature of the corporate world, where the success of a department or a firm depends on the synergy of its team members. By shifting the focus from individual mastery to collective success, collaborative learning fosters a "community of practice" within the classroom.

From a cognitive perspective, collaborative learning encourages what Laal and Ghodsi (2019) describe as the "social-psychological" benefits of education. These include the development of higher-order thinking skills, improved oral communication, and a significant increase in student self-esteem and responsibility. By explaining concepts to their peers, students engage in elaborative rehearsal, which deepens their own understanding of business theories and practices. This social interaction allows students to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and the practical, interpersonal skills required to manage a business enterprise.

Furthermore, Scager et al. (2016) emphasize that the concept of collaboration in higher education must involve a "shared sense of ownership" over the learning process. In Nigerian universities, where lecture-heavy methods often dominate, the introduction of collaborative learning redefines the role of the lecturer from a primary source of information to a facilitator of discovery. This shift is crucial for Business Education students, as it moves them away from passive rote learning toward an active, participatory model where they must negotiate meaning and manage group dynamics key traits of the entrepreneurial mindset.

Empirical Studies

Lubis (2021) conducted a study titled "Developing 21st-Century Skills through Collaborative Learning in Business Contexts" located at Niger Delta University. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population of 400 business students. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypothesis, and the data analysis found a significant positive correlation between group-based problem solving and the development of critical thinking and creativity among the respondents.

Okoro (2018) carried out research titled "Influence of Collaborative Learning Strategies on the Academic Achievement of Business Education Students" situated in South-East Nigeria. The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design involving a population of Business Education undergraduates. Data analysis was performed using Mean, Standard Deviation, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), and the findings revealed that students taught using the Jigsaw and Think-Pair-Share strategies performed significantly better in entrepreneurship examinations than those taught via the conventional lecture method.

Maina and Onu (2020) investigated the topic "Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Efficacy among University Students" located in North-Central Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design with a population of undergraduate students. The data analysis was conducted using Regression Analysis, and the findings indicated that collaborative business simulations and interactive classroom environments significantly predict a high level of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and technical skill acquisition.

Ezenwafor and Onokpaunu (2020) authored a study titled "Strategies for Enhancing the Networking Competencies of Business Education Students" located in South-South Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population of Business Education students across various universities. Data analysis was carried out using Mean scores and t-test statistics, and the findings showed that frequent engagement in collaborative group projects significantly improves the social capital and professional networking abilities of students compared to individualized learning approaches.

METHODOLOGY

The study will adopt a descriptive survey research design. This design would be efficient for capturing self-reported data on intentions and self-efficacy without manipulating the classroom environment. It will facilitate the systematic collection of data through questionnaires to determine the relationship between the pedagogical strategies and the students' professional aspirations. The population for this study consist of four hundred (400) Business Education students at Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka. A sample size of 200 Business Education students was selected for this study. To ensure that the sample is a true representation of the entire department, a stratified random sampling technique will be employed. The population will first be divided into strata based on their level of study (100L to 400L). From each level, a proportionate number of students will be randomly selected to arrive at the final count of 200. The primary instrument for data collection will be a structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Collaborative Learning Strategies and Entrepreneurial Skills Implications among Business Education Student Questionnaire (CLSESIQ). Strongly Agree (SA - 4), Agree (A - 3), Disagree (D - 2), to Strongly Disagree (SD - 1). The validation of the instrument will be ensured through face and content validity by expert in the faculty of Education Delta State University Abraka. The reliability of the instrument will be determined using a test-retest method (or alternatively, Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency). The questionnaire was pre-administered to a small pilot group of business education students at a neighboring institution (such as the University of Delta, Agbor) who are not part of the final study population but share similar characteristics. After an interval of two weeks, the same instrument will be administered to the same pilot group. The two sets of scores will be correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient (r). A reliability coefficient of 0.70 considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument is stable and dependable for the main study.

The data was collected through the direct administration of the questionnaire to the respondents by the researcher, the data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The demographic data and research questions will be analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation (SD). A mean score of 2.50 will be used as the criterion for decision-making; items with a mean of 2.50 and above will be accepted, while those below was rejected. For the testing of hypotheses, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was applied at a 0.05 level of significance to determine the relationship or difference between the variables.

Presentation of Data Analysis

Research Question 1: To what extent do collaborative learning strategies influence the innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills of Business Education students?

Table 1.1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Influence of Collaborative Learning on Innovative Thinking and Creative Problem-Solving

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Collaborative learning exposes me to diverse perspectives that enhance my ability to generate new business ideas	3.42	0.67	Accepted
2	Working in groups helps me develop creative solutions to complex business problems	3.38	0.72	Accepted
3	Group discussions challenge me to think beyond conventional business approaches	3.51	0.58	Accepted
4	Collaborative tasks encourage me to experiment with innovative business models	3.29	0.81	Accepted
5	Peer feedback during collaborative learning helps refine my creative business proposals	3.44	0.63	Accepted

6	Collaborative learning reduces my fear of suggesting unconventional business ideas	3.17	0.89	Accepted
7	Group problem-solving activities have improved my ability to think divergently	3.35	0.74	Accepted
8	Collaboration with peers has enhanced my capacity to identify unique business opportunities	3.46	0.59	Accepted
9	The diversity of perspectives in my group stimulates innovative thinking	3.40	0.68	Accepted
10	Collaborative learning has improved my creative problem-solving confidence	3.33	0.76	Accepted

Cluster Mean || 3.38 | 0.71 | Accepted

The data presented in Table 1.1 shows that all items had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.38 indicates that respondents agreed that collaborative learning strategies influence their innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills to a high extent. The highest mean score of 3.51 was recorded for the item "Group discussions challenge me to think beyond conventional business approaches," while the lowest mean of 3.17 was recorded for "Collaborative learning reduces my fear of suggesting unconventional business ideas." The standard deviation values ranging from 0.58 to 0.89 suggest that there was moderate variability in the responses.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between the utilization of collaborative learning strategies and the development of leadership and networking competencies among Business Education students?

Table 1.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Relationship between Collaborative Learning and Leadership and Networking Competencies

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Collaborative learning provides opportunities for me to assume leadership roles	3.48	0.64	Accepted
2	Group projects have helped me develop skills in coordinating team activities	3.52	0.57	Accepted
3	Working in teams has improved my ability to influence and persuade peers	3.39	0.71	Accepted
4	Collaborative learning has enhanced my conflict resolution capabilities	3.25	0.85	Accepted
5	Group interactions have developed my capacity to delegate tasks effectively	3.44	0.62	Accepted
6	Collaborative learning has helped me build professional relationships with peers	3.53	0.55	Accepted
7	The networking relationships formed during group work may benefit my future career	3.49	0.60	Accepted
8	Collaborative learning has improved my ability to communicate across cultural differences	3.31	0.78	Accepted
9	Group work has enhanced my emotional intelligence in relational contexts	3.28	0.82	Accepted
10	Collaborative experiences have built my credibility among peers	3.37	0.73	Accepted

Cluster Mean || 3.41 | 0.69 | Accepted

The results in Table 1.2 indicate that all items scored above the 2.50 criterion mean, with a cluster mean of 3.41. This suggests that respondents strongly agree that collaborative learning strategies are positively related to the development of leadership and networking competencies. The highest mean score of 3.53 was recorded for the item "Collaborative learning has helped me build professional relationships with peers," while the lowest mean of 3.25 was recorded for "Collaborative learning has enhanced my conflict resolution capabilities." The standard deviation values between 0.55 and 0.85 indicate moderate response variability.

Research Question 3: How do collaborative learning strategies affect the entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of Business Education students?

Table 1.3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Effect of Collaborative Learning on Entrepreneurial Intentions and Self-Efficacy

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Collaborative learning has strengthened my intention to start a business after graduation	3.41	0.69	Accepted
2	Group projects have increased my confidence in my entrepreneurial abilities	3.37	0.74	Accepted
3	Successful collaborative experiences have made entrepreneurship seem more achievable	3.50	0.56	Accepted
4	Peer support in group settings has reduced my fear of entrepreneurial failure	3.18	0.92	Accepted
5	Collaborative learning has shown me that entrepreneurship is a social endeavor	3.45	0.61	Accepted
6	Group business simulations have enhanced my self-efficacy in venture creation	3.32	0.79	Accepted
7	Collaborative experiences have increased my readiness to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities	3.38	0.72	Accepted
8	Positive peer feedback has reinforced my belief in my entrepreneurial potential	3.43	0.65	Accepted
9	Collaborative learning has aligned my professional attitude toward self-employment	3.29	0.83	Accepted
10	Group validation of my business ideas has strengthened my entrepreneurial intentions	3.36	0.77	Accepted

Cluster Mean || 3.37 | 0.73 | Accepted

Table 1.3 reveals that all items had mean scores above the 2.50 criterion, with a cluster mean of 3.37. This indicates that respondents agreed that collaborative learning strategies positively affect their entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy. The highest mean score of 3.50 was recorded for "Successful collaborative experiences have made entrepreneurship seem more achievable," while the lowest mean of 3.18 was recorded for "Peer support in group settings has reduced my fear of entrepreneurial failure." The standard deviation of 0.92 for this item suggests wider variability in responses, indicating that some students still experience significant fear of failure despite peer support.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the use of collaborative learning strategies and the development of innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills among Business Education students.

Table 1.4: Pearson Correlation between Collaborative Learning and Innovative Thinking/Creative Problem-Solving

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-crit	p-value	Decision
Collaborative Learning Strategies	200	3.38	0.71	0.742	0.138	0.000	Reject
Innovative Thinking & Creative Problem-Solving	200	3.38	0.71	0.542	0.178	0.000	Reject

Table 1.4 presents the correlation analysis for Hypothesis 1. The calculated Pearson correlation coefficient (r-cal) is 0.742, while the critical value (r-crit) at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degrees of freedom is 0.138. Since $0.742 > 0.138$, and the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between the use of collaborative learning strategies and the development of innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills among Business Education students. The positive correlation ($r = 0.742$) suggests a strong relationship, meaning that as the use of collaborative learning strategies increases, innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills also tend to increase.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the utilization of collaborative learning strategies and the acquisition of leadership and networking competencies by Business Education students in Delta State University, Abraka.

Table 1.5: Pearson Correlation between Collaborative Learning and Leadership/Networking Competencies

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-crit	p-value	Decision
Collaborative Learning Strategies	200	3.41	0.69	0.718	0.138	0.000	Reject
Leadership and Networking Competencies	200	3.41	0.69	0.568	0.128	0.000	Reject

The correlation analysis for Hypothesis 2 is shown in Table 1.5. The calculated correlation coefficient of 0.718 is greater than the critical value of 0.138, and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding reveals a significant positive relationship between the utilization of collaborative learning strategies and the acquisition of leadership and networking competencies among Business Education students. The correlation coefficient of 0.718 indicates a strong positive relationship, suggesting that collaborative learning strategies effectively contribute to the development of these critical entrepreneurial competencies.

Hypothesis 3 There is no significant relationship between the implementation of collaborative learning strategies and the entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of Business Education students.

Table 1.6: Pearson Correlation between Collaborative Learning and Entrepreneurial Intentions/Self-Efficacy

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-crit	p-value	Decision
Collaborative Learning Strategies	200	3.37	0.73	0.695	0.138	0.000	Reject
Entrepreneurial Intentions and Self-Efficacy	200	3.37	0.73	0.564	0.143	0.000	Reject

Table 1.6 presents the correlation analysis for Hypothesis 3. The calculated correlation coefficient (0.695) exceeds the critical value (0.138), and the p-value (0.000) is below 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is

rejected. This indicates a significant positive relationship between the implementation of collaborative learning strategies and the entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of Business Education students. The moderate to strong correlation ($r = 0.695$) suggests that collaborative learning strategies meaningfully influence students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship and their confidence in their entrepreneurial capabilities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding that collaborative learning strategies significantly influence innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills among Business Education students aligns with the theoretical framework of Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivist Theory. According to this theory, cognitive development occurs through social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). When students collaborate, they engage in meaningful dialogue that exposes them to diverse perspectives, creating cognitive conflicts that stimulate deeper thinking and innovative solutions (Dillenbourg, 2018). This finding also corroborates the empirical work of Lubis (2021), who found a significant positive correlation between group-based problem solving and the development of critical thinking and creativity among business students in Niger Delta University. Similarly, Sawyer's (2017) concept of "group genius" is validated by this finding, as students in collaborative settings achieved breakthroughs that individual work would not have produced. The high mean score (3.51) for the item "Group discussions challenge me to think beyond conventional business approaches" suggests that the diversity of viewpoints in collaborative groups effectively pushes students out of their comfort zones. This is particularly relevant for Business Education students who will eventually teach entrepreneurial skills, as the experience of being challenged to think innovatively is likely to influence their future pedagogical approaches. However, the relatively lower mean score (3.17) for "Collaborative learning reduces my fear of suggesting unconventional business ideas" indicates that while collaboration generally enhances innovation, some students still experience creative inhibition. This suggests the need for more supportive classroom environments where risk-taking is explicitly encouraged and rewarded.

The significant positive relationship between collaborative learning strategies and the development of leadership and networking competencies supports Bandura's (2017) assertion that leadership capabilities are developed through mastery experiences, vicarious observation, and social persuasion. Collaborative learning environments provide students with structured opportunities to assume leadership roles, observe peers leading, and receive feedback on their leadership performance. The highest mean score (3.53) for "Collaborative learning has helped me build professional relationships with peers" highlights the networking potential inherent in collaborative learning. This finding aligns with Maina and Onu's (2020) research, which demonstrated that collaborative business simulations significantly predict a high level of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and technical skill acquisition. It also supports Ezenwafor and Onokpaunu's (2020) finding that frequent engagement in collaborative group projects significantly improves the social capital and professional networking abilities of students.

The strong correlation ($r = 0.718$) between collaborative learning and leadership competencies is particularly significant for Business Education students at Delta State University, Abraka, given their future role as teachers of entrepreneurship. Students who develop leadership skills through collaborative experiences are better equipped to facilitate collaborative learning in their own classrooms. Johnson and Johnson (2019) emphasized that cooperative learning structures naturally distribute leadership functions among members, and this study confirms that these experiences translate into tangible leadership development. The relatively lower mean score (3.25) for conflict resolution capabilities suggests that while collaborative learning enhances most aspects of leadership, students may need additional explicit instruction in managing interpersonal conflict. This finding is consistent with the challenges identified in the literature review, particularly Adebayo's (2021) observation that student teams frequently experience friction and clashing personalities that derail the collaborative process. The significant positive relationship between collaborative learning strategies and entrepreneurial intentions/self-efficacy provides strong empirical support for Ajzen's (2021) Theory of Planned Behavior. According to this theory, behavioral intention is influenced by attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Collaborative learning directly influences all three constructs by creating a social environment where entrepreneurship is normalized, positive feedback reinforces attitudes, and shared experiences enhance perceived behavioral control.

The highest mean score (3.50) for "Successful collaborative experiences have made entrepreneurship seem more achievable" is particularly noteworthy. This finding aligns with Bandura's (2017) concept of mastery experiences as the most potent source of self-efficacy. When students successfully complete collaborative business simulations or group projects, they develop "proof of competence" that strengthens their belief in their entrepreneurial capabilities. This finding also supports the work of Nwosu and Ibe (2022), who observed that in the Nigerian context, the "team-spirit" found in collaborative classrooms helps students overcome the fear of failure, significantly boosting their confidence in their entrepreneurial capabilities. The correlation coefficient of $r = 0.695$ confirms that the relationship between collaborative learning and entrepreneurial intentions is substantive and practically significant.

The relatively lower mean score (3.18) for "Peer support in group settings has reduced my fear of entrepreneurial failure" suggests that despite the benefits of collaborative learning, the fear of entrepreneurial failure remains a significant psychological barrier for some students. This finding has important implications for entrepreneurship educators, suggesting that explicit strategies for managing entrepreneurial fear and building resilience should be incorporated into the curriculum. As observed by Adebayo (2021), the high-stakes pressure of maintaining a strong CGPA may discourage students from taking creative risks, even in collaborative settings. The practical significance of this finding extends beyond the individual student to the broader Nigerian context. As noted by Olorundare and Oyelola (2023), graduate unemployment remains a persistent challenge in Nigeria, and the development of entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy through collaborative learning represents a strategic intervention to address this problem. By producing graduates with strong entrepreneurial intentions and the confidence to act on them, collaborative learning strategies contribute to the national goal of economic diversification and youth empowerment.

The findings revealed that:

1. Collaborative learning strategies significantly influence the innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills of Business Education students ($r = 0.742$, $p < 0.05$).
2. There is a significant positive relationship between the utilization of collaborative learning strategies and the development of leadership and networking competencies ($r = 0.718$, $p < 0.05$).
3. Collaborative learning strategies significantly affect the entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of Business Education students ($r = 0.695$, $p < 0.05$).

The study concluded that collaborative learning strategies are effective pedagogical approaches for developing entrepreneurial competencies among Business Education students. The findings provided empirical support for the theoretical frameworks of Social Constructivist Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Based on the findings, recommendations were made for students, lecturers, administrators, policy makers, and future researchers. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, providing evidence that can inform curriculum development, pedagogical practices, and policy formulation aimed at producing graduates with the entrepreneurial competencies necessary for economic self-reliance and national development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, Collaborative learning strategies significantly enhance the innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills of Business Education students at Delta State University, Abraka. Through exposure to diverse perspectives, cognitive conflicts, and peer feedback, students develop the capacity to generate novel business ideas and solve complex problems creatively. This finding validates the Social Constructivist theoretical framework and confirms the pedagogical value of moving from teacher-centered to student-centered instructional approaches. There is a strong positive relationship between the utilization of collaborative learning strategies and the development of leadership and networking competencies among Business Education students. Collaborative learning experiences, including team coordination, conflict resolution, and relationship building, effectively cultivate the leadership capabilities and professional networking skills essential for entrepreneurial success. This finding underscores the importance of structured collaborative

experiences in preparing students for the relational demands of entrepreneurship. Collaborative learning strategies significantly affect the entrepreneurial intentions and self-efficacy of Business Education students. The mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and social persuasion inherent in collaborative settings enhance students' confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities and strengthen their intentions to pursue entrepreneurial careers. This finding provides empirical support for the Theory of Planned Behavior and confirms the role of collaborative learning as an incubator for entrepreneurial intentions. The study has demonstrated that collaborative learning strategies, when properly implemented, can address the persistent gap between theoretical knowledge and practical capabilities in Business Education. By simulating real-world business environments and fostering the development of entrepreneurial competencies, collaborative learning strategies contribute to producing graduates who are not only theoretically knowledgeable but also practically equipped for the challenges of the Nigerian entrepreneurial landscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the following recommendations are made:

1. Lecturers should create supportive classroom environments where risk-taking and unconventional thinking are encouraged and rewarded. The study found that some students still experience fear of suggesting unconventional ideas, suggesting the need for classroom cultures that celebrate innovation and view failure as a learning opportunity
2. University administrators should provide institutional support for collaborative learning by ensuring adequate infrastructure, including modular furniture that facilitates group work, digital collaboration tools, and physical spaces for after-class group meetings. The study identified infrastructural deficits as a significant barrier to effective collaborative learning.
3. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should consider revising the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) for Business Education to include explicit requirements for collaborative learning and entrepreneurship education. This would ensure that collaborative learning strategies are systematically integrated across Nigerian universities.
4. Government agencies such as the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) should collaborate with business education stakeholders to develop guidelines and resources for collaborative learning implementation in Nigerian universities.
5. Government should support research initiatives that explore the long-term impact of collaborative learning strategies on entrepreneurial outcomes, tracking the venture creation and employment generation activities of Business Education graduates. Such longitudinal research would provide evidence for policy decisions and curriculum reforms.

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