IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS IN JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduate students in Jigawa state, Nigeria. Guided by the theory of planned behaviour, the research adopted a cross-sectional survey design involving 100 final-year students from a federal and a state university. Data were collected using the Undergraduate Students' Entrepreneurial Intention Scale (USEIS), validated and tested for reliability ($\alpha = 0.70$). Analyses were conducted using t-tests, correlation, and regression at the 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that students from the federal university recorded significantly higher entrepreneurial intention scores compared to those from the state university, highlighting the influence of institutional context. However, no significant difference was found between male and female students, indicating similar motivation across genders. Further, students' attitudes and subjective norms showed no significant relationship, suggesting that social support does not strongly shape entrepreneurial attitudes in this context. Lastly, perceived knowledge gained from entrepreneurship education did not significantly predict entrepreneurial intentions, implying that classroom-based learning alone may be insufficient to drive entrepreneurial ambition. The study concludes that while entrepreneurship education contributes to shaping intentions, its effectiveness depends on institutional ecosystems, experiential exposure and program quality.
Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Undergraduate Students.

Introduction

Apart from the pervasive challenge of corruption, one of Nigeria's most pressing socio-economic issues is the rapid growth of its youth population alongside persistently high unemployment rates (Abubakar, 2023). Recent estimates indicate that Nigeria's population is approximately 206 million, with nearly 70% falling within the university-age bracket (Premium Times, 2022). Out of this figure, about 151 million are youths, yet the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) reported a youth unemployment rate of 53.4%. In addition, the National Youth Survey (2020) revealed that fewer than 15% of Nigerian youths had attained post-secondary education. These statistics point to a looming crisis, underscoring the warning of Akinyemi and Moblaji (2022) that a large, unskilled, and economically unproductive youth population poses a significant national burden.

In response to these concerns, the Federal Government of Nigeria directed all higher institutions to integrate entrepreneurship education into their curricula. This directive aims to equip students with the skills necessary to create employment for themselves and others,

thereby reducing reliance on government jobs. The National Universities Commission (NUC) further implemented this policy by introducing a compulsory "General Studies" module on entrepreneurship education for all undergraduate students beginning in April 2007 (NUC, 2015).

Entrepreneurial intention, conceptualized within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), is widely regarded as one of the most reliable predictors of future entrepreneurial action (Krueger, 2005). Within this perspective, entrepreneurship education plays a critical role in shaping students' attitudes, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms, all of which collectively influence their decision to pursue entrepreneurial activities. By nurturing these factors, entrepreneurship education is expected to enhance students' entrepreneurial mindset and strengthen their likelihood of translating intentions into actual ventures. Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the role and effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in shaping the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduate students in Jigawa state, Northwestern Nigeria. Existing scholarship suggests that entrepreneurship education contributes to the development of entrepreneurial mindset, confidence, and self-efficacy, thereby empowering students to envision and pursue innovative career paths. Building on this foundation, the study seeks to provide empirical insights into how entrepreneurship education influences students' readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities, particularly within the local context of Jigawa State.

This study is situated within the context of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) Proposed by Ajzen (1991). TPB posits that an individual's behaviour is shaped by their intention to act, which in turn is influenced by two factors: attitude toward the behaviour and subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitude reflects an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behaviour, subjective norms capture the perceived social pressure from significant others to engage in or refrain from the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) while perceived behavioural control is the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of this research, TPB provides a robust framework for understanding among students. Entrepreneurial intention is conceptualized as the conscious and deliberate decision to start a new business. According to the TPB model, students are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions when they (a) hold favourable attitudes toward entrepreneurship, (b) perceive supportive social expectations, and (c) believe they possess the skills and control necessary to act entrepreneurially (Zhang, 2018). While TPB highlights internal psychological predictors of intention, this study argues that external factors particularly entrepreneurship education also play a crucial role in shaping students' entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurship education can improve knowledge, skills, exposure, confidence, and awareness, thereby reinforcing the three TPB components. For example, exposure to entrepreneurial learning may strengthen students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship, shift subjective norms by promoting supportive networks, and enhance perceived behavioural control through skill development and experiential learning.

Therefore, in addition to the traditional TPB predictors, this study proposes that entrepreneurship education serves as a significant external influence on entrepreneurial

intention. Integrating entrepreneurship education into the TPB model enriches the understanding of how both internal dispositions and educational experiences jointly shape students' willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Education, at its core, is about nurturing the potential within individuals and equipping them to meet societal needs. In contemporary Nigeria, the alarming rate of youth unemployment has necessitated a shift in educational goals from merely preparing students for paid employment to equipping them with entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance. Entrepreneurship education is more than just teaching how to start a business. Enu (2012) defines it as a set of learning experiences that enable students to identify and exploit opportunities in a dynamic environment. Emeraton (2008) emphasized that entrepreneurship education fosters critical attitudes and skills necessary for effective business creation and management. Oduwaiye (2009) argues that it cultivates innovation, confidence, and independence qualities essential for economic transformation. Moses et al. (2016) and Agu (2006) also stress the transformative power of entrepreneurship education in instilling passion, orientation, and practical skills. It plays a crucial role in preparing students to become job creators rather than job seekers.

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) refers to an individual's conscious commitment to starting a new venture (Krueger, 1993). Anal & Singh (2003) describe it as a mental inclination to initiate a business, often influenced by personal perception of opportunity and risk. Entrepreneurial intention is defined as a self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future. In general, depends on situational and personal characteristics (Krueger et al., 2000). Therefore, EI is a function of the university's educational, relational, and structural supports as well as of personality traits and one's own characteristics (Turker &Selcuk,2009).

Statement of the Problem

In 2007, the Federal Government of Nigeria made entrepreneurship education compulsory in all higher education institutions to address the rising unemployment among graduates and to foster a culture of self-employment. This initiative aimed to reform traditional curricula, which were often misaligned with the demands of the evolving economy and global trends. Despite the national implementation of entrepreneurship education for over a decade, there is insufficient empirical evidence on its effectiveness, particularly in the context of northern Nigeria. The impact of these programs on students' entrepreneurial intentions remains unclear, especially within institutions in Jigawa state. This study, therefore, seeks to assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduate students in Jigawa State universities. It aims to contribute empirical data that can inform policy and curriculum development.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduate students in Jigawa state. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine differences in Entrepreneurial Intentions Scores (EIS) of students from different universities exposed to entrepreneurship education.

2. To investigate gender-based differences in Entrepreneurial Intentions Scores (EIS) among students exposed to entrepreneurship education.
3. To assess the relationship between students' attitudes and their subjective norms.
4. To determine to what extent, perceived knowledge gain predict Entrepreneurial Intention.

Research Questions

1. What is the difference in Entrepreneurial Intention Scores among students from different universities exposed to entrepreneurship education?
2. What is the difference in Entrepreneurial Intention Scores between male and female undergraduate University students?
3. What is the relationship between students' attitudes and their subjective norms?
4. To what extent does the knowledge gained from Entrepreneurship Education predict students' Entrepreneurial Intentions?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the Entrepreneurial Intention Scores of undergraduate students from the two universities.
2. There is no significant difference in term of gender in the Entrepreneurial Intention Score (EIS) of undergraduate students from the two universities.
3. There is no significant relationship between students' attitudes and their subjective norms.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design, enabling the assessment of variables at a single point in time (Ary et al., 2010). The target population consisted of all 400-level undergraduate students in two universities in Jigawa State—one federal and one state-owned. A convenience sampling technique was used to select 50 students from each university, resulting in a total sample size of 100 participants. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled the Undergraduate Students' Entrepreneurial Intention Scale (USEIS). The scale was structured according to the Theory of Planned Behaviour and validated for both content and construct. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.70. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while t-tests, correlation and regression analyses were employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the Entrepreneurial Intention Scores of undergraduate students from the two universities.

Table 1: t–test Analysis of the undergraduate students E.I Scores

University	N	M	SD	DF	T	p - value	MD
A	50	4.42	.67	98	4.47	.000	.74
B	50	3.68	.957				

The independent samples t-test showed that students from University A (M = 4.42, SD = 0.67) reported significantly higher entrepreneurial intention scores compared to students from University B (M = 3.68, SD = 0.96), t (98) = 4.47, $p < .001$. The mean difference (0.74) indicates a moderate practical effect, with the 95% confidence interval (0.41 – 1.07) confirming that the true difference is unlikely to be due to chance.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in terms of gender in the Entrepreneurial Intention Score (EIS).

Table 2: t – test Analysis of Male and Female undergraduate students E.I Scores

Gender	N	M	SD	DF	T	p - value	MD
Male	50	4.54	.76	98	1.08	.302	.74
Female	50	4.38	.78				

The result above showed that, the Male students (M = 4.54, SD = 0.76) and the female (M = 4.38, SD = 0.78), t(98) = 1.08, $p < .302$. The mean difference (0.14). The p - value of .302 which is higher than the set value of 0.05 reported no significant variation in the entrepreneurial intention scores compared to indicates a moderate practical effect, with the 95% confidence interval (0.41 – 1.07) confirming that the true difference is unlikely to be due to chance.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between students' attitudes and their subjective norms.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of Undergraduate Students Attitude and their subjective Norm

Variables	**Correlation Coefficient (r)**	**Significance (p-value)**	**N (Sample Size)**
Subjective Norm & Attitude	r = -0.007	p = 0.917	100

The result shows a Correlation Coefficient, r = -0.007 which is very close to zero (0), indicating no virtually linear relationship between Subjective Norm and Attitude toward entrepreneurship among the students. The direction is slightly negative, but the value is so small that it is

statistically negligible. The result also revealed a Significance Level (p = 0.917**)**. The p-value is much greater than 0.05, which means the result is not statistically significant. The hypothesis stated there is no significant correlation between the two variables in this sample is accepted.

Hypothesis Four: Knowledge gained from Entrepreneurship Education does not significantly predict students' Entrepreneurial Intentions.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Perceived Knowledge on Entrepreneurial Intention

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	**B**	**T**	**P**
Constant	3.853	.342	-	11.27	.000
Perceived Knowledge	.139	.077	.127	1.80	.074

Model Fit: R = .127, R^2 = .016, F (1,198) = 3.221, p = .074.

Results showed that perceived knowledge was a weak, positive predictor of entrepreneurial intention, R^2 = .016, F (1, 198) = 3.221, p = .074. Although the regression coefficient for perceived knowledge was positive (B = 0.139, β = .127, p = .074), it was not statistically significant. This indicates that students' perceived knowledge does not meaningfully explain their entrepreneurial intention.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study revealed a significant variation in the entrepreneurial intentions between the undergraduate students of the two universities. The finding did show that institutional context can contribute to shaping of students' entrepreneurial intentions. Students in University A could have been more grounded in entrepreneurship education or more exposed to entrepreneurial ecosystems. Previous report like Campos et al (2021), Efendi et al (2023), supported the fact that institutional ecosystem affects entrepreneurial characteristics like entrepreneurial intentions.

The findings further revealed no significant difference between male and female undergraduates in their entrepreneurial intentions. This suggests that both male and female students are equally motivated to pursue entrepreneurial activities when exposed to similar educational environments. This outcome is not surprising in a country like Nigeria, where economic hardship and unemployment affect both genders without discrimination. Such socio-economic realities may have contributed to the lack of gender differences in entrepreneurial motivation. The study also revealed no significant relationship between attitude and subjective norm. This indicates that students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship are not strongly influenced by their perceived subjective norms, such as support from family, friends, and society. Contrary to the assumptions of widely accepted behavioural theories, this finding

suggests that social support may not be a critical factor in shaping students' attitudes toward venturing into business.

In addition, the results showed that perceived knowledge is not a strong predictor of entrepreneurial intention. This implies that entrepreneurship education alone may be insufficient to stimulate students' intentions to become entrepreneurs. The finding here agreed with Lin *et al*. (2023), who reported no direct impact of Entrepreneurship education on intention. It is reasonable to infer that factors beyond classroom knowledge such as experiential learning, access to resources, or the quality and delivery of entrepreneurship education might have influenced the outcomes. This finding stands in contrast to several previous studies that identified knowledge acquisition as a key determinant of entrepreneurial intention.

Conclusion

This study underscores the critical role of institutional context in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions, as evidenced by the significant differences observed between undergraduates in the two universities. The findings highlight that exposure to supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems and robust entrepreneurship education can meaningfully influence students' motivation to pursue business ventures. In contrast, the absence of gender differences suggests that broader socio-economic pressures particularly those prevalent in Nigeria motivate both male and female students equally toward entrepreneurship, regardless of societal norms or expectations.

The study further reveals that subjective norms do not significantly influence students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship, challenging assumptions in established behavioural theories and indicating that personal attitude formation may be largely independent of social pressures within this context. Moreover, the finding that perceived knowledge is not a strong predictor of entrepreneurial intention suggests that classroom-based learning alone may be insufficient to drive entrepreneurial motivation. This reinforces the need for universities to complement theoretical instruction with practical experiences, mentorship, and access to entrepreneurial resources.

Overall, the study contributes to the growing discourse on the multifaceted determinants of entrepreneurial intention, emphasizing that while institutional support is crucial, fostering entrepreneurship requires a holistic approach that extends beyond educational content to include experiential and environmental factors.

Recommendations

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

1. Universities, especially public ones, ought to improve entrepreneurship education by integrating hands-on learning, incubation centres, and mentorship access, as the institutional environment greatly influences students' entrepreneurial aspirations
2. Entrepreneurship education should include practical business simulations, partnerships with the industry, and community-related projects, since knowledge alone does not significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions.

3. Foster Inclusive Entrepreneurial Access: As no notable gender disparities were found, policymakers and educators should create entrepreneurship programs that are equally available and inspiring for all students, promoting inclusivity and greater engagement among youth.

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