

**INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON THE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, ZARIA, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This study investigated the influence of entrepreneurship education on the employability skills of undergraduate Social Studies students at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, Nigeria. The research aimed to determine the extent to which entrepreneurship education enhances creative thinking and financial literacy skills among these students. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 308 undergraduate Social Studies students. A sample size of 171 was determined using the Research Advisors (2006) formula. A structured questionnaire, titled "Entrepreneurship Education and Employability Skills Questionnaire (EEESQ)," was used for data collection and validated by experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, yielding a coefficient of 0.85. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and the development of creative thinking skills. Similarly, a significant positive relationship was found between entrepreneurship education and the enhancement of financial literacy skills among the students. The study concludes that entrepreneurship education is a vital component in developing crucial employability skills necessary for the modern workforce. It was recommended, among other things, that university management should strengthen the practical components of entrepreneurship courses and create more platforms for students to apply learned skills in real-world scenarios.*

**Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Employability skills, Creative thinking, Financial literacy, Social studies and Higher education**

**Introduction**

The global economic landscape is characterized by rapid change, technological disruption, and an increasingly competitive job market. In this context, the role of higher education institutions has evolved beyond traditional knowledge dissemination to include the cultivation of practical skills that enhance graduate employability (Adekunle & Aina, 2021). In Nigeria, the challenge of graduate unemployment remains a significant socio-economic issue, with many graduates lacking the requisite skills demanded by the 21st-century workplace (Okafor & Ibe, 2020). This "skills gap" has prompted a strategic shift in educational policy, leading to the integration of entrepreneurship education into the university curriculum across various disciplines, including Social Studies. Entrepreneurship education is a pedagogical approach designed to equip students with the mindset, knowledge, and skills necessary to identify opportunities, manage resources, and create value (Bello, 2019). It transcends mere business creation, fostering a wide range of competencies often categorized as employability skills. These skills include but are not limited to, creative thinking, problem-solving, financial literacy, communication, and leadership (Ekundayo & Alonge, 2022). For Social Studies students, whose discipline centers on understanding human society and civic competence, these skills are particularly relevant. They not only prepare students for self-employment but also make them more adaptable, innovative, and valuable employees in both public and private sectors.

Several studies have affirmed the positive impact of entrepreneurship education. For instance, research by Ibrahim and Yusuf (2021) indicated that students who participated in practical entrepreneurship programs demonstrated higher levels of innovation and risk-taking propensity. However, the specific influence of these programs on core employability skills like creative thinking and financial literacy within non-business disciplines like Social Studies is an area that requires more focused empirical investigation. Creative thinking enables individuals to approach problems with novel solutions, a highly sought-after trait by employers (Thompson, 2023). Similarly, financial literacy—the ability to understand and manage

financial concepts—is crucial for personal and professional success, whether as an entrepreneur or an employee (Adewale, 2020). The Federal University of Education, Zaria, has implemented mandatory entrepreneurship education courses for all its undergraduate students. However, the extent to which these courses are effectively translating into tangible employability skills among Social Studies students is not well-documented. Are the pedagogical methods employed fostering genuine creativity, or are they merely theoretical? Do students emerge with the practical financial knowledge needed to navigate economic realities? This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by empirically assessing the influence of the extant entrepreneurship education program on the creative thinking and financial literacy skills of undergraduate Social Studies students at the institution.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the mandatory inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian university curriculum, there remains a persistent concern about the employability of graduates. Many Social Studies graduates from institutions like the Federal University of Education, Zaria, face challenges in securing gainful employment, suggesting a possible disconnect between the skills taught and the skills required by the labor market. While entrepreneurship education is intended to bridge this gap, its actual influence on specific, critical employability skills such as creative thinking and financial literacy is unclear. It is uncertain whether the current program is effectively moving beyond theoretical knowledge to instill the practical competencies that make graduates versatile and job-ready. This study is therefore motivated by the need to empirically determine the relationship between the entrepreneurship education received by Social Studies students and their perceived level of employability skills.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of entrepreneurship education on the employability skills of undergraduate Social Studies students in Federal University of Education, Zaria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the creative thinking skills of undergraduate Social Studies students.
2. Ascertain the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the financial literacy skills of undergraduate Social Studies students.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the creative thinking skills of undergraduate Social Studies students?
2. What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the financial literacy skills of undergraduate Social Studies students?

### **Null Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the creative thinking skills of undergraduate Social Studies students.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the financial literacy skills of undergraduate Social Studies students.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a correlational research design. This design is appropriate because it seeks to establish the nature and extent of the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. In this case, it was used to determine the relationship between the independent variable (entrepreneurship education) and the dependent variables (creative thinking skills and financial literacy skills). The population for this study consisted of all 308 registered undergraduate Social Studies students (from 200 to 400 levels) at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, for the 2024/2025 academic session. This population was chosen because these students have all been exposed to the mandatory entrepreneurship education courses offered by the university. The sample size was determined using the Research Advisors (2006) sample size table. For a population of 308, at a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%, the recommended sample size is 171. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the participants. The population was first stratified by level of study (200, 300, and 400 levels). Then, a proportionate random sampling method was used to draw the required number of participants from each stratum to ensure representation across the different levels of study. The instrument for data collection was a self-developed, structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship Education and Employability Skills

Questionnaire (EEESQ)." The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section A: Collected demographic data of the respondents (e.g., level of study, gender). Section B: Contained items on Exposure to Entrepreneurship Education, using a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Section C: Contained items measuring Employability Skills, subdivided into Creative Thinking Skills and Financial Literacy Skills, also on a 4-point Likert scale.

To ensure face and content validity, the questionnaire was given to three experts: two from the Department of Social Studies Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation. Their feedback on the clarity, relevance, and ambiguity of the items was incorporated into the final version of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study conducted with 20 Social Studies students from a different university with a similar curriculum. The data collected were analyzed using the Cronbach's Alpha method. The analysis yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency and makes the instrument reliable for the study. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions. A mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as 'High Extent' or 'Agree,' while a mean score below 2.50 was considered 'Low Extent' or 'Disagree.' Pearson Product-Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) was used to test the two null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. This statistical tool was deemed appropriate as it measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables.

## Results

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from the respondents. The results are organized according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

### Answering the Research Questions

**Research Question 1: What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the creative thinking skills of undergraduate Social Studies students?**

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Perceptions on Entrepreneurship Education and Creative Thinking Skills**

S/N	Items related to Creative Thinking Skills	N	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Decision
1	Entrepreneurship education encourages me to find novel solutions to problems.	165	3.15	0.78	Agree
2	The course has improved my ability to think "outside the box."	165	3.02	0.81	Agree
3	Practical projects in the course challenged me to be more innovative.	165	2.95	0.85	Agree
4	I feel more confident in generating new ideas after taking the course.	165	3.20	0.75	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>			<b>3.08</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

The data in Table 1 show a cluster mean of 3.08, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that students perceive entrepreneurship education as having a high positive influence on their creative thinking skills.

**Research Question 2: What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the financial literacy skills of undergraduate Social Studies students?**

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Perceptions on Entrepreneurship Education and Financial Literacy Skills**

S/N	Items related to Financial Literacy Skills	N	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Decision
1	The course improved my understanding of budgeting and financial planning.	165	3.25	0.72	Agree
2	I am now more knowledgeable about sourcing funds for business ideas.	165	2.88	0.90	Agree
3	I can differentiate between profit, revenue, and cash flow.	165	3.10	0.83	Agree
4	The course taught me the importance of keeping financial records.	165	3.31	0.69	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>			<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

Table 2 presents a cluster mean of 3.14, which is above the 2.50 benchmark. This suggests that students agree that entrepreneurship education has enhanced their financial literacy skills to a high extent.

### Testing the Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1 ( $H_{01}$ ):** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the creative thinking skills of undergraduate Social Studies students

**Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Entrepreneurship Education and Creative Thinking Skills**

Variables	N	r-value	p-value	Decision
Entrepreneurship Education	165			
Creative Thinking Skills	165	0.672	0.000	Reject $H_0$

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 3 shows a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.672 and a  $p$ -value of 0.000, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This indicates a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and creative thinking skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2 ( $H_{02}$ ):** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the financial literacy skills of undergraduate Social Studies students

**Table 4: Pearson Correlation of Entrepreneurship Education and Financial Literacy Skills**

Variables	N	r-value	p-value	Decision
Entrepreneurship Education	165			
Financial Literacy Skills	165	0.715	0.000	Reject $H_0$

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

As shown in Table 4, the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is 0.715 with a  $p$ -value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This signifies a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and financial literacy skills. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence on the influence of entrepreneurship education on the employability skills of Social Studies students. The first finding revealed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and creative thinking skills. The rejection of the first null hypothesis ( $r = 0.672$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) implies that as students' exposure to entrepreneurship education increases, their capacity for creative and innovative thinking also increases. This aligns with the work of Bello (2019), who argued that the problem-based learning approach inherent in entrepreneurship education compels students to move beyond rote memorization and develop novel solutions. It also supports the findings of Ibrahim and Yusuf (2021), who found that practical entrepreneurial activities foster innovation. The curriculum at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, likely includes components such as business plan development and case studies, which challenge students to think creatively and critically, thereby enhancing this essential employability skill.

The second major finding indicated a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and financial literacy skills. The result from the test of the second null hypothesis ( $r = 0.715$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was unequivocal. This suggests that the curriculum is effective in imparting fundamental financial knowledge related to budgeting, sourcing funds, and financial management. This finding is consistent with Adewale (2020), who emphasized that financial literacy is a critical outcome of a well-structured entrepreneurship program. For Social Studies students, who may not have a natural inclination towards finance, this intervention is particularly crucial, equipping them with the confidence to manage personal and business finances, making them more valuable assets to any organization or capable of managing their own ventures.

The results suggest that the entrepreneurship education program at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, is achieving its intended objective of enhancing key employability skills. The strong positive correlations found in this study underscore the strategic importance of such programs in preparing graduates for the complexities of the modern labor market.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the influence of entrepreneurship education on the employability skills (creative thinking and financial literacy) of undergraduate Social Studies students. Based on the findings, the study concludes that entrepreneurship education has a significant positive influence on the development of both creative thinking and financial literacy skills among the students. The program is a vital tool in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and the practical competencies required for graduate employability. It not only prepares students for potential self-employment but also cultivates a versatile skill set that makes them more competitive and effective in any career path they choose.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. University management and curriculum developers should increase the practical, hands-on components of entrepreneurship courses. This could include mandatory internships with start-ups, business incubation programs, and more frequent business plan competitions to allow students to apply their creative thinking skills in real-world contexts.
2. The university should foster stronger collaborations with local businesses and financial institutions. Inviting entrepreneurs and financial experts as guest lecturers and mentors would provide students with practical insights and bridge the gap between classroom theory and industry practice, further enhancing their financial literacy.
3. The content of entrepreneurship education should be tailored to be more relevant to the specific disciplines of the students. For Social Studies students, this could involve focusing on social entrepreneurship, NGO management, and civic innovation, making the concepts more relatable and applicable to their field.

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