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## DOES ENTREPRENEURIAL PASSION MATTER IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION?

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the mediating role of entrepreneurial passion on the effect of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intention of students in Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic, Birnin Kebbi (WUFP). The study used the partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) as a technique to run and analyze the data collected from polytechnic students using a sample of 350 students. The study found that entrepreneurial education influence entrepreneurial intention. Also, entrepreneurial passion mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention. The study concludes that entrepreneurial passion is a critical factor in strengthening and enhancing entrepreneurial education of students towards developing entrepreneurial intention. The study recommends that management of tertiary educational institutions and policymakers should focus on enhancing students' confidence in their abilities to successfully execute tasks necessary for entrepreneurship. This will strengthen students' knowledge of entrepreneurship, and nudge them towards entrepreneurial intention and actions, hence, directly affect their propensity to become self-employed and self-reliant.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention.

### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial intention is individuals' the aspiration to establish business enterprises. Such inspiration transform into action when an individual is able to meet necessary conditions for starting a particular business enterprise. Entrepreneurial intentions is central to the entrepreneurship process. It is the initial stage of individuals' entrepreneurial inclination (Dao et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial intention is also a commitment to start a new business (Krueger, 1993); and is determined by attitudes, individual traits and personalities, risk-receptiveness, self-efficacy and exposure to entrepreneurial activities (Ndofirepi, 2020; Hou et al., 2019).

Entrepreneurial intention is a strong sign of entrepreneurial potential. In Nigeria, the need for entrepreneurship education emerges in the mid-1980s. During the mid-80s, the Nigeria economy

experienced significant hiccups, and youth and graduate employment declined. This challenged the National University Commission (NUC) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) to initiate entrepreneurship courses at the tertiary level of educational, with a view to enabling students acquire skills necessary to establish and run businesses independently and successfully after graduation.

However, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reports that Nigeria's Entrepreneurial Activity Rate (EAR) was just about 16% (GEM report, 2013). This disappointing EAR requires a study to determine factors influencing entrepreneurial intention among Nigerians youth (students). Thus, this study aims to examine whether entrepreneurship education has impacted students' entrepreneurial intention.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention is an essential step in the foundation of an organization (Dao et al., 2021). It is a state of mind that guides individual actions towards creating and developing a new business (Agolla et al., 2019). It is a major determinant of actions towards new venture creation, though moderated family background, position in one's family, parent(s) occupation, education and training (Michelle & Tendai, 2016; Emmanuel et al., 2012). Entrepreneurial intention determines individuals entrepreneurial the creation and management on new ventures aimed at generating profit-seeking (Nabil, 2021).

### Entrepreneurship Education

The main reason for introducing entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is to empower students, irrespective their discipline, with skills that will provide them opportunity to engage in income yielding businesses, whether they are able to secure paid employment in public or private sectors or not. Entrepreneurship education turns a graduate from being a job seeker to job creator (Aladejebi, 2018). The mandate of entrepreneurship education therefore, is to equip youths, with functional knowledge and skill, to build their character, attitude, and vision. Entrepreneurship education consists activities with the objective of fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, attitudes, and skills covering a range of areas such as idea generation, startup, growth and innovation (Fayolle, 2009).

Entrepreneurship education is the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies, concepts, skills and mental awareness required by individuals to start or develop their own business ventures (Michelle & Tendai, 2016). Hence, aside from teaching students about starting and running a business, entrepreneurship education also promotes creative thinking, innovation and a strong sense of self-esteem and discipline (Iwu et al., 2019).

### Entrepreneurial Education and Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurship education improve individuals' ability to identify market opportunities and perceived risk (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003). Entrepreneurship education provides entrepreneurship knowledge, entrepreneurship spirit, and improves entrepreneurship ability and psychological quality. Accordingly, entrepreneurial education positively impact individuals' entrepreneurial attitude and ability (Iwu et al., 2019).

By improving entrepreneurial knowledge and awareness, as well as entrepreneurial qualities and abilities; and by enhancing individuals' understanding of the entrepreneurial spirit, entrepreneurial education can enhance entrepreneurial intention of students. Entrepreneurial education had also been argued to positively influence entrepreneurial intentions (Hong et al., 2020). However, Kononuhwa and Chimucheka (2016) report that entrepreneurial education does not have direct significant impact on entrepreneurial intention. In the light of this inconsistency in the position of scholars, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** Entrepreneurship education has not significant impact on students' entrepreneurial intention.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** Entrepreneurial passion has not significant impact on students' entrepreneurial intention.

### Entrepreneurial Passion and Entrepreneurial intention

Entrepreneurial passion stimulate individuals to positively assess the results of entrepreneurship and to believe that they can achieve success in entrepreneurship (Hou et al., 2019). Passionate entrepreneurs are more assured in their evaluation of opportunities and in their entrepreneurial abilities; they regularly seek new markets; more actively explore new products and learn new knowledge and management skills (Cardon et al., 2013).

Hou et al. (2019) introduced the concept of identity centrality to the study of entrepreneurial passion, and orchestrated a change in perspective from an emotional point to cognitive view of entrepreneurship. Thus, intense positive feelings and identity centrality became seen as dimensions of entrepreneurial passion. Cardon et al. (2013) showed that identity centrality is an individually perceived entrepreneurial identity from a psychological point of view; and that individual's enthusiasm and interest in entrepreneurship activities is an intense positive feeling that can improves their entrepreneurial self-confidence.

Entrepreneurial intention also predicts entrepreneurial actions and behavior. Therefore, entrepreneurial intention is the total effort an individual is willing to make in order to start a business (Kautonen et al., 2015). It is believed that entrepreneurial education positively influence entrepreneurial passion (Temoor et al., 2021; Brownhilder, 2020; Luyu & Dandan, 2019); though entrepreneurial passion is argued not to have significant impact on entrepreneurial intention (Saeid, 2019). Therefore, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** Entrepreneurial passion does not mediate the impact of entrepreneurship education on student's entrepreneurial intention.

### Theoretical Foundation of the Study

The theory of planned behavior was used to underpin this study. The theory has been an influential model in offering a sound and generally applicable theoretical framework to improve the understanding and prediction of entrepreneurial intention (Nyock and Jean, 2014; Ajzen, 2011). The purpose of TPB is to explain how a person interest reflects the conduct or behavior of a person doing something (Ajzen 1991). Furthermore, the TPB can also be considered as the most suitable model that explained the students' entrepreneurship intention. According to this theory when people have time to plan how they are going to behave, the best predictor of that behavior is one's intention. In other word to predict what people are going to do, there is a need to know what they intend to do.

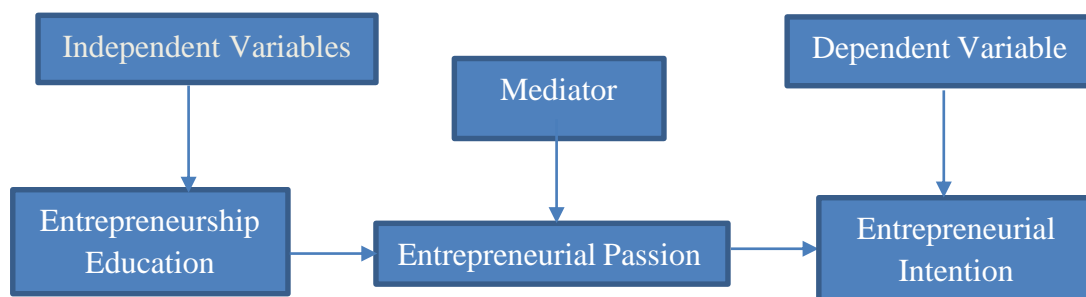


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework the study

Source: Researchers' conceptualization from review of literature (2023)

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## METHODOLOGY

The study employed cross-sectional survey research design. The populations of the study comprised 722 final year students of Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Birnin Kebbi. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table for sample size determination was used to arrive at the sample size of (250) which is the average of 248 and 254 for a population of 700 and 800 respectively. The study collected primary data from respondents (students of Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Birnin-Kebbi) using structured questionnaire.

In line with the suggestion of Hair et al. (2008) that a sample size could increase by 40 to 50% in order to handle the tendency of missing questionnaire as well as unaccommodating subjects. If the 40% was increase the new sample size will be (350). Thus, the study distributed 350 copies of questionnaire to respondents. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was also employed to arrive at the sample elements. However, only 280 copies were filled and successfully returned. 23 copies of the retrieved questionnaire had more than 7.7% missing values, hence, were deleted. Therefore, 257 copies of valid questionnaire were used for the analysis.

The instrument for measuring entrepreneurship education were 6 items adapted from Keat et al. (2011) and has a Chronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.71. 5 items were used to measure entrepreneurial passion. The items were adapted from Cardon et al (2013); and they had a Chronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.78. Furthermore, 6 items adapted from Linan and Chen (2009), and which had a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.78 was used measure entrepreneurial intention. The primary data collected, was analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling, and with the assistance of Smart-PLS 3.0 statistical software.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Assessment of SEM Path Model Results

This study utilizes a two-step process to report the results of SEM path. This is in line with the suggestion of Henseler et al. (2015). The two-step process utilizes in this study include: the assessment of a measurement model, and the assessment of a structural model (Hair et al., 2018; Henseler, 2013). Measurement model assessment encompasses determining individual item reliability, internal consistency, as well convergent, content and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2018).

### Individual Item Reliability

Assessment of individual indicators' reliability was accomplished by evaluating the outer loadings of individual construct's measure (Hair et al., 2018). The outputs signified that except for one item EP1, all other outer loadings met the recommended threshold of 0.5 and above (Hair et al., 2014). It was noted that of the 17 items that measured the constructs of the study, 16 were retained as they had a loading between 0.585 and 0.833. Only EP1 was deleted because its loading was below the established threshold. The precise values of the outer loadings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Items Loadings, Average Variance Extracted, Reliability**

Item	Loadinng	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
EE1	0.65	0.52	0.87	0.81
EE2	0.81			
EE3	0.83			
EE4	0.76			
EE5	0.66			
EE6	0.59			
EI1	0.65	0.52	0.86	0.81
EI2	0.72			
EI3	0.74			
EI4	0.76			
EI5	0.71			
EI6	0.72			
EP2	0.78	0.51	0.80	0.71
EP3	0.69			
EP4	0.66			
EP5	0.71			

Table 1 depict the result of reliability and validity, the composite reliability and the Cronbach's Alpha values for all the latent construct considered shows that they are all above the suggested threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014, Henseler et al., 2009). Precisely, as indicated in the Table 1, the values for the latent constructs for the two test of reliability employed ranged from 0.71 to 0.87, hence, higher level of reliability (Hair et al., 2014).

Following the reliability test, convergent validity was also assessed, convergent validity measures the extent to which two measures of the same concept are correlated (Hair *et al.*, 2014). This was accomplished by evaluating the value of the average variance extracted (AVE). All the AVE values as showed in Table 1 were greater than the threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014, Henseler et al., 2009). The least value was 0.51; this indicates that convergent validity was accomplished.

Next is the examination of the discriminant validity which indicates the extent to which a construct is really distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2014). *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)* of correlation was employed as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015). They argued that even though, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the cross-loadings are the most popular methods used by researchers for assessing discriminant validity, they do not reliably detect the lack of discriminant validity in common research situations (Henseler et al., 2015). The findings of the study showed that the HTMT ratio values are less than the benchmark of 0.85 suggested by (Kline, 2011), hence, discriminant validity was achieved. Table Two presented the HTMT ratio criterion for determining discriminant validity.

**Table 3: Test of Hypothesis (direct and mediating relationship)**

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta Value	STDEV	T-Stat	P-Value	2.5%	97.5%	Decision
Ho <sub>1</sub>	Eeduc -> EI	0.60	0.04	14.76	0.00**	0.52	0.69	Rejected
Ho <sub>2</sub>	EP -> EI	0.19	0.05	3.79	0.00**	0.09	0.29	Rejected
Ho <sub>3</sub>	Eeduc -> EP -> EI	0.11	0.03	3.60	0.00**	0.05	0.16	Rejected

\*\*\*p<.05; \*\*p<.01

Table 3 shows the result of the hypothesis one (Ho<sub>1</sub>) which signified a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention (EI) (t= 14, 76 p < 0.00). Also, finding of

hypothesis Ho<sub>2</sub> revealed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial passion and EI ( $t= 3.79$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ). Likewise, for the indirect relationships, the result for hypothesis Ho<sub>3</sub> indicates evidence for mediating role of entrepreneurial passion on the relation between entrepreneurial education and EI ( $t= 3.60$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ).

To further buttress the significance of the mediating relationship, the confidence interval method is also important due to the fact that the hypotheses may not be significant when there is zero between the lower bound and upper limit of the confidence interval that relies on bootstrapping standard error (Hair et al., 2014; Hayes & Preacher, 2013). It was also posited by Hair et al. (2017) that instead of just reporting the significance of a parameter, it is important to also report the bootstrap confidence interval that provides additional information on the stability of a coefficient estimate. The Smart PLS 3.0 has automatically generated the confidence interval estimation at 2.5 per cent lower level and 97.5 per cent upper level as presented in Table 3.

#### **Assessment of Variance Explained in the Endogenous Latent Variables**

Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value reveals the extent of variation in the dependent variable(s) that can be explained by one or more independent variables. However, the acceptable level of  $R^2$  value is research context specific. Hair et al. (2011) suggest an  $R^2$  value of 0.10 as a minimum acceptable level. Table 4 indicated the  $R^2$  values of the dependent latent variables.

**Table 4: R-Squared**

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>R-Square (<math>R^2</math>)</b>
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.53 (53%)

The research model signified that the independent variables explain 53% of the total variance in the dependent variable.

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

This study examined the role of entrepreneurship passion on the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention. Findings from the collected data reveals that entrepreneurial education has positive significant influence on entrepreneurial intention. These findings agree with those of Temoor et al. (2021) and Hong et al. (2020) that a positive significant relationship exists between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention. This suggests that entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurship passion significantly influence entrepreneurial intention, which in turn leads to venture creation.

The study also indicate that entrepreneurship passion mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention. This finding suggests that intense enthusiasm towards entrepreneurship plays a vital role and is an important mechanism that can transmit the effect of acquired entrepreneurship education towards developing entrepreneurial intention which is necessary for subsequent venture creation. This further suggests that regardless of level of entrepreneurial education acquired, enthusiasm and keenness towards owning a business serve as a good channel of transmitting the effect of acquired entrepreneurial education towards intention to engage in real venture creation.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study concludes that entrepreneurial passion is a critical factor in strengthening and enhancing entrepreneurial education of students towards developing entrepreneurial intention. This factor plays a significant role in developing entrepreneurial intention which is a strong predictor of entrepreneurial education and subsequent venture creation. Therefore, the study recommends that management of tertiary



educational institutions and policymakers should focus on enhancing students' confidence in their abilities to successfully execute tasks necessary for entrepreneurship; as this is capable of strengthening acquired entrepreneurship knowledge towards developing entrepreneurial intention which has direct effect on becoming self-employed. This study contributes to entrepreneurship literature by documenting mediating effects of entrepreneurial passion on the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intention of students which is very rare in the existing literature.

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