

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND THE STIMULATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AND ENTERPRISE CREATION OF STUDENTS IN NIGERIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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### Abstract

*This study examined how Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum (EEC) stimulates Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI) among students in Nigerian Colleges of Education. Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework, we surveyed 647 students from seven Northwest Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Hierarchical regression analysis revealed that Personal Attitude ( $\beta=0.358$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), Subjective Norms ( $\beta=0.112$ ,  $p=0.017$ ), Perceived Behavioural Control ( $\beta=0.103$ ,  $p=0.017$ ) all have significant and positive effect on EI. To ascertain the impact of EEC taught courses on EI, the study integrated EEC as additional construct in the model which yielded a significant relationship ( $\beta=0.262$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The central finding of this research is the significant and positive effect of EEC on EI. Even after accounting for the powerful effects of personal attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, EEC contributed a unique and substantial explanation of variance ( $\Delta R^2 = 2.4\%$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The study model, significantly predict EI, explaining 50.1% of variance. Interestingly, while EEC quality strongly influenced intentions, mere course enrolment showed no significant effect. Findings emphasize that curriculum quality, rather than simple exposure, drives EIs, offering crucial insights for educational policy and curriculum development. The non-significant effects of gender, age, and level of study are encouraging, suggesting that the potential for entrepreneurship is widely distributed across student population and is not the exclusive domain of any demographic subgroup. The study has both theoretical and practical implications for Curriculum designers, College Administrators and policy makers.*

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**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial intention, theory of planned behavior, entrepreneurship education, Nigerian colleges of education, curriculum quality

### Introduction

Education is universally accepted as a mechanism for changing the behaviour and attitude of individual citizens, as well as equip them with the necessary skills to earn a living. This in turn contribute to the

development and growth of a country's economy and the World at large (Nana & Muhammad, 2017). Entrepreneurship education is widely recognized as a critical tool for fostering entrepreneurial intentions and enterprise development, particularly in

developing economies like Nigeria (Alinno, 2020). Nigerian Colleges of Education (CoEs) have integrated entrepreneurship and enterprise education into their curricula to equip students with skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for self-employment and job creation. In 2006, the government mandated all tertiary institutions in the country to introduce entrepreneurship education as general studies courses beginning 2007/2008 (Gujrati, Lawan, Jain & Tyagi (2019). To support the theoretical aspects of entrepreneurship education, the Federal Government of Nigeria gave directives to National Universities Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) to ensure that tertiary institutions establish centres for entrepreneurship development (Lawal & Omorodion, 2021). The centres are to teach entrepreneurship principles and practice as general studies courses in each institution irrespective of their course offering. This is with the aim of arming graduates with the necessary skills to create their own businesses and not rely on government for paid employment. Moreover, this will curb the rising national unemployment rate among the youth aged 15-24 years which stands at 6.5% in Q2 2024. The overall unemployment in the same period was 4.3%. The percentage of youth in Education, Employment or Training (NEET Rate) was 12.5% in Q2 2024. Time-related underemployment in Q2 2024 was 9.2% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

The inclusion of theoretical and practical aspects of taught entrepreneurship courses has not produced appreciable actual transition of graduates from the Colleges of Education into entrepreneurship and venture creation (Nana & Muhammad, 2023). This gap between education and action calls for answers to two questions. First, what motivates students' entrepreneurial intention leading to venture creation for? Secondly, what is the impact of taught entrepreneurial courses to the stimulation of entrepreneurial intention of graduates of colleges of education?

This study resorted to established motivational and behavioural theories to answer these questions- the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Azjen (1991). Although several models have been used to explain entrepreneurial intention, none have been as influential as Ajen's (Kautonen & Gelderen, 2013; Linan et al., 2016). This study adopts the TPB model of three constructs to investigate the influence of Personal Attitude, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioural Control on the entrepreneurial intentions of COE students in the Northwest political zone of Nigeria comprising seven States.

To ascertain the impact of Entrepreneurial Education Curriculum (EEC) taught courses on entrepreneurial intentions, the study added EEC as additional construct in the model. This integration aims to provide a more holistic understanding of the extent to which formal

training interacts with demographic, personal and social factors to shape entrepreneurial intentions for wealth creation. Thus, the study aims to ascertain the extent of the effectiveness and quality of the Entrepreneurial curriculum taught courses and close the existing gap of paucity of studies focused on the Colleges of Education especially in the Northwest geo-political zone of Nigeria.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the impact of Personal Attitude (PA) towards the Entrepreneurial intentions of students for enterprise creation.
2. To assess the impact of Subjective Norms (SN) towards the Entrepreneurial intentions of students for enterprise creation.
3. To assess the impact of Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) towards the Entrepreneurial intention of students for enterprise creation.
4. To assess the impact of Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum (EEC) towards the Entrepreneurial intention of students for enterprise creation.
- 5.

### Study Hypothesis

1. H1: Personal Attitude (PA) positively affects EI
2. H2: Subjective Norm (SN) positively affects EI
3. H3: Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) positively affects EI

4. H4: Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum (EEC) positively affects EI

### Literature Review

The Theory of Planned Behaviour has been extensively validated in entrepreneurial intention research across diverse contexts (Linán & Chen, 2009; Nabi et al., 2018). Meta-analyses consistently demonstrate that Personal Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioural (Zhang, et. al. 2022; Gregorio-Martinez, 2021). Control significantly predicts entrepreneurial intentions, though their relative importance varies by cultural and institutional context.

Hossain, Al Asheq and Arifuzza (2019), studied the impact of individual and contextual factors on entrepreneurial intention of Bangladeshi students. They used a survey questionnaire to collect responses from a sample of 270 university students. Data was analyzed through the use of Hierarchical Multiple regression to test the eight variables of the study. Risk taking propensity, locus of control, self-efficacy, job autonomy are classed and hypothesized as individual factors, while access to capital, social network and University entrepreneurship education program are the hypothesized contextual factors. Results showed that risk taking propensity, locus of control, self-efficacy, job autonomy and social networks were positively and significantly associated with EI. More importantly, entrepreneurship education program was highly positively significant in the prediction of EI. Access to capital was

found to be negatively associated with EI. The sample of this study is, however, considered to be too small for generalization in a very large, populated university.

Gujrati, Lawan, Jain and Tyagi (2019), studied the Entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian undergraduates from the three geo-political zones of Northern Nigeria using Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The sample size was 342 undergraduate students from six Universities in the zone using Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression. The study finds that all three antecedents of intention (personal attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control) are significant predictors of intention accounting for 20% of the variance. Olanrewaju, 2013, studied the influence of Demographics, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and locus of control as determinants of adolescent's entrepreneurial intention in Ogun state Nigeria using a sample of 210 students randomly selected from senior secondary three classes in seven schools. Data collected was analyzed using product moment correlation coefficient and hierarchical multiple regression. Findings revealed that locus of control, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and socio-economic status had significant correlation with the adolescents' entrepreneurial intentions, while age and sex were not. In a South African study,

Hlatywayo, Marange and Chinyamuridi (2017), studied the effect of psychological capital on entrepreneurial intention amongst prospective university

graduates in South Africa using the TPB theory and psychological capital on 270 final year students in the management and commerce faculty at a selected university. Results of hierarchical multiple regression modelling showed that entrepreneurial intentions is positively influenced by perceived behavioural control ( $\beta_1 = 0.367$ ;  $p = 0.009$ ). the results further showed that resilience was the only significant psychological capital construct that added unique variance in predicting entrepreneurial intention above and beyond, which is predicted by the theory of planned behaviour variables among the prospective graduates. However, the sample is considered too small and is moreover the study is limited to only one faculty in a university. This could pose problem of generalizability of findings.

In a Ukrainian study, Slovesik, Westhead and Matlay (2014), studied the role of cultural factors and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial mindset. Survey information from 321 students from three universities in the Ukraine was hand collected. Hierarchical multiple ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis was used to test relevant hypotheses. Business students taking part in ESE were compared to engineering students not taking part in ESE. OLS regression analysis revealed that students who cited a perceived desirability and perceived feasibility for entrepreneurship, initiative taking culture, and participation in ESE reported significantly higher intensity of

entrepreneurial mindset. Conversely, students who cited the capability beliefs culture factor reported significantly lower intensity of mindset. ESE interactions with perceived cultural factors as well as perceived desirability and perceived feasibility for entrepreneurship were not significantly associated with higher intensity of entrepreneurial mindset. Admittedly, the researchers acknowledged that, their findings are generalizable to the context of limiting the study to only three universities and the comparison of students who offer business and engineering courses.

Ezeh, Nkamnebe, & Omodafe (2019), studied the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates in a Muslim community of Zamfara State, Nigeria. They extended the TPB to include compatibility and educational support as predictors. The model was empirically tested and was analysed using the partial least square structural equation modelling technique on a sample of 312 higher institution students in Zamfara State. The finding shows that entrepreneurial intention is taken as a function of educational support, compatibility and

perceived behavioural control. The extended model has predictive relevance, and it explained 36 per cent of variance in entrepreneurial intention.

## **Methodology**

### **Measures**

We adapted established scales from Liñán and Chen (2009) and Liñán et al. (2011). Modifications ensured cultural and contextual appropriateness for Nigerian Colleges of Education. All constructs used five-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Entrepreneurial Intention (EI) was measured using five items assessing behavioral intention and self-prediction ( $\alpha = .871$ ). Personal Attitude (PA) used four items measuring entrepreneurial attractiveness and desirability ( $\alpha = .849$ ). Subjective Norms (SN) employed four items assessing perceived social pressure ( $\alpha = .831$ ). Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) included four items measuring perceived capability ( $\alpha = .771$ ). Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum (EEC) used six items evaluating curriculum quality and relevance ( $\alpha = .843$ ).

The scales for this study have high reliability scores as can be seen on Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1 Reliability Test (Cronbach’s Alpha) Results**

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of Items
1. Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	0.871	5
2. Personal Attitude (PA)	0.849	4
3. Subjective Norm (SN)	0.831	4
4. Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	0.771	4
5. Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum (EEC)	0.843	6

Source: IBM SPSS 27 Output

**Sample and Data Collection**

Data for the study was collected from a random total sample of 647 third year Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) students and final year students of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students offering three categories of disciplines

(Vocational/Technical Education, Sciences, Arts and other related courses). This study is about the entrepreneurial intention of ‘potential’ entrepreneurs (Piperopoulos & Dimov, 2015). Our sample fits this since our respondents are final year students of the qualifications, they are pursuing which is believed

**Correlations**

The Correlation matrix on TABLE 3 shows that all four predictor variables (PA, SN, PBC, EEC) are significant and correlated with Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), with strong coefficients ranging from .535 to .614. All four independent variables show a strong, positive, and statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) correlation with Entrepreneurial Intention (EI).

**Table 3 Correlations of Predictor Variables**

No.	Variables	EI	PA	SN	PBC	EEC
1.	Entrepreneurial Intention	1				
2.	Personal Attitude	.614** <.001	1			
3.	Subjective Norms	.591** <.001	.618** <.001	1		
4.	Perceived Behavioral Control	.535** <.001	.492** <.001	.674** <.001	1	
5.	Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum	.601** <.001	.533** <.001	.733** <.001	.716** <.001	1

Notes: N=360, \*\*p < 0.01.

**Hierarchical Regression Results**

TABLE 4 *Hierarchical Regression Results/Hypotheses Testing*

Predictor	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4-EEC Interaction	Hypothesis
Demographics	R <sup>2</sup> = .004				
PA		β = .378***	β = .358***		H1: <b>Strongly Supported</b>
SN		β = .220***	β = .112*		H2: <b>Supported</b>
PBC		β = .209***	β = .103*		H3: <b>Supported</b>
EEC			β = .262***		H4: <b>Strongly Supported</b>
R	.061	.690	.708	.709	
R <sup>2</sup>	.004	.476	.501	.503	
ADJ. R <sup>2</sup>	-.004	.470	.494	.494	
R <sup>2</sup> Change	.004	.473***	.024***	.003	

\*\*\*p < 0.001, \*p < 0.05

- Model 1 (Demographics):** R<sup>2</sup> = .004. Demographics alone explain only 0.04% of the variance in EI.
- Model 2 (TPB):** R<sup>2</sup> = .473. Adding the TPB constructs explains a massive 47.3% of the variance in EI. The R<sup>2</sup> Change is highly significant (p <

- .001). This shows the TPB model is incredibly powerful in our context.
- Model 3 (EEC):** R<sup>2</sup> = .501. This means that the model (PA, SN, PBC, EEC) and demographics explains 50.1% of the variance in students' Entrepreneurial intentions. Adding EEC explains a

further 2.4% of the variance. This change is highly significant ( $p < .001$ ). **This is the key result that supports H4.** It proves that the Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum provides a significant, unique contribution to predicting intention, over and above the established psychological factors of the TPB model.

The finding of this study with regards to EEC is supported by the findings of Papa, et. al., 2018<sub>a</sub>, Ezeh, et. al., 2019; Chukwuma, & Ogbeide, 2017; Hossain, et. al., 2019 who all found strong positive relationship with EI.

- (a). T-test on Level of study shows that even though NCE students have a slightly higher means than B.Ed. students (20.22 vs. 20.05) the difference is not significant ( $p=0.656$ ).
- (b). T-test on Level of study shows that even though NCE students have a slightly higher means than B.Ed. students (20.22 vs. 20.05) the difference is not significant ( $p=0.656$ ).
- (c). Anova test on age groups reports a non-significant difference across age groups ( $F= 2.420$ ,  $p = 0.065$ ).
- (d). For Department/ Course of study, A one-way ANOVA revealed a **significant difference** in EI across departments ( $p = 0.032$ ). Post-hoc (Tukey) tests showed that students in the Sciences (Mean=19.00) had significantly

- 4. Model 4 (Interaction: EEC x Course):**  $R^2 = .503$ . The interaction term adds a negligible and insignificant amount of variance ( $R^2$  Change = .003,  $p=.068$ ).

#### Group Comparisons (T-Tests & ANOVA)

Table 5 shows demographic group comparisons in relation to EI.

- (a). Independent t-test for Gender shows that even though males have a slightly higher means than female students (males-20.36; females-19.88), there is no significant difference in intention between them ( $p=$  than B.Ed. students (20.22 vs. 20.05) the difference is not significant ( $p=0.656$ ).

lower EI than those in Vocational/Technical (Mean=20.33) and Arts/Others (Mean=20.37) departments.

- (e). Independent T-tests on students who took entrepreneurship courses and those who did not show an insignificant difference in their *average* entrepreneurial intention ( $p =0.840$ ) and an extremely small effect size (Cohen's  $d$  0.040).

#### Discussion of Key Findings

This study investigated the factors responsible for the stimulation of

entrepreneurial intentions of students in seven Colleges of Education in the

Northwest geo-political zone of Nigeria, with a specific focus on the role of the entrepreneurship education curriculum within the established Theory of Planned Behaviour framework. The findings robustly confirm the relevance of the TPB model in this context and significantly extend it by demonstrating the critical, additive role of formal entrepreneurship education taught courses in the target Colleges.

### **The Power of the Theory of Planned Behaviour**

Results show a strong, positive relationships between Personal Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioural Control, and Entrepreneurial Intention align with a vast body of global literature (e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009, Sabah, 2016; Hlatywayo, et. al., 2017; Hossain, et. al., 2019). In the Nigerian Colleges of Education context, this implies that students who have a favourable personal evaluation of entrepreneurship, feel supported by their family and peers, and believe in their own capabilities to start a business, are substantially more likely to form the intention to do so. Among these, Personal Attitude ( $\beta = 0.358$ ) emerged as the strongest predictor within the TPB constructs, highlighting the primacy of cultivating a positive mindset and desirability towards entrepreneurship as a career path.

### **The Catalytic Role of Entrepreneurship Education**

The central finding of this research is the

significant and positive effect of the Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum (EEC) on entrepreneurial intentions (H4 supported). Even after accounting for the powerful effects of personal attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, the EEC contributed a unique and substantial explanation of variance ( $\Delta R^2 = 2.4\%$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the EEC does not merely work *through* the TPB constructs but has a direct effect on intention, perhaps by providing concrete knowledge, reducing perceived uncertainty, and making the entrepreneurial pathway seem more tangible and achievable. The curriculum acts as a crucial intervention tool that can systematically enhance EI.

### **The non-determinant role of the Demographics**

The non-significant effects of gender, age, and level of study on EI are encouraging. They suggest that the potential for entrepreneurship is widely distributed across the student population and is not the exclusive domain of any demographic subgroup (Adiputra & Nataherwin, 2025; Zhang et.al. 2022). This finding reinforces the argument for universal, rather than targeted, entrepreneurship education programs within Colleges of Education. However, the significant difference found between students from science disciplines and others warrant further investigation. It may point to a need for tailoring pedagogical approaches in science departments to better connect scientific innovation with commercial opportunity.

### The Moderating Effect (Model 4 Insight)

While the regression analysis demonstrated a strong positive relationship between Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum (EEC) quality and entrepreneurial intentions, the independent t-test revealed no significant difference in EI between students who had taken an entrepreneurship course and those who had not. This apparent paradox underscores a crucial distinction between mere exposure to entrepreneurship education and the perceived quality of that education.

The findings suggest that the content, delivery, and perceived relevance of the curriculum—as captured by the EEC scale—are more consequential for stimulating entrepreneurial intention than simple enrolment in a course. This aligns with pedagogical literature emphasizing that educational outcomes depend more on instructional quality and student engagement than on nominal participation (Iwu, et.al., 2024; Fems, et. al., 2020; Fan et. al. 2024; Chukuma & Ogbeide, 2017).

The near-significant interaction effect in Model 4 ( $p = 0.068$ ) further suggests that curriculum quality perceptions may operate through different pathways—either through direct course experience or through indirect environmental exposure. The very high enrolment rate (96%) in entrepreneurship courses at these institutions creates an educational ecosystem where even non-participating students may be influenced by the prevailing entrepreneurial culture.

These results argue for educational policies that focus on continuous improvement of curriculum quality, pedagogical approaches, and practical relevance, rather than simply expanding course availability. Institutions should prioritize **how** entrepreneurship is taught rather than merely ensuring **that** it is taught.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study successfully integrates a specific educational variable (EEC) into the TPB model, enhancing its explanatory power in an educational context. The study was conducted in seven colleges of education in the northwest geopolitical zone viz Shehu Shagari COE, FCET Gusau, FCET Bichi, FCET Zaria, COE Maru, Adamu Augie COE Kebbi, and FCE Katsina. The study validates the model in the under-researched setting of Nigerian Colleges of Education. The study recommends as follows:

1. Curriculum Development: Education policy planners should focus on continuous improvement of curriculum quality, and practical relevance rather than simple course availability.
2. Pedagogical Enhancement: Streamline entrepreneurship education to target all TPB constructs simultaneously. Use inspirational case studies, successful entrepreneur involvement, and hands-on learning. Positive attitude can be instilled and fostered through inspirational case studies. Subjective norms can be strengthened through involving successful community

business entrepreneurs and alumni in the teaching process. Perceived Behavioural Control can be built through hands-on-experiential learning and students' competition for creating business plans and simulations.

3. Departmental Tailoring: Science students for this sample showed lower intentions compared to students of other departments. Therefore, there is need for instructors to enhance their delivery of entrepreneurship education to ensure it impacts on all students.
4. With the considerable number of students, Colleges of Education should be recognised as a vital source of not only entrepreneurial teachers but of entrepreneurs which can significantly yield returns in terms of enterprise and wealth creation. Therefore, the institutions should be supported with funding and training for educators.
5. Laboratories, workshops must be well equipped and supplied with materials necessary for practical and hand-on-experience.

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### Limitations and Future Research

This study is cross-sectional, establishing relationships but not causality. Longitudinal studies tracking students' intentions before and after exposure to the curriculum would be valuable. Furthermore, the homogenous sample in terms of course taking (96%) limited the analysis of its moderating effect. Future research could explore the specific pedagogical components of the EEC (e.g., theoretical vs. practical) that are most effective in stimulating intention and, ultimately, venture creation.

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