
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

This investigation focused on the effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduate students. A descriptive research design was adopted. A sample of 200 undergraduate students were purposively selected from three universities (Baze University, University of Abuja and National Open University of Nigeria). Structured questionnaire was used to elicit response from respondents. The instrument was validated by experts in entrepreneurship education. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result showed that entrepreneurship education has no significant effect on entrepreneurship intention of undergraduate students; while the availability of entrepreneurship resources has a significant positive effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions. The study concludes that entrepreneurship education is a necessity but is not fulfilling the aim of leading students into entrepreneurship activities. The study therefore recommends that government and relevant stakeholders should partner with Nigerian universities on startup capital, knowledge transfer, and a favorable business atmosphere.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial resources, undergraduate students

INTRODUCTION

Education is key to national development. It plays important roles in uplifting the standard of living of citizens of nations. This is because it unlocks economic potentials of the people; empowers and equips individuals in society to participate in, and benefit from their national economy. According to Agi and Yellowe (2013) education is important to the development of human resources, impartation of

appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. Thus, education becomes a veritable platform for tackling socio-cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological challenges facing nations.

Entrepreneurship education as part of the total educational system is the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for job creation. An entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seek employment. Therefore, there is a need to embrace this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make it functional. Quality entrepreneurship education is a weapon for fighting unemployment in Nigeria. It is worthy of note that when the issue of unemployment is tackled and won in Nigeria, it will as well lead to reduction in poverty, crime, cultism and other atrocities which emerge as a result of unemployment.

Unemployment in Nigeria has been an issue of concern. This problem was attributed to the fact that most graduates do not acquire needed skills and competence that will make them become self-employed. There is a great need to provide appropriate counseling, economic and social conditions to encourage the emergence of individuals with required entrepreneurial skills. There is need for entrepreneurship education and technology skill-oriented courses aimed at equipping learners with manipulative skills, which can make them self-employed and self-reliant, thus reducing the problem of unemployment in the country.

However, the nature of entrepreneurship courses demand provision of resources that capital-intensive. For example, entrepreneurship education specialists are expected to be teachers that can deploy appropriate teaching-learning process. However, where the traditional methods of teaching such as memorization and lecture methods are adopted during interactions with students, they end up producing students who are deficient in the practical aspects of entrepreneurship.

The introduction of entrepreneurship education into the university curriculum became an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment, self-reliance and poverty reduction. It is therefore surprising to note that despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education, there seems to be increase in graduates' unemployment. For instance, the unemployment rate in Nigeria among youths rose to 5.94% in 2021 (O'Neil, 2023; Statista 2023), while countries like Japan, China, India, and Korea have joined community of industrialized nations by strengthening their small-scale industries. Majority of graduates still roam the street in search of white-collar jobs, irrespective of their exposure to entrepreneurship education. This has raised a lot of concern on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education (Nwafor & Nwachukwu, 2012). Therefore, this study opts to investigate the effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduate students in selected universities in Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Theoretical Framework

Acquired needs theory (McClelland, 1965) and theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) are adopted as a baseline theories in this study. Acquired needs theory states that individuals' needs result from experience acquired through life. The theory shows a strong relationship between need for achievement, economic development and entrepreneurial activities. Acquired Needs Theory is an adequate baseline theory for this study as undergraduates who are still in school are sufficiently motivated to have high need for achievement in life through entrepreneurship education. When this happens, there is the tendency that majority of them (undergraduates) would decide to set up their own businesses upon graduation (Akhueomonkhan et al., 2013).

Theory of Planned Behaviour on the other hand, provides that the drive to perform a behavior is stimulated by intention that is influenced by some underlying beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). This means that the degree to which an individual sees a certain behaviour positively (attitude), or foresees that relevant others want them to engage in the behaviour (subjective norm) and believe that they are capable of carrying out the behaviour (perceived behavioral control), serve as direct determinants of their intention to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). This theory posits that intentions lead to behavior; however,

intentions do not always guarantee behaviour. The theory implies that there is a relationship between the intention to be an entrepreneur and the act of becoming one.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

The individual's attitude towards entrepreneurship education is a personal perception about entrepreneurship, motivated by assessment and inclination towards entrepreneurial behaviour (Alemu & Ashagre, 2015). Entrepreneurship education is practical education that cultivate innovative talents with basic literacy in entrepreneurship and continuously injects new power into the innovation and entrepreneurship in a country (Lv et al., 2021; Hahn et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship education seeks to establish and maintain a working economy that create jobs and fights poverty (Chukwuma & Ogbiede, 2017).

Olawolu and Kaegon (2012) provides that entrepreneurship education prepares youths to be responsible individuals and entrepreneurial thinkers by exposing them to real life learning experiences where they will be required to think, take risks, manage circumstances and learn from the outcome. Entrepreneurship education entails teaching students vital skills needed to build sustainable business enterprises, equipping learners with skills required for taking responsibility and developing initiatives (Ezeani, 2012).

Entrepreneurship education involves acquiring skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for job creation (Gartner, 2018; Mokaya et al., 2012). It increases human capacity development and results in greater number of new businesses (Drost, 2019). Scholars converge in the position that exposure to entrepreneurship education influence students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship and their capacity to sustain their own businesses (Vesper & McMullan, 2018; Drost, 2019). Hence, entrepreneurship education addresses the problem of unemployment and also ensure entrepreneurial human capacity for national development.

Entrepreneurial Intention

Intention is the predisposition to enact a given behaviour in the future. It describes readiness and willingness of individuals behave or act in a specified manner. Entrepreneurial intention is thus the mindset of a person that guides anticipated outcomes. Entrepreneurial intention is the motive in individuals developed towards becoming a job creator rather than a job seeker. This could be as a result of exposure on entrepreneurship. According to Krueger (2021), entrepreneurship anticipations ought to be considered in entrepreneurship research, in that career decisions are determined by deliberate mindset.

Entrepreneurship intention is the deliberate mindset that gives way for action and guides interest toward entrepreneurial behaviours such as establishing a business and becoming a job creator. Fridoline (2019) asserts that a person's tendency of becoming an entrepreneur is influenced by their entrepreneurial anticipations. Entrepreneurial intention is thus an individual's self-realized conviction to start a business and make conscious efforts to manifest that conviction (Thompson, 2019).

Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Intention

The rationale behind entrepreneurship education is to motivate student to become entrepreneurs upon graduation. Hence, students' exposure to entrepreneurship education affect their entrepreneurial behaviour. Zhang and Huang (2021) states entrepreneurial intention is a prerequisite to entrepreneurial action. Therefore, high level of entrepreneurial intention effectively predicts entrepreneurial entry (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014).

Izedonmi and Okafor (2010) examined 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) showed that attending entrepreneurial classes and training has a positive impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions; while Burke et al. (2002) found that cultivation of entrepreneurial ability through entrepreneurship education has a significant effect on individuals' decision to start a business.

Receiving entrepreneurship education is conducive to stimulating students' entrepreneurial inspiration, accumulating entrepreneurial knowledge, and cultivating entrepreneurial abilities and skills making it easier for them to enhance their entrepreneurial intentions and participate in entrepreneurship (Muñoz et al., 2020; Solomon et al., 2019; Nabi et al 2018). According to Ajufo (2013), entrepreneurship education is a form of empowerment that influence the behaviour and mindset of individuals towards entrepreneurial activities.

Also, Owusu-Ansah (2004), report that majority of graduates who became entrepreneurs were motivated by their exposure to entrepreneurship education; while Kumara (2012) revealed that graduates who develop positive attitudes and beliefs towards self-employment are mostly those who have received entrepreneurship education. Thus, we hypothesizes that:

H₁: Entrepreneurship education has significant effect on entrepreneurial intention of undergraduate students.

Entrepreneurship Resources and Entrepreneurial Intentions

It has also been observed that entrepreneurship subjects require availability of resources such as adequate classrooms, workshops, incubation centres, tools, machines, electricity and so on. Where these facilities are inadequate, the mode of teaching of entrepreneurial subjects could be more of theoretical than practical. This is in line with the report of Nwachukwu and Okpo (2018) that some universities are devoid of adequate resources for the teaching of entrepreneurship. This tends to negate the objective of entrepreneurship education, as such, this study tends to ascertain if the availability of resources for efficient and effective entrepreneurship education affect students' entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, the study hypothesized that:

H₂: Availability of entrepreneurship resources have significant effect on entrepreneurship intention of undergraduate students.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population consist undergraduate students in Abuja. However, a total of 200 undergraduate students were purposively drawn from three selected universities, namely: Baze University, University of Abuja and National Open University of Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit response from respondents. The questionnaire was designed in a 5- point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD). Using the Cronbach Alpha test, the questionnaire was tested for internal consistency and reliability which was found to be 78%, hence the questionnaire was considered reliable. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, section one comprised questions relating to demographic information of respondents while the second section comprised statements formulated in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

The data collected was analyzed in relation to the research questions and formulated hypotheses. Inferential statistics were utilized to test the formulated research hypotheses. The Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression technique served as test statistic. The test was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Entrepreneurship Education and Availability of Entrepreneurship Resources on Entrepreneurship Intention

Dependent Variable	Variable: EntI			
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-test	P-value
EntEdu	.019	.054	.269	.788
AQER	.182	.053	2.592	.010
C		.119	13.440	.000
R ² = .253	DW = 1.974			

Source: SPSS 23 (Fieldwork, 2023)

Table 1 depicts the model summary, which shows the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The adjusted R^2 value of .253 indicates that 25.3% of variations in entrepreneurship intention of undergraduate university students in FCT, Abuja are accounted for by entrepreneurship education and availability of entrepreneurship resources. Two hypotheses were formulated (in alternative form) at a 5% significant level to assess the effects of entrepreneurship education and the availability of entrepreneurship resources on entrepreneurship intention of undergraduate students.

The first hypothesis, which states that entrepreneurship education has significant effects on students' entrepreneurship intention was rejected (given that the significant p-value of .788 is greater than 0.05 in Table 1) that entrepreneurship education has no significant effects on student's entrepreneurship intention. This means that, despite the inclusion of entrepreneurship programmes across pedagogies in Nigerian universities, student's intentions to engage in entrepreneurship is still low.

The findings of this study are at variance with the report that entrepreneurship education influence entrepreneurship intention among graduate students (Owusu-Ansah, 2004). Our findings also vary from that of Kumara (2012) which showed a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and student's entrepreneurship intention. More so, Obisanya (2010) showed a 94% influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurship intention of students.

The second hypothesis speculated that availability of entrepreneurship resources significantly affects students' entrepreneurial intention. The hypothesis was accepted (given that the significant p-value of .010 is less than 0.05 in Table 1) that availability of entrepreneurship resources have positive effect on entrepreneurship intention of students. This finding agrees with the findings of Anwor (2002) that without competent teaching staff and adequate material resources, a well-funded education system will fall below expectation. Our finding is also in line with the result that of Martin et al. (2013) that entrepreneurship training has significant positive effect on entrepreneurship intention, skills, and outcomes.

Entrepreneurship education is a necessary but insufficient condition in youth's intention towards entrepreneurship. It is one thing to have entrepreneurship programs, and it is another to have the right apparatus to enhance student's intentions towards entrepreneurship programs. The inability to harness the two has been the bane to youth well-being and the growth of Nigeria's economy (Statista, 2023). Thus, despite the inclusion of entrepreneurship education to enhance entrepreneurship intention among students, the results have not been too encouraging.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Education is a driving force in human capital development and growth of national economies. The inability to equip undergraduate students across Nigerian universities with adequate entrepreneurship skills to engage in startup business has hampered the objectives enshrined in entrepreneurship programs by the National Universities Commission. This calls for a re-evaluation of the program by the University Commission through the use of efficient human resources, adequate facilities such as incubation centres where practical application can be carried out and the right environment to enhance the intention of undergraduate students towards startup businesses and self-sufficiency.

Thus, study concludes that entrepreneurship education has yielded no significant positive effect on intention of students to engage in entrepreneurship. The government and relevant stakeholders should partner with Nigerian universities on startup capital, knowledge transfer, and a favorable business atmosphere to enhance the growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) among undergraduate students across Nigerian universities.

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