

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AND UNDERGRADUATES' INTENTION TO BECOME ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines entrepreneurial education and undergraduates' intention to become entrepreneurs. A descriptive survey design was used to achieve the objectives of the study. Six (6) universities in southwest, Nigeria were selected to make up the study's population. Two research questions and two hypotheses were adopted for the study. Data was collected from respondents through a structured Google form questionnaire, and analyse using descriptive and inferential statistics. The tool used for analysis was Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. The findings of this study revealed that entrepreneurial education has a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intention. This implies that the presence of entrepreneurial education in universities motivates the students to consider a career in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the findings revealed that personal encouragement from mentors, desire for financial independence, having passion for a specific idea and guidance from the entrepreneurship centre are factors that contribute to undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions. The findings also revealed that entrepreneurial skills are very important for student's future career success. This implies that universities should offer more opportunities for students to develop entrepreneurial skills to aid job creation, rather than job hunting. The study recommends that practical experience should be prioritized above theory in university entrepreneurial education. Universities should encourage entrepreneurship by providing a platform for successful entrepreneurs to share their experiences and insightS

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Education, Entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial Iintention

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is considered a key factor in the economic development of a nation. It is a critical stepping stone for creating competitive advantage in a dynamic business environment, sustainable economic growth and development (O'Connor, 2013). As a result of its growing significance as a vital economic driver with substantial potential for job generation, Iwu (2018)

suggested that nations especially developing countries should be encouraged to create a conducive environment for entrepreneurship to thrive. Other studies such as Donovan, Maritz, and McLellan (2013), Agbi and Odutola (2023) have also suggested that embracing and stimulating entrepreneurship and innovation education and training will provide nations with more entrepreneurs and innovators. Therefore, it is not unlikely that

entrepreneurship education and enterprise creation have positive relationship with economic development (Cheung, 2008). In appreciation of the critical role education and entrepreneurship could play in development of a country, the intention of undergraduates to embrace entrepreneurship becomes very important. Interestingly, scholars such as Oosterbeek et al., (2016) have reported that exposure to entrepreneurship education programs positively affects undergraduates' attitudes towards entrepreneurship and their intention to start a business.

Statement of the Problem

One notable challenge confronting developing nations of the world, especially Nigeria is how to get their youth gainfully employed. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), a Nigerian government agency that collects data on different sectors of the economy reported 53.40% youth unemployment in its report released 2022 and published online, April 11, 2023 (www.nigerianstat.gov.ng). The Bureau also reported that between 2006 to 2020 unemployment in Nigeria increased from 5.10% to 33.30% (www.nigerianstat.gov.ng). The consequence of this deficiency has always been associated with diverse forms of criminality, violence and numerous social vices which youth are noted for (Akanbi, 2013). Arising from such adverse situation, scholars such as Fems, Abara and Poazi, (2016) therefore noted that after 10 years of entrepreneurship education, the objectives of

the programme are far from being reached or seem to be yielding no positive results as over 80% of graduates in the country still grapple with unemployment long after graduation instead of creating jobs for themselves and employing others. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate if entrepreneurial education influences undergraduates' intention to become entrepreneurs with a focus on South west, Nigeria. We thus set out to find answers to the following research questions:

- i. How does the presence of entrepreneurial education programs in universities influence the intention of students to become entrepreneurs?
- ii. What are the key factors that contribute to undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions?

Research Hypotheses

The study poses the following research hypotheses:

- H1:** Undergraduates who have received entrepreneurial education are more likely to have a higher intention to become entrepreneurs compared to those who do not receive such education.
- H2:** The presence of supportive entrepreneurial education facilities within universities will positively influence students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial Education

Entrepreneurial education is a practical education that cultivates innovative talents with basic literacy in entrepreneurial skills and continuously injects new power into the innovation and entrepreneurship in a country (Lv et al., 2021; Hahn et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial education seeks to establish and maintain a working economy that creates jobs and fights poverty (Chukwuma & Ogbiede, 2017). Entrepreneurial education is based on the philosophy of increasing knowledge about business, training of skills required to establish a business, and positive attitude towards self-employment (Asghar et al., 2019). The goal of entrepreneurial education is to transform the society Ratten and Usmanij, (2021) and leverage the ability of individuals and prepare for a new generation of entrepreneurs (Modenov et al., 2018).

Furthermore, with entrepreneurial education in place, undergraduates will have the ability to acquire some entrepreneurial traits which can influence graduates' entrepreneurship behavior (Ediagbonya, 2013). The traditional pedagogical and lecture method in delivering lectures have also not been innovative to enhance entrepreneurship skills, creativity and innovation in the students. Oseni et al., (2015) argued that the prevailing curricular in higher education institution are not designed to prepare students to become entrepreneurs that can compete favorably in modern business environment but to become civil servants.

Rideout and Gray, (2013) also argued that entrepreneurial courses often overlook essential skills like problem-solving, resource utilization, venture building, networking, sales, and team building.

The teaching methods in higher institutions are largely theoretical, both the educators and students agreed that the system needs a reform (Afolabi, 2016). Quality entrepreneurial education is crucial for reducing unemployment, improving productivity, increasing wages, fostering technological innovation, and promoting economic growth in a country experiencing rising mediocrity (Simkovic, 2012). Balam (2014) included visits and attachments to companies to gain practical experiences.

The scope of entrepreneurial education goes beyond teaching students how to start their own independent businesses. Beyond that, it involves a variety of factors including developing into an autonomous and creative thinker, taking calculated chances, appreciating diversity, and taking responsibility in order to establish and foster a learning environment that encourages entrepreneurial traits and behaviors (Manish & Singh, 2015). Similarly, Madu et al., (2020) are of the opinion that entrepreneurship is further propelled by a multitude of variables, including the willingness, talent, ability, capacity, and drive to recognize and seize an investment opportunity.

According to Blenker et al. (2011), there has been a notable surge in the development of training courses focusing on the three dimensions of entrepreneurial education: teaching about the entrepreneur (about), teaching to become an entrepreneur (for), and educating through committing to entrepreneurial (through). Entrepreneurship education can be divided into three approaches: educating about, for, and through entrepreneurship (Heinonen & Hytti, 2010; O'Connor, 2013). This approach relies on the broader articulation of entrepreneurship by connecting entrepreneurial characteristics, processes and experiences (Lackeus, 2015).

Impact of Entrepreneurial Education on Entrepreneurial Intention

Previous research such as Purwana et al., (2015) believe that entrepreneurial education may lead to increasing motivation and intention to be an entrepreneur. The importance of entrepreneurial intention is to arouse the interest of students to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial education has impact on students' entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, high level of entrepreneurial intention effectively predicts entrepreneurial entry (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014). Izedonmi and Okafor (2010) examine the effect of entrepreneurship on students' entrepreneurial intentions and found that exposure to entrepreneurship education for a period of four years aggravates entrepreneurial intention of students. Similarly, Souitaris (2017) reiterates that attending entrepreneurial classes and

training has a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurship education stimulates students' entrepreneurial inspiration, accumulates knowledge, and cultivates skills, enabling them to enhance their intentions and participate in entrepreneurship (Muhammed & Sheikh-Ali, 2021; Nabi & Holden, 2018). Entrepreneurship education has a favorable effect on entrepreneurial mentality, which indicates that it will actively influence students' perspectives or enhance their capacity to capitalize on chances in challenging circumstances (Saadat et al., 2022). The entrepreneurial inclinations of young people are positively and significantly impacted by their attitude toward starting their own business (Wijayati, Fazlurrahman, Hadi & Arifah 2021). Entrepreneurial attitude, a subjective cognition, directly influences an individual's intention to start a business and can change under various conditions, influencing their entrepreneurial intention (Wang et al., 2023). Entrepreneurial attitude has received attention because it is a prerequisite for developing creative thinking, which can awake the internal creative potential of individuals which the key factor affecting their entrepreneurial intention (Sulung, et al., 2020).

Competence of Lecturers and Student Intention

Scholars including Mykolenko et al. (2022), reported that education and teaching strategies positively affect students' entrepreneurial attitudes and perceptions.

Previous studies have argued that entrepreneurship education is a multidimensional construct that includes the role of entrepreneurship lecturers, and adequacy of instructional materials and curriculum content (Falkäng & Alberti, 2000; Nwambam et al., 2018; Lv et al., 2021). However, Nwambam et al., (2018) found that those who facilitate entrepreneurship education are few in Nigerian universities. However, very few studies have examined the link between the perceived competence of lecturers and the entrepreneurship intention of students in higher education institutions in the context of Nigeria (Unachukwu, 2010; Nwambam, et al., 2018; Mamman, et al., 2018; Scent, et al., 2020; Olofinyehun, et al., 2022).

Methodology

The study investigates entrepreneurial education and undergraduates' intentions to become entrepreneurs focusing on six selected universities in South west Nigeria: University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, Lagos State University, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Kola Daisi University, and Chrisland University. These

institutions were chosen for their specialized entrepreneurial programs. The research employed a survey design to systematically collect data from a population of approximately 183,000 students across these universities, utilizing stratified and simple random sampling techniques to derive a sample size of 399, as calculated using the Taro Yamane formula. This sample was slightly increased to 450 to account for incomplete responses, ultimately yielding 423 valid questionnaires for analysis. The questionnaire comprised five sections: assessing demographic data, entrepreneurial education programs, factors influencing intentions, perceptions of entrepreneurial skills, and individual characteristics. To ensure face and content validity of the instrument, a number of entrepreneurs and senior academics were consulted to offer suggestions on the study instrument (questionnaire). Data were analysed through both descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 29, with significance tested at the 0.05 level. The aim was to ascertain the correlation between entrepreneurial education and students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

The distribution of the respondents according to demographic presentation in Table 1

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	202	47.8
Female	221	52.2
Total	423	100.0
Age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16-20 years	98	23.2
21-25 years	242	57.2

26-30 years	59	13.9
31-35 years	16	3.8
36 years and above	8	1.9
Total	423	100.0
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	380	89.8
Married	33	7.8
Others	10	2.4
Total	423	100.0
Choice of university	Frequency	Percentage (%)
KolaDaisi University	134	31.7
University of Lagos	96	22.7
University of Ibadan	87	20.6
Lagos State University	47	11.1
Chrisland University	11	2.6
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology	48	11.3
Total	423	100.0
Level of study	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100 Level	31	7.3
200 Level	101	23.9
300 Level	160	37.8
400 Level	107	25.3
500 Level	24	5.7
Total	423	100.0
Does your university have an entrepreneurship centre?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	120	28.0
Agree	208	49.2
Neutral	78	18.4
Disagree	16	3.8
Strongly Disagree	1	0.2
Total	423	100.0

The data on table 1 reveals that majority (52.2%) of the respondents were females

while (47.8%) were males. It implies that the respondents that constitute the larger

population of the study were females. The result further shows that out of the 423 respondents, majority 57.2% is between 21 and 25 years of age, followed by 23.2% respondents who are between 16-20 years of age, 13.9% of the respondents are between 26 and 30 years, 3.8% is between 31 and 35 years and 1.9% of the respondents are 36 years and above. This result, thus indicates that majority of the respondents are 21 – 25 years. The result also reveals that majority (89.8%) of the respondents are single, 7.8% is married and 2.4% constitutes others. It implies that majority of the students are single.

The table reveals that majority with 31.7% of the respondents are KolaDaisi University students, 22.7% is from University of Ibadan, while 20.6% is from University of Lagos. Other universities captured in the study show that 11.3% indicates Ladoko Akintola University of Technology, 11.1% is from Lagos State University, while 2.6% are Chrisland University students. It implies that majority of the respondents that

constitutes the larger population of the study are Kola Daisi University students.

The data shows that 37.8% of the respondents are in 300 Level, 25.3% of the respondents are in 400 Level, 23.9% is in 200 Level, 7.3% is in 100 Level, while 5.7% of the respondents are in 500 Level. It implies that majority of the respondents that constitute the larger population of the study are 300 Level students. The result reveals that 49.2% of the respondents agree that their university have an entrepreneurship centre. This is followed by a relatively large number 28.0% strongly agree, 18.4% is neutral, 3.8% disagrees while 0.2% of the respondents strongly disagree. Thus, it implies that 87.2% of the respondents acknowledge that their universities have entrepreneurship centres.

Testing of Research Questions

There were two research questions formulated to achieve the objectives of the study. Answers to these research questions are provided below:

Research Question 1: How does the presence of entrepreneurial education programs in universities influence the intention of students to become entrepreneurs?

Table 2: Entrepreneurial Education Program in Universities

S/No	Question Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	\bar{x}	S.D
1.	The presence of entrepreneurial education programs in my university motivates me to consider entrepreneurship as a career option.	154 36.4	201 47.5	50 11.8	9 2.1	9 2.1	4.14	.861
2.	I believe that entrepreneurial education courses offered by my university are valuable for developing entrepreneurial skills.	127 30.0	222 52.5	55 13.0	13 3.1	6 1.4	4.07	.823
3.	The practical experiences provided in entrepreneurial education programs at my university increase my interest in starting my own business.	107 25.3	215 50.8	86 20.3	11 2.6	4 0.9	3.97	.804
4.	The resources available through entrepreneurial education programs at my university positively influence my intention to become an entrepreneur.	100 23.6	209 49.4	98 23.2	11 2.6	5 1.2	3.92	.821
Grand mean							16.1	3.309
Weighted mean							4.03	0.83

Source: Authors Field Report, 2024

In Table 2, the presence of entrepreneurial education programs in universities influences the intention of students to become entrepreneurs, as the data shows a weighted mean score of ($\bar{x} = 4.03$). The criterion mean of 3.5 and above is considered as positive and accepted while below 3.5 is considered as negative or rejected (Source: Authors Field Report, 2024). Therefore, we can conclude that the presence of entrepreneurial education programs in universities influence the intention of students to become entrepreneurs as majority of the respondents

agrees with the statements that the presence of entrepreneurial education programs in their university motivates them to consider entrepreneurship as a career option ($\bar{x} = 4.14$). Similarly, the data reveals that entrepreneurial education courses offered by their university are valuable for developing entrepreneurial skills ($\bar{x} = 4.07$), while the practical experiences provided in entrepreneurial education programs at their university increase their interest in starting their own business ($\bar{x} = 3.97$). On the resources available through entrepreneurial education programs at their university

positively influence their intention to become an entrepreneur ($\bar{x} = 3.92$) indicates a positive affirmation.

Research Question 2: What are the key factors that contribute to university students’ entrepreneurial intentions?

Table 3: Key factors that contribute to university students’ entrepreneurial intentions

S/No	Question Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	\bar{x}	S.D
5.	Personal encouragement from mentors has a positive influence on my intention to become an entrepreneur.	168 39.7	185 43.7	50 11.8	15 3.5	5 1.2	4.17	.858
6.	I believe that the guidance from the entrepreneurship centre in my university positively influence my intention to become an entrepreneur.	97 22.9	232 54.8	75 17.7	15 3.5	4 0.9	3.95	.796
7.	The desire for financial independence motivates me to pursue entrepreneurship.	129 30.5	209 49.4	67 15.8	11 2.6	7 1.7	4.04	.846
8.	Having a passion for a specific idea encourages me to consider starting my own business.	122 28.8	213 50.4	69 16.3	11 2.6	8 1.9	4.02	.853
	Grand mean						16.18	3.353
	Weighted mean						4.05	0.84

Source: Authors Field Report, 2024

Table 3 indicates that the key factors that contribute to undergraduates’ entrepreneurial intentions has a weighted mean score of ($\bar{x} = 4.05$). The criterion mean of 3.5 and above is considered as positive and accepted while below 3.5 is considered as negative or rejected (Source: Authors Field Report, 2024). Therefore, the findings reveal that all the items in the scale are key factors that contribute to undergraduates’ entrepreneurial intentions as respondents agree with the statements that: personal

encouragement from mentors has a positive influence on their intention to become an entrepreneur with a mean of ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), the desire for financial independence motivates them to pursue entrepreneurship with a mean of ($\bar{x} = 4.04$), having a passion for a specific idea encourages them to consider starting their own business with a mean of ($\bar{x} = 4.02$), and they believe that the guidance from the entrepreneurship centre in their university positively influence their

intention to become an entrepreneur with a mean of ($\bar{x} = 3.95$).

those who do not receive such education

Testing of Hypotheses

H1: Undergraduates who have received entrepreneurial education are more likely to have a higher intention to become entrepreneurs compared to

Table 4: Showing independent sample t-test in the higher intention to become entrepreneurs of students who have received entrepreneurial education and those who do not receive such education

Variables	University students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-value	Sig.
Intention to become entrepreneur	Entrepreneurial education	423	44.7228	7.24087	421	.012	Sig.
	Non-entrepreneurial education	423	46.4253	6.61473			

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in university students who have received entrepreneurial education and those who do not receive such education on the intention to become entrepreneurs (Df= 421; N= 423, t = .012, P<.05). From the above table, students with entrepreneurial education have a mean score of 44.7228 towards having higher intention to become entrepreneurs while students with non-entrepreneurial education have a mean score of 46.4253 towards having higher intention to become entrepreneurs. This implies that

there is a significant difference among university students who have received entrepreneurial education and those who do not receive such education to have a higher intention to become entrepreneurs.

H2: The presence of supportive entrepreneurial education within universities will positively influence students’ entrepreneurial intentions

Table 5 regression analysis for the difference in mean between supportive entrepreneurial education and students’ entrepreneurial intentions

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10497.458	1	10497.458	102.222	.000
	Residual	43233.724	421	32736.266		
	Total	53731.182	422			
a. Dependent Variable: entrepreneurial education						
b. Predictors: (Constant), supportive entrepreneurial education						

Table 5 shows that there is a difference in the mean between supportive entrepreneurial education and students' entrepreneurial intentions. The regression result shows that there is a positive influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable, $F(1, 422) = 102.222, P < 0.05$. Based on this, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the presence of supportive entrepreneurial education within universities will positively influence students' entrepreneurial intentions. This implies that when the university management makes available facilities and equipment for entrepreneurship education in the university, students are motivated to enroll in order to acquire such skills.

Discussion of the Findings

The aim of this study is to examine entrepreneurial education and undergraduates' intention to become entrepreneurs: a study of some selected universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses are addressed and the findings are summarized below.

The study reveals that the presence of entrepreneurial education programs in universities influences the intention of students to become entrepreneurs as majority of the respondents agrees with the statements that: the presence of entrepreneurial education programs in their university motivates them to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. This finding aligns with Iwu, et al (2020) who

conducted a similar study at a university in South Africa and reported that majority of the respondents are inclined towards becoming entrepreneurs; majority of the respondents believe that entrepreneurial education courses offered by their university are valuable for developing entrepreneurial skills; practical experiences provided in entrepreneurial education programs at their university increases their interest in starting their own business and the resources available through entrepreneurial education programs at their university positively influence their intention to become an entrepreneur. This finding is in agreement with the study by Saadat et al., (2022) which also noted that entrepreneurship education in universities enable students to acquire the requisite entrepreneurship skills and mindset.

The study also reveals that the key factors that contribute to undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions include: personal encouragement from mentors, the desire for financial independence, and having a passion for a specific idea encourage them to consider starting their own business. They also believe that the guidance from the entrepreneurship centre in their university positively influence their intention to become an entrepreneur.

The study further reveals that there is a significant difference in undergraduates who have received entrepreneurial education and those who do not receive such education in the intention to become entrepreneurs. This

finding is in alignment with the empirical research of Hong et al., (2020) which states that the higher the level of entrepreneurship education received by students, the stronger their efficacy and intention to become entrepreneurs. The outcome of the study shows that the presence of supportive entrepreneurial education within universities will positively influence students' entrepreneurial intentions. This implies that when the university management makes available facilities and equipment for entrepreneurship education in the university, students are motivated to enroll in order to acquire such skills. Our findings align with Kaya et al. (2019) empirical research which proves that entrepreneurial support increases the possibility of future entrepreneurial activities and intention.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that entrepreneurial education significantly influences undergraduates' intentions to become entrepreneurs. It emphasizes the roles of supportive university environments and individual characteristics, such as self-efficacy and risk-taking propensity, in fostering these intentions. Key factors include the desire for financial independence, mentorship, passion for ideas, and support from entrepreneurship centres. Additionally, students acknowledge entrepreneurship's role in job creation, highlighting a positive correlation between self-efficacy, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial intentions.

This study supports earlier findings by Kumara (2012) and Martin et al. (2013), both of which found a positive link between entrepreneurship education and students' entrepreneurial intentions. Additionally, Pretheeba and Venkatapathy (2018) confirm the significant impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial motives in India. However, it contrasts with Ibrahim et al. (2023) that entrepreneurship education does not significantly influence students' intentions in Nigeria, indicating a persistent low engagement in entrepreneurship among students despite educational programs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Practical experience should be prioritized above theory in university entrepreneurial education. In order to make sure students understand there should be a workshop and project assigned.
- ii. There should be introduction of entrepreneurial courses at all levels in Nigerian institutions, along with a thorough evaluation of the current curriculum of entrepreneurial courses.
- iii. Universities should encourage entrepreneurship by providing a platform for successful entrepreneurs to share their experiences and insights.
- iv. Undergraduates should be encouraged to take calculated risks

and develop a growth mindset to pursue entrepreneurship opportunities.

- v. Entrepreneurship centres should provide guidance and necessary equipment to students to develop entrepreneurial skills and intentions

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