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EDITORIAL: ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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This Special Issue explores the concept of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship ecosystem through the lenses of our esteemed contributors.

As you are aware, entrepreneurship education and its antecedents have remained core discussions for governments and practitioners worldwide. Researchers in the Global South have argued that to escape the stranglehold of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, they need to invest their economies in entrepreneurial projects.

This Special Issue couldn't have come at a better time as UWC is hosting the 7th Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Lekgotla. It is worth noting that the 2023 theme of EDHE is **Social Innovation for Societal Impact**. This theme expresses the utility of universities in realising social innovation that "enables the addressing of societal challenges" and the fostering of "interdisciplinary collaboration that engages students and faculties, strengthens community partnerships, generates knowledge and research, and cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset, ultimately leading to positive societal impact and a more equitable and sustainable future". Essentially, the necessity for the youth to embrace entrepreneurial projects remains a key priority in EDHE's discussions. It is within this goal of embracing entrepreneurial projects that the papers in this Special Issue become valuable.

For instance, Evelyn's and Henry's conceptual paper, **Redefining Entrepreneurial Education in Africa through Africanisation: A Review of the Igbo Apprenticeship System**, assesses how Africans can develop an Africanised philosophical framework on which their identity and worldview can be incorporated into an entrepreneurial curriculum that has been appropriated from Western nations. Achieving this according to Evelyn requires two crucial steps, namely: the use of indigenous languages and examples in conveying important entrepreneurial messages, as well as improving the competency of academic staff on Africanisation philosophy.

Along with the argument of local language use in entrepreneurial instructions is Kelechi Mezieobi's paper titled: **The Use of Mother Tongue and Gender as Determinants of Students' Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship Education**. Kelechi and his colleagues found that students with knowledge of the use of the mother tongue related better to entrepreneurship education.

Daniel and Adeniyi's paper, **Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development in Nigerian Universities: Moving Beyond Vocational Skills Teaching** explored entrepreneurial and enterprise teaching in Nigerian universities to understand whether it is slanted toward the acquisition of vocational skills. Adopting the theory of Planned Behaviour and Kolb's experiential learning theory, they found that the current practice of teaching vocational skills is not effective as shown by the perennial increase in graduate unemployment. The study recommends the teaching of entrepreneurship and enterprise development anchored in value addition, opportunity, and wealth creation with a view to repositioning university graduates for the 21st century's challenges and opportunities. Furthering the attempt to understand entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, Kelechi and his colleagues in their paper, **Teaching Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria**, offer a definition of entrepreneurship education that is focused on Nigeria to enhance how it can be improved. Some insightful suggestions and recommendations are flagged in their paper.

Egena Ode, Sidikat Shitu and Ochanya Blessing Adegbe investigated the influence of entrepreneurship education on undergraduate students' entrepreneurial intention, with a focus on the cognitive, behavioural, and affective components of entrepreneurship education. In their paper titled, **Examining the Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Intention: A Gender-Focused Analysis of Intentions Among Undergraduate Students**, they reveal a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and intention. While offering valuable insights into the teaching and delivery of entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions, they also emphasise the importance of instructional methods, materials, facilities, and equipment in shaping entrepreneurial intentions in developing countries.

Dr Sibindi and I have been teaching, rethinking, and researching this concept for many years. Our wish is to understand how to improve the entrepreneurial intention of the youth, as well as find fitting definitions of entrepreneurship education that are unique to Africa, come up with better ways to teach entrepreneurship and explore other opportunities to make entrepreneurship education an attractive field of study.

We hope that this special issue provokes you to join the movement that pursues a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem for socioeconomic sustainability in Africa.

Prof. Chux Gervase Iwu

Dr. Ntandoyenkosi Sibindi



REDEFINING ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA THROUGH AFRICANISATION: A REVIEW OF THE IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

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Abstract:

Despite having abundant natural resources, Africa has consistently experienced high rates of poverty and unemployment. Enormous efforts have been exerted to raise living standards by integrating entrepreneurial education into the curriculum of higher institutions. Tragically, these exertions have not yielded the desired dividends. The goal of this study is to examine and evaluate how Africans can develop an Africanised philosophical framework on which their identity and worldview can be incorporated into an entrepreneurial curriculum that has been appropriated from Western nations. The conceptual research review approach was used to achieve the research objective. The findings from the review of extant literature show a paucity of empirical studies on the Africanisation of entrepreneurship education curriculum; the Igbo Apprenticeship system; a misfit between the present academic curriculum and Africa's identity; and how the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) has influenced economic, social, and environmental development in Nigeria's Eastern region. Resulting from the failure of the present entrepreneurial education to provide the desired outcome on the continent, this study, therefore, proposed a framework that will ensure the infusion of the IAS model into the curriculum of institutions of learning in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Education, Africa, Africanisation, Igbo Apprenticeship System, Igba-Boi, Imu-Ahia*

INTRODUCTION

Sall (2022) refers to entrepreneurship as a key contributor to economic growth, development, and poverty reduction in Africa. Nevertheless, 34% of the continent's population lives below the poverty line (Randy, 2022). Vermeire and Bruton (2016) assert that global poverty has been reduced in regions, such as Southeast Asia and South America, but not in Africa. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2022) reports that the poorest countries with high poverty levels in Africa include South Sudan at the top with a poverty rate of 82.30%, followed by Equatorial Guinea with a poverty rate of 76.80% and then Madagascar with a poverty rate of 70.70%. Other countries, Guinea Bissau, Eritrea, and Sao Tome and Principe recorded poverty rates of 69.30%, 69.00%, and 66.70% respectively. By observing the outcomes of this incident, researchers observed that poverty has deprived Africans of the basic needs of man, which are: stable income, a minimal level of food, affordable health services, shelter, clothing, and access to formal education, all of which are crucial for a good quality of life (Sall, 2022).

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Entrepreneurship, which is indeed contributing robustly to the growth of Western economies, is yet to replicate the same level of success on the African continent given the current level of poverty in Africa which translates into high unemployment, particularly among the youths. Growing youth unemployment has continued to pressurise the government into making social services available, thus exerting more pressure on the economy and national resources (Iwu, 2022). This indicates that entrepreneurship, which spurs industrialisation and generates employment opportunities in other continents, is not operating at full capacity on the African continent.

Africa's level of poverty and unemployment enhances the cruciality of entrepreneurship education in the continent. Entrepreneurship education as a process would equip students with the understanding of rigorous economic tools and human relations skills in handling difficult challenges (Fejes, Nylund & Wallin, 2019). In Africa, entrepreneurship education comes with a lot of expectations, one of which is to uproot individuals and even communities from the stronghold of poverty and unemployment to a more sustainable living. A dig into the success of entrepreneurship development reveals that individuals' educational background and entrepreneurial skills are core to the effectiveness of the entrepreneurial process (Diandra & Azmy, 2020). Despite these positive expectations, Iwu (2022) reveals that there are pitfalls associated with the achievement of these public expectations; these are insufficient curriculum (Ahmad, Abu-Bakar & Ahmad, 2018) and level of lecturer competency (Iwu, Opute, Nchu, Eresia-Eke, Tengeh, Jaiyeoba & Aliyu, 2021).

Increased poverty rates make one wonder if entrepreneurial studies or their pedagogical methodology have failed to lift Africa from the unwanted impact of extreme poverty. However, According to Dzingirai (2021), many social scientists and academics have neglected to examine poverty and its relationship to entrepreneurship in their work on structural policies and programs for eradicating poverty in Africa throughout the years. Dzingirai (2021) further explains that the low support of entrepreneurship in Africa is because many African entrepreneurs assume independence; are too casual, unresourceful, spontaneous risk-takers, and planners, rendering them unappealing to be given technical and financial support from public and private institutions.

These problems are partly caused by the absence of entrepreneurial education which this study believes can be enhanced through Africanisation. Furthermore, the adopted Western educational culture seems to be at variance with the indigenous African culture. To this end, this study aims to examine using a review of extant literature, the status quo regarding entrepreneurship education and to make a business case for the pedagogical efficiency of African entrepreneurial education and its practice through an Africanisation philosophy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a relatively nascent field of learning that is spreading like wildfire across countries, continents, and territories. It is an academic tool and a model for the development of societies (Fayolle, 2013). The term entrepreneurship education (Gibb, 1993) has been used interchangeably with terms such as entrepreneurial education (Jones & English, 2004) and enterprise education (Singh, 2015). Entrepreneurship refers to the creation of novel institutions, employment, incomes, and resources with scarce input (Ali & Ali, 2013). An individual also can discover feasible business ideas and transform them into practicable realities (European Commission, 2011). Similarly, Shane and Venkataraman (2000) view entrepreneurship as the study of opportunity sources that comprise processes through which opportunities are learned, assessed, and seized for economic purposes. In gaining mastery over the entrepreneurial process, the role of proper education cannot be undermined. This detailed training is what produces entrepreneurship education (Deveci & Seikkula-Leino, 2018).

Entrepreneurship education is a research-focused process that investigates the most positive education process that produces graduates that can transform ideas and life ambitions into income streams (Abiogu, 2011). This specialised education is premised on learners' ability to develop skills and a mindset that turns creative ideas into entrepreneurial action (Miço & Cungu, 2023). Entrepreneurship education exceeds just educating learners on how to become independent business owners. It goes beyond that to create and nurture a learning environment that supports entrepreneurial traits and behaviours, like becoming an independent and creative thinker, taking risks, valuing diversity, and assuming responsibility (Manish & Singh, 2015).

Despite the adopted strategies employed in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship at various educational institutions, research has proven that indigenous skills are essential in the delivery of sustainable entrepreneurship education (Major & Leigha, 2019; Obunike, 2016; Ligthelm, 2010; Maritz & Foley, 2018). Furthermore, Maritz and Foley (2018) reiterate that indigenous entrepreneurship represents a significant opportunity for indigenous-led

economies to facilitate and sustain economic growth, development, and social well-being. Just like other fields of learning, entrepreneurship education has its fair share of arguments regarding whether entrepreneurs are born or made. One such argument is premised on the fact that if talent and temperament cannot be taught, then becoming an entrepreneur cannot be imparted either (Fayolle, 2007).

Despite the ongoing debates on the teaching and training features of entrepreneurship, Mwasalwiba (2010) argues that crucial entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitude can be instilled in young entrepreneurs. However, it is believed that entrepreneurs are not born but become entrepreneurs in the course of their life experiences (Manish & Singh, 2015). The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2008) avers that entrepreneurship education is not just about teaching individuals how to run a business; it is about promoting creative thinking and supporting a strong sense of self-worth and empowerment. Encouraging creative thinking among African entrepreneurs forms the basis for Africanisation, which is the core tenet of the study.

Africanising Entrepreneurial Education for Knowledge Creation

Africanisation is a term that has been used to represent Africa's belief system. In essence, it is the identity of the African continent. Africanisation has gained traction over the past few years because Africans are in pursuit of unity, a sense of kinship, and pride in who they are and what they stand for (Louw, 2010). The Africanisation agenda is a reminder of how Africans used to conduct their affairs before the advent of colonial influences (Williams, 2019). The Africanisation movement is concerned with two processes. Firstly, it has to do with the creation of knowledge by Africans to address African challenges (Ramose, 1998), which makes it a direct challenge to neo-colonialism, and which in turn encourages African countries to adopt European economic and social systems (Langan, 2018). Secondly, Africanisation inspires Africans to take advantage of social systems and culture to improve livelihoods.

Ramose (1998) depicts Africanisation as a conscious and purposeful statement of nothing more or less than the right to be an African. The Sankofa Youth Movement (2007) uses the term "Africanisation", to mean the acceptance of African heritage and growing a sense of loyalty towards the Motherland - Africa. Ramose (1998) further argues that the African experience, being nontransferable, can be communicated by only Africans (as cited in Letsekha, 2013). Africanisation also involves the indigenisation of African knowledge systems (Saurombe, 2018).

The quest for the Africanisation of knowledge is fostered by the common and disparaging notion that Africans cannot generate knowledge and were made to serve, not lead, as they were incompetent in thinking. As such, many African universities today are African in name and location only, but the curriculum design is still informed by London, Paris, or Portugal (Mangu, 2005). The Westerners argued that Africans do not possess the faculty of reason to create knowledge (Etieyibo, 2016). According to Mangu (2005, p.23):

"Africans were taught that Africans produce no knowledge ... were created to serve and not lead as they were incapable of thinking ... The universities that many African countries inherited from colonialisation were African in name and location only ... the curricula were dictated by London, Paris, or Portugal ... academics and researchers had to perform for their colonial masters ... recycling knowledge produced elsewhere in a different context and for a specific milieu"

On a more interesting note, Makgoba (1997) states that Africanisation is not about disregarding Europeans and their cultures but about asserting the African culture and its place in the global community. In support of the coexistence of African knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems in academia, Le Grange (2004) asserts that Africanisation is not a process of getting rid of the entrenched Western knowledge systems already being practised in Africa. However, Saurombe (2018) warns of the need to instill a sense of security and states that if this coexistence happens, Africa could borrow from the West without fear that changes would damage the African character. Adick (1989) who pioneered the Africanisation of schooling, expressed Africanisation as teaching personnel and the curricula, which are distant from the Western or modern model of schooling. In other words, the teaching staff and academic curricula in Africa ought to be strongly rooted in that continent's belief system as against the *status quo* where African institutions have, with wide-open arms, embraced Western curricula that exhort neo-colonial ideals that have over time gained a strong foothold in African educational system.

Horsthemke (2004) avers that in promoting Africanisation, higher education institutions need a change in the composition of learners, the administrative bodies, the syllabus and its content, the curricula, and the criteria that ascertain what excellent research is. These criteria must be based on African philosophy. This advocacy aligns with the position of Prah (2004, p.99) who defines "Africanisation as the systematic and deliberate deployment of

Africans in positions which enables them to gain control of society". In realising the dream of Africanisation or for the ideals of Africanisation to effectively impact the African people, institutions of higher learning must focus on the reawakening of an African voice and identity, where the government and universities, in particular, must be serious about the development of Africanisation (Louw, 2010) by initiating radical changes to reshape processes and ideas (Maluleke, 2005). The academic institutions as 'the intellectual landscape', hold it to the African Community to execute this mandate of producing sustainable knowledge (Oelofsen, 2015, p.15) which can be transformed into useful innovations (Chetty et al., 2014). Thus, the Africanisation of tuition would demand making room for ideas of African thinkers and African intellectual traditions that have been underestimated and relegated to the background in virtually all tuition materials. This involves making concerted efforts to incorporate these African ideas and traditions as part of the content of academic materials. Africanisation, as it applies to higher education, involves adapting curricula and syllabuses to guarantee that teaching and learning are tailored to African conditions and realities (Letsekha, 2013). Africanised knowledge regards African cultural values and ethos, and such values and ethos must be made to be a source of the solutions to challenges facing Africans, principally the challenges brought about by globalisation, capitalism, and neo-colonialism (Chikoko, 2016).

Africanisation, being a philosophical African ideology, is generating debate among researchers as they argue for the place of Africanisation in the body of philosophical ideology. Coetzee and Roux (2002) posit that philosophy is deeply embedded in the mental existence of man, which makes him a rational animal. They concluded by affirming that philosophical activities are simply manifestations of man's mental existence. Drawing from this philosophical assertion, Louw (2010) questions the concept of Africanisation, based on the fact that it does not meet the requirements of Western thoughts about the meaning of philosophy. However, in earlier years, Coetzee and Roux (2002) inferred that if the world must give Africanisation a philosophical meaning, Africans must first determine what is required for establishing Africanisation as a philosophy. Africanisation can indeed be applied to different contexts, but for this study, our focus is to ascertain how entrepreneurship education in Africa can be Africanised.

For entrepreneurship education to truly excel on the African continent, current and prospective African entrepreneurs must develop creative thinking patterns that are African-oriented. The progress of entrepreneurs is not possible without creative activities and thinking that are theoretically and practically fortified (Doncean & Doncean, 2022). Human resource development experts have continuously stressed that the promotion of creative thinking will, in no distant time, replace economic growth that is based on human strength (Lin & Wu, 2016). This has become a known reality in the current global situation, where economies are frequently relying on intellect and skill proficiency rather than physical endowments.

Sternberg and Lubart (1996) refer to creativity as the capacity to cope with a given problem in ways that are different from the known. The ability to think creatively depends on an individual's endowment (Osedebamen, n.d.). For Okpara (2007, p.4), 'creative thinking is the articulation of strategy where viable strategy integrates flexibility and originality'. Creative thinking has been argued to have underlying characteristics. In his study, Adams (2006) identified some of the characteristics that are essential to creative thinking as (a) being able to create ideas that depart from the status quo, (b) combining knowledge from previously disparate fields, (c) perseverance through different problems, and (d) stepping away from efforts and returning later with a fresh perspective.

Africanisation and the Indigenous Entrepreneurship System in Nigeria

The world is presently burdened with mounting challenges such as poverty, unemployment, unsustainable utilisation of natural resources, pollution, racial and gender discrimination, and conflicts among other problems. As part of this world, Nigeria, the most populous black nation with a population of 211,400,794 people (World Bank, 2021) is also in a battle with most of the aforementioned issues. Concerning poverty, one of the predominant crises of contemporary Nigeria is that 133 million Nigerians, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), are multi-dimensionally poor. Sami (2022) reports that the figure of 133 million exceeds the World Bank's projection of Nigeria's poverty index, which was predicted to be around 95.1 million in 2022. A collaborative survey between the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the National Social Safety-Nets Coordinating Office (NASSCO), the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reveals, among other things, that 65% of the poor (86 million people) live in the North, while 35% (nearly 47 million) live in the South (Ichedi, 2022). The NBS collaborative survey also revealed that multi-dimensional poverty ranged from a low of 27% in Ondo State (Southern Nigeria) and 32.1% in Anambra State (Eastern Nigeria) to a high of 91% in Sokoto State (Northern Nigeria). These high poverty rates recorded in Nigeria are partially attributable to the country's high unemployment rate. Fajobi, Olatujoye, Amusa, and Adedoyin (2017) report, that Nigeria is one of the nations in the world with the highest unemployment rate.

Nigeria's unemployment rate has risen from 14.2% in 2016 to 23.1% in 2018, and higher to 33.3% at the end of 2020 (United Nations, 2022).

Against these reports, the need for sustainable solutions is crucial irrespective of cultural peculiarity. In Africa, it is expedient to re-evaluate the role and value of cultural norms in proffering desired solutions to identified problems. Typically, African cultural norms and culture revolve around favourable communal relationships, respect for human values, and a deep appreciation for nature and the resources it provides (Skolimowski, 1990).

The Igbo tribe in Nigeria, have through communal effort patterned community relationship that directly impacts the socio-economic well-being of a community at large. This entrepreneurship philosophy is often called "*Igba Boi*" (Iremeka, 2022), which means the Igbo Apprenticeship System. The Igbo business model in Nigeria is similar to the South African humanistic philosophy called "*Ubuntu*" (Crippen, 2021). Ubuntu promotes harmonious living with man and nature which compares with the Western principle of sustainability (Crippen, 2021).

The Igbo Apprenticeship Scheme, which is indigenous to the people of Anambra State, is an entrepreneurship model that has helped in alleviating the unemployment plight of not only the state whose poverty index, according to Sami (2022) is 32.1% with a population of 4,177,828 (NBS, 2010) but also the entire Eastern region of Nigeria. Gerald, Ifeanyi, and Phina (2020) concur and purport that the Igbo apprenticeship system has for decades remained a major means for closing the unemployment gap in the Eastern region of Nigeria. This apprenticeship system made several Igbo people take their financial destinies into their own hands after the Civil War when they were given just £20 regardless of the content of their actual financial statements and the value of their property (Kanu, 2019). The Igbo apprenticeship system has throughout the years improved the economic position of the Igbos, as the majority of this tribe does not depend on the government or white-collar jobs for their livelihood, but rather works out their means of survival. On this basis, the Sahara Report (2011) asserts that the Igbos are Nigeria's main and most enterprising ethnic group and a major player in the Nigerian economy.

Statistically, Anambra state is a densely populated state with renowned markets such as Onitsha main market, Mgbuka Obosi market, Ochanga market, and relief market, to mention a few. The men of this state are predominantly businessmen. Many of the women or wives of these businessmen in many cases join their husbands to run their businesses. In the contemporary Igbo community, many of these businessmen and their wives could be educated with university degrees while some are holders of just primary or secondary school certificates. However, a large part of them are not schooled formally.

Under the Igbo apprenticeship system, there are two forms of participation, which are: Imu-ahia or Imu-oru, and the Igba-boi business systems. For this study, we shall be linking Igba-boi to the concept of Africanisation. The Igba-boi is described as the Igbo tribe's entrepreneurial framework where a strategic training process is employed to train young men of Igbo stock in entrepreneurial ventures by successful entrepreneurs locally known as "Oga" (Ejo-Orusa 2019).

The Igbo apprenticeship system is one of the numerous dimensions of Africanisation. This apprenticeship system originates from the Igbo tribe in Nigeria and has, since its emergence, been recognised as a successful entrepreneurial model in Africa. The Igbo apprenticeship system is structured in such a way that the apprentice resides with his master to be equipped with the necessary diplomacy, attitude, and decorum required for the trade or business, generally for an agreed period often stretching a number of years. In the end, the master establishes the apprentice by setting up a business for him and providing needed guidance until the apprentice gains a certain level of business maturity (Okeke & Osang, 2021). An important factor in this form of entrepreneurship training is the passion and line of business one wants to go into. The parent or guardian confers and agrees with their child or ward on their choice of vocation and then consciously seeks successful entrepreneurs in that particular vocation for the required training (Okeke & Osang, 2021). Additionally, this ward does not only learn how to be successful in the desired line of business but he will also be trained in the act of making a good home because he lives with the boss and is expected to help out with house chores. After the agreed-upon number of service years, the apprentice is handed over a stipulated amount of money to start up his business, having been trained and mentored by the boss. After gaining stability or recording a substantial degree of success, this new entrepreneur will need the services of a new apprentice who will learn the trade at his hand. This makes the Igbo apprenticeship system an ongoing business process. The cyclic Igbo apprenticeship system is deemed to be the biggest business incubator platform in the world (Neuwirth, 2018). As part of the Igbo entrepreneurship culture, reputable businessmen (the nurturers) in a town or street have the societal obligation to accommodate teenagers and young adults (the apprentices) and give them informal entrepreneurial training and mentorship (Alake, 2018). During the agreed-

upon training period, the apprentice acquires entrepreneurship skills and learns all the complexities involved in the business, such as quality control, supply-chain management, customer management, forecasting, human relations, simple bookkeeping and accounting, negotiation skills, and opportunity recognition and utilisation (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019). These nurturers, when necessary, adopt the "carrot approach" to improper and unapproved actions. Generally, the apprentice learns on the job through direct instruction and is punished for costly mistakes (Adekola & Ezekiel, 2013).

A major problem with the Igbo apprenticeship scheme is the inhibition posed by the belief that the scheme is intended for those who cannot thrive in formal institutions or for those whose parents or guardians cannot meet the expenses of formal education (Adekola, 2013). This belief makes the apprenticeship scheme unattractive to young graduates and youths of school-going age (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019). Despite the derived economic benefit of the Igbo apprenticeship system, findings have shown that quite several Igbo entrepreneurs have not fully understood the concept of customer relationships and networking as a business strategy for organisational profitability (Ayozie, Oboreh, Umukoro & Ayozie, 2013; Obunike, 2016). This depicts an unexplored prospect of this entrepreneurial system.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

To guide the study, the conceptual research review was adopted. Adopting this approach revealed existing literature gaps and the need for academic intervention.

Purposefully, the conceptual review section covered the following: entrepreneurial education; Africanisation as a basis for entrepreneurial education and creative thinking; and Africanisation and the Indigenous Entrepreneurship System in Nigeria.

Infusing the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) into Entrepreneurial Education in Nigerian Universities

The success of entrepreneurial education in Nigeria depends on how universities can tactically and innovatively integrate the valid tenets of the Igbo apprenticeship system into academic curricula. Although the university's entrepreneurial teachings may have their strengths, there are also visible weaknesses in the Nigerian environment. The strength of university entrepreneurial education is premised on the foundational teachings of entrepreneurship principles and theories.

Entrepreneurship education awakens and educates the mind of entrepreneurs to learn about the world around them through proven theories and assumptions. In Nigeria, entrepreneurial education has failed to equip university graduates with practical skills in the form of apprenticeship programmes. Many university graduates are technically deficient in establishing and successfully running an enterprise. These graduates lack field experience and know-how. This deficiency requires improved field exposure and mentoring. On the other side of the divide, the Igbo apprenticeship system finds its strength in field exposure and the ability to mentor apprentices. However, the inability of the Igbo apprenticeship system to validate field know-how with a theoretical foundation breeds more doubt than confidence.

The Practicalities of the Infusion Process



Figure 1: The *Igba Boi* Infusion Process

For Nigerian universities to meet expectations there is a viable need to inject and infuse field mentoring programmes, which are the core strength of the Igbo apprenticeship, into the entrepreneurial curricula of higher institutions. The proposed mentoring programme should create a match between the apprentice's preferred line of business and a devoted mentor to teach and train the apprentice for a stipulated period. The viability of this proposal requires an institutional corporation with successful Igbo businesses. Firstly, a successful mentoring programme must decisively identify Igbo businesses and match them with apprentices as a way of Africanising entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and Africa. Secondly, apprentices' performance reports should be collected and collated by the apprentices' university. Finally, for the mentoring programme to succeed, the apprentices' institution must play the role of parents or guardians by offering periodic counseling to apprentices as a way of extending African culture in a University-Igbo business relationship.

Ingress and Introductory Phase

This phase would require prospective candidates with accepted grades in O'Level results to make formal applications to universities of choice through the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). This is in the assumption that the present curriculum has been revised and customised for this purpose. Afterward, successful applicants will attend a detailed departmental orientation exercise, where formal registration and induction take place. At this stage, students are mandated to fill-out expression of interest forms, one of which would be the candidate's preferred choice of business. The choice of business must be that which passionately and positively drives entrepreneurial behaviour. Additionally, students will be taught the fundamentals of entrepreneurship such as entrepreneurial theories, principles, and the necessary skills required of entrepreneurs to be successful. The focus will be on Western teachings on entrepreneurship.

Aboriginal Business Tutoring Phase

Regarding the entire entrepreneurial education framework, this phase is the most significant because it demands entrepreneurs' absolute mental absorption capacity to be accurate in the understanding of indigenous business models. Here students will be taught the different forms of indigenous business models obtainable in the Nigerian business environment with the view to broadening students' understanding of how native businesses have flourished over decades. Unambiguously, the Igbo apprenticeship business model is the proposed business model to be taught because of its deep historical success. The Igbo apprenticeship business model suggested for adoption is the Igba-boi business system. The Igba-boi business system demands that an apprentice serves an Oga (boss, business owner, or master) for a contracted number of years, rendering services at home and shop before he will be settled with capital or goods to start his own business. Ideally, service years are not less than 5 years. During service years, the Oga and Onye isi umu-boyi (most senior apprentice) are expected to teach the new apprentice thriving business secrets and proper customer relationships required to burgeon. Traditionally, the wearisome nature of the Igbo apprenticeship model suits only male apprentices with strict stipulations on age limits. Students in the entrepreneurial programme will be practically and theoretically taught the barebones of this apprenticeship system in preparation for placement in one of the Ndi-Oga's shops for an agreed number of years.

Apprentice Placement Phase

During this phase, students are placed in the custody of Ndi-Oga to train the students (apprentices) for about a year and six months. A crucial challenge is convincing Ndi-Oga to take up students for apprenticeship purposes as many business owners are likely to perceive this scheme as a distraction to business objectives. To overcome this threat, there is a need for universities to engage and lobby State governments to provide tax incentives and another university form of incentive to businesses that register to participate in this entrepreneurial scheme. Efforts should be made by universities to ensure that only standardised and law-abiding businesses are allowed to register and participate in this scheme. At the beginning of placements, universities will notify and provide Ndi Ogas with information about assigned apprentices to avoid false placements. However, these university-based apprentice does not need to live with business owners. The university at the end of the apprenticeship year will require Ndi-Oga to submit a formal report concerning the student's training period. Ndi-Oga should be made to know that falsifying reports to favour apprentices comes with unyielding penalties.

Assessment and Study Conclusion Phase

This is expected to be the final phase of the apprenticeship program. Students who are due to return from the yearlong apprenticeship program are thoroughly evaluated by the university through a comprehensive examination that comprises both theoretical examination and practical case studies. Students who emerge successful in

their comprehensive examination will be granted a Bachelor of Science Degree in Indigenous Entrepreneurship Development.

Findings from Extant Literature

From the review of extant literature, the following observations were made;

1. Not much empirical literature on Africanising education in Africa and the Igbo apprenticeship system exists.
2. A mismatch exists between entrepreneurship education and the peculiarity of African culture because borrowed academic curriculum misaligns with the African identity.
3. Africanising entrepreneurship education would likely provide a sense of communalism whereby each person helps another to grow, rather than giving room for competition, individualism, antagonism, and conflict.
4. Economic, social, and environmental development in the eastern region of Nigeria is partly influenced by the Igbo apprenticeship system.
5. The establishment, enhancement, and development of small-scale enterprises in eastern Nigeria are positively impacted by the ability of the IAS to offer credit facilities and informal business advice for sales improvement.
6. In the east of Nigeria, most families and communities collectively render financial support to new entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria's rising unemployment and poverty rates, and the proliferation of entrepreneurship studies in higher education institutions, reveal that the current entrepreneurship education curriculum offers little when compared to the success of the same in Western countries. The liberation of Africa and Nigeria from the shackles of poverty and unemployment rests on their ability to devise indigenous means of impacting entrepreneurial skills into the youths in this present century and beyond. The foregoing likely suggests that entrepreneurship education in Nigeria will benefit from indigenous or Africanised discipline in the form of the popular Igba-boi or the Igbo Apprenticeship system.

African youth must be self-aware of who they are and what they stand for. They must be taught to operate from the standpoint of Africanisation as a viable African philosophy. Focusing on Nigeria, Igba-boi is one of the ways Anambra State ensures that economic wealth is evenly distributed. Igba-Boi is a communal way through which Anambraians (people from and or residing in Anambra State) lend a helping hand to the underprivileged of the society as long as these apprentices are of good character. Finally, For Africa to truly find its place on the world stage, it must establish, develop, and build on its traditional belief business system regarding wealth creation and rotation through successful means.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conceptual review of the literature, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Encourage the use of indigenous languages
Central to the success of Africanisation is the place of native language in the mental reasoning process of Africans. In Nigeria, there are over five hundred and twenty-two (522) native languages spoken among the different tribes (Akindele, Olatunde & Akano, 2022). These numerous spoken languages present the country with enormous potential for economic prosperity. The language of a people is at the core of their native identity. Language improves and strengthens the communication needed for a good mentoring process between an apprentice and a business owner. Many of the existing Igbo business owners (Ndi Oga) are not fluent in the use and command of the English language. This is potentially likely to affect their flow of communication with the undergraduate student (prospective apprentice) who is fluent in the use of English but not the local language. The conscious eroding and exchange of native African languages with foreign languages will indeed limit, delay, or prevent the intent of Africanising entrepreneurship education on the African continent if drastic measures are not put in place to save the continuous extinction of African languages, most especially in Nigeria.
2. Improve competency of academic staff on Africanisation philosophy
Academic staff who are at the forefront of knowledge transfer ought to achieve a certain level of comprehension

of the Africanisation philosophy. This is because the development of an academic curriculum that reflects the African race and identity is immersed in the Africanisation philosophy. To a great extent, the success of achieving an Africanised entrepreneurship education curriculum which will ensure the economic sustainability of Africa, will largely depend on African elites which university lecturers spearhead. Therefore, educating the educator to achieve the Africanisation philosophy is inevitable rather than contingent.

Direction for Future Research

Future researchers may wish to conceptually or empirically uncover areas that this study has not adequately addressed. Some of these are firstly, the role of local and state governments in establishing and improving the indigenous business system prevalent in their respective states. Secondly, focusing on the formation of a tripartite alliance that involves higher educational institutions, government, and business owners, for the promotion of economic growth.

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USE OF MOTHER TONGUE AND GENDER AS DETERMINANTS OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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Abstract:

The study investigated the use of mother tongue and gender as determinants of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education (EE) in higher education institutions (HEIs) using the Faculty of Education, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria as a case study. The objective was to determine the relationship between the use of the mother tongue, gender, and students' attitude toward entrepreneurship education. Two hypotheses were formulated to serve as a guide to the study. Three hundred (300) Alex Ekwueme Federal University students were randomly selected for the study. A questionnaire titled "Use of mother tongue scale and students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education" questionnaire was administered and used for data collection. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regression tested at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the criterion variable (students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education correlated positively and low towards the use of the mother tongue. Also, gender was not a determinant factor in both students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education and the use of the mother tongue. The results also showed that only students with knowledge of the use of the mother tongue with the regression coefficient (b) of .258, and a beta weight of .592 significantly have a good attitude towards entrepreneurship education, while gender was not a significant factor in predicting students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education. Based on these findings, some recommendations were made which include, but are not limited to, that students should be encouraged to be knowledgeable on the use of their mother tongue, understand, speak, and use their mother tongue, irrespective of gender. The university should encourage the use of the mother tongue in entrepreneurship education.

Keywords: *Mother Tongue, Gender, Students, Students' Attitude, Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education.*

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INTRODUCTION

Discussions on the promotion of the use of the mother tongue in teaching and learning in Nigerian schools have increased tremendously (Mezieobi, Obiechina & Birabil, 2014; Pulka & Ayuba, 2014). This is because, with the English language as the official language in Nigeria, the over 774 local dialects in Nigeria are completely ignored (Mezieobi, 2013). Mother tongue, gender, students' attitudes and entrepreneurship education in contemporary times are vital concepts that need to be given priority in scholastic writings. The main reason for discussing the topic is to sort out the arguments on the relationship between the use of mother tongue and gender as determinants of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education. Attitude can be conceived as an individual's feelings, opinions, ideologies, and perceptions about a particular thing, subject matter, experience, exposure, and so on. Agulanna and Onukogu (2012) pinpointed that attitude is a learned tendency to evaluate some object, person, or issue in a particular way. According to Petty, Wegener, and Fabrigan (2017), attitude means a relatively stable assessment of persons, objects, situations, or issues along a continuum ranging from positive to negative. On the same note, Cetin (2016) stated that attitude is a tendency attributed to individuals, and creates ideas, feelings, and behaviours about a psychological object in an orderly manner. For Kara (2010), attitude is described as that which can cause individuals to always behave in the same way to people, objects, events, and constant foundations, and unchangeable beliefs, feelings, and tendencies. Attitude informs an individual's behaviour and disposition towards a particular thing, event, occasion, presentation, experience, and so on. Attitudes are formed to serve an objective for the person who holds them (Agulanna & Onukogu, 2012). Furthermore, attitudes inform people's behaviour towards set goals. They also assist individuals in interpreting whatever new information they get based on already-formed attitudes. They further stated that attitudes are formed through learning and experience. Learning theories exposes the fact that attitudes are learned through classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and modeling (Agulanna & Onukogu, 2012). Attitude is very essential especially for students in entrepreneurship education classroom. The disposition of the students towards entrepreneurship education will determine whether or not they will perform excellently in entrepreneurship education.

Furthermore, gender is a variable in this study. In education and even entrepreneurship education, gender plays very important roles. An individual's gender can have an impact on his or her attitude toward entrepreneurship education. Gender as the social construction of female and male identity, is more than biological differences between men and women. It is also how those differences have been valued, used, and relied upon to simply classify women and men and to allocate roles and expectations to them (Nzewi, 2017). For Aydon (2015), gender is described as the social phenomenon of distinguishing males and females based on a set of identity traits. It is a social, not psychological, or biological construction. On the same note, Ametefe and Ametefe (2017) noted that gender is a social construct that establishes and differentiates status and roles between men and women, particularly in the way they contribute and participate in social, political, and economic activities and are rewarded by the economy and most social institutions. It has been noted that gender is a contextual issue in research generally. Oluwagbohunmi (2014) has stated that 90% of male students are better than their female counterparts and the results were statistically significant valued at 5% level. Also, Voyer and Voyer (2014) found out that females perform better than their male counterparts in academics, and the results were statistically significantly valued at 5%. The two perceptions are perceived as contradicting each other.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE CHAPTER

Entrepreneurship Education

Several nations of the world, including Nigeria, have resorted to entrepreneurship – the capacity to transform ideas into income-yielding businesses – to address unemployment and related social and economic issues. In Nigeria for instance, the introduction of entrepreneurship education in schools was a reaction to the economic problems of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty. Both global and local assessments of current entrepreneurship education, however, demonstrate many substantive and pedagogical deficiencies in entrepreneurship education. Lectures, seminars, and practice (demonstration) are still the most common teaching methods in entrepreneurship education (Akpomi & Ikpesu, 2020; Prochazkova, 2015; Prochazkova & Noskova, 2020). In many Nigerian higher education institutions (HEIs), entrepreneurship education has been reduced to learning a trade and learning how to trade like tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry, weaving, and so on, with predictable results (Agbonlahor, 2016). Besides, most of the reviewed studies in entrepreneurship education – in content, policy, and pedagogy - have focused on understanding and promoting the unique personality of the entrepreneur, that is, psychological or the human capital perspective (Thornton, 1999). These deficiencies and the obvious minimal impact of the current entrepreneurship education programme in Nigeria's higher education institutions (HEIs), suggest a need for reform or, indeed, an alternative instructional model. Entrepreneurship education has been studied more from a focus on the individual entrepreneur than from the perspective of the social interactions that shape the entrepreneurial

process and context for learning (Toutain, Fayolle, Pittaway & Politis, 2017). Irrespective of the above weakness, it can be debated that entrepreneurship is fundamentally a collective process (Jones & Spicer, 2009), that it relies on the communication between individuals, their developing companies, and the environment (Bryat & Julien, 2001). Entrepreneurship education, or what Zozimo, Jack, and Hamilton (2017) referred to as entrepreneurial learning, is identified as a critical concept for advancing knowledge on entrepreneurship (Wang & Chugh 2014). This has led to the quest for more understanding and knowledge on how human beings learn from one another (Cope 2005; Hamilton 2011; Konopaski, Jack, & Hamilton 2015; Pittaway & Thorpe 2012) and, more particularly, how entrepreneurs learn through observing other individuals with whom they communicate in social contexts and who are often referred to as role models (Bosma et al. 2012; Hoffmann, Junge, & Malchow-Møller 2015). Entrepreneurship education encompasses all the pedagogical courses, programmes and processes offered to students, at all levels of educational endeavours, to develop or strengthen their entrepreneurial traits, attitude, and skills (Bae et al 2014; Fayolle, Gailly & Lassas- Clerc, 2016). According to Hahn, Minola, Gils, and Huybrechts (2017), entrepreneurship education, or what they referred to as entrepreneurship learning is defined as the key process through which students develop the entrepreneurship knowledge that facilitates them to identify and act upon entrepreneurship opportunities. Entrepreneurship education can also be defined as the process of inculcating in students business-oriented skills, ideas, and knowledge to enable them to become independent after graduation. For Iwu, Ezeudji, Eresia-Eke, and Tengeh (2016) engaging in entrepreneurial activity is considered one of the ways of becoming self-employed but in the actual sense of this chapter, sitting in a classroom where entrepreneurship education is taking place is considered the major way of becoming self-employed. This entrepreneurship education may be in theory or practice. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education is an educative process through which students are led, to acquire skills (ideas and knowledge) that have the ability to (productively) utilise these skills for self-sustenance and self-reliance (Onyeachu, 2011) that may have a spillover positive effect on national development (Mezieobi, 2016).

Use of Mother Tongue in Teaching and Learning

Mother tongue, according to Okediadi (2017), refers to the first language an individual acquires. This language has greater prominence than any other language in the life of every individual. But debunking Okediadi's (2017) definition of mother tongue, the question is what if the first language, an individual acquires, is the English language which has been the case in contemporary Nigerian families? For Afolayan (2018), it is the only language of a monolingual person, which meets all his linguistic needs. It is usually the sequentially first language of a bilingual or a multilingual person. John-Nwosu (2018) averred that mother tongue is perceived as "whatever language a child speaks at home...or the language of the immediate environment of a child...". Mother tongue is the indigenous language that the federal government of Nigeria has endorsed as the language of instruction in the lower, middle and upper basic education level schools in Nigeria (Mezieobi, Obiechina & Birabil, 2014). Mother tongue is no more than the first language of any human in his/her immediate indigenous environment and on which effective take-off of one's life experiences and development are based. It is one's father's indigenous language or rather the language of one's ethnic group or indigenous community. Consequent to the fact that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society, various mother tongues (MT) in Nigeria are aplenty and to the tune of 521, with a bewildering array of dialects which total about 1000 (Akpan, Mezieobi & Umoh, 2020). For this chapter, mother tongue will mean the language a child is born into through identifying with an ancestral origin. Furthermore, the Nigerian government is developing a policy in support of teaching and learning in the mother tongue in Nigerian schools. This language policy is part of a rising trend around the world to support mother tongue instruction in the early years of a child's education (Edgar, 2017). The mother tongue (first language, native language, or L1) is important for learning as a part of intellectual ability (Noormohamadi, 2008). Human beings acquire their mother tongue language from birth. It assists the child in his or her mental, moral and emotional development (Noormohamadi, 2008). Worthy of note is the fact that much of a child's future social and intellectual development is reliant on the milestone of the mother tongue (Plessis, 2008). Therefore, the mother tongue has a central role in education that demands the cognitive development of a child (Noormohamadi, 2008).

Also, there are several studies on different variables that serve as determinants of attitudes among students of higher education institutions (HEIs). Examples are:

- (1) Ludwig, Burton, Weingarten, Milan, Myers and Kligler (2015) carried out a study on the health of students in high schools stating that the health of students is essential in determining their attitudes.
- (2) Sharma (2014) examined classroom environment, parental education, income, and institution as a predictor of students' academic achievement. He stated that all these can determine students' attitudes.
- (3) Mosteller (1995) studied the location of the institution (urban or rural) to be a significant factor that contributes to the students' attitudes.
- (4) Gbore (2013) carried out a study on the relative contributions of teachers' variables and students' attitudes

toward teaching and learning. He found out that teachers' variables and students' attitudes affect both teaching and learning.

- (5) Oloyede (2010) carried out a research on self-concept in higher education institutions' (HEIs') chemistry. He stated that self-concept determines the attitude of students towards the teaching and learning of chemistry in higher education institutions (HEIs).
- (6) Sharma and Jha (2014) examined parents' educational achievement. They pinpointed that parents' educational achievement can impact on and influence students' attitudes towards teaching and learning, negatively or positively, depending on the success or failure recorded by the parents in their educational pursuit.
- (7) Schick, de Villiers, and Hoffmeister (2002) in their research pinpointed that language delays typically noticed in deaf children are causally related to delays in major aspects of cognitive development. They maintained, that children who cannot understand complex syntactic forms, like complements, have difficulty understanding how their thoughts and beliefs may differ from those around them (Noormohamadi, 2008). However, not many of these pieces of research combined the use of mother tongue and gender as correlates of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions (HEIs).

It is on this premise that this study seeks to examine the use of mother tongue and gender as determinants of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education in Faculty of Education, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI), Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical backgrounds underpin this study. However, the study will be anchored on the following theories; Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) and the Social Constructivist Theory.

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) is a relevant theory that is associated with teaching and learning, knowledge acquisition, and pedagogic practices. This framework focuses on three types of knowledge: technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and content knowledge (CK). This order is important because the technology being implemented must communicate the content and support the pedagogy to enhance students' entrepreneurship education experience. TPACK is a theoretical explanation of the set of knowledge and competencies that entrepreneurship educationists need to effectively teach entrepreneurship education. According to Mishra and Koehler (2006), Content Knowledge (CK) connotes teachers' (entrepreneurship educationists in the context of this chapter) own knowledge of the subject matter. Technological Knowledge (TK) defines entrepreneurship educationists' understanding of how technology and content can both influence and push against each other, especially in the use of technology in entrepreneurship education. TPACK provides a practical framework that this study adopted for appraising current entrepreneurship education. The use of the mother tongue in entrepreneurship education is relevant and related to this theory because it drives the content knowledge of the subject matter to the entrepreneurship education student. Imagine explaining a concept to an individual using his or her mother tongue or local dialect, the individual will understand the concept and will become effective and efficient in explaining that particular concept to another individual. Therefore, the theory assisted in the development of the rubric for evaluating the efficacy of the use of mother tongue and gender as determinants of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education.

The Social Constructivist Theory

Lev Vygotsky is a Russian psychologist who propounded social constructivism. According to social constructivism, culture, and context are crucial when trying to make sense of society's happenings, and knowledge creation should be based on that understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) proposes three primary themes concerning social development:

- Social interaction,
- The more knowledgeable other (MKO), and
- The zone of proximal development (ZPD).

Cognitive growth, especially inter-psychological development, necessitates social contact. The social constructivist theory of Lev Vygotsky serves as a strong foundation for this study. According to Vygotsky's theory of social interaction, the sociological method to entrepreneurship research used in this chapter comes from that theory. Cognitive development is heavily influenced by interpersonal social contact, according to social constructionism. This premise implies that entrepreneurship education should be studied, developed, and taught in social "jackets," since it is a social venture that involves many stakeholders. Another social constructivist premise that influenced this

study is the idea that knowledge is a socially and culturally created human product. Education should, therefore, be based on social knowledge and practical experience (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Gredler, 1997). Furthermore, social interaction is promoted through the use of language. The mother tongue of the students and teachers is the best medium for entrepreneurship education. Vygotsky (1978) has stated that a lot of the important education by the child occurs through social interaction with a skillful teacher. The teacher may model behaviours and/or provide verbal instructions for the child. Vygotsky refers to this as cooperative or collaborative dialogue which is an important aspect of teaching and learning a language. This language becomes effective and efficient in entrepreneurship education process because it is the language of the origin of the learner (mother tongue). This theory is relevant to this study because when the entrepreneurship education (EE) learner graduates and finally becomes an entrepreneur, social interaction continues. The entrepreneur will need to interact with his environment (where the business is located), other individuals (customers, suppliers, apprentices and consultants-if need be), equipment-through operations, resources and so on. Even if the business is online-based, the entrepreneur will also interact with technology-trying to adapt to world trends from time to time.

Purpose of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- (1) To determine the coefficient correlation between the use of the mother tongue and students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education.
- (2) To ascertain the coefficient correlation between gender and students' attitude toward entrepreneurship education.
- (3) To obtain the multiple relationships between the use of mother tongue, gender, and students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education.

The following hypotheses were raised to guide the study. They are:

- (1) Students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education is not significantly related to the use of the mother tongue.
- (2) Students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education is not significantly related to gender.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers applied a correlational design in this study. Correlation design was used to understand the relationship and differences existing between two or more variables. The sampling technique adopted in the selection of the sample size is the simple random sampling technique by balloting. Three hundred (300) students from the Faculty of Education, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria were used for the study as sample size.

The setting of the Study

The setting of the study was Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI) Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The institution is a public university owned by the federal government and located in Ebonyi State. Alex Ekwueme Federal University was established in 2011. Therefore, the total population for the study comprised the entire students of Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI), Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria which is 12,000 (twelve thousand) students (Students' Affairs Unit, 2023).

Participants

The participants for the study comprised three hundred (300) students of the Faculty of Education, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The three hundred (300) samples (150 males and 150 females) were selected through a simple random sampling technique from first-degree/regular/full-time students of the institution's Faculty of Education.

Instrument

The instrument used for this study was a researchers' self-structured questionnaire titled 'use of mother tongue scale and students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education inventory'. The questionnaire comprised the sections A and B. Section A comprised fifteen (15) items drawn on the mother tongue while section B comprised fifteen (15) items on students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education. The items were structured in a 4-Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was given face and content validities by two experts from the Faculties of Education, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria and Imo State University, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. To test for the internal consistency of the questionnaire, a test-retest was adopted, and using Pearson product-moment correlation

coefficient (PPMCC), a coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. The scoring of the items was as follows: SA = 4 marks, A = 3 marks, D = 2 marks, SD = 1 mark for positive items while reversed scores were allocated to negative items.

Procedure

The researchers and two research assistants visited the Alex Ekwueme Federal University, campus. Six (6) of the researchers are teaching staff of the university. The three hundred (300) questionnaires administered were retrieved on the spot from respondents.

Data Analysis

The data generated from the questionnaires administered were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The SPSS 15.0 statistical package was utilised in the computation.

RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Use of Mother Tongue(MT) on Students' attitude towards Entrepreneurship Educations

S/N	Mother Tongue Knowledge	\bar{x}	Std	Rem	Students' Attitude towards entrepreneurship education	\bar{x}	Std	Rem
1	Current textbooks available on the mother tongue, have improved my understanding of the use of the mother tongue	3.09	0.41	A	Developing of reading culture of materials on entrepreneurship education	3.50	0.25	A
2	Attending classes where the teacher uses the mother tongue to teach, makes me understand my mother tongue	1.67	0.27	D	Ability to learn about entrepreneurship education	2.11	0.32	D
3	Watching movies on the impacts of the use of the mother tongue affects my use of the mother tongue in the classroom	2.21	0.31	D	Enhancing study duration on entrepreneurship education	2.50	0.39	A
4	I enjoy reading books in my mother tongue at my school	1.63	0.40	D	Cultivation of research skills in entrepreneurship education	3.12	0.42	A
5	My school has a lot of resources on the use of the mother tongue	1.80	0.32	D	Appreciation of books on entrepreneurship education	2.56	0.39	A
6	Mother tongue knowledge orientation on entrepreneurship education is well organised	1.62	0.23	D	Disposition to entrepreneurship education and knowledge building on entrepreneurship education	1.50	0.21	D
7	Computer literacy skills have positively affected my entrepreneurship education capacity in the use of the mother tongue	1.57	0.25	D	Ability to adapt to any environment on entrepreneurship education	2.01	0.36	D
8	Consulted books in the mother tongue are always relevant to entrepreneurship education	1.61	0.41	D	Exploring reading group opportunities in entrepreneurship education	2.00	0.29	D
9	I am being encouraged to research in my school on impacts of the use of the mother tongue in entrepreneurship education	3.06	0.42	A	Receptive to other people's ideas and contributions to entrepreneurship education	1.61	0.26	D
10	Maintenance of a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship education	1.54	0.25	D	Enjoying the positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education	1.84	0.21	D
11	Poor information services on the use of the mother tongue in my school discourage me from accessing materials on entrepreneurship education	3.09	0.23	A	Unwillingness to make use of materials on entrepreneurship education for pieces of research	1.54	0.24	D
12	I learn a lot in school about the use of the mother tongue, and without accessing materials on the mother tongue	1.42	0.21	SD	Unwilling to participate in a literacy programme on entrepreneurship education	1.52	0.21	D

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Use of Mother Tongue(MT) on Students' attitude towards Entrepreneurship Educations

S/N	Mother Tongue Knowledge	\bar{x}	Std	Rem	Students' Attitude towards entrepreneurship education	\bar{x}	Std	Rem
13	Educational activities in my mother tongue are not prohibited in my school	1.56	0.40	D	Lack of interest on computer skills programme on entrepreneurship education	1.62	0.23	D
14	Increase in information materials available on the mother tongue	1.52	0.32	D	Unwilling to read books on entrepreneurship education	1.50	0.26	D
15	High levels of crime happen due to the effects of the use of the mother tongue in schools	1.82	0.32	D	Inability to make reference/consultation on entrepreneurship education, irrespective of the effects of entrepreneurship education	1.50	0.21	D
Overall Mean							4.44	

The result presented in Table 1 shows that all the items are positive. This is evident in the level of the respondents' agreement with the items' statement shown in the details of the table above. Meanwhile, the result shows that students' attitude toward entrepreneurship education is greatly influenced by the knowledge of entrepreneurship education in our higher education institutions (HEIs).

Table two: Descriptive Statistics and correlation between the use of mother tongue and gender on students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education

Variables	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
(constant)	23	2.316		19.518	.000
Use of Mother Tongue	0.516	0.138	0.592	7.518	.000
Gender	-0.54	0.702	-0.122	-1.542	0.884

Dependent variable: students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education.

The regression analysis results show that the only students' use of mother tongue knowledge with the regression coefficient (0) of 0.516 and a beta weight of 0.592 significantly contributed to students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education while the contribution of gender was not significant. The prediction equation is, therefore, as follows:

$$\text{Students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education} = 23 + 0.516 (\text{MT}) - 0.54G$$

Based on the result, the null hypothesis which proposed a no significant contribution of the individual variable to the prediction of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education was accepted for mother tongue knowledge and rejected for gender.

Table Three: Descriptive Statistics and correlation matrix for the relationship between the predictor variables and criterion variable

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education	Use of mother tongue	Gender
Students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education	300	29.7466	4.44684	2.000	0.598	-0.152
Use of Mother Tongue	300	29.2134	5.10242	0.598	2.000	-0.102
Gender	300	2.9	0.998	-0.152	-0.102	2.000

The result from the table indicates that the mean and standard deviation of the respondents. The participants' value for students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education was $M=29.7466$, $SD = 4.4684$, use of mother tongue was $M = 29.2134$, $SD = 0.998$. Meanwhile, the matrix correlation between the two variables (use of mother tongue and gender) and the criterion variable (students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education) indicated that students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education correlate positively and low towards the use of mother tongue. Also, gender was never a determinant of both students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education and their mother tongue knowledge.

Table four: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis between the predictor variable and the criterion variable

Multiple R (adjusted) = 0.61 [^] , multiple R ² (ADJUSTED) = 0.186 Adjusted R ² = 0.162, Std. Error of the estimate = 4.26386					
Mode	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	136.922	4	64.462	15.062	0.736 ^b
Resident	1336.264	294	9.09		
Total	1473.186	298			

Dependent variable: students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education

Predictors: (constant), gender, use of mother tongue (MT).

From table 3, it was indicated that the independent variables gave a co-efficient of multiple regression [®] of 0.61, multiple R² (0.186), and adjusted R³ = (0.162), which indicate that 93% of the two variables accounted for the students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education. This, therefore, indicates that the analysis of the independent variables as a block did not contribute to the students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education. The table from the analysis of variable is also indicated, it produced an F-ratio 15.062 and was found to be insignificant at 0.05 levels.

Discussion of the findings

Table one states that there is no significant correlation between the use of the mother tongue and gender on students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education. The result from the study shows that the matrix correlation between the two variables (use of mother tongue and gender) and the criterion variable (students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education) indicates that students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education correlate positively and low towards the use of mother tongue.

Also, gender was not a determinant of both students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship education and their use of the mother tongue. This result is in connection with Almamum, Rahman, Rahman, and Hossaim (2012) when they observed that respondents have positive attitudes towards education irrespective of their gender.

Table two states that there are no significant multiple relationships between students' knowledge of the mother tongue, gender, and their attitude towards entrepreneurship education. Results of the regression analysis showed that only students' knowledge of the mother tongue (MT) with the regression coefficient (b) of 0.516 and a beta weight of 0.592 significantly contributed to students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education, while the contribution of gender was not significant in predicting students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education. Therefore, the result of the null hypothesis which proposed a no significant contribution of the individual variable to the prediction of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education was accepted for use of mother tongue (MT) and rejected for gender. This is in correlation with the research by Aryana (2010) who found a positive correlation between students' self-esteem and attitude towards learning. Also, Akpan, Mezieobi, and Umoh (2020) revealed that the mother tongue has the strongest impact on education and that improving the use of the mother tongue in entrepreneurship education is important. It also ranks as high as the use of the mother tongue to influence students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education.

Furthermore, Pulka and Ayuba (2014) carried out a study on 'an assessment of factors influencing students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. They found out that the correlation analysis shows that there is a significant influence of factors influencing attitude on students' entrepreneurial attitudes. Therefore,

we reject the null hypothesis that says: Factors influencing attitude have no significant influence on students' entrepreneurial attitude. The alternative hypothesis: Factors influencing attitude have a significant influence on students' entrepreneurial attitude is accepted (p.510).

Gender Implications of Finding

- Gender is not a factor that influences students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education, therefore, students can learn effectively in any condition irrespective of their gender.
- According to the finding, gender was not observed to be a determinant of both students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education and their knowledge of the mother tongue. This implies that entrepreneurship educationists are duty-bound to provide varieties of information materials to satisfy the information needs of students on entrepreneurship education irrespective of their gender and mother tongue.
- Male and female genders can acquire knowledge of entrepreneurship education simultaneously and freely, without any gender bias.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a university – Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. This can affect the generalization of the findings to other higher education institutions (HEIs) including universities, colleges of education and polytechnics, and other levels of education (primary – lower basic education level schools, middle basic education level schools, and secondary – upper basic education level schools and senior secondary schools) in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Several works of literature have related the use of mother tongue, gender, and students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education. This study showed that knowledge of the use of the mother tongue (MT) is very important in students' education and can influence their attitudes towards entrepreneurship education. It is also essential to state that gender, according to this research, did not affect students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education. The use of the mother tongue in entrepreneurship education (classroom interaction in entrepreneurship education) is a contemporary issue. The issue of the English language, as the official language in Nigeria, makes the use of the mother tongue in Nigeria education more difficult, even though, the Nigerian government is encouraging schools to promote the use of the mother tongue as the language for teaching and learning. Entrepreneurship education is an important area of study in the 21st century, especially with the quest of nations to grow and develop their economy. Nigerian higher education institutions (HEIs) are, therefore, encouraged to reposition entrepreneurship education and promote the acquisition of entrepreneurship knowledge among students irrespective of their gender, attitude, character, behaviour, self-esteem, background, mother tongue, and so on.

Recommendations

From the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Teachers should encourage their students about entrepreneurship education at all times. Students are desirous of listening and believing their teachers (Okeke & Anyaogu, 2019). Therefore, if the teachers persuade and encourage the students to be committed to entrepreneurship education, the students will respect their teachers.
- Resources or teaching materials on entrepreneurship education should be recommended for students to use. Students need to have resources on entrepreneurship education for their regular reading. According to John-Nwosu (2018), for a student to understand a subject, topic, course, module, and so on, the students need reading materials.
- Improved communication between teachers and students should be promoted by the school's leadership. Entrepreneurship education has a lot to do with the interaction between the entrepreneurship education teacher(s) and the entrepreneurship education student(s). Improved rapport between the entrepreneurship education teacher and the entrepreneurship education student will make for effective entrepreneurship education.
- The school's library should be equipped with materials and resources on the use of mother-tongue (MT) and entrepreneurship education. Anyanwu and Njoku (2021) noted that students should be encouraged to read all manner of books in the schools' libraries. Every subject, course, or discipline, should have books in the schools' libraries.
- Entrepreneurship education in contemporary times should be student-centred and practice-based. The students need to be active participants in the entrepreneurship education classroom. The entrepreneurship education teacher can give the students roles to play, ask them questions regularly and make them demonstrate concepts or ideas in the entrepreneurship education process.

- Triangulation of teaching methods should be encouraged in entrepreneurship education. This will enable students, with different learning styles and levels of understanding, to acquire the knowledge that will emanate from the entrepreneurship education processes (Offem & Bisong, 2020; Obi, 2021). Triangulation of teaching methods means the combination of two or more teaching methods in teaching and learning (Offem & Bisong, 2020).
- Teachers should be encouraged to use the mother tongue in entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions (HEIs). 'Entrepreneurship education' in the mother tongue requires special tactics (Mezieobi et al, 2014). Therefore, encouraging the entrepreneurship education teacher will enable him/her to explore the use of special tactics in entrepreneurship education in the mother tongue.
- In an entrepreneurship education classroom, the students should be encouraged to engage in social interactions and networking. This is important because entrepreneurship is now more focused on teams, networks, and social capital, rather than the entrepreneurial personality.

The use of technology in entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria should be promoted. This is because digitalisation of entrepreneurship education breeds globalisation. In the globalised world, entrepreneurship education has a relation with globalization, trade, and the economy. Igwe and Rahman (2022) have noted that research on globalisation has been gaining momentum as scholars and policymakers analyse the relationship between globalisation, trade, and economic competitiveness from different dimensions.

Suggestions for Further Studies

1. The study should be conducted with all levels of education in other universities in Nigeria.
2. There should also be the same study conducted with all levels of education in Nigeria.
3. The study could be done with quasi-experimental and factorial design.
4. A comparative research on the use of mother tongue and gender as determinants of students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education in secondary schools (upper basic education level schools – JSS 1-3 and senior secondary schools, primary schools (lower basic education level schools – primary 1-3 and middle basic education level schools – primary 4-6) or tertiary institutions like colleges of education and polytechnics can be carried out.
5. A comparative study on the use of mother tongue and gender as determinants of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education in public and private institutions of learning can be carried out.
6. The study should be extended to private educational institutions.

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: MOVING BEYOND VOCATIONAL SKILLS TEACHING

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Abstract:

Entrepreneurship and enterprise development in Nigerian universities have been on the increase considering their potential to create jobs and reduce the rise of unemployment. This approach that universities have embraced is largely focused on the teaching of vocational skills which has a thin impact on reducing graduate unemployment and meeting the strategic objective of repositioning the universities. The focus of this study is to examine whether entrepreneurial and enterprise teaching in Nigerian universities is slanted toward the acquisition of vocational skills. The study adopts the theory of Planned Behaviour and Kolb experiential learning theory to explain the concepts of entrepreneurship and enterprise development in stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit. The study adopts a descriptive research design and data was collected using a structured questionnaire that was administered physically and online to elicit information from respondents. The sample size for the study is 300 students that were randomly selected from 10 universities made up of 5 public and 5 private universities in South West Nigeria. Data collected were analysed using regression analysis. Findings revealed that the current practice of teaching vocational skills is not effective as shown by the perennial increase in graduate unemployment. The study recommends the teaching of entrepreneurship and enterprise development anchored on value addition, opportunity, and wealth creation with a view to repositioning university graduates for the 21st century's challenges and opportunities.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Enterprise Development, Repositioning, 21st Century*

INTRODUCTION

The desire to enforce entrepreneurship skills into higher education has been on ascendancy globally. In Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) the agency charged with the responsibility of overseeing the activities of universities has encouraged the teaching of entrepreneurship courses and vocational skills training in universities. This embrace reflects the increasing appreciation that university-based entrepreneurship, and enterprise education and development will help achieve some useful entrepreneurial outcomes (Nabi, Linan, Fayolle, Krueger & Walmsley, 2017; Rideout & Gary, 2013). Some of the anticipated outcomes include enhanced entrepreneurial mindset, knowledge, and graduate venture creation, and employment generation, ultimately leading to economic growth, and enhanced societal resilience and improved school engagement (Greene & Saridakis, 2008; Rideout & Gary, 2013; Kamovich & Floss, 2017; Lackeus 2015). However, it is important we make some clarification concerning two of the most used terms in the field of enterprise education and entrepreneurship education. Enterprise education is the preferred term in the United Kingdom and in some Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark and Norway, and is understood to be focused essentially on personal development, mindset, skills and competencies required

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to effect disruptive innovations. Entrepreneurship education on the other hand is used commonly in the United States of America and is defined as focusing more on the specific context of starting a venture and becoming self-employed (QAA, 2012; Rae, & Woodier-Harris, 2012). However, Erkkila (2000) suggested an embracing word, entrepreneurial education as consisting of both enterprise education and entrepreneurship education. The paper will adopt the term.

The implementation of entrepreneurial education in Nigerian universities seeks to imbibe entrepreneurial culture and mindsets in students; with the intention of creating new entrepreneurs, generate employment opportunities and start-up ventures. Unfortunately, it does not appear that this goal is being achieved considering the perennial increase in unemployment in the country.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) a Nigerian government agency that collect data on different sectors of the economy reported 53.40% youth unemployment in their report released on 2022 and published online on April 11, 2023. The Bureau also reported that between 2006 to 2020 unemployment in Nigeria increased from 5.10% to 33.30% www.nigerianstat.gov.ng

Furthermore, it will seem that the current Nigerian universities curriculum as provided by the Nigerian Universities Commission is not achieving the desired goal considering its inability to address entrepreneurial education in a manner that will enable it to achieve the sets objectives. In Nigerian universities, basically, students are trained to become employees in organisations, as the only career option. For example, the curriculum of existing entrepreneurship courses is devoid of requisite content such as problem-solving skills; creativity and innovation; acquisition and utilisation of resources; ability to build organisations, networking, sales and marketing skills which are necessary to function as an entrepreneur (Rideout & Gray, 2013). This situation clearly shows a deficiency that needs addressing.

First, the existing entrepreneurship curriculum is slanted heavily towards vocational skills acquisition instead of entrepreneurial development anchored on knowledge, attitude and a problem-solving mindset. Second, most universities offer entrepreneurship courses in one or two semesters for the duration of the four-year degree programme. A duration that is not likely sufficient to understand the principles, philosophy, and practice of entrepreneurship.

Third, weak capacity of entrepreneurship educators to train students on entrepreneurial development and provide a new paradigm on its importance and relevance.

Fourth, entrepreneurship centres across Nigerian universities do not have any set standard, structure, and format for developing entrepreneurship education.

These challenges indicate the many factors working against entrepreneurial development in Nigerian universities. The specific objectives of the study, therefore, are to:

- i. determine whether existing entrepreneurship development learning programs in Nigerian universities are slanted towards vocational skills;
- ii. investigate if the existing curriculum on entrepreneurial teaching impacts student entrepreneurial intention;
- iii. ascertain if existing entrepreneurial educators have the requisite skills to effectively teach entrepreneurship courses; and
- iv. examine if universities have the set standard and structures for entrepreneurial development.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Entrepreneurship Development

The four factors of production namely land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship were suggested by early political economists such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx and Joseph Schumpeter. The factor that coordinates all the other factors and makes meaning out of them is the entrepreneur. It is the factor that is considered the engine room of economic development, improved standard of living and prosperity (Wang & Chugh, 2014). It is perhaps in the realisation of this that entrepreneurship development has been on the ascendancy and assumed prominence in universities curriculum. Lackeus (2015) noted that interest in entrepreneurship development cuts across several disciplines hence a single definition of the concept is difficult. Baptista and Ania (2015) submit that while economists may consider self-employment as entrepreneurship, organisational theorists view it from the perspective of growth-oriented ventures. Drucker (2006) sees it from the prism of capacity for innovation, while Baron and Shane (2008)

believe it is all about creativity. In this study, we will prefer to explain entrepreneurship from the angle of value creation, opportunity creation and wealth creation. As the study will show, this position is informed by the fact that entrepreneurship is deeper than technical/vocational skills acquisition or self-employment. It is more than mere product development or having an idea. Entrepreneurship is a problem-solving mindset that focuses on building a business around a solution that will result in value creation, opportunity creation and wealth creation. Therefore, entrepreneurship development implementation in universities should be designed to infuse entrepreneurial culture and mindset in students. Rideout and Gray (2013) believe that entrepreneurship development should be able to create entrepreneurs and startup ventures leveraging science and technology.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) propounded by Ajzen (1991), is an extension of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The theory argued that human behaviour is a product of human intention. The general rule of the theory is that the performance or outcome of an intention is largely dependent on the strength of the desire to engage in the behaviour. In this respect, scholars such as Verzat and Bachelet, (2006) have proposed that prior to the intention to set up a venture, there is the desire to become an entrepreneur. Similarly, researchers such as Iwu, Muresherwa, Nchu, and Erasia-Eke (2020) noted that when individuals are confident that they have acquired the right resources and ability to engage in a certain behaviour they will be more likely to engage in it. Basically, the intention is for universities to produce graduates that will create jobs thereby reducing unemployment. However, it will seem that the implementation of entrepreneurship development in Nigerian universities is ineffective considering the low intention to become entrepreneurs, as graduates appear inclined towards seeking jobs in government offices and private organisations. This outcome could be linked to an entrepreneurship curriculum that is weak on key essentials of entrepreneurship knowledge but high on vocational skills. Although the study agrees that there is nothing wrong with acquiring vocational skills, it should not be equated to mean entrepreneurship. Vocational skills are part of entrepreneurship studies as it will still require entrepreneurial skills to build a business around vocational skills to be able to achieve the desired outcome. Furthermore, the challenge of inexperienced entrepreneurial educators, paucity of funds and inappropriate pedagogy are also factors for consideration.

Enterprise Development

Enterprise development is one of the two most frequently used terms in entrepreneurship while the other is entrepreneurship development. Enterprise development is the preferred term in the United Kingdom and is described as focusing generally on mindset, personal development, skills and competencies. The United States use the term entrepreneurship development which focuses on setting up of a business concern and becoming self-employed (QAA, 2012; Rae, Martin, Antcliff & Hannon, 2012). Enterprise development includes acquiring competences, capacity and capability required to implement new ideas that will create value customers including small business or community ventures (Rae, et al, 2012).

Entrepreneurship education

In recent years entrepreneurship education has been on the ascendancy in Nigerian tertiary institutions and has also experienced global exponential growth in higher institutions (Kuratko, 2005). There seems to be widespread acceptance that it has the capacity to deal with the challenges of unemployment and poverty. Entrepreneurship education has been defined by various scholars such as Okiti, (2009) who described it as a "gateway to job opportunities and job creation"; while Fashua, (2006) defines it "as the willingness and ability in a person to seek out investment opportunities in a society". Scholars such as Santoso, Junaedi, Priyanto, and Santoso (2021), believe that entrepreneurship education focuses more on preparing students to be good employees. Uche, Nwabueze and Ememe, (2009), reported that university students lack entrepreneurial skills. This is supported by Rideout and Gray, (2013) who noted that students who are offered entrepreneurship courses are not taught the basic skills an entrepreneur needs such as thinking outside the box, obtaining and utilising resources, building ventures, networking, sales, and building teams. Therefore, Shulte, (2004) suggested that entrepreneurship education in universities should produce job creators and not job seekers.

In Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC), a body charged with the responsibility of superintending over universities, has encouraged universities to embrace entrepreneurship education by way of vocational skill acquisition. This approach it is believed will help curtail rising graduate unemployment. However, this does not seem to be the case as graduate unemployment has been on the increase in Nigeria for the past ten years. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) estimated that the Youth unemployment rate will reach 42.5% in the fourth quarter of 2020 as against 38.3% recorded in the same period in 2019 (<https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/>). Considering the lack of up-to-date data in developing countries including Nigeria the study is unable to access specific unemployment data for graduate unemployment. However, from the statistics obtained from NBS, it is safe to assume that graduates will fall within the bracket of Youths.

Entrepreneurship education can be divided into three approaches – educating about, for, and through entrepreneurship (Heinonen & Hytti, 2010; O'Connor, 2013). Educating “about” entrepreneurship refers to a content-laden and theoretical approach directed at giving a broad understanding of the phenomenon. This is the approach often adopted by universities (Mwasalwiba, 2010). Entrepreneurship training is focused on vocational skills acquisition aimed at giving young graduates the requisite knowledge and skills. This is close to what Nigerian universities refer to as vocational skills. Teaching “through” entrepreneurship is a process driven and often experiential approach. It is where students go through a practical learning process (Kyro, 2005). This approach relies on the broader articulation of entrepreneurship by connecting entrepreneurial characteristics, processes and experiences (Lackeus, 2015). While the “about” and “for” approaches are relevant to students at the lower level of education and the embedded design of teaching methodology of teaching “through” entrepreneurship appears relevant to all students, especially at the university level. However, some challenges have been confronted in trying to embed entrepreneurship into education in this manner, including resource and time constraints, uncooperative attitude from teachers, evaluation challenges and cost issues (Smith et al., 2006).

Finally, the role entrepreneurship plays in proffering solutions to issues (Rae, 2010) has demonstrated that entrepreneurial education is a strategic approach to empowering people and organisations to create social value for the populace (Volkman et al., 2009; Austin et al., 2006).

Vocational skills acquisition

The term vocational skills acquisition has been defined jointly with technical education by some authors such as Anyaogu (2009), and Okorocho, (2012), while others such as Tsang (1997), define them separately. The focus of this study is on vocational skills acquisition as it relates to entrepreneurship study in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The government of Nigeria through the National Universities Commission (NUC) for over a decade has mandated universities in Nigeria to integrate entrepreneurship training into their curriculums. The goal of this policy is to encourage students to acquire at least a vocational skill during the course of their programme in the university to enable them to become self-employed and even become employers of labour especially if they are unable to get a white-collar job after graduation. Some of the vocational skills being taught as entrepreneurship in Nigerian universities include carpentry and furniture works, shoe-making, tie and dye, photography, cosmetology, event-planning management, catering and hotel management, etcetera. These are certainly good skill sets that are designed to help in reducing youth unemployment. But the perennial increase in graduate unemployment over the past years does not indicate the effectiveness of these trainings and policies. Data from Statistica.com indicate that in the fourth quarter of 2020, the unemployment rate in Nigeria hit 42.5% as against 38.3% in 2019. Between 2015 and 2020, the unemployment rate grew by 22.8%. In 2017, the country’s unemployment experienced the fastest increase of 6% during the year. If this is the outcome of vocational skills acquisition in Nigerian universities, it will seem that the policy is ineffective in tackling youth unemployment. This ineffectiveness perhaps is traceable to the short duration of training students are exposed to. For a 4-year degree programme, what the vocational training students are exposed to often does not exceed an hour a week or in some cases an hour every fortnight. In Nigeria, an academic session may not exceed a maximum of 28 weeks.

Kolb (1984), building on earlier work by Dewey and Lewin, provides "a comprehensive theory which offers the foundation for an approach to education and learning as a lifelong process and which is soundly based in intellectual traditions of philosophy and cognitive and social psychology". Kolb's model can be adopted in prescribing a learning process in general, but the theory is focused on ensuring a link between theory and practice which can be useful in vocational skills teaching and acquisition in Nigerian universities.

Taking the totality of the meaning of entrepreneurship, which is the ability to create value, create opportunity and create wealth, it seems focusing on vocational skills without teaching students how to build a business around the skills may not be effective. The study believes this might be the reason why despite the vocational skills training graduates still wait for someone to hire them to apply the skills.

METHODOLOGY

The focus of the study is to investigate whether the teaching of entrepreneurship in Nigerian universities is slanted towards acquisition of vocational skills. The study adopts a descriptive research approach to collect primary data from students across 10 public and private universities in Nigeria. An online questionnaire using Google form was

adopted and sent to 300 students to collect data from the respondents (university students). The questions were structured in such a way to elicit responses in line with the objectives of the study. Of the 300 online questionnaires sent out, 210 responses were received from students across different levels from 100 – 500 levels who have been offered basic modules in entrepreneurship and vocational skills-related courses. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data collected. Based on the research objectives simple percentages, frequency tables, and mean and standard deviation were used in analysing and interpreting the data obtained.

1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Showing the Demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Female	123	58.6	
	Male	87	41.4	
	Total	210	100.0	
Age last birthday	16 years – 20 years	100	47.6	
	21 years – 25 years	81	38.6	
	26 years – 30 years	20	9.5	
	31 years and above	9	4.2	
	Total	210	100.0	
Choice of university	Adeleke University	11	5.2	
	Chrisland University	35	16.7	
	KolaDaisi University	53	25.2	
	University of Lagos	27	12.8	
	University of Ilorin	3	1.4	
	Lead city University	4	1.9	
	Obafemi Awolowo University	39	18.5	
	University of Ibadan	12	5.7	
	Nile University	20	9.5	
	Federal University of Tech.	6	2.8	
	Total	210	100.0	
	Level of study	100 Level	17	8.1
		200 Level	20	9.5
300 Level		89	42.4	
400 Level		67	31.9	
500 Level		17	8.1	
Grand Total		210	100.0	

Source: Authors' Field Report, 2023

Table 1 reveals the demographic profile of the participants. The finding indicates that 123 (58.6%) were female students while 87(41.4%) were male respondents in the distribution. The result shows that female students were more represented in the distribution.

The respondents' last birthday is an essential pointer for the study. Findings reveal that between 16 years – 20 years were 100 (47.6%) participants, between 21 years – 25 years were 81 (38.6%) participants, between 26 years – 30 years

were 20 (9.5%) participants and finally, between 31 years and above were 9 (4.2%) participants in the distribution. It was concluded that between 16 years - 20 years were more represented in the distribution. Meanwhile, the respondents' years of study (level) reveal that students in the 100 level were 17 (8.1%), 200 level 20 (9.5%), 300 level 89 (42.4%), 400 level 67 (31.9%) and finally, 500 level were 17 (8.1%) participants in the distribution. It, therefore, shows that 300-level students were more represented in the study.

1.2 Testing of Research Questions

The research questions that were answered in the course of the study are:

RQ 1: Determine whether existing entrepreneurship development learning programmes in Nigerian universities are slanted toward vocational skills.

Table 2: Existing entrepreneurship development learning programmes in Nigerian universities toward vocational skills

S/N	Question Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	X	SD
1	Entrepreneurship courses I have taken have stimulated my interest sufficiently to start my business after graduation	15 7.4	22 10.8	44 12.6	69 33.8	54 26.5	3.61	1.19
2	Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities is more of vocational skill acquisition	7 3.4	25 12.3	32 15.7	90 44.1	50 24.5	3.74	1.07
3	Entrepreneurship development training is not necessarily same thing as vocational skills acquisition	8 3.9	33 16.2	51 25.0	76 32.3	35 17.2	3.48	1.08
Weighted mean							3.61	1.11

Source: Authors' Field Report, 2023

Regarding the question on whether entrepreneurship courses taken have stimulated sufficient interest to start a business after graduation, 18.2 % of the respondents agree with the statement, 60.3% disagree and 21.6% were neutral. These responses show that the majority of the respondents believe that the entrepreneurship courses they are exposed to have not sufficiently stimulated their interest to start a business after graduation.

The responses on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities relate more to vocational skill acquisition, 15.7% of the respondents agree with the statement, 68.6% of the respondents disagree and 15.7% were neutral. This outcome shows that a preponderant of the respondents are of the view that entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities is not really so much of vocational skills. However, this outcome is at the heart of the study and perhaps helps explain why instead of unemployment being reduced with the teaching of entrepreneurship in Nigerian universities, it is on the increase as earlier stated in this study.

On whether entrepreneurship development training is not necessarily the same thing as vocational skills acquisition, the responses indicate that 20.1% of the respondents agree with the statement, 54.5% disagree while, 25.0% were neutral.

Meanwhile, the study also revealed a negative result as shown by the weighted mean score of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.11 in the distribution. This implies that there are not enough existing entrepreneurship development learning programmes in Nigerian universities that will sufficiently develop an entrepreneurial mindset in the students. This finding is at variance with the study by Etor et al, (2009), which revealed that students believe their entrepreneurship studies were relevant and met their learning needs for entrepreneurship. Tulgan, (1999) also noted that entrepreneurship education in universities enables students to acquire the requisite entrepreneurship skills and mindset. These differences in outcome could be as a result of other factors including the quality of facilitators and curriculum content.

RQ2: Investigate if the existing curriculum on entrepreneurial teaching has an impact on student entrepreneurial intention.

Table 3 containing research question 2 shows that 42.6% of the respondents agree that the number of times students received lectures/training on entrepreneurship development is sufficient to make them entrepreneurs,

Table 3: Showing whether existing curriculum on entrepreneurial teaching has an impact on student entrepreneurial intention

S/N	Question Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	X	SD
1	The number of times I received lectures/training on entrepreneurship development is sufficient to make me an entrepreneur	28 13.7	59 28.9	44 21.6	55 27.0	18 8.8	2.8 8	1.2 1
2	My university curriculum on entrepreneurship development is adequate to make me an entrepreneur.	30 14.7	41 20.1	51 25.0	59 28.9	23 11.3	3.0 2	1.2 4
3	Considering the training I have received; I am ready to start a venture after graduation	12 5.9	45 22.1	54 26.5	67 32.8	26 12.7	3.2 5	1.1 2
Weighted mean							3.0 5	1.1 9

Source: Authors' Field Report, 2023

35.8% disagree while 21.6% were neutral. Regarding the statement on the adequacy of university curriculum on entrepreneurship development to produce an entrepreneur, 34.8% of the respondents agree, 40.2% disagree and 25% were neutral. On the question of the readiness of respondents to start a venture upon graduation from university, 28% agree with the statement, 45.5% disagree, and 26.5 were neutral.

Overall, the findings revealed a negative result as shown with a weighted mean score of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 1.19 in the distribution. This implies that the existing curriculum on entrepreneurial teaching has no impact on student entrepreneurial intention in the study. However, respondents indicated a positive desire to start a venture after graduation. This outcome is supported by several studies such as Akpan and Etor, (2013) and Anyaogu, (2009) who reported that Nigerian university entrepreneurship curriculum content and method are insufficient to create entrepreneurial intention in students. Similarly, a study by Mentoor and Friedrich, (2007) recorded a negative link between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention among South African students, while Lanero, Vazquez, Gutierrez and Garcia, (2011) also observed the absence of a significant link between entrepreneurship curriculum and entrepreneurial intention among Spanish students.

RQ 3: Ascertain if existing entrepreneurial educators had the pre-requisite skills to effectively teach entrepreneurship courses.

Table 4: Showing the extent to which existing entrepreneurial educators had the pre-requisite skills to effectively teach entrepreneurship courses

S/N	Question Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	X	SD
1	Entrepreneurship educators in my university have the requisite competencies to teach the courses	11 5.4	16 7.8	67 32.8	78 38.2	32 15.7	3.64	1.04
2	My university has a sufficient number of entrepreneurship educators to teach all relevant courses	13 6.4	33 16.2	65 31.9	73 35.8	20 9.8	3.21	1.02
3	Notwithstanding my vocational skills acquisition, I look forward to seeking employment in an existing organisation	10 4.9	19 9.3	42 20.6	96 47.1	37 18.1	3.39	1.18
4	Entrepreneurship courses should be taught every semester across all levels as against the current practice	10 4.9	23 11.3	44 21.6	69 33.8	58 28.4	3.15	1.14
Weighted mean							3.35	1.11

Source: Authors' Field Report, 2023

Table 4 reflects the respondents' responses to research question 3. Of the statement on whether entrepreneurship educators have the requisite skills to effectively teach entrepreneurship courses, only 13.2% agreed, 53.9% disagree

with the statement, while 32.8% were neutral. What can be deduced is that respondents (students) do not believe that entrepreneurship educators have the requisite skills to teach. On the question of whether the respondent's university has the sufficient number of entrepreneurship educators to teach all relevant courses, 22.6% agree with the statement, 45.6% disagree while 31.8% were neutral. Regarding the suggestion that entrepreneurship courses should be taught every semester across all levels, 16.2% agree with the statement, 62.2% disagree while 21.6% were neutral. However, the study is concerned with the high percentage of respondents who took a neutral position on the research question. Perhaps a lower percentage will lead to a different outcome. Overall, the study indicates a negative result with a weighted mean score of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 1.11 in the distribution. It therefore implies that the existing entrepreneurial educators in the opinion of the respondents do not possess the pre-requisite skills to effectively teach entrepreneurship courses in the study. This outcome agrees with the work of Nwangwu (2007), who lamented the high paucity of experts in entrepreneurship education, and Etor et al, (2009) who suggested that entrepreneurial studies should be taught by professionals in the relevant aspects of the program in order to achieve the desired objective.

RQ 4: Examine if Nigerian universities set standards and structures for entrepreneurial development.

Table 5: The extent to which universities set the right standard and structures for entrepreneurial development

S/N	Question Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	X	SD
1	Entrepreneurship education should be made compulsory for students in Nigerian universities.	7 3.4	11 5.4	32 15.7	78 38.2	76 37.3	4.01	1.03
2	My university has set standards for entrepreneurial development	11 5.4	26 12.7	53 26.0	81 39.7	33 16.2	3.69	1.14
3	My university has structures that support entrepreneurial development	16 7.8	28 13.7	39 19.1	89 43.6	32 15.7	3.48	1.07
4	Overall, I am satisfied with the way and manner entrepreneurship education is being taught in my university.	19 9.3	35 17.2	55 27.0	59 28.9	36 17.6	3.46	1.15
Weighted mean							3.36	1.09

Source: Authors' Field Report, 2023

The outcome of the finding with respect to the extent universities set the right standard and structures for entrepreneurial development is shown in Table 5.

Regarding the question on whether entrepreneurship education should be made compulsory for students in Nigerian universities, only 8.8% of the respondents agree with the statement, 75.5 disagree while 15.7 were neutral. Respondents' responses to the question of whether universities set standards for entrepreneurial development, 18.1% agree, 55.9% disagree while 26.0% were neutral. In responses on whether universities have structures that support entrepreneurial development, 21.5% agree, 59.3 disagree and 19.1% were neutral. It will seem from the pattern of responses that perhaps the lack of set standards and structures are responsible for why the students do not see the need to make entrepreneurship compulsory in Nigerian universities. This view also reflected on the question of whether respondents were satisfied with how the entrepreneurship program was being taught in the university. While 26.5% agree, 46.5% disagree and 27.0% were neutral.

Responses to RQ 4 revealed a negative outcome with a weighted mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.09 in the distribution. This implies that Nigerian universities are failing to set standards and structures for entrepreneurial development for students. This finding is supported by Akpan and Etor, (2013) who identified decayed infrastructure, and Akpomi, (2009) who faulted the current approach of mechanistic teaching of entrepreneurship by moving beyond rhetoric which does not support entrepreneurship development. The finding also helped throw more light on why entrepreneurship studies in Nigerian universities have not been effective in creating entrepreneurs that could create jobs and not job seekers.

Conclusion, recommendations, and future research direction

In conclusion, the study has revealed that entrepreneurship and enterprise development in Nigerian universities may not necessarily be slanted towards vocational skills but is certainly not meeting the expectations of students. This is so because not only did the study reveal that Nigerian universities neither have standards nor structures to effectively support entrepreneurship and enterprise development, but it also shows that students are not satisfied with the competency level of entrepreneurship educators. Similarly, the study has shown that the existing entrepreneurship curriculum in Nigerian universities is not primed to produce entrepreneurs, which perhaps explains why a significant number of the respondents are not looking forward to starting their businesses after graduation.

Based on the findings of the study, it is our recommendation that steps including the following should be taken so as to achieve the desire of using entrepreneurship development to create jobs, reduce unemployment and improve standards of living.

- A comprehensive review of the current curriculum by introducing entrepreneurship and enterprise development courses across all levels in Nigerian universities.
- Train entrepreneurship educators to effectively teach the courses. Entrepreneurship is a specialised discipline and needs to be taught by properly trained educators.
- Universities should set standards and put appropriate structures in place to support the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship courses.

Having vocational skills acquisition centres is not enough. More important is the ability to build a business around such skills. Meanwhile, a key limitation of the study is the fact that the study is focused on universities in southwestern part of Nigeria of which data was only collected from 10 universities (5 government owned and 5 private-owned universities). As of February 2023, Nigeria had 170 universities made up of 79 private and 91 public (43 federal and 48 state universities). Therefore, future studies may wish to expand the scope to include universities from Northern Nigeria and also increase the sample size to make for better generalisation.

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TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION (EE) IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:

Entrepreneurship education (EE) has been viewed as a crucial tool for a country's economic growth. Every country in the world attempts to develop and strengthen its economy by considering all available options. Nations are attempting to or have already implemented the teaching and learning of EE in schools in response to the discovery of EE as a tool for economic development. In higher education institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria, entrepreneurial education has been offered as a field of study, discipline, or area of expertise. Researchers currently criticise the way EE is learned at colleges and universities for a variety of reasons, such as the use of generalist teachers, the dearth of adequate teaching materials, the inadequate financing of EE programmes, the low rate of graduates choosing entrepreneurship as a career, and more. Additionally, higher education students in Nigeria have not received appropriate orientation towards the value of EE for their present, future, families, and general well-being. Additionally, it has been noted that the context-free methodology used in Nigeria's colleges and universities to teach EE makes it challenging for students to comprehend. The scope of this paper is mainly on pedagogy and not necessarily on policy. Therefore, this paper examines a definition of EE that is focused on Nigeria, the objectives of EE with a focus on its learning and teaching in HEIs, the environment for EE teaching and learning in HEIs, how EE teaching and learning can be improved, and EE teaching and learning. Some suggestions and recommendations are equally flagged.

Keywords: *Teaching, Learning, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Higher Education and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)*

INTRODUCTION

The competition between various countries of the world to out-grow one another economically has caused the exploration of one strategy or approach by these countries. We live in a vastly competitive global society, according to Alonso, de Soria, Orue-Echevarria, et al. (2010), which necessitates a quick evolution of the labour market to meet societal demands for goods and services. It is also interesting to note that politicians and economists

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often believe that a country's rate of economic growth and innovation are inversely correlated with its level of entrepreneurship (Sanchez, 2013). Van Praag and Versloot (2007) noted that there are also strong relationships between entrepreneurial activity and economic performance, including the teaching of EE, as well as a need to create an environment for international trade in which entrepreneurship plays a significant role (Lado & Vozikis, 1996). This is further elevated by the creation of EE centres and institutes in HEIs, similar to what several HEIs in Nigeria have done. Furthermore, it is believed that education, particularly EE, can help people achieve elevated levels of entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2006). The United States of America and China, two rivals of the European Union, have both taken action, which is indicative of the widespread idea that entrepreneurship is essential to competitiveness and satisfaction (Smelstor 2007; Wang 2007). This belief is also pervasive in emerging nations like Nigeria. As a result, EE has been seeing a significant resurgence in recent years all over the world. For instance, it is well known that entrepreneurship and EE have advanced significantly in the United States (Solomon, Duffy & Tarabishy 2002; Finkle, Kuratko & Goldsby 2006; Solomon 2007). Furthermore, Solomon & Fernald (1991) demonstrate that there were 428% more new degree programmes in entrepreneurship in 1986 than there were in 1979, growing from 25 to 107. In recent years, there has been an even greater growth (Busenitz et al. 2003, Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019). To coordinate what is known as "the migration from manager sector to the entrepreneurial economy," a current study of 164 significant business schools in Europe found out that 42% of the business schools in Europe had set up dedicated centres for entrepreneurship (Thurik & Wennekers 2004). Over 80% of higher learning institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria, including universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics, have developed EE centres and institutes (Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019). In Nigeria, a recent survey of 10 significant business schools, including the Lagos Business School (LBS) found that over 60% of them had set up centres for entrepreneurship (Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019; Anyanwu, 2020; Nnamocha, 2021). In Africa generally, every university has an established centre, institute of EE and/or EE programme (Ndugbu, 2018; Onah, 2020; Akamike, 2021).

Higher education in the Nigerian context refers to a university, college of education or a polytechnic (Elom & Ossai, 2018). According to Tom et al (2013) higher education is generally seen as a major (potential) catalyst towards sustainable development in particular through its traditional mission of education, research and public service. Higher education advances and promotes teaching and learning, as well as research and community services. In Nigeria, HEIs have established centres and institutes of EE. Most higher education institutions in Nigeria offer general courses in EE for all first-year (100 Level) students.

Various countries of the world, including Nigeria, strive to improve, build and develop their economies through different techniques, strategies and approaches (Anyanwu, 2020). One significant technique used by many countries to improve and build their economies is the development of EE as a field of study, discipline, or area of expertise in schools. Additionally, the desire to provide the Nigerian people with appropriate goods and services led to the creation of entrepreneurship courses in universities of HEIs. There must be a steady supply of qualified and talented graduates from colleges and universities (HEIs) where entrepreneurship education is taught to serve as either workers or employers in order to guarantee that such quests are satisfied. Therefore, HEIs are required to turn out graduates who have acquired work-related or company start-up knowledge, abilities, and attitudes so they may function well in established companies or launch their own businesses and provide employment for others (Ehiobuche, Okolie, Nwali & Igwe, 2022). This is crucial in view of the expanding student enrollment, the dearth of graduate jobs, the rising unemployment rate, and the underemployment rate (Karmel & Carroll, 2016; Valentin, 2000). In some countries, such as Nigeria, 40% of the population, or about 83 million people, do not have a job to support themselves and live below the poverty level of 137,430 Naira (\$381.75) per year (World Bank, 2019). This is evident in the study conducted by Onah (2020) where he found out that in recent times, 70% of graduates from HEIs in Nigeria prefer establishing one business or the other to seeking employment elsewhere. This implies that if this can be achieved, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria will be reduced and more employment for people will be created (Akamike, 2021).

In the 21st century, entrepreneurship has turned out to be the order of the day. With the advent of globalisation, nations strive to promote entrepreneurship by encouraging more of their citizens to get involved in one entrepreneurial venture or the other. It is believed that with the introduction and eventual teaching and learning of EE in schools, more people will be encouraged to venture into entrepreneurial activities thereby advancing and improving the nation's economy with particular emphasis on internally generated revenue. In any discussion on teaching and learning, pedagogy and policy need to be considered. This paper looks at the why and how of teaching EE in schools. It will further explore or unravel the education level most appropriate for the first introduction of EE to students using Nigeria as a case study. This paper further explores Nigeria-oriented definition of EE and the various ways the teaching and learning of EE can be enhanced.

Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education and Nigeria-Oriented Definition of Entrepreneurship Education

The history of entrepreneurship and EE in Nigerian schools remains unknown (Akamike, 2021; Ndugbu; 2021). This is because several scholars have differing opinions on when and how entrepreneurship and EE were introduced in Nigerian schools. Furthermore, the first time a student begins to hear of EE is in upper basic education level schools (that is JSS 1-3) through HEIs – universities, colleges of education and polytechnics. But the truth remains that EE would be more effective if it is introduced to the child in early childhood education (Uzomah, 2022). During break time, EE can be introduced to a child in nursery school and kindergarten in form of role play or drama. Therefore, entrepreneurship means different things to different researchers. Some old definitions of entrepreneurship still hold sway. For example, as far back as 1970 till to date, the definitions of entrepreneurship by Kilby (1971) and Timmions (1987) have remained relevant. Kilby (1971) defines entrepreneurship as the ability to adapt to production processes to suit the local situation. This implies that a developing nation like Nigeria benefits more by merely modifying the existing technology to suit local variation rather than developing that technology itself from the start. Entrepreneurship seeks to find out how best graduates of HEIs can convert their education to intellectually productive ventures in order to bring out the best economic-yielding establishment and idea in an individual. Entrepreneurship is the act of creating and building something of value from practically nothing, and the creation and distribution of something of value and of benefit to the individual (Timmions, 1987). In support of these old definitions of entrepreneurship, Onah (2020) noted that the definitions of entrepreneurship then and now have no significant difference. The only known difference is the improvement in technology and the inclusion of technology as an innovation in entrepreneurship. This agrees with Gana (2011) with his description of entrepreneurship defined as the intention and capacity of an individual to look for business opportunities and to establish on the identified opportunities. Furthermore, entrepreneurship is the willingness, skill, ability, capacity and drive to identify and harness an investment opportunity (Madu, Uzoeshi, Agu & Kanu, 2020). This implies that non-business opportunities are included in EE. Thus, the entrepreneur must have entrepreneurship behaviour.

Entrepreneurship behaviour can manifest itself in any individual in any locality provided there is the willingness, skill and drive to harness all available resources in order to achieve a given objective. It requires conscious devotion to time and effort. Only individuals that are enterprising will appreciate the significance of the time and effort required to make something new and operational. It also involves risks with very impressive rewards which give the individual personal satisfaction. According to Tchamyu (2014), entrepreneurialism is exceedingly dangerous in Africa, including Nigeria (Alagidede, 2008; Asongu, 2012). World Bank's Doing Business Indicators did not fully reflect the impact of labour regulations on the African continent (Paul et al., 2010). This supports a previous claim made by Eifert et al. (2008) that the World Bank's measures undervalue the performance of African enterprises.

The level of success of an entrepreneur is indicated by the profit. There are entrepreneurs who lack the requisite abilities but are passionate about developing and running a business idea. Contrarily, EE is described as any educational method or programme that fosters the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and abilities (Fayolle & Klandt, 2006). Despite the fact that entrepreneurship education has been related with/to acquiring more academic information as opposed to practical entrepreneurial abilities (Al-Awlaqi, Aamer & Habtoor, 2018). Entrepreneurship learning, as described by Hahn, Minola, Gils & Huybrechts (2017), is the "essential process via which the students build entrepreneurship knowledge that permits them to discover and act on entrepreneurial possibilities." The process of fostering in students' business-oriented skills, ideas, and information, to enable them to become autonomous after graduation, is another definition of EE (Ihemadu & Mezieobi, 2021).

It is believed that entrepreneurial learning, as defined by Zozimo, Jack and Hamilton (2017), is essential for expanding knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship (Wang & Chugh, 2014). This has prompted numerous requests for greater knowledge and understanding of how people pick up skills from other entrepreneurial skills' acquisition sectors (Cope 2005; Hamilton 2011; Pittaway & Thorpe 2012; Konopaski, Jack & Hamilton 2015), and in particular how different businesspeople pick up skills from observing other business people and people they communicate with, in social settings and who are frequently viewed as essential role models (Bosma et al. 2012; Hoffmann, Junge & Malchow-Meller 2015). Everything pertaining to education in Nigeria must incorporate the notions of teaching and learning. The notion that EE, which encompasses the pedagogical programmes, and procedures supplied to students to increase or reinforce their entrepreneurial qualities, attitudes, and abilities (Bae et al. 2014; Fayolle, Gailly & Lassas-Clerk 2016), is one of many initiatives that have been implemented by educational institutions. This is encouraged by policymakers in response to the popular belief that entrepreneurship functions as an engine for economic growth. Universities as HEIs in Nigeria, face the challenge of preparing undergraduates for a job market where the willingness to act and think in an entrepreneurship and proactive manner is a key success factor

(Audretsch 2014; Urbano & Guerrero 2013). Hahn, Minola, Gils & Huybrechts (2017) assert that the primary objective of EE has switched from encouraging students to launch new enterprises to emphasizing entrepreneurship as an important style of rational thinking and strategic behaviour (Leitch, Hazlett & Pittaway, 2012; Mustar, 2019). According to Mezieobi and Okeke (2019), the majority of Nigerians who have been successful in entrepreneurial pursuits have never enrolled in an entrepreneurship programme(s). Apprenticeship can be advantageous in this circumstance. In fact, the European Commission (2018, p. 7) emphasizes that the benefits of EE are not limited to start-ups, innovative ventures, and new jobs, but also to an individual's ability to put ideas into action. As a result, entrepreneurship education is a key competence for all, enabling young people to be even more creative and self-assured in whatever they pursue, be it business, wellness, family, family planning, and so on. In order to promote entrepreneurial learning (EL) (Neck & Greene, 2011), entrepreneurial thought, entrepreneurial actions and EE in Nigeria should contain the aforementioned objectives.

Therefore, in the Nigerian context, EE is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and initiatives that can make an individual excel in business, commerce and trade. But EE should not be limited to the economy, trade, commerce or business, it should be the acquisition of skills to excel and succeed in all areas of life including health, oil and gas, engineering, governance, human welfare, management (Ndugbu, 2018; Nnamocha, 2021) and so on. Furthermore, EE should not just be the transfer of entrepreneurial knowledge through teaching and learning from one individual to another, but entrepreneurial knowledge can be acquired through observations, practice, getting involved in entrepreneurial-oriented activities (Uzomah, 2022; Iheanacho, 2022) and so on.

For some Nigerians, EE, or what Sibanda & Iwu (2021) referred to as entrepreneurship literacy (EL), advances knowledge of starting up a business and the ability to handle and manage the numerous challenges that come with business complexities for the betterment of the society and the enhancement of the nation's economy. They see entrepreneurs as those individuals that have established top-ranking businesses (Nnamocha, 2021; Ihemadu & Mezieobi, 2021) like Aliko Dangote, Tony Elumelu, Mike Adenugo, Femi Atedola, Folurunsho Alakija, Innocent Chukwuma, Frank Nneji, Alex Mbata, ABC Orjiako, Uchenna Mezieobi and so on. They do not recognize street hawkers, truck pushers, wheelbarrow pushers, taxi and bus drivers and all petty traders as entrepreneurs. Higher education institutions form part of the EE teaching and learning environment (Mazzarol 2014), thus suggesting that a thriving economy is achieved partly through quality education (Sibanda & Iwu, 2021). In Nigeria, the quest for achieving quality education especially in HEIs is being promoted by the various unions that make up higher education institutions. Quality education improves pass rates and helps to decrease dropout rates (Iwu, Ezeuduj, Iwu, Ikebuaku & Tengeh 2018). Therefore, with quality education, the teaching and learning of EE in Nigeria can be effective and efficient. Furthermore, this will reduce the high rate of unemployment among graduates of HEIs in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Teaching and Learning of Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria

There is ongoing discussion regarding whether and/or under what circumstances this sort of education helps the students' EE/entrepreneurial learning, according to Hahn et al. (2017), despite the global increase in entrepreneurship education given at HEIs. This is why outlining the objectives of EE is very essential. Even though Osuala (2012) has noted that "not all the colleges and institutions... teach entrepreneurship education...", it is still important that it is introduced and taught in HEIs in Nigeria. Ekefre and Aloba (2012) outlined the following as objectives of EE in Nigeria. They are:

- To give youngsters that meaningful education that would empower them to become self-reliant, and afterward encourage them to generate profit and be self-sufficient.
- To provide small and medium-size businesses with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to the management of the small business centres.
- To provide graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium-size businesses.
- To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty be possible and easy.
- To motivate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
- To provide graduates with training in the skills that will make them meet the manpower need of society.
- To encourage industrial and economic growth in rural and underdeveloped areas, and
- To give graduates sufficient training to enable them to think creatively and innovatively while seeking out new business prospects.

Achieving the above objectives is not usually easy for Nigerian schools and teachers. This is because of the corruption and selfishness on the part of the school's management and the government. In some case, inadequate funding of the schools makes it impossible for the above objectives to be achieved. On the other hand, ineffective and inefficient utilization of available funds becomes a problem. But Ekefre and Aloba (2012) mentioned that "to attain the... objectives, the course content of EE should be all-embracing". This means that it should include all information that has to do with starting new businesses, sustaining them and advancing them. Some information that EE should contain are:

- Sources of finance to start-up small business;
- Basic managerial skills;
- Knowledge of the business enrolment especially various businesses;
- Organization of small-scale businesses;
- Risk management;
- Principles of managing businesses;
- Interaction in business and so on (Ndugbu, 2018; Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019)

Entrepreneurial Training Environments for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

The setting in which EE is taught and learned, whether in theory or in reality, is crucial and can encourage and promote learning. The success of EE today connects the political, academic, professional, and scientific realms and permeates every social stratum in western society (Toutain, Fayolle, Pittaway & Politis, 2017). With specifically Nigeria and Africa in general, this is not the case. This is because the environment for teaching and learning is still evolving. The three educational elements of teaching about the entrepreneur (about), teaching to become an entrepreneur (for), and educating through committing to entrepreneurial (through) are all experiencing significant growth in training course development (Blenker et al., 2011).

All these three educational dimensions of EE need strategic consideration, harnessing and implementation in the Nigerian context. Furthermore, the teaching and learning of EE should not be confined to the classroom, instead fieldwork, site-seeing and exploration of innovative strategies should be encouraged.

EE in Nigerian schools is taught in theory. Practicalising the content of EE has not been easy because of lack of funds to adequately fund EE activities and programmes in HEIs (Ihemadu & Mezieobi, 2021; Iheanacho, 2022). In the teaching of entrepreneurship education, making emphasis on successful entrepreneurs in Nigeria motivates the students to want to practicalise entrepreneurship. This also impacts on their expectations at becoming entrepreneurs and engaging in entrepreneurial activities after graduation (Anyanwu, 2020; Nnamocha, 2021).

How can the Teaching and Learning of Entrepreneurship Education be Enhanced?

It is possible for one to say that EE covers entrepreneurship teaching (ET) and entrepreneurship learning (EL). The link between entrepreneurship teaching (ET) and entrepreneurship learning (EL) is so pronounced that without entrepreneurship teaching, there would be no entrepreneurship learning and with effective entrepreneurship learning, the purpose of EE can be achieved. This, therefore, means that enhancing the teaching and learning of EE will entail strategic repositioning of the entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigeria's HEIs. Additionally, in the modern day, knowledge, innovation, and business are crucial components of a country's and an economy's development. According to Audretsch (2007), "knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship are essential to economic and societal progress in contemporary globalized and competitive environment." Therefore, EE needs to be a priority. Furthermore, the following have to be considered for EE to be improved through its teaching and learning at HEIs:

- EE content, pedagogical approaches and didactic tools should be relooked.
- The EE curriculum should be re-visited and modernised to conform to best practices and international standards.
- Contextualisation of the content of EE should be encouraged.
- Ideal and reflective thinking by EE teachers and students on EE should be considered.
- HEIs should allow professional teachers in EE to run the affairs of the centre or Directorate of EE as the case may be.
- The separation of the centre for EE from the school/faculty of education should be discouraged.
- The services of professionals in EE should be engaged.
- The government should make policies making EE very compulsory in HEIs.

- EE teaching and learning can only be effective if practicalised. After theoretical learning, practical learning should take place.
- Workshops on various careers or businesses should be established in Nigeria's HEIs.
- Creativity and innovations should be introduced in the teaching and learning of EE (Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019; Anyanwu, 2020; Onah, 2020).

The above information was supported by Anyanwu and Nnamocha (2021), when they stated that factors like EE content, pedagogical approaches, didactic tools, ideal and reflective thinking, practicalisation of EE, creativity and innovation, contextualizing the teaching and learning of EE and so on should be considered in the process of improving the teaching and learning of EE in higher education institutions (HEIs) especially in Nigeria. This is because there are borrowed information in EE that do not fit into its teaching and learning in Nigeria.

Education in Entrepreneurship: Teaching and Learning

In Nigeria's HEIs, there is no widely recognised model for the learning and teaching of EE. Additionally, during the past 20 years, there has been a significant growth in research on EE, activities, and programmes (Katz 2013; Kuratko 2015). Despite certain improvements in the general pedagogical structure, there are still a lot of crucial concerns that need to be resolved. According to Verzat, O'shea and Jore (2017), these include how to describe appropriate learning objectives for addressing the complex and difficult EE concept, how to design appropriate and adequate teaching methods and methodologies, and the various measures that can be used to assess their overall efficacy. Current literature reviews (Rizza & Varum 2011; Byrne, Fayolle & Toutain 2014; Naia et al. 2014); as well as individual insights from a subject-matter expert (Fayolle 2013), all suggest that researchers are still unable to fully explain and describe why and how we should teach what, to whom in the entrepreneurship classroom and learning process. The definition, teaching, and learning of soft skills related to EE and the entrepreneurial attitude is one of the most ambiguous areas (Blenker et al. 2014). In Nigeria, the teaching and learning of EE is still vague. It is extensively utilised and promoted as a crucial capacity for lifelong learning despite its ambiguity.

EE considers several pieces of information for its effectiveness and efficiency. Some of these activities or information considered by EE especially for effective teaching and learning are: regional development, safety, education services, culture, environmental services, recreation, transport, economic development, international engagement and health services.

Additionally, on the basis of the above assertions, this paper highlights the following as a guide to the teaching and learning of EE in Nigeria:

- Students of HEIs need EE from entrepreneurship educationists, but also through the use of didactic tools that can teach them to be creative in their own businesses.
- Students of higher education institutions (HEIs) and EE lecturers need to have ownership of their own creative ideas and be held responsible for the reflective process and its outcome.
- HEIs, that is universities, colleges of education and polytechnics, in the Nigerian context can benefit from engaging the community in entrepreneurship activities (or the producer of entrepreneurs) by bringing outside expertise/skills to their classrooms.
- Students of higher education institutions (HEIs) ought to have the freedom of learning, but within a freedom framework, a controlled environment in which they are free to experiment with their entrepreneurial ideas and thoughts

CONCLUSION

The teaching and learning of EE entail a lot of creativity, reflective thinking and innovation. The value of EE cannot be over looked because the high rate of unemployment can be reduced through effective and efficient teaching and learning of EE. In as much as Nigerians see business as an area for the uneducated and unemployed, every individual should be encouraged to get involved in one business or the other in order to increase salaries that can be enough for human survival. Government should create an enabling environment for entrepreneurs to strive even amidst economic meltdown or recession. Furthermore, business start-up sponsorships should be provided by the various state and federal governments, charity organisations, and private individuals.

Enhancing the teaching and learning of EE in HEIs will give students impressive experiences. This can be achieved by involving students in practical aspects of entrepreneurial teaching and learning. However, students with the ability to learn EE and become entrepreneurs should be encouraged by the various stakeholders of education including the government, institutions of learning, investors, international organisations, non-governmental organisations,

the community and so on. This will help in the reduction of the unemployment rate of graduates of HEIs. It is crucial to encourage graduates, whether or not they have a passion for business, to get involved in one or more trades in their local community, given the rising number of people receiving various degrees from universities of HEIs and Nigeria's rising unemployment rate. This study builds on earlier research that examined the teaching and learning of EE in various educational settings and contexts. It is situated in Nigeria and uses an integrative literature review methodology for critical and analytical evaluation, and synthesises the literature on entrepreneurship, EE, and a Nigeria-specific definition of EE with a focus on HEIs in the nation. Through this method, colleges and universities (HEIs) in Nigeria can improve the teaching and learning of EE by creating a new theoretical framework and perspective. The study adds to the body of information about EE, EE teaching and learning, and the numerous ways EE teaching and learning may be improved in higher education institutions in Nigeria and other areas of the world. Additionally, it has applications for those interested in entrepreneurship, EE, and the delivery of EE in HEIs.

Recommendations

It is a fact that there are fewer entrepreneurial methods/strategies in education. Therefore, this paper recommends that:

- Policy makers in education should ensure that courses in EE are taught by entrepreneurship educationists in collaboration with entrepreneurs –business owners/traders/market men and women/investors and so on (for practical purposes).
- All levels of educational endeavours—lower (primary 1-3), middle (primary 4-6), and upper (JSS 1-3) basic education level schools, senior secondary schools, and HEIs—should teach and learn about entrepreneurship.
- The curriculum of the school should include instruction in entrepreneurship.
- EE should be an independent course.
- If it is possible, apart from teaching EE in schools, avenues of out-of-school tutoring/apprenticeship should be created and encouraged.
- It is crucial to reposition the instructors in EE. They need to receive proper instruction.
- In schools and the general public, periodic seminars, workshops, conferences, and symposia on EE should be held.

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EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION: A GENDER-FOCUSED ANALYSIS OF INTENTIONS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Background: In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the impact of entrepreneurship education (EE) on entrepreneurial intentions (EI) among undergraduate students, as EI is a critical precursor to actual entrepreneurial behaviour. However, there is limited research that specifically explores the influence of EE on EI with a focus on gender differences, especially in developing countries.

Purpose: This study investigates the influence of EE on undergraduate students' EI, with a focus on the cognitive, behavioural, and affective components of EE. Additionally, the study explores how perceived competence of entrepreneurship lecturers, adequacy of facilities and equipment, and perceived adequacy of instructional materials and curriculum content influence students' EI. Furthermore, the study examines whether the effect of these factors varies among male and female undergraduate students.

Methodology: The researchers collected data from undergraduate students over a three-year period via a self-reported online questionnaire. Hierarchical regression analysis was used for data analysis using SPSS version 24.

Findings: The findings reveal a positive relationship between students' EE and EI. The results further indicate that while cognitive attitudes do not influence EI, behavioural and affective attitudes do. Moreover, the study highlights that the influence of EE on EI differs among male and female students.

Implications and conclusion: This study provides valuable insights into the teaching and delivery of EE in higher education institutions (HEIs), emphasising the importance of instructional methods, materials, facilities, and equipment in shaping EI in developing countries.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship intention, attitudes, gender differences, developing countries*

Ethical Statement: This study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their privacy and confidentiality were protected throughout the research process. The study was conducted in accordance with relevant institutional and national ethical standards, and appropriate approvals were obtained from the relevant authorities.

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INTRODUCTION

Most African countries place a high priority on the development of entrepreneurial skills among young people. In 2006, the Nigerian government enacted a public policy directive through the National Universities Commission (NUC) which made it mandatory for Nigerian tertiary institutions to introduce entrepreneurship courses across all disciplines and to establish Entrepreneurship Development Centres (EDCs) (Maxwell et al., 2018; Nwambam et al., 2018; Anosike, 2019; Olofinyehun et al., 2022). As part of the policy, undergraduates must study an entrepreneurship course between their second and final year (Olofinyehun et al., 2022). Once a student is enrolled in the entrepreneurship course at a university, they are required to complete it before the end of their regular course of study (Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016; Anosike, 2019; Otache, 2019; Olofinyehun et al., 2022). Previous literature supports the view that the process of becoming an entrepreneur is influenced by entrepreneurship education (EE) (Nwambam et al., 2018; Sansone et al., 2021; Deveci, 2022). These studies have shown that university EE is important for two reasons. First, EE is crucial to the generation of knowledge and fostering of entrepreneurial activities, which are historically associated with economic growth (Sirelkhatim & Gangi, 2015; Hasan et al., 2017; Cera et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2020;). Second, the start-ups they create have been shown to improve economic conditions, by creating new jobs, and providing innovation and vitality (Ndofirepi et al., 2018; Othman et al., 2020; Paray & Kumar, 2020). Despite the increased interest in EE as a precursor to entrepreneurial intentions (EI), which has since been made mandatory in Nigerian Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), there is limited empirical evidence linking EE and EI and studies explaining gender differences in EI. This is important because the effect of EE on EI by gender appears to have generated mixed results in the literature (Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2017; Ndofirepi et al., 2018; Brüne & Lutz, 2020; Justus, 2021). While some of these studies have indicated that women are more likely to start businesses and engage in entrepreneurial activities than men, others reveal otherwise (Ali & Salisu, 2019). In some studies, the positive effects of education on female students have been reported, but many others report little or no effect on female students' EI (Ndofirepi et al., 2018; Contreras-Barraza et al., 2021; Justus, 2021). Previous research argues that women may be discouraged from having high aspirations by gender stereotypes and may be deprived of the essential resources required to start and run their own businesses (Westhead & Solesvik, 2016; Scent et al., 2020).

Whilst the literature acknowledges EE as having a significant influence on entrepreneurial activity, it is a recent phenomenon in Nigerian institutions (Maxwell et al., 2018; Olofinyehun et al., 2022). Though there is evidence in the literature to suggest that EE influences student attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Asghar et al., 2019; Jena, 2020; Othman et al., 2020; Iwu et al., 2021), it is not clear whether gender differences exist in the link between EE and EI in developing countries like Nigeria. There are limited studies focusing on this link and the role of gender from a developing country perspective (Westhead & Solesvik, 2016; Nowiński et al., 2019; Onjewu et al., 2021; Pech & Řehoř, 2021). Although, there are a handful of studies (Aladejebi, 2018; Bako et al., 2018; Mamman et al., 2018; Ndofirepi et al., 2018) exploring the link between EE and EI, they fail to account for gender differences in EIs among students in HEIs. Most studies that evaluate gender differences focus on women entrepreneurship (Garba & Kraemer-Mbula, 2018; Ndofirepi et al., 2018; Ali & Salisu, 2019). Other previous studies focus on the challenges of EE (Unachukwu, 2010; Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018; Azuka, 2018; Kulo et al., 2018) and the effect of EE on youth employment generation (Anidiobu et al., 2016; Nwambam et al., 2018; Othman et al., 2020; Iwu et al., 2021).

Gender is an important social factor that can shape individuals' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours towards entrepreneurship (Westhead & Solesvik, 2016; Pech & Řehoř, 2021). Women have been found to face unique challenges and barriers in entrepreneurship, including cultural norms, societal expectations, and access to resources (Ndofirepi et al., 2018; Paray & Kumar, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to examine how EE may impact male and female undergraduate students' EI differently in developing countries. Additionally, other contextual factors, such as perceived competence of entrepreneurship lecturers, adequacy of facilities and equipment, and perceived adequacy of instructional materials and curriculum content, may also play a role in shaping students' EI. These factors can impact the quality of EE delivery and may have differential effects on male and female students. Understanding the role of EE in influencing EI among undergraduate students, with a focus on gender differences and contextual factors, can provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders involved in EE and promotion efforts in developing countries.

Literature review and hypotheses

From the perspective of Human Capital Theory (HCT), education can increase productivity and efficiency of individuals (Schmidt, 1952; Anosike, 2019; Hung & Ramsden, 2021). HCT has recently been recognised as one of the most fundamental pillars of global education policy discourse. Based on HCT core tenets, education is an "investment" that yields returns, through building, and developing skills and knowledge. From this view,

human capital is the intangible economic value of an individual's experiences, knowledge and skills (Gillies, 2015; Boldureanu et al., 2020; Hung & Ramsden, 2021). Thus, human capital serves specifically as a tool for helping individuals identify and exploit opportunities that might otherwise be inaccessible to them. Human capital has been linked to entrepreneurship success in several ways. First, general education and practical experience gained through EE can improve venture performance (Anosike, 2019). By conceptualising and empirically testing EE as an antecedent of EI, this study draws upon HCT to provide insights that will enhance the discourse on EE and EI. Although the theory has been critiqued for being simplistic and flawed, it is useful because it posits that education and training can increase an individual's productive capacity. Consequently, this study provides empirical evidence regarding the significance of gender in shaping perceptions of EIs through EE. This suggests that education is a crucial factor in fostering an individual's entrepreneurial aspirations and in enabling them to create successful businesses.

Entrepreneurship Education and intention

People's attitudes are shaped by how they feel or think about something, which dictates how they act. As a result, attitudes are formed by a combination of feelings, beliefs, and values (Ajzen, 1991; Amanamah, 2018; Jena, 2020). These attitudes may be positive, negative, or neutral. According to Ajzen (1991), people are more likely to endorse a behaviour when they expect it to have desirable consequences and less likely to endorse a behaviour when they expect it to have undesirable consequences. According to Krueger, et al., (2000), people's attitudes and beliefs carry the potential to influence their behaviour. Kurniawan, et al., (2019) defined attitude as an emotion that is expressed through one's actions. Students' attitudes towards EE has been shown to increase students' EI in a number of previous studies (Ndofirepi et al., 2018; Anosike, 2019; Othman et al., 2020; Blankesteyn et al., 2021; Mukhtar et al., 2021). Handayati et al. (2020) found that attitude towards EE acts a fundamental determinant of EI among students. Mukhtar et al. (2021) on the other hand found that there is no link between attitudes towards EE and EI. Though Onjewu et al., (2021) identified a link between attitudes towards EE and EI, and they found that this link is weak. The findings of Mukhtar et al. (2021) is consistent with the findings of Westhead and Solesvik (2016) which revealed that EE does not improve entrepreneurship skills across all participants in an EE programme. Walter and Block (2016) on the other hand found that attitudes towards EE have a strong relationship with entrepreneurial activity, however, this is hugely dependent on the context. Huang et al. (2020) found that whilst attitudes towards EE influences EI, perceived competence of lecturers plays a significant role in influencing the intentions of students. Accordingly, Iwu et al. (2021) found that attitudes towards EE significantly influences the intention of students. This is consistent with other findings which conclude that students' attitudes towards EE has an influence on EI of students (Nowiński et al., 2019; Lv et al., 2021; Onjewu et al., 2021). This study hypothesises that:

H1: there will be a positive relationship between students' attitudes towards EE and EI of students in HEIs.

Competence of lecturers and intention

In past studies, EE was examined using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) constructs to figure out the impact of EE on EIs of students (Paray & Kumar, 2020; Contreras-Barraza et al., 2021; Mohamed & Sheikh Ali, 2021). The majority of these studies have measured EE as a unidimensional construct with a few statements that ask respondents about their perceptions or experiences after an entrepreneurship course (Otache, 2019; Westhead & Solesvik, 2016; Hoang et al., 2021; Iwu et al., 2021; Mukhtar et al., 2021). Previous studies have argued that EE is a multidimensional construct that includes the role of entrepreneurship lecturers, adequacy of materials and equipment, adequacy of instructional materials and curriculum content (Falkäng & Alberti, 2000; Nwambam et al., 2018; Lv et al., 2021). However, Nwambam et al., (2018) found that those who facilitate EE are few in Nigerian universities. Consequently, some studies have asserted that lecturers' inadequacy and lack of depth in entrepreneurship knowledge is a major setback in EE implementation in Nigeria. However, very few studies have examined the link between the perceived competence of lecturers and the EI of students in HEIs in the context of Nigeria (Unachukwu, 2010; Nwambam, et al., 2018; Mamman, et al., 2018; Scent, et al., 2020; Olofinyehun, et al., 2022). Olorundare and Kayode (2014) noted that insufficient trainers have hamstrung EE in Nigeria mostly because those who facilitate EE are perceived to know little about entrepreneurship. Similarly, Chinonye and Akinbode (2014) asserts that Nigerian universities face a serious shortage of skilled lecturers for EE. This study therefore proposes the following hypothesis:

H2a. There is a positive relationship between perceived competence of entrepreneurship lecturers and EI of students in HEIs.

Facilities, instructional materials and intention

The way entrepreneurship courses are structured and implemented can influence EI (Walter & Block, 2016b; Cera

et al., 2020; Contreras-Barraza et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship is a business education discipline that combines elements from multiple disciplines such as economics, finance, marketing and strategy (Otache, 2019). With its cross-functional and cross-sector orientation, the course is intended to increase awareness of entrepreneurial careers and enhance understanding of the process of creating a new venture. A new venture cannot be created without access to learning resources. Students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship is influenced both directly and indirectly by institutional resources (Ohanu & Shodipe, 2021). For students, these resources such as learning facilities, instructional materials, business mentoring initiatives, internships, business plan competition, and seminar presentations by local entrepreneurs may be abundantly or sparsely available. Resources therefore function as a link between intentions and entrepreneurial behaviour. The availability of resources will vary from institution to institution (Hasan et al., 2017; Nowiński et al., 2019; Van Ewijk & Belghiti-Mahut, 2019; Cera et al., 2020; Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021). Obtaining knowledge about entrepreneurship can be accomplished most efficiently if universities provide more support and resources (Ohanu & Shodipe, 2021). Handayati, (2020) found that availability of institutional support can influence EI of students. Thus, assessing the role of facilities and instructional materials is relevant because previous studies have argued that there is an inadequate supply of EE teaching facilities, equipment, and infrastructure in Nigerian HEIs (Aladejebi, 2018; Nwambam et al., 2018). The following hypotheses have been proposed:

H2b: There is a positive relationship between adequacy of facilities and EI of students in HEIs.

H2c: There is a positive relationship between adequacy of instructional materials and EI of students in HEIs.

Curriculum content and intention

The entrepreneurial learning experience is guided by a curriculum (Maxwell et al., 2018). A review of curriculum and teaching methods indicates that curriculum content and teaching methods vary between programs, ranging from theoretical courses intended to increase entrepreneurial awareness to practical classes intended to prepare graduates for entrepreneurship. Most teaching methods used are dynamic and may differ depending on the needs of the institution. Curriculum developers must, however, take the entrepreneurial needs of students and the context into account when developing and implementing the EE curriculum (Sirelkhatim & Gangi, 2015; Adekiya & Ibrahim, 2016). In the context of entrepreneurial development, an entrepreneurship curriculum's effectiveness is not solely based on its potential to motivate learners to develop critical thinking skills and competence in idea generation (Maxwell et al., 2018; Sirelkhatim & Gangi, 2015), neither is it dependent on the students' commitment to accomplishing entrepreneurial goals upon graduation, but a combination of many of the identified factors (Maxwell et al., 2018). As Ratten and Usmanij, (2021) point out, EE is most effective when it is based on experiential learning and a hybrid approach to learning that incorporates case studies and business plan competitions are created to increase student engagement. Consequently, this study assumes that the content of EE positively influences students' perception of entrepreneurship. This is based on the assumptions of Iwu (2021) that the relevance of EE course contents can impact positively on students EI. Drawing from this argument the following hypothesis was developed:

H2d: There is a positive relationship between relevance of EE curriculum contents and EI of students in HEIs.

Gender differences and intention

The findings on how male and female learners develop EI are ambiguous. While some studies show that EE increases EI more positively (or less negatively) among men than among women (Westhead & Solesvik, 2016; Ndofirepi et al., 2018; Paray & Kumar, 2020; Pech & Řehoř, 2021), others report no significant differences reported across the two groups (Entrialgo & Iglesias, 2017; Van Ewijk & Belghiti-Mahut, 2019). Martin and Petr (2021) demonstrate a strong positive effect of EE on male students' attitudes, while Van Ewijk and Belghiti-Mahut (2019), demonstrated no significant difference between male and female students and that female students are more likely to experience a positive change in EI than their male counterparts. Ndofirepi et al. (2018) reports that women are less likely to start businesses than men. Ndofirepi et al. (2018) found a significant difference in EIs between the two groups. Also, Westhead and Solesvik (2016) found that there were significant differences in intention intensity among males than females. Martin and Petr (2021) found no significant difference between male and female students' intentions. However, in comparing, the findings show that EE's positive effects can be felt more by female students than male students (Westhead & Solesvik, 2016). Van Ewijk and Belghiti-Mahut (2019) on the other hand reported that EE no longer presents a substantial gender gap in entrepreneurial skills. The research further argued that female students are more likely than male students to achieve positive changes in their skills after completing entrepreneurship courses (Van Ewijk & Belghiti-Mahut, 2019). While Onjewu et al. (2021) found that EE has a greater positive influence on females' self-efficacy than on male students, Justus (2021) concluded that female students may have less risk

tolerance and entrepreneurial self-efficacy than male students. The following hypotheses have been proposed to guide this study:

H₃: *The influence of EE on HEIs students' EI differs between male and female undergraduate students.*

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach. The research approach is guided by the positivist research philosophy. A research philosophy describes the theoretical framework that guides the overall approach of a researcher (Tsang, 2016). There are various philosophies a researcher can choose from such as positivism, interpretivism, critical theory or constructivism (Gul, 2011; Risjord, 2022). The choice of a researcher is guided by the research objectives and the nature of the research phenomena being explored (Morrow & Brown, 1994). This study adopts a positivist philosophy and objectivist ontology because it uses a survey to gather quantitative data from undergraduate students to establish a relationship between EE and EI. To achieve the objectives of this study, a cross-sectional strategy was used to generate the data. This study collected data over a period of three years from undergraduate students. In this case, a cross-sectional strategy was used to collect data at a specific time. By utilising this strategy, students at various stages of their academic journey were assessed for their entrepreneurial intentions in relation to EE. By using a cross-sectional approach, the study explored variations in EI among students who have been exposed to EE at different points in their undergraduate studies. In addition to capturing changes in EI over time, the three-year data collection period provides a chance to analyse trends and patterns that may emerge. As part of the cross-sectional design, this longitudinal element enhances the study's ability to analyse whether the relationship between EE and EI is stable and consistent.

By employing a positivist paradigm and a cross-sectional strategy, the research aims to generate empirical evidence that contributes to the understanding of how EE influences undergraduate students' EI. This approach allows for rigorous data analysis, identification of causal relationships, and has the potential to inform policy and educational interventions aimed at fostering entrepreneurship among students.

Sample and Data Collection

An online questionnaire was distributed to students who completed entrepreneurship courses. The data was collected from three sets of undergraduate students (2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic sessions) from Accounting and Business Management students at Benue State University who had taken entrepreneurship courses. To increase response rate, the researchers offered vouchers to selected participants. In total, four hundred and seventy-two participants (n=472) completed the questionnaire. This study followed Manfreda and Vehovar (2012) ethical recommendations for designing surveys. As part of this research, all participants were informed about how the findings would be utilised. Consent was sought before participation. Participants were not required to provide their names or any other information that could identify them as part of the study. Though some biographical information was required such as gender, age and level. However, the question was not mandatory, and the researchers assured the respondents that the information they provided would not be used to identify them. It was completely voluntary for the participants to take part in the research, and they had the right to withdraw at any time prior to the analysis of the data. Students were informed during lectures and through student representatives. In addition, information about the researchers and their contacts was included in the research to support and clarify questions.

Measurement of variables

The measures of EI and EE were adopted from Jena (2020). In this study, attitudes towards EE were measured using three components (cognitive, affective and behavioural). To measure EE, this study used four dimensions; perceived competence of entrepreneurship lecturers; adequacy of facilities/equipment; adequacy of instructional materials and relevance of EE curriculum contents. The measures for EE were adopted from Nwambam et al., (2018). EI has been conceptualised as a conscious decision that precedes action, as well as the motivation behind enterprise-related actions such as starting a business and becoming an entrepreneur (Aladejebi, 2018; Asghar et al., 2019; Mei et al., 2020). A multi-item, 6-item scale was used to measure EI. Each research question was graded on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

Validating the scale/questionnaire items

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed on the data (see Table 1). This step aimed to explore the data, assess indicators, and perform the test of reliability. In the process, questionnaire items were explored to ensure that items had no low factor loadings (<.4) and multiple cross-loadings (>.4). The results are presented in Table 1. The data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 24 and SPSS AMOS version 22.

Table 1 Results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Construct	Item statement	Standardised Factor Loadings
Behavioural Component $\alpha=0.84$	I enjoyed lectures on entrepreneurship as offered in the university.	0.720
	Lectures on entrepreneurship I received in the university have increased my interest to pursue an entrepreneurial career.	0.762
	I consider entrepreneurship as a very important course in the university.	0.738
	Entrepreneurship education courses I have undergone in the university have prepared me to make informed decision on entrepreneurial career choices.	0.762
	I am happy to have had entrepreneurship education in my university.	0.785
	I sincerely consider entrepreneurship a desired career option.	0.691
	My entrepreneurship lecturers have helped me to meet and interact with successful entrepreneurs.	0.618
	My university entrepreneurship staffers help students to meet successful entrepreneurs who provide motivation to students to become entrepreneurs.	0.646
Cognitive Component $\alpha=0.92$	University entrepreneurship courses have enabled me to identify business-related opportunities.	0.724
	Entrepreneurship courses I took in the university have taught me to create a service and/or products that can satisfy the needs of customers.	0.809
	University entrepreneurship courses have taught me to develop business plans successfully.	0.741
	Due to the university entrepreneurship education program, I now have the skills to create a new business.	0.813
	With the university entrepreneurship education program, I had undergone, I can now successfully identify sources of business chances.	0.801
	Entrepreneurship program of the university has taught me to perform feasibility studies.	0.749
	The university entrepreneurship courses have stimulated my interest in entrepreneurship.	0.804
	Through the university entrepreneurship program, my skills knowledge and interest in entrepreneurship have improved.	0.815
	Overall, I am very satisfied with how entrepreneurship education program is been taught in my university.	0.696
Affective Component $\alpha=0.81$	I would want to be an entrepreneur after my study.	0.745
	The idea to become an entrepreneur and work for myself is appealing to me.	0.836
	I really consider self-employment as something very important.	0.862
	The entrepreneurship program in university has effectively prepared me to establish a career in entrepreneurship.	0.759
Adequacy of Instructional Materials $\alpha=0.83$	The available instructional materials are adequate for studies.	0.811
	Entrepreneurship education/studies textbooks are accessible to students.	0.829
	Library provides necessary textbooks for entrepreneurship studies to students.	0.853
	Students get most of the material for entrepreneurship studies through the internet.	0.796
	Lecturers improvise instructional materials for entrepreneurship studies.	0.829
Perceive competence of Lecturers $\alpha=0.84$	Lecturers are adequate to teach entrepreneurial students/ education.	0.456
	Specialists teach entrepreneurial studies/education.	0.846
	Lecturers have good knowledge of the subject matter of the entrepreneurial education/studies.	0.844
	Lecturers deliver the lesson appropriately in line with the entrepreneurial studies curriculum contents.	0.898
	Lecturers attend entrepreneurial studies classes as at when due.	0.800

Table 1 Results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) Contd.

Construct	Item statement	Standardised Factor Loadings
Adequacy of Facilities & Equipment $\alpha=0.90$	The classrooms are adequate for the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship studies.	0.858
	The classroom has public address system for teaching and learning of entrepreneurship studies.	0.815
	Practical entrepreneurship studies are carried out in the laboratories/ workshop.	0.846
	The laboratories/ workshops are adequately equipped.	0.880
	There are uninterrupted power supplies during entrepreneurial studies/ education classes.	0.819
Adequacy of Curriculum Content $\alpha=0.85$	The curricular contents of the entrepreneurial studies are relevant for sustainable development in Nigeria.	0.647
	Entrepreneurial skills acquired through entrepreneurial studies will help in establishing personal business outfits.	0.627
	The knowledge acquired through entrepreneurial studies is enough for students to put into practice the vocation or trades learnt.	0.655
	Students are satisfied with the skills, aptitudes and capacities provided to them through entrepreneurial studies/education.	0.729
	Entrepreneurship studies are helpful in students' area of specialisation.	0.685
Entrepreneurial Intention $\alpha=0.92$	A career as an entrepreneur is attractive to me.	0.810
	If I had the opportunity and resources, I would like to start a business.	0.835
	People I care about would approve of my intentions to become an entrepreneur.	0.861
	Most people who are important to me would approve of me becoming an entrepreneur.	0.798
	Being an entrepreneur gives me satisfaction.	0.826
	Being an entrepreneur implies more advantages than disadvantage to me.	0.838
	Amongst various options, I would rather be an entrepreneur.	0.785

Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.70$) was used to assess the internal reliability of the scales. As shown in Table 1, the α ranged between 0.81 to 0.92, suggesting that the instrument is reliable. CFA was performed to evaluate the overall measurement model. A discriminant and convergent validity assessment was conducted to evaluate the validity of the measurement model. The *discriminant validity* measures the extent to which it measures factors that are not relevant to the construct being measured. To assess discriminant validity, this study adopted the Fornell and Larcker (1981) approach. Using this technique, the AVE of each construct should be higher than the squared correlation between the construct and other constructs. Table 2 shows that this study reflects a satisfactory discriminant validity. As shown in Table 2, the multiple squared correlations (in bold†) between the variables and AVE values range from 0.51 to 0.71. This means that diagonal variables are higher than AVE values, which suggests that all constructs in the study display good discriminant validity.

Table 2 Reliability, validity statistics and correlation

Variables	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cognitive Component (1)	0.93	0.60	0.76†							
Behavioural Component (2)	0.88	0.51	.75**	0.80†						
Affective Component (3)	0.88	0.63	.69**	.59**	0.72†					
Per. competence of Lect. (4)	0.89	0.62	.62**	.49**	.45**	0.77†				
Adeq. of Fac. & Equip. (5)	0.93	0.71	.56**	.47**	.38**	.64**	0.82†			
Adeq. of Inst. Materials (6)	0.88	0.71	.56**	.47**	.38**	.64**	.81**	0.84†		
Curriculum Content (7)	0.91	0.67	.71**	.68**	.54**	.65**	.69**	.69**	0.77†	
Entrep. Intention (8)	0.94	0.68	.62**	.59**	.79**	.44**	.39**	.39**	.58**	0.80†

A convergent validity test measures how closely variables that should measure a single construct align with each other. The average variance explained (AVE) and composite reliability were used to assess convergent validity in this research. All constructs should have composite reliability (CR) above 0.6 and the AVE values above 0.5. The results shown in Table 2 indicates that CR ranges between 0.88 and 0.94, while the AVE values range between 0.51 to 0.71. It can therefore be concluded that the results meet the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 3 CFI Model Fit Indices

Model Fit Measure	Threshold	Value
CMIN/DF	<3.0	3.138
CFI	>.90	.90
RMSEA	<.08	.06
GFI	>.80	.83
NFI	>.90	.86
SRMR	<.08	0.07

CFI= Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; Goodness of Fit; SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Square Residual; NFI = Normal Fit Index

Prior to the test of hypotheses, model fit was examined to determine how well the model fits the data. To assess model fit (see Table 3), CMIN/DF (3.138), RMSEA (0.06), CFI (0.90), GFI (0.83), NFI (0.86) and SRMR (0.07) were used in this study. Based on Table 3, all fit indices fall within the recommended thresholds for evaluating model fit. Thus, the model fits well with the data and can be used to test the proposed research hypotheses.

Results

To assess H1 and H2, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed. H1 addressed the linkage between attitudes towards EE and EI of students, while H2 was related to the linkage between perceived components of EE and EI. To conduct the hierarchical regression analysis, the independent variables measuring attitudes towards EE were added to Model 1 to investigate cognitive, behavioural, and affective components of entrepreneurial attitudes and EI of students. In Model 2, the study explored the linkage between perceived competence of entrepreneurship lecturers, adequacy of facilities, instructional materials, curriculum content and EI. The regression models used factor scores derived from the EFA conducted previously.

Table 4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis for H1 and H2

	Variables	Entrepreneurial intention		Tolerance Limit	VIF
		Model 1	Model 2		
Attitudes Towards EE	Cognitive Component	.04	.04	.332	3.012
	Behavioural Component	.16***	.10*	.411	2.486
	Affective Component	.67***	.66***	.517	1.934
Components of EE	Perceived competence of Lect.		.13*	.511	2.105
	Adequacy of Fac. & Equipment		.39***	1.00	1.000
	Adequacy of Inst. Materials		-.65	.460	2.206
	Curriculum Content		.545***	.443	3.175
F-value		293.851***	83.444***		
R ²		.65	.35		
Adj. R ²		.65	.34		
∇ R ²		.65	.35		

Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

As shown in Table 4, there is a positive significant relationship between students' attitudes towards EE and EI ($R^2 = .65$, $p < .001$). Specifically, the relationship between cognitive attitudes ($\beta = .04$, $p > .05$) and EI is not significant while the relationship between behavioural ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$), affective attitudes ($\beta = .67$, $p < .001$) and EI is significant. These findings provide support for H1, indicating that there is a positive relationship between students' attitudes towards EE and EI. In Model 2, this study examined the impact of four components of EE, namely: perceived competence of lecturers, adequacy of facilities, instructional materials, and curriculum content on EI. Perceived competence of lecturers ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$), facilities and equipment ($\beta = .39$, $p < .001$) and curriculum content ($\beta = .55$, $p < .001$) positively influences EI. The findings suggest that curriculum content has the greatest effect on EI, followed by adequacy of facilities and perceived competence of lecturers, respectively. The results indicate that adequacy of instructional materials does not influence EI of students ($\beta = -.65$, $p > .05$). These results provide support for H2a, H2b and H2d while H2c is not supported.

As Table 5 shows, the cognitive, behavioural, and affective component of entrepreneurial attitudes explained 71% of male students and 55% of female students' variance in EI. The three sub-scales of entrepreneurial attitudes towards EE shows that for male students, cognitive ($\beta = .06$, $p < .05$), behavioural ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$) and affective ($\beta = .69$, $p < .001$) significantly influences the EI of male students, while for female students, only behavioural ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$) and affective attitudes ($\beta = .69$, $p < .001$) influence the EI of female students. In comparison, the results suggest that whilst cognitive attitude has a positive influence on male students EI, it does not affect the EI of female students. Behavioural attitude has a slightly higher influence on female students EI than it has on males. However, for affective component, there is no difference in EI of female and male students as it influences the EI of male and female students equally.

Table 5 Gender Differences in EI (Attitudes towards EE)

	Variables	Entrepreneurial intention	
		Male	Female
Attitudes Towards EE	Cognitive Component	.06*	-.05
	Behavioural Component	.12*	.15*
	Affective Component	.69***	.69***
F-value		232.704***	72.922***
R ²		.71	.55
Adj. R ²		.71	.54
∇ R ²		.71	.55

Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

As shown in Table 6, perceived competence of lecturers, facilities and equipment, instructional materials and curriculum content explained 43% of male students and 25% of female students' variance in EI. The results indicate that three sub-scales of components of entrepreneurial EE, perceived competence of lecturers ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$), instructional materials ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$) and curriculum content ($\beta = .65$, $p < .001$) have a higher influence on the EI of male students when compared to females. Female students reported a lower influence in the relationship between instructional materials ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$) and curriculum content ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$). Perceived competence of lecturers does not affect the EE of female students ($\beta = .05$, $p > .05$).

Table 6 Gender differences in entrepreneurship intentions among students

	Variables	Entrepreneurial intention	
		Male	Female
Components of EE	Perceived competence of Lecturers	.17*	.05
	Adequacy of Fac. & Equipment	-	-
	Adequacy of Inst. Materials	-.20**	.17*
	Curriculum Content	.65***	.32***
F-value		70.037***	19.654***
R ²		.43	.25
Adj. R ²		.43	.23
∇ R ²		.43	.25

Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

The findings obtained in this study indicate that the influence of EE on HEIs students' EIs differ by gender, depending on the specific component that is examined.

Discussion

This study responds to calls by previous studies (e.g., Kabongo & Okpara, 2010; Unachukwu, 2010; Ali & Salisu, 2019; Anosike, 2019; Olofinyehun et al., 2022) to further explore the links between EE and EI and how gender diversity can influence entrepreneurial outcomes in developing countries. This is crucial because where negative gender stereotyping exists, it can be pervasive and as Van Ewijk, et al., (2019) puts it, such a cognition has the potential to affect the behaviour and EI of women. This paper advances the argument that EE can influence students' EIs based on gender differences. Thus, it is important to re-evaluate how EE curriculum and pedagogy are designed and executed to account for context-specific attitudes towards entrepreneurship whilst recognising that gender differences exist in the development of EI. This has important policy implications because such an awareness can create an ecosystem that encourages students regardless of gender to engage in entrepreneurial ventures. Likewise, it can improve female participation in entrepreneurship, especially in developing countries like Nigeria where entrepreneurship participation is skewed (Ndofirepi et al., 2018; Onjewu et al., 2021).

The findings suggest that there is a positive relationship between EE and EI. Specifically, the results indicate that there is a relationship between behavioural and affective component of entrepreneurial attitudes and EI. This means that what students learn, how they learn and who they learn from can encourage changes in attitudes toward starting a new business or getting involved in entrepreneurial activities within an existing organisation. This finding is consistent with other previous findings in other contexts suggesting that how EE is delivered, who delivers the content and the content of the course, can influence the intention of students (Hasan et al., 2017; Nwambam et al., 2018; Nowiński et al., 2019; van Ewijk & Belghiti-Mahut, 2019; Cera et al., 2020; Iwu et al., 2021; Martínez-Gregorio et al., 2021; Ohanu & Shodipe, 2021). This suggests that behavioural skills are crucial to the identification of opportunities in ways that can improve the capacity of individuals to make spontaneous decisions. It also enhances students' ability to establish and build mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders. This way, EE can influence student mindset, attitudes, beliefs, and values in a way that enhances their decision to be entrepreneurs (Deveci & Seikkula-Leino, 2018; Boldureanu et al., 2020). This is consistent with the findings of Fayolle and Klandt (2006) that effective EE contributes to specific situations, behaviour, and developing an entrepreneurial mindset. The findings provide evidence to show that affective (related feelings and emotions) and behavioural aspects of EE (related to overt response, behaviour and willingness) can determine an individual's response towards EE (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2018; Jena, 2020). It is important to note that the effective implementation of EE requires cooperation and constructive collaboration between the policymakers, universities, lecturers, and the students (Alakaleek, 2019; Ratten & Jones, 2021).

This study contributes to reducing the ambiguity in findings related to gender differences in EIs. Whilst some of the findings regarding gender differences in EE are not consistent with some previous findings such as Van Ewijk and Belghiti-Mahut, (2019) which finds that gender differences do not exist in EE and EI, Westhead and Solesvik (2016) and Ndofirepi, et al. (2018) found a significant difference in the EIs of male and female students. This study provides evidence that differences exist depending on the aspect of EE in consideration and the context. Whilst certain aspects of EE such as those that facilitates information and knowledge have more impact on male students' intentions, others have greater impact on the intentions of female students. However, affective component of attitudes which comprise of feelings and beliefs have a strong effect on both male and female students, indicating that EE can effectively influence students' attitudes. This study has a significant role to play in the implementation of entrepreneurship pedagogy in Nigerian universities. Institutions and policy makers can focus on aspects of EE that have the greatest outcome on students' learning. A part of the Nigerian Universities Commission's mission is to encourage students to become entrepreneurs, the findings are in support of the policymakers' efforts to build an entrepreneurship-friendly environment through EE. This study argues that EE can be particularly tailored to promote a strong students' attitude towards entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and venture creation by focusing on gender diversity.

In the context of EE, these findings contribute to the development of human capital theory by pointing out the role that EE plays in acquiring knowledge, addressing gender differences, emphasising the influences of attitudes and behaviour, and emphasising the role of universities in promoting entrepreneurship (Anosike, 2019; Hung & Ramsden, 2021). Specifically, this study makes four specific contributions to the development of Human Capital Theory (HCT). First, HCT emphasises the acquisition of knowledge and skills as a crucial component of an individuals' productivity and economic success (Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013; Aboobaker & Renjini, 2020). The discussion highlights the

positive relationship between EE and EI, suggesting that EE plays a vital role in enhancing students' entrepreneurial attitudes and mindsets (Anosike, 2019). Secondly, EE provides students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies for entrepreneurship, supporting the notion that EE contributes to human capital development (Aboobaker & Renjini, 2020). The discussion in this research highlights the effect of gender differences in EE on EI. Secondly, HCT recognises that individuals' characteristics, including gender, can influence the accumulation of human capital and subsequent economic outcomes. The study adds insights to human capital theory by considering the intersection of gender and EE by acknowledging context-specific attitudes and gender differences in EI development. The findings emphasise the importance of tailoring EE to promote equal entrepreneurship participation and gender equality.

Thirdly, HCT holds that individuals' attitudes and behaviours' play an integral role in the formation and utilisation of human capital (Sofoluwe, Shokunbi, Raimi & Ajewole, 2013; Marvel, Davis & Sproul, 2016). The findings in this study emphasises that EE can influence students' attitudes, thereby influencing their entrepreneurial decision-making. The findings further highlight the behavioural component of EE, indicating that students' ability to identify opportunities, make decisions, and build relationships can be enhanced by behavioural skills acquired through EE. This aligns with human capital theory's emphasis on attitudes and behaviours in entrepreneurial success (Aboobaker & Renjini, 2020). Finally, HCT recognises the role of institutions in fostering human capital development (Aboobaker & Renjini, 2020; Boldureanu et al., 2020). The research finds how EE programs are delivered, the facilities that universities provide and the perceived competence of those that design and deliver EE, can shape student's intentions. Thus, institutions and policymakers can foster entrepreneurship among students by focusing on the aspects of EE that are most influential on their learning and taking gender diversity into account. This aligns with human capital theory's emphasis on the role of institutions and policy interventions in shaping individuals' human capital accumulation.

Limitations and future research

Whilst this study has made some contributions, there are some limitations worth mentioning. First, the study reports the effect of EE in one institution. Although the study examined the effect of EE on EI of three different sets of students over a three-year period, other institutions may report slight differences. Future studies can examine this link and compare the changes across different HEIs to examine if cultural and other context-specific factors contribute to a higher EI. Secondly, the study examined the effect of EE on current students. This excludes graduates who may have benefitted from EE. Future studies can adopt a longitudinal approach to examine whether the students translated their learning into practice after graduation from the University. Finally, the study measures students' perceptions of EE and not the EE that students received. Hence, another limiting factor is the self-report of participants. Despite these limitations, there are many benefits institutions can derive from the findings of this study in the design, delivery and the methods used to deliver EE.

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