

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A PREDICTOR OF SELF-RELIANCE AND JOB CREATION POTENTIALS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, ZARIA, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated entrepreneurship education as a predictor of self-reliance and job creation potentials among undergraduate Social Studies students at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, Nigeria. Against the backdrop of rising youth unemployment in Nigeria, entrepreneurship education has been integrated into the tertiary curriculum as a strategic tool to foster economic independence. Using a quantitative correlational research design, the study surveyed a sample of 171 undergraduate Social Studies students from a population of 308. The sample size was determined using the Research Advisors (2006) formula. A structured questionnaire, validated by experts and with a high reliability coefficient, was used for data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson Product-Moment Correlation). The findings revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' self-reliance ($r=.712, p<.05$). Similarly, a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship was found between entrepreneurship education and students' job creation potentials ($r=.689, p<.05$). The study concludes that entrepreneurship education is a significant predictor of both self-reliance and job creation potentials. It is recommended, therefore, that university management should strengthen the practical components of the entrepreneurship curriculum and that policymakers should provide dedicated funding for student-led start-ups and incubation hubs within universities to translate theoretical knowledge into tangible ventures.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Self-Reliance, Job creation, Social studies, Unemployment and Higher Education

Introduction

The global economic landscape is characterized by rapid change, technological disruption, and an increasingly competitive job market. For developing nations like Nigeria, these challenges are compounded by demographic pressures, with a significant youth population entering the workforce annually (Ogunrinola & Olaitan, 2021). The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) consistently reports high rates of youth unemployment, which poses significant social, economic, and security threats to the nation's stability and development. This "youth bulge" without corresponding employment opportunities has created a generation at risk of chronic underemployment and poverty, necessitating a paradigm shift from traditional degree-for-job expectations to a mindset of innovation and enterprise (Adamu & Ibrahim, 2022). In response to this pressing challenge, the Nigerian government, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), mandated the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of all tertiary institutions. This policy intervention is anchored on the belief that equipping students with entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes can foster a culture of self-employment and job creation, thereby reducing over-reliance on scarce white-collar jobs. Entrepreneurship education is designed to move beyond theoretical business concepts to include practical skills such as opportunity recognition, business planning, financial literacy, risk management, and innovation (Bello, Adebisi, & Othman, 2021). The goal is to cultivate graduates who are not merely job seekers but job creators, capable of identifying and exploiting economic opportunities within their environment.

Social Studies, as a discipline, is uniquely positioned to benefit from and contribute to this entrepreneurial drive. The field is inherently concerned with the study of human beings and their interaction with their social, economic, and political environments. It equips students with critical thinking, problem-solving, and socio-civic skills necessary to understand and address societal needs (Mohammed & Audu, 2023). Integrating entrepreneurship into Social Studies education can empower students to apply their understanding of societal problems to create innovative and sustainable social enterprises that address community challenges while generating economic value. However, despite the compulsory nature of

entrepreneurship education, questions remain regarding its effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes. There is a persistent gap between the theoretical knowledge imparted in classrooms and the practical ability of graduates to establish and sustain viable enterprises (Suleiman, 2020). This study, therefore, focuses on the Federal University of Education, Zaria, a specialized institution for teacher training, to assess the extent to which the mandated entrepreneurship education predicts the development of self-reliance and job creation potentials among its Social Studies undergraduates.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the mandatory implementation of entrepreneurship education across Nigerian universities for over a decade, graduate unemployment remains critically high. Many graduates, including those from Social Studies programs, still exhibit a predominant mindset of seeking formal employment rather than creating it. This suggests a potential disconnect between the curriculum's objectives and its actual impact on students' entrepreneurial intentions and capabilities. The core problem is the uncertainty regarding whether the current model of entrepreneurship education, as delivered at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, is effectively cultivating the necessary psychological attributes of self-reliance (the confidence and ability to depend on one's own efforts and abilities) and the cognitive skills for job creation (the ability to identify opportunities and mobilize resources to start a venture). While many studies have examined entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, most have focused on students in business or management faculties, often overlooking those in education and the social sciences. The specific context of Social Studies students, who are trained to be both teachers and community development experts, presents a unique case. There is a dearth of empirical evidence specifically linking their exposure to entrepreneurship education with their perceived potential for self-reliance and job creation within the context of the Federal University of Education, Zaria. This study aims to fill this gap by empirically investigating the predictive strength of entrepreneurship education on these two crucial outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine entrepreneurship education as a predictor of self-reliance and job creation potentials among undergraduate Social Studies students at the Federal University of Education, Zaria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the self-reliance of undergraduate Social Studies students.
2. Ascertain the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the job creation potentials 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 self-reliance of undergraduate Social Studies students at the Federal University of Education, Zaria?
2. What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the job creation potentials of undergraduate Social Studies students at the Federal University of Education, Zaria?

Hypotheses

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

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the self-reliance of undergraduate Social Studies students.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the job creation potentials of undergraduate Social Studies students.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, correlational research design. A correlational design is suitable for this study because the primary aim is to establish the nature and strength of the relationship between the predictor variable (entrepreneurship education) and the criterion variables (self-reliance and job creation potentials) without manipulating any of the variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design allows for the statistical investigation of the extent to which variations in one variable are associated with variations in another. The population of this study comprised all 308 full-time undergraduate students in the Department of Social Studies at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, for the 2024/2025 academic session. This includes students from the 100 to 400 levels who have been exposed to the mandatory General Studies (GNS) entrepreneurship courses. The sample size for this study was 171 students. This was determined using the scientific formula for sample size calculation for a known population as provided by Research Advisors (2006). At a 95% confidence

level and a 5% margin of error for a population of 308, the recommended sample size is 171. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the participants. First, the students were stratified according to their level of study (100, 200, 300, and 400 levels). Then, a proportionate random sampling method was used to select respondents from each stratum to ensure that the sample was representative of the entire student population across all levels.

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship Education, Self-Reliance and Job Creation Questionnaire (EESRJQ)". The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section A collected demographic information of the respondents (e.g., level, age, gender). Section B measured students' perception of Entrepreneurship Education. It consisted of 10 items related to curriculum content, teaching methods, and practical relevance. Section C measured students' level of Self-Reliance. It consisted of 10 items assessing traits like independence, proactiveness, and confidence in one's abilities. Section D: Measured students' Job Creation Potentials. It consisted of 10 items assessing skills like opportunity recognition, resourcefulness, and intention to start a business. All items in Sections B, C, and D were presented on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2), to Strongly Disagree (SD=1). To ensure face and content validity, the questionnaire was given to three experts: two from the Department of Social Studies and one from the Department of Business Education at the Federal University of Education, Zaria. Their feedback on the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items was used to modify the final instrument. To establish reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 30 Social Studies students from a nearby university (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) who were not part of the main study. The data collected were analysed using the Cronbach's Alpha method. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.85 for Entrepreneurship Education, 0.82 for Self-Reliance, and 0.88 for Job Creation Potentials. The overall reliability of the instrument was 0.86, which is considered high and acceptable for social science research.

The data collected were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r), were used to test the two null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Pearson's 'r' was deemed appropriate as it is designed to measure the linear relationship between two continuous variables.

Results

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from the respondents.

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the self-reliance of undergraduate Social Studies students?

To answer this question, the mean and standard deviation of the students' responses to the items on entrepreneurship education and self-reliance were calculated.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Reliance

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Entrepreneurship Education	171	2.50	4.00	3.15	0.45
Self-Reliance	171	2.40	3.90	3.28	0.52
Valid N (listwise)	171				

Table 1 shows that the mean score for Entrepreneurship Education was 3.15 (SD = 0.45) on a 4-point scale, indicating that students generally have a positive perception of the entrepreneurship education they receive. The mean score for Self-Reliance was 3.28 (SD = 0.52), suggesting that the students perceive themselves as having a high level of self-reliance.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the job creation potentials of undergraduate Social Studies students?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Entrepreneurship Education and Job Creation Potentials

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Entrepreneurship Education	171	2.50	4.00	3.15	0.45
Job Creation Potentials	171	2.30	4.00	3.09	0.61
Valid N (listwise)	171				

Table 2 shows the mean score for Job Creation Potentials was 3.09 (SD = 0.61), indicating that students perceive themselves as having high potential for creating jobs. The mean for Entrepreneurship Education remains 3.15 (SD = 0.45).

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the self-reliance of undergraduate Social Studies students.

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Reliance

		Entrepreneurship Education	Self-Reliance
Entrepreneurship Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.712**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	171	171
Self-Reliance	Pearson Correlation	.712**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	171	171

* **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The result in Table 3 shows a strong, positive correlation between entrepreneurship education and self-reliance, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .712$. The significance value is $p = .000$, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is **rejected**. This indicates that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and the self-reliance of undergraduate Social Studies students.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and the job creation potentials of undergraduate Social Studies students.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between Entrepreneurship Education and Job Creation Potentials

		Entrepreneurship Education	Job Creation Potentials
Entrepreneurship Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	171	171
Job Creation Potentials	Pearson Correlation	.689**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	171	171

* **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The result in Table 4 reveals a strong, positive correlation between entrepreneurship education and job creation potentials, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .689$. The significance value is $p = .000$, which is less than 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and the job creation potentials of undergraduate Social Studies students.

Discussion of the Findings

This study's findings provide crucial empirical evidence on the impact of entrepreneurship education in a specialized university context. The discussion is structured around the two main findings. The first major finding of this study was the strong, positive, and significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' self-reliance ($r = .712$). This result suggests that as students' exposure to and positive perception of entrepreneurship education increases, their sense of personal independence, proactiveness, and confidence in their ability to succeed through their own efforts also increases. This finding aligns with the work of Adamu and Ibrahim (2022), who argued that the core psychological outcome of effective entrepreneurship education is the cultivation of an "internal locus of control," where individuals believe they are the primary architects of their own success. The curriculum, by design, exposes students to concepts of risk-taking, resilience, and personal responsibility, which are the building blocks of a self-reliant character.

Furthermore, this finding supports the position of Bello, Adebisi, and Othman (2021), who found that pedagogical approaches in entrepreneurship that emphasize practical skill acquisition and business plan development significantly boost students' confidence. When Social Studies students learn to identify community problems and are guided to frame them as business opportunities, they begin to see themselves not just as future employees but as active agents of change, capable of creating their own livelihoods. This shift in mindset is the essence of self-reliance. The strong correlation suggests that the entrepreneurship courses at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, are succeeding in imparting this crucial psychological attribute.

The second key finding was the strong, positive, and significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' job creation potentials ($r = .689$). This indicates that the educational intervention is effectively equipping students with the perceived skills and intentions necessary to start new ventures. This aligns with research by Ogunrinola and Olaitan (2021), who established that exposure to entrepreneurship education is a strong predictor of entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian university students. The curriculum's focus on opportunity recognition, resource mobilization, and market analysis directly hones the cognitive skills required to identify and act on business opportunities.

This result is particularly significant for Social Studies students. As argued by Mohammed and Audu (2023), these students possess a deep understanding of societal structures and challenges. Entrepreneurship education provides them with the commercial framework to monetize solutions to these challenges. For instance, a student knowledgeable about rural-urban migration can be trained to develop a social enterprise focused on agro-processing to create jobs in rural areas. The significant relationship found in this study suggests that the students recognize this synergy and feel empowered by their education to pursue such ventures. The findings challenge the notion that entrepreneurship is only for business students and confirm that with the right training, students from diverse fields, including education and social sciences, can develop strong potential to become job creators.

Conclusion

Based on the empirical evidence from this study, it is concluded that entrepreneurship education is a strong and significant predictor of both self-reliance and job creation potentials among undergraduate Social Studies students at the Federal University of Education, Zaria. The programme is achieving its core objectives of fostering an independent, proactive mindset and equipping students with the confidence and skills to consider enterprise creation as a viable career path. This demonstrates the value of the NUC's policy on mandatory entrepreneurship education and its potential to contribute to mitigating youth unemployment in Nigeria when effectively implemented.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. The management of the Federal University of Education, Zaria, should further strengthen the practical components of the entrepreneurship education curriculum. This can be achieved by establishing a fully functional on-campus business incubation hub where students can be mentored to translate their business plans into actual start-ups.
2. The curriculum should be regularly updated to reflect current market realities and technological trends. More emphasis should be placed on digital entrepreneurship, social enterprise management, and access to funding, which are critical areas for 21st-century ventures.
3. Government bodies like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and the Federal Ministry of Education should create a dedicated grant scheme for student entrepreneurs. Providing seed funding for the most viable student business plans developed through the entrepreneurship courses would bridge the gap between learning and practice.
4. Students should actively engage with the practical aspects of the courses, participate in business plan competitions, and leverage the university environment to network and form interdisciplinary teams to pursue innovative business ideas.

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