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# **PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND THE EMERGENCE OF E-STARTUPS IN A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Entrepreneurship education is considered a vital tool for nurturing talents and redirecting the energy of young people for profitable engagement and economic growth. This study investigated the perception of students on entrepreneurship education as it relates to the emergence of E-start-ups in Nigeria. The study used quantitative method based on survey approach for the collection of data. A total of 306 copies of questionnaire were administered to 200-500 level students in a Nigerian university. This study used simple random sample under the probability sampling technique for the selection of the respondent. Hence, each member of the population was given equal chance of being chosen from the population in no particular order. The criteria for the selection is 200-500 students of various colleges (College of Business, Social Sciences, Engineering, Science Technology and others) in Nigeria*

*offering courses on entrepreneurship programme. There are total of 306 respondents for this study. Regression analysis was used to analyse the stated hypotheses through statistical package for social science. The result of the analysis revealed that entrepreneurship education has significant impact on the emergence of e-start-ups. Based on the findings, it was recommended that university system should reform curriculum contents to better facilitate creation of e-start-ups*

**Key words:** Entrepreneurship, Technology, E-start-ups, Business growth.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In fast paced societies, businesses are conducted over the Internet because of its huge potential as major avenues for the creation of wealth and economic values. Therefore, established business are conducting new online businesses as well as new firms, are leveraging on the opportunities the Internet offers. Entrepreneurship education is regarded as a viable means for cultivating talents and harnessing the abundance energy possessed by young people to accelerate the creation of social and economic values (London, Moses, Iyiola, Ibidunni, A & Amaihian, 2017). This suggests that the major goal of entrepreneurship education is to equip students with adequate knowledge, set of skills and motivation to manifest their enterprise potential in different settings. Thus, Entrepreneurship Curriculum Content in institutions of higher learning should be designed in such a way that attention is not only devoted to the creation of traditional businesses, but also, the identification, exploitation of online business opportunities. This is predicated on the fact that a robust curriculum content facilitates intention of student to create stimulate creating thinking among student regardless of the settings (Nawaser, Khaksar, Shaksian & Jahanshahi, 2011)).

Over the years, several entrepreneurship development programs such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) and many others have been embarked upon in Nigeria. It is vital to note that the emergence of e-business presents a strong reason for the convergence of stream of research on entrepreneurship and strategy, as posited by Hitt and Ireland (2001) However, academic debates on e-business is sparse. Furthermore, many studies on entrepreneurship education in the advanced world and specifically, in Nigerian context, indicated a positive effect of these programmes on entrepreneurial intention of students to create e-business. However, the rising rate of unemployment and aspirations for a white collar job in Nigeria, suggests a contrary outcome of these program particularly on students' entrepreneurial intentions to start online businesses (Babatunde & Durowaiye, 2014). Therefore, this implies that there is a need to reengineer the policy and curriculum content of universities in such a way that student can leverage on business opportunities across all sector of the economy particularly e-business. Thus, the major objective of this study is to explores the degree of the impact of entrepreneurial curriculum contents on e-business idea creation in a Nigerian university.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1. Entrepreneurship Education**

According to Fayolle and Gailly (2015), entrepreneurship education is concerned with pedagogical programmes and cultivating entrepreneurship skills and competences in learners. Similarly, Oduwaiye, (2009) and Keat, Selvarajah, & Meyer, D. (2011) described entrepreneurship education as the content of programs, lectures and curricula that is targeted at providing students who are pursuing a career in entrepreneurship with the relevant information skills and competencies to unleash their enterprise potentials. This is in alignment with the view of Clouse (1990) and Solomona and Davis (2012), who posited that acquiring the relevant expertise and skills, in respect to the practice and process of entrepreneurship based on inheritance of a unique gene. Conversely, other authors believe that everyone has the inherent potential to be an entrepreneur by exposing themselves to the process of education (Akpomi, 2009; Gelard & Saleh, 2011). It is vital to state here that the majority of definitions advanced in favour of entrepreneurship education, suggest that the major objective is to ensure the delivery of entrepreneurial competences in students which should translate into starting a business venture (Blenter, Dreisler, Faergemann, & Kjeldsen, 2008; Akpomi, 2009). Two prominent words strongly linked with education, are competences and information, therefore, a robust definition of entrepreneurship education must contain competences and information as an indication of the process (Gibb, 2005, Ogundele, Sofoluwe, & Kayode, 2012). Hence, the authors adopted the definition of entrepreneurship education as posited by Garavan & O'Connell (1994) which explained entrepreneurship education as delivery of programmes designed for the development of student competences and motivation as a way of life or for a labour market depicted by enterprising behaviour.

### **2.2. University Education and Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria**

As put forward by Ajayi & Afolabi (2009), the primary duty of any institution of higher learning in respect to economic development of a nation has been duly recognized. Extant literatures have suggested that the important role of institutions of higher learning in the knowledge economy, is to facilitate economic growth through research and development, teaching and transfer of technology (Bloom, Canning, and Chan, 2005; Adamu, 2015). However, in addition to the stated roles above, it is important to note that cultivating entrepreneurial skills is an additional responsibility that knowledge-based societies have handed on to the universities (Wong, 2007, Ifedili & Ofoegbu, 2011). Today's competitive society requires that individuals should be knowledgeable and risk-oriented in generating tangible and intangible values even in an unstable condition (Wu, 2007; Enu, 2012). This has put enormous pressure on Nigerian universities to create and disseminate knowledge, educate a highly deep smart labour force for technological and intellectual leadership, and meeting the diverse needs of the society. (Hatakenata, 2006; Olorundare & Kayode, 2014).

### **2.3. Entrepreneurship Curriculum Contents and E-Business Generation**

Nowadays students are groomed in a technology-driven environment and possess more advantages when compared to any social classes to set up their own business with the support of the Internet. Bruyat and Julian (2001) posited that as authors continue to advance and evolve new literature on entrepreneurship education processes, there is a need for consensus on what should be included in the content of the entrepreneurship curriculum. This is premised on the fact that researchers have identified a major inconsistency between entrepreneurship and business management. Past studies such as Gundry & Kickul contended that curriculum particularly entrepreneurship education must contain entrepreneurship undertakings and

actions that encourage rational and analytical thinking so as to attain the goal of teaching. Vasper McMullan (1988), buttressing on skill building courses, mentioned that major attention must be given to the distinction between entrepreneurship education and traditional management, which is based on the dissemination of knowledge that empower students to generate business ideas, and make business forecast. Kickul and Fayolle (2007). in their study in support of the distinction between entrepreneurship education and traditional management. They opined that entrepreneurship programs should be targeted at deductive and inductive learning. Deductive learning involves the application of what others know. While inductive learning is concerned with identifying entrepreneurial challenges in a complex situation, establish objectives, come up action plan, and evaluate results of their decisions (Gundry & Kickul, 2010). in a review of entrepreneurship education stated that universities with entrepreneurship programs are saddled with the responsibility to articulate a robust curriculum in order to enhance the learning needs of the students who are involved starting and developing an e-business. It was further emphasis that at each level development of the e-business life cycle, special interest must be given to how entrepreneurs can exploit vital information at their disposal. This implies that the contents of an entrepreneurship curriculum in Nigeria universities may motivate students to engage in critical thinking activities and business idea generation if the curriculum contains an extensive coverage on idea generation activities as a major theme in the entrepreneurship program (Steinfioff & Durges, 1993; Solomon 2007). This is in alignment with the view of Shi (2014) who posited that it imperative for entrepreneurship education reform to happen with particular focus on networking, e-commerce logistics management, e-commerce security, payment and settlement networks, planning and design in e-commerce website in order to motivate students to nurse and develop e-business thinking.

#### **2.4. Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The theory of planned behaviour is rooted in the theory of reasoned action (TRA) which was established by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980). Perceived behavioural control was used to determine how human beings behave when they are incompletely under voluntary control. TRA was used to predict behavioural outcomes based on intentions with the notion that all actions are voluntary and under control. But, not all intentions culminate into actual actions which account for the introduction of perceived behavioural control. (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). The concept of perceived behavioural control indicates that a controlled belief system will produce either perceived ease or difficulty in performing behaviour. This suggest that intention is a direct predictor of behaviour outcomes while perceived behavioural control, Attitude, and subjective norm are considered as the antecedents of intention (Ajzen, 1991). The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1988, 1991) is viewed as most popular and famous conceptual frameworks for investigating human action (Ajzen, 2001) and particularly the individual's intention to be actively involved in different endeavours. TPB has strong connection with the field of entrepreneurship based on validated research results (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000). The major focus of the TPB is the individual's intention to carry out a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of entrepreneurship education, TPB suggests that participation in a given program can go a long way to influence an individual's attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norm in the development of students' intention to start new businesses (Fayolle & Gailly, 2004)

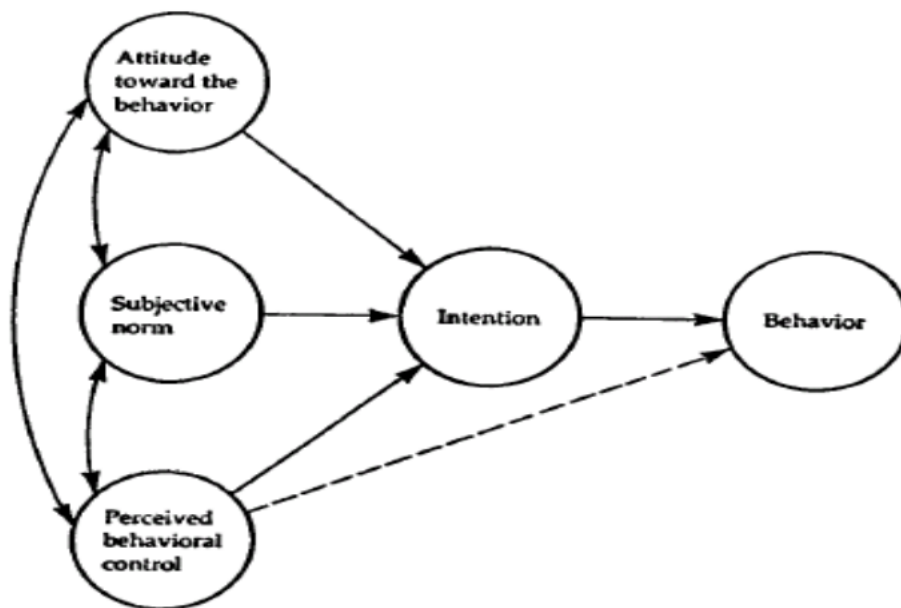


Figure 2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior Model Source: Ajzen, (1991)

Figure 2.1 above, indicates that students' entrepreneurial intentions are majorly influenced by the attitude of students to start a career in entrepreneurship, their mind set towards challenges linked with an entrepreneurial career (perceived behavioural control), and what individuals perceived about how to succeed in pursuing a career in entrepreneurship (subjective norm). Therefore, nurturing entrepreneurial intentions will culminate into the manifestation of entrepreneurial actions.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The data gathered for this study was based on a quantitative approach. The quantitative data consist of the responses from respondents relevant to the objective of this study which is based on the impact of entrepreneurial curriculum contents on e-business idea creation in a Nigerian university. The data for this study was collected from 200-500 students of various colleges (College of Business, Social Sciences, Engineering, Science Technology and others) in Nigeria offering courses on entrepreneurship programme. Simple random sampling technique was used in distributing the questionnaire to the students. Sample size was based on Krejcie & Morgan (1970). Therefore, the calculated sample size is 306. The questionnaire was divided into two sections namely section A and B. Section A comprised of respondent's profile; section B featured questions on the independent variable (entrepreneurship education), the dependent variable (E-business start-ups). The respondents were asked to respond to the statements on a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = undecided, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree. The data collected was analysed based on simple regression analysis (SPSS 23.0)

#### 3.1. Operationalization

It is the representation of the research topic in a mathematical form for proper definition of the relationship between the construct and variables involved in the topic. Entrepreneurship education is the independent variable in this research and it has an Understanding of Entrepreneurship curriculum contents and University learning policy while New venture creation which is the dependent variable in this research involves electronic start-ups,

Mathematically,  $Y=F(X)$

Where; Y= Dependent Variable

X=Independent Variable

F is a function

Y= New venture Creation

X= Entrepreneurship Education

New venture creation ( $Y_1, Y_2, Y_3... Y_n$ )

$Y_1$ = e-business idea creation

Entrepreneurship Education ( $X_1, X_2, X_3... X_n$ )

Where;

$X_1$ = entrepreneurship curriculum conten

## 4. RESULT

### Hypothesis Testing Result

$H_0$ : Entrepreneurship Curriculum Contents has no effect on E-business Idea Creation.

**Table 1** Model Summary of Entrepreneurship Curriculum Contents has no effect on E-business Idea Creation

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.306 <sup>a</sup>	.094	.091	.89478

a. Predictors: (Constant), : ENTREPRENEURSHIP CURRICULUM CONTENT

Table 1 model summary table shows the degree to which the variance in the independent variable (entrepreneurship curriculum content) is explained by the dependent variable (e-business idea creation). This implies that entrepreneurship curriculum content explains 9.1%(adjusted R. square = 0.091) of the variance on e-business idea creation.

**Table 2 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	30.567	1	30.567	38.179	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	296.232	370	.801		
Total	326.799	371			

a. Dependent Variable: E-BUSINESSIDEACREATION

b. Predictors: (Constant), ENTREPRENEURSHIPCURRICULUMCONTENT

Table 2 ANOVA tests the null hypothesis to know if it is statistically significant. From the result, the model in the table is statistically significant  $p \leq 0.000$  (sig = 0= 0.000 concerning the service.

**Table 3 Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.890	.219		13.171	.000
1 ENTREPRENEURSHIPCURRICULUMCONTENT	.318	.051	.306	6.179	.000

a. Dependent Variable: E-BUSINESSIDEACREATION

The table of coefficient above shows the extent to which entrepreneurship curriculum content impacts E-business idea creation in this table, the beta coefficient is 0.306, implies that a change in entrepreneurship curriculum content would result in up to 30.6% e-business idea creation.

**Decision:** the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is therefore rejected, this hypothesis states that entrepreneurship curriculum content does not affect e-business idea creation, and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. This implies that entrepreneurship curriculum content affects e-business idea creation

## 5. DISCUSSION

From the analysis of the data collected from respondents in this research work, perception of students on entrepreneurship and the emergence of e-start-ups. Entrepreneurship Education has a large effect on students based on their perception and leads to the emergence of e-start-ups.

Entrepreneurship Education is necessary for all students in other for them to be motivated to start their own E-business than to wait in line for job opportunities whose chances of occurring after graduation is usually under a low probability of occurrence. It helps to reduce unemployment by having e-business owners and having the opportunity to employ people through this business. Entrepreneurship education will equip the students with the skill with which to be able to identify e-business idea or create one.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study provides valid evidence to show that the implementation of effective teaching methods in entrepreneurship, motivate student to create e-business start-ups in Nigerian universities. The finding indicates that the design of the curriculum of an entrepreneurship programme largely affects the extent to which entrepreneurship students develop critical thinking abilities which facilitates the creation e-business idea creation in Nigerian universities. The result of this study is in alignment with the findings of Zunfeng and Chunling (2011), who suggested that the design of an entrepreneurship curriculum may motivate students to embark on e-business. This study recommends that universities need to improve their curriculum content, pedagogy and policy system so they can meet the current economic requirement as it relates to e-start-ups idea creation thereby creating employment in Nigeria.

## CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This research contributes to present knowledge on entrepreneurship curriculum content development literature, by establishing that quality and robust curriculum content influence students disposition towards the creation of electronic business opportunities.

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