

ATTITUDES OF FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE

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Abstract

The study investigates attitudes of female university Students towards entrepreneurship education in Federal University of Education, Zaria. Survey design method was used for the study. The researchers targeted 100 female undergraduate students in Federal University of Education, Zaria. The instrument used for data collection is 60 item four rating scale structured questionnaire. Simple logistic Regression (SLR) and ANOVA were used to test the null hypotheses. All the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 (5%) level of significance. Findings revealed that through entrepreneurship education, students are likely to foster their attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The researchers recommended among others that tertiary institutions in north-west, Nigeria should be mandated to establish Entrepreneurship Centres. The Centres should be equipped with all the modern facilities which could enrich the students with both theoretical and practical skills. This will help to create students with positive attitudes needed for successful business management.

Keywords: Female students, attitudes, entrepreneurship education, self-reliance

Introduction

The term entrepreneurship education is used interchangeably with entrepreneurship training and skill acquisition. Conceptually, entrepreneurship education refers to a specialized educational programme that impacts entrepreneurship skills and develops in the learner the passion to start-up and carries out a business venture successfully. It therefore follows that entrepreneurship education is designed to inculcate competencies, skills and values needed to recognize business opportunities and start new business ventures. According to the European Commission Communities (2012), entrepreneurship education refers to knowledge and skills that enable learners to turn ideas into action, promotes their creativity, innovation and risk taking abilities, as well as their ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. Mauchi1, Karambakuwa, Gopo, Kosmas, Mangwende, & Gombarume (2011) explained that entrepreneurship education is the process of providing learners with skills and knowledge to recognize commercial opportunities and the ability to act on them. Thus, entrepreneurship education inculcates knowledge to do with identifying something new, promoting students' creativity, innovative abilities, beliefs and requisite skills to be successful entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship skills are dynamic social skills needed to be successful entrepreneurs. These skills make individuals to become successful entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers. The skills enable individuals, solely or in collaboration with others to identify possibilities and utilize them to transform ideas into practical and goal-oriented activities in a social, cultural or economic context. Entrepreneurship skills involve a range of attributes, such as creativity, team work, risk management, and ability to handle uncertainty in a business venture. Scholars such as Kuratko (2005) and Famous & Okafor (2010) identified leadership, negotiation, creative thinking, exposure to technology, opportunity identification, idea generation and protection, tolerance, ability to tackle challenges at different entrepreneurial stages, ability to write and communicate business plans, new venture development, ability to diagnose business performance, networking and mentorship, environmental analysis, computer and simulation skills, invention and innovation as entrepreneurship skills.

Attitude is a psychological response to people, society, objects, events, occurrences and circumstances which determines real or possible activity of the individual in the social world. It consists of belief, perception and judgment that reflect the classification and evaluation of persons, objects and situations. Attitudes are inferred; they are not objectively observable, though they are manifested in conscious experience, verbal reports, overt behavior and physiological indicators. According to Eagly & Chaiken (1998) and Van Den Berg et al., (2006) attitudes consists of three component constructs which are known as the ABC. A is the affective, or emotional component that influences behavior, whether are feels good or bad or ambivalent. B is the typical behavioral tendency of a person, and C is the cognitive evaluation or belief of a person, based on what that person learnt from experience or observations.

In Nigeria, educational stakeholders and scholars both agree that the educational system has influence on the knowledge base, the achievement of skills, competences and attitudes on which future career aspiration of graduates are based. Considering that education is essential to the future of the individual, the school has the responsibility to inform and expose students to a wide range of career options, including entrepreneurship. Programmes in tertiary institutions widely acknowledged the importance of entrepreneurship education and its systematic incorporation into the curriculum. Scholars believed that, through effective entrepreneurship education, graduates will acquire the skills and knowledge needed to start and grow up new businesses. Thus, entrepreneurship education is endows graduates with skills capable of influencing their attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Scholars such as Reynolds, Hay, & Camp (1999) and Sánchez (2010) observed that entrepreneurship education provides graduates with a sense of independence and self-confidence, makes them to be aware of alternative career choices and provide them with knowledge that can be used to actualize new entrepreneurial opportunities. Accordingly, based on the forgone, the researchers intend to find out the attitudes of female university students towards entrepreneurial education for national development is to be conducted.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions to inculcate attitudes, values, psychological mind sets and strategies necessary for the subsequent take-off venture among the university graduates, the rate at which it fosters the attitude of graduates towards considering entrepreneurship for self-reliance is not encouraging. As a result, the rate of unemployment among graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is increasing.

Interaction with students revealed that curriculum implementation tends to inadequately equip them with the intricacies of managing across the range of functions in business organisation. The landscapes that will lead to realization of the objectives of entrepreneurial education are not translated into practical realities during the process of policy implementation. This probably explained why Adamu (2020) lamented that, most university graduates lack skills to work across boundaries on complex, interrelated problems needed for successful entrepreneurship. These have affected the expansion of pool of entrepreneurial talent needed to develop and manage new business ventures upon graduation in Nigeria. As a result, massive graduates of business education are waiting for white collar jobs rather than starting their businesses for their self-reliance. These have led to increase in over dependency in white collar jobs which led to increase in the rate of unemployment among the university graduates in Nigeria. The recent research by the National Bureau of Statistics in Nigeria shows that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is 50%.

The nature of entrepreneurship education given to students in Nigerian universities gives room for concern. There is general complain of inadequate funding, poor state of infrastructure in universities and dearth of experienced entrepreneurship teachers that will cope with the challenges of the new curriculum. All these affect the realization of the objectives of entrepreneurial education. According to Obeleagu-Nzelibe and Moruku (2010), the state of funding and infrastructure in the Nigerian university system is embarrassing. Apart from those specific to universities (as Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, has argued in several negotiations with the Federal Government) there are those of infrastructure, such as electricity, roads and telecommunications network, that generally affect the attitude of university students towards self-reliance upon graduation. Considering that the unpleasant situations the goal of the entrepreneurship education is not yielding the desire objectives becomes the major problem of this study which the researcher wishes to investigate using empirical evidence.

Objectives of the Study

The study intends to:-

- viii. determine the influence of entrepreneurial education on attitudes of female university students towards self-reliance in Federal University of Education, Zaria
- ix. determine the difference between views of female university students based on their discipline regarding influence of entrepreneurial education on their attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Federal University of Education, Zaria

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were raised and will be tested at a significant level of 0.05.

1. Entrepreneurial education has no significant influence on attitudes of female university students towards self-reliance in Federal University of Education, Zaria
2. There is no significant difference between views of female university students based on their discipline regarding influence of entrepreneurial education on their attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Federal University of Education, Zaria

Literature

The study is based on the theory of capital resources by Jöreskog and Sörbom, (1993). The theory considers education as a context that prepares individuals for a future which is not open to them. The proponents of the theory maintained that purposeful education for can provide skills necessary for graduates to make use of their acquired human capital resources in their own countries. The choice of this theory was based on consideration that educational training is capable

of inculcating competencies, skills and values that will stimulate entrepreneurial zeal among graduates to be self-reliance. The bottom line for the choice of this theory is that entrepreneurship education is capable of equipping students with skills that will foster entrepreneurship spirit and develop in them the attitude to startup businesses for self-reliance upon graduation. The theory had support of Uwameiye & Osunde (2000); Adenipekun (2004) and Bhandari (2006) who all opined that entrepreneurship education helps students develop skills and attributes that allow them to be innovative and to identify, initiate and successfully manage personal and work opportunities, including working for themselves.

The theory has gained worldwide recognition in countries such as USA, France, Germany, Britain and Nigeria to mention a few. As Fayolle (2004), Bhandari (2006) and Prince & Okafor (2010) rightly observed, more educational institutions now offer a wide range of entrepreneurship programmes and training. This theory, according to Akhemonkhan and Raimi & Sofoluwe (2013) suggests that the more favourable the attitude and subjective norms is, the greater the perceived behavioural control. Agreeing with this theory, the Federal Ministry of Education directed that entrepreneurship education be included as part of the curricula of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) effective from 2007/2008 academic session.

The increased interest in this theory by scholars in Nigeria, specifically business educators scholars like Ibrahim (2010); Sani (2020); Udoh (2020); Adamu, Umar, Amoor and Magaji (2022) and Adamu, Adamu & Bashir (2022) all opined that when students/learners are sufficiently motivated to have high need for achievement in life through entrepreneurship education, there is the greater tendency for them to set up their own businesses after graduation.

In summary, this study is based on the theory which states that entrepreneurship education improves the ability, capability and potentials of individuals to undertake risks for which economic benefits are assured. The theory perceives entrepreneurship education as the training that stimulates school leavers to take calculated risk for which future stream of benefits are guaranteed, and people taking big risks have to contend with great responsibilities.

Research Methodology

The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design. This design allows the researchers' to collect data and subject the item to statistical analysis. The choice of the design is based on the advice of Amechi (2003) who stated that when a study involves a population or a sample of respondents from whom information is obtained either verbally or through questionnaire, the ideal design to be adopted is the descriptive survey design. Considering that the study involves the use of sample and questionnaire, the researchers consider the design appropriate for the study.

Undergraduate students of Federal University of Education, Zaria were used for the study. The population is enormous, however the researcher estimated the population size of >2,000 for graduates of 2024/2025 academic year. Based on this number (>2,000) Glenn (2009) suggested that at Precision level of $\pm 3\%$ of this population, the sample size of 111 should be used. In order to get reasonable representation for the study, the researchers targeted 100 undergraduate students serving in Federal University of Education, Zaria. This is in line with the view of Douglass (2006), who opined that sample size has to be big enough to enable a researcher to detect the smallest worthwhile effect or relationship between variables. The instrument used for data collection is a

structured questionnaire, titled Entrepreneurship Education for Positive Attitude and Economic Development (EESPAED). The instrument contains 60 items meant to gather data from the respondents used to test the nine null hypotheses raised. The instrument is structured using four rating scale.

To ensure that the instrument meets the expected standard, consultations were made with experts in business administration, research methodology and statistics who are in the rank of senior lecturer and above in Federal University of Education, Zaria. The experts examined the test items for their appropriateness and clarity of the statement whether or not are well structured. After vetting the instrument, their corrections and suggestions were incorporated in the final copy. According to Uzosike (2008), face validity of a survey instrument of this nature is considered adequate. The instrument is therefore considered suitable for the study.

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted. Ten (10) copies of questionnaire were distributed to universities graduates who served in 2024/2025 session. The groups of serving coppers used are outside the population of the study. The data collected from the pilot study was used to establish the reliability of the instrument using test-retest method. The computation gave reliability co-efficient of 0.75. A reliability co-efficient of this value is high enough for studies of this nature, as observed by Uzosike (2008), who stated that the average value of correlation co-efficient should not be less than 0.50.

Data collected by all the researchers with the aid of trained research assistants covering the North-west, Nigeria. Face to face delivery method employed in data collection. This procedure is necessary because it ensures high return. The respondents were given enough time (3 hours) to complete the instrument before there were collected back.

Simple Logistic Regression (SLR) used to test null hypotheses one. This decision was based on the opinion of Anthony (2006) who opined that Simple Logistic Regression can be employed to determine the influence of a dependent variable on an independent variable if the variables are categorical. ANOVA used to test null hypotheses two. The choice of this tool was based on the explanation of Sani (2020) that the use of ANOVA allows researcher(s) to test whether a sample mean (of a normally distributed interval variable) significantly differs from a hypothesized value. In the analysis, where the calculated value is greater than the Table value, the null hypothesis was rejected. On the other hand, when the calculated value of any of the null hypotheses is less than the Table, the null hypothesis was retained. All the null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

Results of the study

HO₁ Entrepreneurial education has not significantly influenced attitudes of universities students towards entrepreneurship in Federal University of Education, Zaria.

Table 1: Regression analysis on influence of Entrepreneurial education (EE) on attitudes of graduates towards entrepreneurship (AGTE)

Model	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.	Beta	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
EE (Constant)	.210	.014	15.312	.000				

AGTE	0.344	0.319	1.08	0.2915	0.781	0.779	0.607	0.561
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The result of test of null hypothesis four presented in Table 1 revealed the Beta value of 0.644 indicates the equation that needs to be adjusted in order to get regression equation relating to the variables in the hypothesis. The calculated R value was 0.751 and the R² was 0.564. The analysis indicates the influence of 56% of variability in GAESFM to EE. Based on the analysis, the null hypothesis was not retained.

HO₂ There is no significance the difference among the views of students based on their discipline on the influence of entrepreneurial education on their attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Federal University of Education, Zaria

Table 3: Analysis of Difference among the views of students based on their discipline on the influence of entrepreneurial education on their attitudes towards

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Cal	F. Crit	Sig.
Between Groups	96.76	3	32.25	2.77	2.60	.02
Within Groups	3441.94	568	6.06			
Total	3538.70	571	38.31			

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork 2025

Result of ANOVA used to test null hypothesis eight presented in Table 3 reveals the sum of squares between groups value of 96.76 with degree of freedom of 3 and mean square stood at 32.35. On the other hand, sum of squares within groups was 3441.94, the degree of freedom was 568 and the mean square was 6.06. The F-cal was 2.17 greater than 2.60 F-crit. This can also be seen in alpha value the result 0.02 < 0.05 indicating that difference exists in the mean responses based on their programme related to null hypothesis nine. It was conclude that there is significant difference on the views of graduates based on their discipline on the influence of entrepreneurial education on their attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Hence the null hypothesis was not retained.

Discussion of the Findings

The results of the study indicated that entrepreneurship education helps female university students in Federal University of Education, Zaria, to foster their attitudes towards entrepreneurship activities in Nigeria. The findings further affirmed that of Cotton, O’Gorman and Stampfi (2000) who observed that entrepreneur education help students to acquire increased understanding of entrepreneurship, equip them with entrepreneurial approach to the world of work and prepare them to act as entrepreneurs and managers of new businesses. The European Union (2002) pointed out that entrepreneur education raise students’ awareness of self-employment as a career option (the message being that you can become not only an

employee, but also an employer); promoting the development of personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship, such as creativity, risk taking and responsibility; and providing the technical and business skills that are needed in order to start a new venture.

Similarly, Bassey and Archibong (2005) maintained that entrepreneurship education empowered graduates irrespective of their areas of specialization with skills that will enable them to engage in income yielding venture, if they are unable to secure jobs in the public sector. It is a reorientation from job seekers to job creators. The study of Dana (2007) reported that entrepreneurship provides (i) meaningful education for the youths which can make them self reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit, and be self-independent after graduation; (ii) small and medium size companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to the management of the small business centre; (iii) graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish career in small business centre; (iv) graduates with the training in skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society; (v) graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy and; (vi) graduates with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new Business Opportunities. All these attributes constitute a viable platform for economic development in any society. Nieuwenhuizen and Groenewald (2008) opined that through entrepreneur education, students were stimulated to have a high tendency to start their own business compared with those attending other business courses or not attending any courses. They maintain that entrepreneurship training is critical to venture success.

The United Nation Educational Scientific Cultural Organization Report (2008) observed that entrepreneurship education help to:- (i) raise the level of awareness among key stakeholders on entrepreneurship and enterprise creation as a viable and realistic option for career development; (ii) nurture and develop entrepreneurial characteristics an individual and encourage that individual to become an entrepreneur while acknowledging that not all graduates of entrepreneurial studies will become entrepreneurs; (iii) raise awareness that entrepreneurship education is not reading books or writing essays; (iv) develop strategy plans for activities at different levels targeting different players; (v) develop innovation in young people and to develop their skills to identify, create, initiate business and work opportunity of which owning an enterprise is just one example; (vi) give young people opportunities to develop skills; (vii) focus on the idea of creating an "Entrepreneurship culture" and not limiting entrepreneurship education to teaching of business skills and learning about setting one's own business; and (viii) empower students with the competencies and skills necessary to prepare them to respond to their life needs including running their own business, so that they become productive citizens.

The observed difference in the respondents' opinion could be as a result of difference in the curriculum content of the programme in which some universities emphasized on theory while others integrates theory and practical. In addition, some universities have sufficient modern facilities and equipment used for teaching and learning of practical. The result therefore shows that curriculum and facilities appear to be an important precondition for student learning, provided that other conditions are present that support a strong academic program in the school. A previous study by John (2010) has also linked difference on school achievement to curriculum, its implementation, available facilities and manpower. He argued that teaching resources, teachers' skill, and curriculum play a vital role in education.

Conclusion

From the result of the study, the researchers observed that entrepreneurship education helps to develop in female university students certain beliefs, values and attitudes regarding entrepreneurship. The knowledge generated from it helps to encourage creative thinking and promotes a strong sense of self-worth and empowerment among school leavers. Through

entrepreneurship education, students are likely to recognize business opportunities, pursue the opportunities, create and operate a business. However, not all students have positive entrepreneurial attitude and competencies in Nigeria, the inference would be that, the possibility of some graduates to engage in entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria would be thwarted by lack of generic attitude needed by entrepreneurs.

Recommendations

13. Government should encourage tertiary institutions in Nigeria to establish entrepreneurial training partnership with business organizations, private investors, state and local governments and other relevant stakeholders; these will help to foster the attitude to female students to engage in entrepreneurial activities in the country.
14. The curriculum content of entrepreneurship taught to students in all disciplines in educational institutions in Nigeria should be the same. This would help to harmonize the learning experience and understanding of students regardless of institutions and disciplines.

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