



Entrepreneurship Education and Its Influence on Entrepreneurial Intentions: Evidence from Undergraduate Students in Kwara State University

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in the development of emerging economies by fostering job creation and promoting entrepreneurial activity. The present study aimed to examine the impact of entrepreneurship education specifically, the role of universities and the entrepreneurship curriculum on students' entrepreneurial intention. A quantitative approach employing a causal-comparative research design was adopted. The study population consisted of final year undergraduate students of Kwara State University, Malete, who had completed a compulsory entrepreneurship course. Using a stratified random sampling technique, 489 students were surveyed using a structured questionnaire, of which 373 responses were valid (response rate = 76.3%). The findings reveal that both the university's role in promoting entrepreneurship and the content of the entrepreneurship curriculum significantly influence students' entrepreneurial intention. The study recommends the integration of more practical and experiential learning strategies, which are essential for developing entrepreneurial competencies.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education; Entrepreneurship curriculum; Entrepreneurial intention; University role

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely regarded as a critical driver of economic development, particularly in developing countries, due to its potential to enhance employment opportunities. This impact is evident in regions where lower unemployment rates have coincided with increased entrepreneurial activity, as reflected by rising entrepreneurial initiative indices (Omri, 2020). Despite global recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship, Nigeria has witnessed limited progress in this domain. This stagnation may be attributed to limited policy prioritization and weak institutional support for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria, compounded by sluggish growth in key entrepreneurial indicators and the limited resilience of Kwara State economy in times of crisis (Dar, Ahmed & Raziq, 2017).

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report on Nigeria, prevailing societal attitudes have significantly influenced individuals' entrepreneurial dispositions. Studies have identified various determinants of individual entrepreneurial intent, with entrepreneurship education emerging as a pivotal factor. Empirical studies by Abbasianchavari and Moritz (2021), Aggarwal and Shrivastava (2021), Dar et al. (2017), and Yousaf et al. (2021) underscore the substantial influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial aspirations. However, despite widespread acknowledgment of its importance, limited empirical research has examined the comparative impact of entrepreneurship education relative to general education (Ahmed et al., 2020). As noted by Salavou et al. (2021), while general education's influence has been broadly explored, entrepreneurship-specific education particularly at the tertiary level remains under-investigated. Salavou et al. (2021) argue that entrepreneurship education exerts only a modest effect on entrepreneurial intent, warranting



further empirical scrutiny. Similarly, Vodă and Florea (2019) highlight the paucity of research focused on assessing the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial tendencies, a concern also raised by Hussain and Norashidah (2015). A recent survey by Hussain et al. (2021) revealed that Nigeria has one of the lowest proportions of students expressing intent to start a business post-graduation.

Despite existing studies, there remains limited empirical evidence on how specific components of entrepreneurship education such as university support systems and curriculum design influence entrepreneurial intentions among students in Nigerian public universities. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence from Kwara State University. Kwara State has faced a worsening unemployment crisis over the past few decades. The average unemployment rate in Kwara State increased from 5.7% in the 1990s to 6.8% in the 2000s, stabilizing at around 6% in recent years (Maqbool et al., 2013). Employment opportunities for university graduates remain heavily dependent on the public and private sectors. Consequently, there is an urgent need to reassess higher education frameworks to identify and address obstacles to entrepreneurial development. Investigating university students' entrepreneurial intention is imperative to formulating strategies that mitigate unemployment and economic stagnation. Given the limited body of research on this subject in Kwara State, the present study seeks to contribute to the discourse on entrepreneurship education by exploring its impact on the entrepreneurial intention of university students.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurship has increasingly become a focal point of discourse among economists, policymakers, academics, and students alike. Numerous conferences, seminars, and workshops are convened globally to emphasize its significance for national and individual development (Reuschke et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship is increasingly acknowledged as a vital strategy for promoting economic growth and sustaining national competitiveness amidst the pressures of globalization (Tih, 2019). Its contribution to wealth generation and job creation has been widely recognized (Asante & Affum-Osei, 2019). Furthermore, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in driving innovation, economic advancement, and competitiveness across nations (Raza et al., 2018).

Given the strong and positive correlation between economic growth and entrepreneurship education, as established in various studies (Salavou et al., 2021), entrepreneurship has become an essential area of research within education. University level courses on entrepreneurship are increasingly prevalent (Zheng et al., 2009), with both undergraduate and postgraduate students showing rising interest in the field (Fantaye, 2019). The diminishing availability of secure employment in the public sector has further heightened the relevance of entrepreneurial training (Reissová et al., 2020). The traditional view of university graduates as elite members of society who easily secure employment is no longer applicable in today's competitive labor market (Ridzuan et al., 2021). In light of limited job opportunities, many graduates seek professional education that equips them with the knowledge and competencies necessary to pursue entrepreneurship (Vodă & Florea, 2019). Accordingly, universities worldwide are incorporating entrepreneurial curricula to meet societal demands (Reissová et al., 2020). Beyond classroom instruction, universities are engaging in various initiatives such as training programs, conferences, and workshops to foster entrepreneurial growth (Aggarwal & Shrivastava, 2021). These initiatives aim to cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets and reshape student attitudes toward entrepreneurship as a viable career path (Muthurman et al., 2020).



Entrepreneurship education has witnessed exponential growth in recent years (Bharucha, 2019). Numerous studies affirm its critical role in the educational system, particularly in enhancing future employment prospects (Das, 2021). Entrepreneurship education influences individuals' propensity to start new ventures (Bazkiaei et al., 2020) and has been linked to increased interest in entrepreneurship as a professional alternative (Reuschke et al., 2021). Accordingly, higher education institutions are expected to play a leading role in imparting entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that are relevant to students' future careers (Bazkiaei et al., 2020). Ahmed et al. (2020) identified entrepreneurship education as a determinant of students' career choices. Despite the growing body of research, few studies have examined the specific relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial Intention particularly among students at public universities in Kwara State. This gap in the literature underscores the need for further investigation into the factors influencing students' predisposition toward entrepreneurship. Thus, the present study aims to evaluate whether entrepreneurship education sufficiently shapes the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Kwara State.

Universities are instrumental in advancing entrepreneurship education to support regional and societal economic development (Keat et al., 2011). According to Mahlberg (1996), educational institutions are well positioned to shape students' entrepreneurial beliefs and aspirations as they navigate an increasingly competitive environment (Parveen et al., 2018). Universities can serve as incubators of entrepreneurship by fostering a culture conducive to entrepreneurial growth (Israr & Saleem, 2018). As key providers of entrepreneurship education, universities have a responsibility to prepare students for entrepreneurial careers (Bharucha, 2019). Moraes et al. (2018) found that the university teaching environment significantly influences students' perceptions of entrepreneurship. Creating a supportive campus environment that provides resources and facilities is essential for promoting entrepreneurship as a viable career path. Even with adequate entrepreneurial training, students may hesitate to pursue entrepreneurship without a favourable perception of it (Oftedal et al., 2018). Therefore, institutions must foster an entrepreneurial culture that positively shapes students' career choices. Young individuals are particularly susceptible to environmental influences and seek relatable role models, making institutional support critical in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations (Salavou et al., 2021).

Exposure to entrepreneurship through formal education is a key factor in nurturing entrepreneurial attitudes (Hossain et al., 2019). However, due to its multifaceted nature, entrepreneurship education remains an evolving subject (Gamede & Uleanya, 2019). Despite increasing academic interest, ongoing debates persist regarding the optimal methods, audiences, and content for entrepreneurship education (Liu et al., 2020). These debates are shaped by various stakeholders, including instructors, student entrepreneurs, program designers, and evaluators (Reyad et al., 2019). Zheng et al. (2009) observed that entrepreneurship education varies across institutions, offered either as elective modules within broader programs or as standalone courses. Fantaye (2019) categorized entrepreneurship instruction into two approaches: education about entrepreneurship and education for entrepreneurship. The objectives of these approaches influence decisions regarding pedagogy and content.

Entrepreneurship courses aim to equip students with practical skills to navigate real-world business challenges. Muthurman (2020) highlighted the prevalence of conventional teaching methods, although their effectiveness in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies remains a concern (Gamede & Uleanya, 2019). Ahmed et al. (2020) advocate for informal, experiential

learning strategies within entrepreneurship curricula. Scholars propose various instructional methods, including traditional lectures (Liu et al., 2020), experiential learning (Das, 2021), case studies of practicing entrepreneurs (Coghlan, 2019), guest lectures (Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2019), and field visits (Byun et al., 2018). Despite differing methods and curricula, the overarching objective remains the same: to enhance students' understanding of entrepreneurship and inspire entrepreneurial interest.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Entrepreneurship Education and Intention

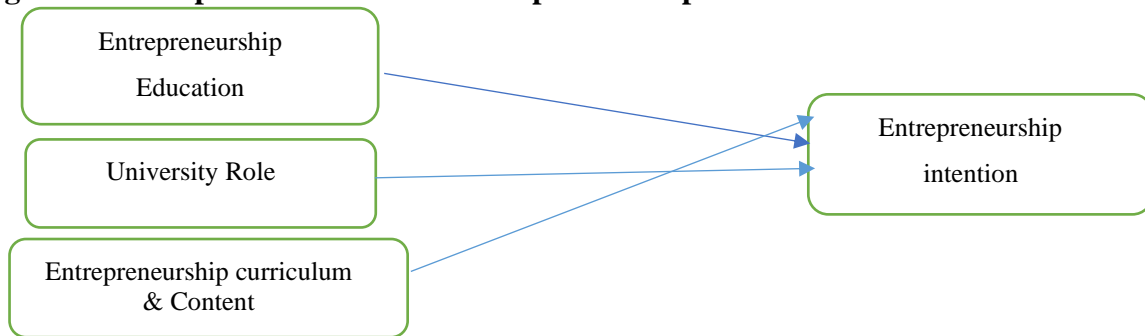


Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study, illustrating the relationship between university role, entrepreneurship curriculum, and entrepreneurial intention.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Ajzen (1991) provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how entrepreneurship education influences entrepreneurial intentions. According to the theory, an individual's intention to perform a behavior is determined by different factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of this study, entrepreneurship education plays a critical role in shaping these three components. First, it enhances students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship by exposing them to the benefits, opportunities, and practical relevance of starting a business. As students gain knowledge and skills, they are more likely to view entrepreneurship as a desirable career option.

Second, entrepreneurship education can influence subjective norms by creating a supportive social environment. Interaction with lecturers, mentors, and peers who value entrepreneurial activities can strengthen social approval and encouragement toward pursuing entrepreneurial careers. Third, entrepreneurship education improves perceived behavioral control, which refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to start and manage a business. Through training, practical exercises, and exposure to real-world business scenarios, students develop the competence and self-efficacy needed to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Therefore, by positively influencing attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, entrepreneurship education significantly contributes to the development of entrepreneurial intentions among students, as explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Methodology

In this study, participation was voluntary, and respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. Quantitative approach with causal comparative research design was used. The population of the study comprised of final year undergraduate students of Kwara State University, Malete who have studied entrepreneurship course as a compulsory subject. The population was heterogeneous in nature. Stratified random sampling technique was applied



and electronic survey questionnaire was sent to the 489 final year undergraduate students of Kwara State University, Malete, the justification for the final year student is as a result that all or many of them had have Entrepreneurship educational knowledge in the course of their studies. 373 forms were returned so; the response rate was 76.28%. “Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention” questionnaire which was originally developed by Keat et al. (2011), was used with permission for the present study. The questionnaire consists of 24 items with three sub scales, namely university role, entrepreneurship curriculum or content, and entrepreneurial intention. University role in promoting entrepreneurship education contain 11 items, entrepreneurship curriculum or content consist of 9 items, and entrepreneurial intention consist of 4 items. Each item was measured on *5-point Likert scale* from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Content validity was established through expert review and reliability of the tool was checked with pilot testing with 73 final year undergraduate students of Al-hikmah University. Cronbach Alpha as indicated in Table 1 below of reliability of the tool was .933, whereas, individual scale was also found reliable. The reliability values are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis of Study Scales

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha (α)
University Role to Promote Entrepreneurial Education	11	.848
Entrepreneurship Curriculum or Content	9	.867
Entrepreneurial Intention	4	.863
Overall	24	.933

Note. Cronbach’s alpha values $\geq .70$ indicate acceptable internal consistency.

Results

This section presents the results and findings derived from the analysis, focusing on the key patterns, relationships, and trends observed in the data. The aim is to clearly summarize the empirical outcomes while linking them to the objectives of the study. Emphasis is placed on the most significant results, their consistency, and their implications, providing a foundation for interpretation and discussion in subsequent sections. Linear regression was run to find the impact of university role to promote entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship curriculum on students’ entrepreneurial intention.

Role of University on Entrepreneurial Intention

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.752 ^a	.565	.563		.627

a. Predictors: (Constant), University role to promote entrepreneurship education

Quantity of variance that is described by the predictor has shown in Table 2. Here, R is representing the multiple correlation coefficients in between the dependent variable with predictor variable. In the above mentioned model table 2, R value is 0.752 indicate a great deal of mutual change by describing the amount of variance described by a predictor variable that is entrepreneurship intention, here the R square value is 0.565 which is indicating that 56.5% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention is explained by university role to promote entrepreneurship education or simply we can say that entrepreneurial intention is 56.5% explained by entrepreneurship education. On the basis ANOVA results (table 3), the overall model is significant (F-Statistics = 322.189 and sig = 0.00)



Table 3: ANOVA on Entrepreneurial intention

Model		Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	126.539	1	126.539	322.189	.000 ^b
	Residual	97.401	248	.393		
	Total	223.940	249			

- a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intention
b. Predictors: (Constant), University role to promote entrepreneurship education

Table 4: Coefficient of Entrepreneurial Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.193	.171		1.152	.262
	University role to promote entrepreneurship education	.951	.053	.752	17.950	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intention

Here, alternative hypothesis is accepted because table 4 shows, t-value is greater than 2 and sig. is less than 0.05. in simple words, university's role to promote entrepreneurship education has a significant impact students' entrepreneurship intention.

Role of Entrepreneurship Curriculum on Entrepreneurial Intention

Table 5: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.694 ^a	.482	.480	.684

Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurship Curriculum or content

Quantity of variance that is described by the predictor has shown in table 2. Here, R is representing the multiple correlation coefficients in between the dependent variable with predictor variable. In the above mentioned model table 2, R value is 0.694 which is the indication of a great deal of mutual change by the describing the amount of variance the goodness of fit described by a given by a predictor variables that is entrepreneurship intention here the R square value is 0.482 which is indicating that there is 48.2 % variance in dependent variable i.e. university's role to promote entrepreneurship education or simply we can say that entrepreneurial intention is 48% explained by entrepreneurship education.

On the basis ANOVA results (Table 5), the overall model is significant (F-Statistics = 230.410 and sig = 0.00)

Table 6: ANOVA on Entrepreneurial intention

Model		Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	107.853	1	107.853	230.410	.000 ^b
	Residual	116.087	248	.468		
	Total	223.940	249			

- a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intention
b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurship Curriculum or content



Table 7: Coefficient of Entrepreneurial intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.455	.185		2.464	.014
	University role to promote entrepreneurship education	.827	.054	.694	15.179	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intention

Here, alternative hypothesis is accepted because table 7 shows, t-value is greater than 2 and sig. is less than 0.05. In simple words, entrepreneurship curriculum or content has a significant impact on students' entrepreneurship intention

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the impact of entrepreneurship education specifically, the role of universities and the content of the entrepreneurship curriculum on students' entrepreneurial intention. The findings indicate that the university's role in promoting entrepreneurship education significantly influences students' intention toward entrepreneurial activities. These results are consistent with those of Keat et al. (2011), who found that universities in the northern region of Malaysia played a vital role in fostering entrepreneurial intent among students. Similarly, Parveen et al. (2018) reported a significant correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention.

This relationship may be explained by the increasing aspirations of students for higher quality education from institutions that cultivate entrepreneurial competencies and prepare them to become future entrepreneurs. Universities are often viewed as environments where students are molded into future business leaders through the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture (Israr & Saleem, 2018). Hence, it is imperative that universities develop and sustain an ecosystem that nurtures entrepreneurship education (Arranz et al., 2019). Within the university context, enhancing entrepreneurial intention and opportunity perception among students is of paramount importance (Oftedal et al., 2018).

Additionally, the findings demonstrate that the entrepreneurship curriculum or course content has a significant impact on students' entrepreneurial intention. This aligns with the conclusions drawn by Otache (2019), who emphasized that higher education institutions must design curricula that meet the evolving needs of both students and industry. Students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship are likely to be shaped by their exposure to entrepreneurial coursework. These findings are consistent with those of Gamede and Uleanya (2019), Hossain et al. (2019), Liu et al. (2020), and Reyad et al. (2019), who observed that entrepreneurship courses often focus on key financial aspects of business ownership such as venture creation, investor pitching, and resource management thereby enhancing students' entrepreneurial intention. The results also align with Keat et al. (2011), who reported a positive relationship between entrepreneurship curriculum and entrepreneurial intention among university students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the entrepreneurial proclivity of university students in relation to two key components of entrepreneurship education: the university's role in promoting entrepreneurship and the content of the entrepreneurship curriculum. Both variables were



found to have a statistically significant influence on students' entrepreneurial intention. These findings hold important implications for both educational institutions and students.

From an institutional perspective, the evolving responsibilities of universities are crucial for cultivating an entrepreneurial environment that fosters innovation and business creation among students. Therefore, universities must adopt a more active role in embedding entrepreneurial culture across campuses through dedicated programs, experiential learning opportunities, and mentorship initiatives.

From the students' perspective, there is a need to shift from passive learning strategies to more practical, hands-on approaches that are integral to the entrepreneurial learning process. Engaging with real-world business problems, interacting with entrepreneurs, and participating in mentorship programs are essential for translating theoretical knowledge into entrepreneurial competence.

Furthermore, the findings contribute to the existing literature by offering new insights into the influence of entrepreneurship education at the university level, particularly within the context of public sector institutions in Kwara State. However, the scope of the study was limited to final year students at Kwara State University. Future research could extend the comparison to include students from private sector universities to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play. Additionally, this study relied solely on student responses; further studies could include a content analysis of entrepreneurship curricula to evaluate their practical relevance and alignment with industry demands.

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