

THE EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON GRADUATE BUSINESS STARTUPS IN NIGERIA

By

Siraji Mudi Kurfi¹

Department of Business Administration, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai, Niger
State Nigeria,

Dr Abdullahi Babandako Yusuf², PhD

Department of Business Administration, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger
State, Nigeria

&

Abdullahi Masud³, PhD

Department of Business Administration, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger
State, Nigeria

talk2masud2008@gmail.com

+2348032170149

Abstract

The increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria has made universities realize the value of entrepreneurship education and attempt to promote students' personal development through an entrepreneurship education program. The main objective of the study is to evaluate the effect of entrepreneurship education on promoting graduate business in IBBUL and FUT, Niger state, Nigeria. The study will adopt a survey research technique. The population of the study will consist of final year students of IBBUL and FUT, Niger State. The participants emanate from different faculties, e.g. faculty of management and social sciences, the faculty of natural sciences, applied sciences, the faculty of languages and the faculty of agricultural sciences. Hence, the population is 4750 students. Yamani (1976) formula was used to draw a sample of 369. The stratified random sampling technique will be applied to select a sample of final year students from a variety of academic arenas. The researcher will utilized a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. To determine the validity of the instrument, the researcher will give the questionnaire instrument to experts who will look at it to determine its appropriateness, clarity, as well as logicity of presentation. The findings of the study reveal that entrepreneurship education has a significant effect on graduate business startups in IBBUL and FUT Minna. The study recommended that students' learning patterns should be kept in mind when analysing the effects of EE on graduate business startups, especially in the University system.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial skills; entrepreneurial competence; entrepreneurial knowledge

1.1 Introduction

In today's era, the role of entrepreneurship is increasing with many stakeholders, including policymakers, academics, and students. Entrepreneurship education is any planned activity aiming at sharpening entrepreneurial intention or some factors that affect the intention, such as knowledge, desirability, and feasibility of the entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurship education is associated with personal skills and attitude, or career choice. It plays a great role in the economic development of a country (Takawira (2020); Sunday-Nwosu & Chukwudi, 2022); Ekeh, Tsetim & Oguche, 2022)). Luyu and Dandan (2019), refer to it as a driver of economic growth and national prosperity. The increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria has made universities realize the value of entrepreneurship education and attempt to promote students' personal development through an entrepreneurship education program. IBB University is not an exception. The basic aim of entrepreneurship education is to apply for a job or to create a new job.

Nevertheless, entrepreneurship education has not held the desirable result in our university today, Luya and Dandan (2019) and Sunday-Nwosu & Chukwudi (2022). The increasing number of unemployed graduates means that the goal of entrepreneurship education in terms of addressing unemployment problem among the youth has not been achieved. A lot still needs to be done. One of the factors responsible for this is the period of accepting entrepreneurship education to actual business startup. This has shifted researchers' attention from real entrepreneurial behavior to entrepreneurial intention to gauge entrepreneurship education. For example, Hattab (2020) Lindahl, Williams and Breum(2022). Entrepreneurial intentions through individual attitudes and cognition. Entrepreneurship education has been considered a major determinant of business start-ups Boso and Magnus (2020).

The rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has persistently been on the increase despite the enormous endowment of the country with human and natural resources. However, graduate unemployment is not peculiar to Nigeria or developing nations; it is indeed a long-standing global phenomenon, hence it has been a common trend in many countries to find graduates of universities not able to secure jobs several years after graduation (Twumasi, 2023). In tackling the global crisis of graduate unemployment, policy makers and stakeholders in developed countries such as England, the USA, and Germany advocated a refocus of educational systems towards the acquisition of vocational and technical skills to enhance a smooth transition into jobs for school leavers, particularly graduates of universities. This owes to the fact that education is important to the development of any society, particularly because the goals of wealth creation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient educational system which impacts relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values into individuals (Agi & Yellowe, 2020). The goal of entrepreneurship education is to empower graduates, irrespective of their areas of academic specialization, with knowledge and skills that

will enable them to create their own income-generating ventures, even if they are not able to secure jobs in the public sector.

Entrepreneurship education is an orientation that seeks to transform graduates from job seekers into job creators in order to reduce graduate unemployment, and it increases students' interest in entrepreneurship as a career (Kinsiku, & Olubunmi, 2014). The rationale for introducing entrepreneurship courses in universities' curricular development is to help students acquire an increased understanding of entrepreneurship. The focus is to equip them with relevant skills and competencies that prepare the students to become entrepreneurs and managers of new businesses soon after graduation in order to increase their household income. Nevertheless, "social and commercial entrepreneurial entry is facilitated by strong property rights and government activism that impacts on entrepreneurship (Anyadike, Emeh, & Ukah, 2022).

In Nigeria, graduate unemployment has undoubtedly become a herculean national canker which every government has to deal with. A section of the public is of the view that job opportunities for new graduates are few, while others contend that there are enough job opportunities, but the type of graduates produced from the institutions of higher learning are not all that suited for the available jobs (Aremu, & Adeyemi, 2011). Most of the employers, therefore, select the fresh graduates who studied in the relevant fields for their jobs as trainees for several years before a decision is taken either to hire them on a full-time basis or as casual workers. This problem has necessitated this research to investigate entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and its influence on graduate business startups.

1.2 Problem Statement

The system of education bequeathed to Nigeria and other colonies by the British was the production of those who are qualified to look for jobs rather than the job providers (entrepreneurs). In Nigeria the educational institution has not properly enshrined the spirit and philosophy of self-reliance for creating a robust cultural and productive environment that will enhance and promote the need pride in primitive work and self-discipline encouraging individuals to freely and actively take participation in decision affecting their general wellbeing by promoting new set of abilities attitudes and culture for the attainment of future world challenges Aishatu, Yakubu & Mahmud (2022).

Several studies have suggested that students' manpower development seems to yield little or no results. International organizations keep sending money to Africa in an attempt to ameliorate the increasing effects of joblessness. The problem of this study could be posed as: do entrepreneurial education affect graduate business operations? Hence, this study is geared toward investigating entrepreneurial education on business start-up in public Universities (Heblich & Luedemann, 2022)

In recent years, attention has been focused on entrepreneurial careers as a leading economic factor for creating job opportunities, economic growth, wealth creation, poverty reduction, and

positive social development (Engle, Schlaegel & Dimitriadi, 2021; Falck, Heblich & Luedemann, 2022). However, Rae, Penaluna and Dhaliwal (2021) argue the need for universities to develop in their graduates an entrepreneurial mindset, skills and experience as part of their program of study. Consequently, many countries to introduced policy structures to support entrepreneurial career choice and to promote entrepreneurial activity (Pittaway and Cope, 2021). Government and other stakeholders embrace a range of supporting programs toward encouraging entrepreneurial career choice, such as career guidance, funding, skill-building courses, business, and the like (Solomon et al., 2022); as well as the improvement in instructional quality. Similarly, the number of entrepreneurship programs offered by universities worldwide has dramatically increased in the past years (Kuratko, 2022; Brockhaus et al., 2021).

From various perspectives, numerous studies have been conducted on entrepreneurship education; however, most of these studies focus on new venture performance (see Boso and Magnus (2022), Audu (2022); entrepreneurship-related behavior (see Xianyue, Chunpei, Guanxi and Dali (2019), Ogunbekun and Abdulazeez (2022) Ekeh, Tsetim and Oguche (2022); economic development Aishatu, Yakubu and Mahmud (2022), Sa'idu and Jamal (2022), among others). Although the literature review suggests that entrepreneurship education has a sharp entrepreneurship-related behavior among students. Hence, only a few studies have it that entrepreneurial traits have led to manipulation through individuals' exposure to entrepreneurship education, and if so, whether there is a knock-on effect on behavioural outcome (business start-up). Thus, this has denied scholars, educators and policymakers the opportunity to fully understand how entrepreneurship education impacts individual participants, and this somehow creates a chasm in knowledge. It is this gap that the current study seeks to narrow.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the influence of entrepreneurship education on graduates' business start-up in Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai, and Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives include:

1. To examine the influence of entrepreneurial skills on graduate business startups in IBBUL and FUT, Niger State, Nigeria.
2. To explore the influence of entrepreneurial competence on graduate business start-ups in IBBUL and FUT, Niger State, Nigeria.
3. To find out the influence of entrepreneurial knowledge on graduate business startups in IBBU and FUT, Niger State, Nigeria.

To analyse the influence of entrepreneurial development on graduate business startups in IBBUL and FUT, Niger State, Nigeria.

2.1 Literature Review

In today 's world, any individual, industry or business leader with innovative and creative business abilities is described as an entrepreneur or someone who engages in entrepreneurship (Okala, 2018). While the entrepreneur is the person venturing into the business of organizing and managing, entrepreneurship is the service rendered by the entrepreneur (Akanwa & Agu, 2022). The term entrepreneurship has received many definitions from different scholars. Salabson (2020) sees it as the process of self-development and self-reliance that generates employment opportunities. Baba (2023) defined entrepreneurship as the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, and social risk and receiving monetary and personal satisfaction. Also, entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek investment opportunities, to establish and run an enterprise successfully (Suleiman, 2022).

Entrepreneurship has been regarded as critical to the economic development of any nation. Melugbo et al. (2020) affirm that entrepreneurship is the lifeblood of economic development for any nation. Conceptually, entrepreneurship entails starting and managing a business entity. According to Barot (2022), entrepreneurship is important to everybody, and anyone who begins a new business entity is venturing into the world of entrepreneurship. According to Chang and Wyszomirski (2023), art entrepreneurship is gradually becoming common, and it entails converting knowledge of artwork into business ventures. Suffice it to say that entrepreneurship entails engagement in business activities, then it follows logically that entrepreneurial skills are important for successful entrepreneurial activities. Such skills are needed so that entrepreneurs will be successful at what they do.

2.2 Entrepreneurial Education

Entrepreneurship education has grown rapidly in tertiary institutions around the world (Fretschener & Weber, 2023). According to Fretschener and Weber (2023), the main objective of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is to empower graduates, irrespective of their course of study, with skills that will provide them with the opportunity to engage in income-yielding business, whether they are able or not able to secure paid employment either in the public or private sector. The main purpose of introducing Entrepreneurial Education into tertiary institutions is to provide graduates with entrepreneurial skills needed in the private sector, start their businesses, and consequently employ others (Aladejebi, 2018). Quality Assurance (QAA) for Higher Education (UK, 2022) define entrepreneurship education as the process of equipping students (or graduates) with an enhanced capacity to generate ideas and the skills to make them happen.

UNESCO/ILO (2021) defines entrepreneurship education as a collection of formalized teachings that inform, train, and educate anyone interested in participating in socio-economic development through a project to promote entrepreneurship awareness, business creation, or small business

development. It is usually conceived as seeking to foster self-esteem and confidence by drawing on the individual's talents and creativity, while building the relevant skills and values that will assist students in expanding their perspectives on schooling and opportunities beyond. It focuses on the development of skills or attributes that enable the realization of opportunity (Wei, Liu & Sha, 2019), and seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Intention/Business Start-up

Just like entrepreneurship, the concept of entrepreneurial intention has been defined by several authors. The concept of entrepreneurial intention is defined by Bird (1988) as the mindsets that direct, guide, coordinate and control the basic concept (action) of new business development, implementation and evaluation. Entrepreneurial intention, as defined by Thompson (2022) as the self-acknowledged conviction of the individual mind in the possibility of starting up a new business with a sincere and dedicated plan to do so at a certain point in time. He went further to state that the concept of entrepreneurial intention helps in determining the strength of intention of starting up a new business. These are in line with the assumption of Ajzen's theory that explains that the higher the intention, the higher the possibility of displaying the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In fact, it has been strongly established that entrepreneurial intention validated determinants of the entrepreneurial activities of an individual.

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 Entrepreneurship Education (EE) and Business Start-Up

Having realized the significant contributions of entrepreneurship to an economy, considerable attention has been given to entrepreneurship education by both policymakers and researchers. Policy makers mainly focus on the impact of entrepreneurial education on graduates decisions, and how policy measures affect entrepreneurial education (see "Global University Entrepreneurship Student Survey" (Sieger, Fueglistaller, and Zellweger, 2021; Kelley, Singer, and Herrington, 2022)). Literature within the entrepreneurship field also confirms that EE programs are the right and effective tool for enhancing entrepreneurial intention. Previous narrative reviews of the literature on entrepreneurship education (eg Kuratko, 2005; Pittaway & Cope, 2021) pointed out that there may be important positive connections between EE and various entrepreneurial-related human capital assets and entrepreneurial outcomes.

Galloway and Brown (2022) reported that people who have taken college-level entrepreneurship courses are more willing to start a business than those who have not. Kolvereid and Moen (2021) added that individuals with entrepreneur training and education are more likely to start a business than individuals without any training. Others, like Alimardan et al. (2021), showed that entrepreneurship education is the most highly ranked factor that affects the entrepreneurial intention of students. In light of these findings, Nabi, Liñán, Fayolle, Krueger and Walmsley (2021) results suggest that the EE could have some strong positive effects on some students,

although the effect depends on their background and initial perspectives on entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, Malebana (2023) found that the longer the exposure to entrepreneurship education, the higher the intention to go into entrepreneurship.

3.1 Research Methodology

The research design that will be adopted for the study is a survey method. The research design establishes the structure of the study, the method and procedure used for writing and analyzing the needed data (Nwogu, 2021). The population of the study consist of final year students of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai and Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State. The participants emanate from different faculties, e.g. faculty of management and social sciences, the faculty of natural sciences, applied sciences, the faculty of languages and the faculty of agricultural sciences. IBBUL makes up 2,050 while FUT makes up 2,700 students, which makes a total of 4,750 students as obtained from the Registry Department of these Universities. In this study, a stratified random sampling technique was applied to select a sample of 369 final year students from a variety of academic arenas.

The researcher utilized closed-ended questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. A questionnaire is an appropriate instrument for data collection for the study because it has the potential to generate a large amount of data (Ale, 2020; Ogbonne, 2021; Kari, 2022). To determine the validity of the instrument, the researcher gave the questionnaire instrument to experts who looked at it to determine its appropriateness, clarity as well as logicity of presentation. The researcher utilized the comments of the experts to prepare a final version of the instrument. Concerning reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot study involving 30 participants, and the result showed that Cronbach's Alpha were within the acceptable limit (.75 - .90. See the table below. This suggests that the instrument was reliable.

Table 3.1: Reliability Testing - Cronbach's alpha values

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Business startup	0.812
Entrepreneurial skills	0.823
Entrepreneurial competence	0.832
Entrepreneurial knowledge	0.771
Entrepreneurial development	0.756

Source: (Pilot Study, 2025).

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Introduction

Out of 369 questionnaires sent to the field, only 303 were validly filled out and returned. This amounts to an 82% return rate.

Table 4.1 Collinearity Test

The result of the study collinearity test is shown in Table 4.2

Table 4.1 Collinearity Statistics

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		
	entrepreneurship skills	.777	1.287
	entrepreneurial competence	.532	1.881
	entrepreneurial knowledge	.501	1.996
	entrepreneurial development	.668	1.498

a. Dependent Variable: graduate business startup

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The values of the study tolerance range between .501 and .777, while the values of the VIF range from 1.287 to 1.996. This result means that there is no collinearity concern in the study.

Table 4.2 Model Summary

The result of the study model fit is shown in Table 4.3

Table 4.2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.669 ^a	.349	.339	4.372	1.997

a. Predictors: (Constant), entrepreneurial development, entrepreneurship skills, entrepreneurial competence, entrepreneurial knowledge

b. Dependent Variable: graduate business startup

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The result of the model summary in Table 4.2 depicts that the value of $R = .669$, which means the model has a good level of prediction. The R-squared value of .349 shows that entrepreneurship skills, entrepreneurial competence, entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial development account for the variability in the graduate business startup of FUT and the adjusted R-squared value of .339 shows that the four independent variables predicted the changes in the dependent variable. The value of the Durbin-Watson = 1.997 means that the model is fit.

Table 4.3 ANOVA

The result of the study ANOVA is shown in Table 4.3

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1889.608	4	472.402	24.710	.000 ^b
	Residual	5697.124	298	19.118		
	Total	7586.733	302			

a. Dependent Variable: graduate business startup

b. Predictors: (Constant), entrepreneurial development, entrepreneurship skills, entrepreneurial competence and entrepreneurial knowledge

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The value of the F-statistic in the ANOVA table is 24.710 and is significant at .000. This result implies that the model is statistically significant and is fit for further analysis.

Table 4.4 Test of Hypotheses

The result of the study ANOVA is shown in Table 4.4

Table 4.4 Coefficients^a

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	13.902	1.223		11.369	.000
	entrepreneurship skills	-.006	.054	-.006	-.104	.917
	entrepreneurial competence	-.072	.071	-.069	-1.008	.314
	entrepreneurial knowledge	-.179	.068	-.187	-2.643	.009
	entrepreneurial development	.516	.054	.588	9.572	.000

a. Dependent Variable: graduate business startup

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The result of the test of the first hypothesis revealed that entrepreneurship skills have a negative and no significant effect on business startup FUT and IBBUL. This explains with the value of the construct coefficient = -.006, t-statistics = -.104 and p - p-value = .917, which is > .05 level of significance. This means that a decrease in entrepreneurship skills by 1 unit will not decrease business startup FUT and IBBUL by -.006 units. With this result, the study therefore accepts the null hypothesis and rejects the alternative.

The result of the test of the second hypothesis revealed that entrepreneurial competence has a negative and non-significant effect on business startup FUT and IBBUL. This explains with the value of the construct coefficient = -.072, t-statistics = -1.008 and p - value = .314 which is > .05 level of significance. This means that a decrease in entrepreneurial competence by 1 unit will not decrease business startup FUT and IBBUL by -.072 units. With this result, the study therefore accepts the null hypothesis and rejects the alternative.

The result of the test of the third hypothesis revealed that entrepreneurial knowledge has a negative and significant effect on business startup FUT and IBBUL This is explained by the value of the construct coefficient = -.179, t-statistics = -2.643 and p - p-value = .009, which is < .05 level of significance. This means that a decrease in entrepreneurial knowledge by 1 unit will

decrease business startup FUT and IBBUL by -.179 units. With this result, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative.

The result of the test of the fourth hypothesis revealed that entrepreneurial development has a positive and significant effect on business startups. This explains with the value of the construct coefficient = .516, t-statistics = 9.572 and p - value = .000 which is < .05 level of significance. This means that a decrease in entrepreneurial development by 1 unit will increase business startup FUT and IBBUL by .516 units. With this result, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative.

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendation

To conclude, this study provides a fruitful framework to explain the potential mechanisms between entrepreneurship course characteristics and student entrepreneurial intentions, as well as how different students benefit differently from a challenging learning environment and supportive teacher-student relationships. Taking students' needs differences into account, we add valuable new insights into entrepreneurship education research, and the findings contribute to continuously evaluating and improving entrepreneurship education courses. Students' learning patterns should be kept in mind when analysing the effects of EE on graduate business startups, especially in the University system. On the other hand, these learning patterns also need to be considered when designing EE programmes, to encourage the students to venture into business after their graduation.

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