

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN JOSEPH SARWUAN TARKA UNIVERSITY, MAKURDI-NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the attitude of students towards Entrepreneurship Education in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The study adopted a quantitative approach with a survey research design. The population of the study includes 20,234 undergraduate students in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. A sample size of 400 was determined using Taro Yamane's formula and a simple random sampling technique was used to arrive at study respondents. Data were collected with the aid of a self-administered questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert Scale. Mean, standard deviation, correlation and multiple regression were used for data presentation and analysis. Findings from the study indicated that cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitudes are positively and significantly correlated with Entrepreneurship Education. Results of the study also showed that cognitive, affective and behavioural attitudes of students have positive and significant effect on entrepreneurship education in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. Bon the study's findings, it concluded that students of the university have developed positive attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education. It recommended amongst others that both the curriculum and entrepreneurship teaching methods should be revised such that students are effectively prepared to establish a career in entrepreneurship upon graduation.

Keywords: Attitude, University Students, Entrepreneurship, Education, Entrepreneurship Education.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been globally recognized as an antidote of unemployment reduction and a major contributor to a country's economic growth through the creation of new goods and services (Urbano & Aparicio, 2016). There is growing research interest about entrepreneurship education in Nigeria due to the strategic role entrepreneurship plays as the engine drive for economic growth and development. Entrepreneurship education is gaining a lot of attention across the globe because it is regarded as a driving force to the development of economies and the creation of jobs thereby providing solution to lingering unemployment challenges.

The knowledge of entrepreneurship is transferred to learners through entrepreneurship education by imparting skills and competencies on them (Fenando, 2018). Akinkugbe (2004) asserted that entrepreneurship education enables the learner to acquire relevant skills, knowledge and abilities and to develop an entrepreneurial orientation and mindset as a necessary preparation for business, vocational and professional lives after their formal

education so that they can become more relevant in today's global market (Abraham, 2015). Entrepreneurship education trains students to gain innovative enterprise skills and acquire the opportunities to succeed in business ventures (Nian, Bakar & Aminul-Islam, 2014). Developing positive attitude towards entrepreneurship enables one to cope with uncertainties and challenges of the whole entrepreneurship process (Tao, Arturo, and Alexander 2017; Jale & Sadagopan, 2017).

Entrepreneurship attitude describes the degree to which a person has favourable or unfavourable appraisal of entrepreneurship. A positive attitude towards entrepreneurship is useful for the development of high level entrepreneurial initiative among students (Lafortune, Jlio & Tessada, 2017). Students' attitude towards entrepreneurship will influence the way they approach the entrepreneurship course and consequently their entrepreneurial intention. Thus if the attitude of students towards entrepreneurship education is positive, then the tendency of them engaging in entrepreneurial activities will be high (Lafortune, Jlio & Tessada, 2017; Khurshed, 2017). Entrepreneurship attitude includes three components namely cognitive, affective and behavioral attitudes.

Globally, many countries have placed intensive and frantic efforts and programmes towards the development of entrepreneurship. In Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) through the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced entrepreneurship education course under general studies programmes which is mandatory for all undergraduate students in the country. The programme is expected to facilitate the development of favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship education. The federal government through the Ministry of Education in conjunction National Universities Commission (2011) approved the establishment of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in all federal own Universities in the country, and Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University (JOSTUM), Makurdi is not an exception.

The establishment of the centres is funded by Educational Trust Fund (ETF). The primary role of the centre is stimulation of entrepreneurial competencies among students, staff and the community. The objective of the Entrepreneurship Study Centre is to develop and offer courses, seminars, workshops and conferences to advance and propagate entrepreneurship; provide entrepreneurial clinical services in entrepreneurship to students, staff and members of the public; serves as a National Centre for the training and development of experts in entrepreneurship; and promote research and experimentation in entrepreneurship. Currently, all universities in Nigeria are mandated to offer entrepreneurship programmes; however the efficacy of the entrepreneurship education programmes cannot be measured based on the number of students who graduated from this programme. It is therefore necessary to investigate the attitude of students towards entrepreneurship education in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education refers to the process of imparting entrepreneurial qualities and skills by an educator to a recipient (student). Entrepreneurship education is also defined as a formal structure of conveying entrepreneurial competencies, concepts and skills to enable

recipient start and develop their ventures (Isaacs, Visser, Friedrich & Brijlal, 2007). It is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude to enable the learner apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realize new trends and opportunities for meeting those challenges in all aspects of human life. This type of education instills in students the entrepreneurial mindset, drive, talent and skills thereby deracinating any risk-averse attitude in students. Agu (2006) stated that entrepreneurship education is designed to change both the orientation and attitude of students to enable them create and effectively manage a business. Entrepreneurship education therefore focuses on building in students the essential entrepreneurial attitude, skills and competencies, which enable them, develop positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Therefore, entrepreneurship education equips students with the necessary attitude and skills for business creation and development in a country (Paço, Ferreira, Raposo, Rodrigues, & Dinis, 2015; Rengiah, 2016).

2.2 Entrepreneurial Attitude

Different authors have defined attitude in various ways. Attitude is one of the variables used in explaining human behavior, including entrepreneurship research. Attitude refers to the degree or extent to which an individual like or dislike something. Ajzen, (1991) defines it as the predisposition to respond in a general favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to the object of the attitude. In the views Krueger, Reilly and Carsrud (2000), attitude attracts a specific behaviour and this behaviour is influenced by the persons' positive or negative beliefs about the behaviour. To Recber, Isikasal, & Koc, (2018), attitude is defined as beliefs and perceptions regarding the personal desirability of performing the behavior, which in turn are related to expectation regarding the personal impact of outcomes resulting from that behavior. Pulka, Rikwentishe, and Ibrahim (2015) defines IT as predisposition learned to respond in a consistent manner to a social object. Attitude plays important roles in determining learning behaviors of students in universities which calls for continued effort by the researchers/teachers to make sure that students develop positive attitude towards the construct at hand (Nishat & Nadeem, 2016).

2.3 Components of Entrepreneurial Attitude

The combination of affection, cognition and conation makes up an individuals' general attitude toward entrepreneurial behaviour. According to Pulka, Aminu and Rikwentishe (2015), students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education can be viewed from cognitive, affective and behavioural perspectives.

2.3.1 Cognitive Attitude

The cognitive component relates to thoughts, beliefs and knowledge students possess of entrepreneurship education, the affective relates to students' feelings and emotions about entrepreneurship education (Abdellatif, Sawsen, Sami & Younes, 2016), and the behavioural relates to the actions, responses and willingness of the students to accept and respond to new things (Abraham, 2016). Cognitive component of attitude is all about an individual's belief thought and knowledge. Belief is a reflection of an individual's knowledge and assessment of the context of discuss while affective component of attitude are feeling and emotion towards the context of discuss and behavioral component explains behavior, response and willingness which is the way individuals react to a specific set of context (Amdam, 2011).

2.3.2 Affective Attitude

This refers to the student's emotional reaction and feelings to an attitude object (entrepreneurship education). Affective attitude entails that perceived desirability of entrepreneurship is formed through affective attitudinal judgement (Adebayo & Kavoo, 2016). The expression I like Entrepreneurship Education course or I hate Entrepreneurship Education course, is the expression of the emotional evaluation of the Entrepreneurship Education to the student (Rahman & Dag, 2014). This means some individuals/students may have positive feelings towards the entrepreneurship education, while others could respond with a negative reaction.

2.3.3 Behavioural Attitude

Behavioural attitude is the way in which individuals/students responds or react to a specific set of attitudinal object (Amouri, Sidrat, Boudabbous & Boujelbene, 2016). According to Mani (2008) this component reflects the willingness of students' behavioural intentions in form of goals, objectives and aspiration and expected responses to the attitude object (entrepreneurship education). A student who intend to become an entrepreneur before or after graduation, may form and plan behaviour towards attending and having keen interest in Entrepreneurship Education (Zozimo, Jack & Hamilton, 2017).

2.4 Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Attitude

Attitude plays an important role in establishing entrepreneurial activity within a population. The attitude relevant to entrepreneurship includes willingness to bear risk in business and individual's perceptions of their own skills, knowledge, and experience in business creation (Zhai, Sun, Tsai, Wang & Zhao, 2018). Attitude towards entrepreneurship are important because they express the general feelings of an individual toward entrepreneurship (Recher, Isiksal & Koc, 2018). Positive attitude is a vital mindset that should be possessed by every aspiring entrepreneur (Rashni & Chennai, 2018). Similarly, students' attitude towards entrepreneurship determines how they approach the course and the benefit they derive from the course. Students with positive attitude towards the course will be full of drive and enthusiasm (Ranwala, 2016). It is also argued that entrepreneurial skills enhance student knowledge, attitude, passion, integrity and determination towards entrepreneurial intention (Byabashaija & Katono, 2011).

Previous studies indicate that the entrepreneurship education contribute positively to business start-up and is positively related with students' attitude (Alhaji, 2015), and contributes significantly in shaping attitudes (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Hattab, 2014; Wilhelmina & Tendai, 2014; Bergmann, Hundt & Sternberg, 2016). In support of this, Fauziah (2012) averred that entrepreneurship education discourages students from hunting for opportunities in the job markets; rather it creates in them a mindset to develop entrepreneurship capabilities and create wealth for them. Henry, Hill and Leitch (2005) affirmed that entrepreneurship education build in students positive attitudes, creativity and the confidence to be their own boss, rather than depending on the government for employment. In their study, Postigo and Tomoborni (2002) reported that entrepreneurship education develops and stimulates entrepreneurial process, providing all tools necessary for starting up new venture. Additionally, previous research found that there is a correlation between entrepreneurship education and individual attitude toward entrepreneurship

(Mwatsika &Sankhulani, 2016). Attitude therefore plays an imperative role in increasing entrepreneurial intention of students (Potishuk &Kratzer, 2017).

3. Methodology

Descriptive survey research method was used for this study to collect different opinions of the respondents about entrepreneurial attitudes and entrepreneurship education. The sample for this study is undergraduate students drawn from Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This is because all undergraduate students offer Entrepreneurship Education course from the Division of General Studies of the University. The sample includes 400 students determined from a population of 20,234 undergraduate students of the institution. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert type scale and the responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire measures the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitude. A total of four hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered to the participants and 389 were successfully retrieved and analysed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) was used in the analysis of the collected data.

4. Results and Discussion

Results of data collected from the respondents are presented using mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, correlation matrix and regression analysis.

Table 1:Univariate Analysis

N=389	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis	CCA	ACA	BCA	ENTE
CCA	4.46	.611	-1.676	2.497	1			
ACA	4.29	.828	-1.899	2.372	.590**	1		
BCA	4.45	.597	-1.582	2.588	.810**	.484**	1	
ENTE	4.48	.588	-1.602	2.590	.724**	.464**	.688**	1

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

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

CCA=Cognitive Component of Attitude, ACA=Affective Component of Attitude, BCA=Behavioural Component of Attitude, ENTE=Entrepreneurship Education

Results of data analysis on mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis are presented in Table 1. The results indicated that cognitive component of attitude has a mean score of 4.46 and standard deviation of 0.611. The normal curve is skewed to the left with a skewness of -1.676 and kurtosis measure of 2.497. Affective component of attitude has a mean score of 4.29 and standard deviation of 0.828. It has skewness of -1.899 making it skewed to the left side of the curve along with a kurtosis 2.372. Behavioural component of attitudes has a mean score of 4.45, standard deviation of 0.597. The curve is skewed to the left with a skewness of -1.582 and a kurtosis of 2.588. Also, entrepreneurship education has a mean score of 4.48 and standard deviation of 0.588. The curve is skewed to the left with a skewness of -1.602 and a kurtosis of 2.590. All the hypothesized relations advanced were established to be significant statistically at level $p \leq 0.01$, signifying adequate external validity of the measures. Additionally, a strong and positive correlation exists between cognitive attitude and entrepreneurship education ($r = 0.724, p \leq 0.01$). There is also a moderate relationship between affective attitude and entrepreneurship education ($r = 0.464, p \leq 0.01$) while behavioural

component of attitude is strongly correlated with entrepreneurship education ($r = 0.688, p \leq 0.01$).

Table 2: Cognitive Component of Students' Attitudes

S/N	Variable	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
1	I am able to identify business opportunities due to entrepreneurship education	148	162	60	12	7	4.11	.900
2	I can now create products and services that satisfy customers due to entrepreneurship education	166	146	51	19	7	4.14	.947
3	Entrepreneurship education skills enable me to create a new business	143	175	52	17	2	4.13	.841
4	Due to entrepreneurship education I can successfully identify sources of business finance	157	153	60	15	4	4.14	.887
5	Through entrepreneurship education I can now anticipate, tolerate and manage unexpected market changes	139	184	48	13	5	4.13	.846
	Average	151	164	54	15	5	4.12	.884

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 2 shows cognitive components of the attitude of respondents towards entrepreneurship education. The overall results showed that students identify business opportunities through entrepreneurship education (mean=4.11), they create new products that satisfy customers (mean=4.14), they acquire skills to create new businesses (mean=4.13), they easily identify sources of business finance (mean=4.14) and they anticipate changes in the market (mean=4.13). With an average mean score of 4.12 for the cognitive variables employed and adopting the criterion set for acceptance, we could conclude that JOSTUM students who had undergone entrepreneurship education training had a positive cognitive attitude towards entrepreneurship education.

Table 3: Affective Component of Students' Attitudes

S/N	Variable	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
6	I prefer to work for myself after completing school	144	169	50	14	12	4.08	.957
7	I consider self-employment as very important and highly desirable	144	179	48	13	5	4.14	.851
8	The idea of working for myself is very appealing to me	146	165	57	17	5	4.11	.883
9	Entrepreneurship programmes taught in the institution has	118	207	48	12	4	4.09	.798

	adequately prepared me for an entrepreneurial career								
10	Personal satisfaction with self-employment	144	160	61	15	9	4.07	.942	
	Average	139	176	53	14	7	4.10	.886	

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The result in Table 3 shows the affective component of students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education. All items with scored a mean score of more than 3 which ranges from 4.07 to 4.14. With an average mean score for all items as 4.10, this reveals that overall, the affective attitudes of JOSTUM students towards entrepreneurship are positive.

Table 4: Behavioural Component of Students' Attitudes

S/N	Variable	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
11	I enjoyed entrepreneurship education lectures	142	179	46	14	8	4.11	.895
12	Entrepreneurship education lectures increased my interest in career in entrepreneurship	155	148	63	18	5	4.11	.923
13	Entrepreneurship education prepared me to make innovative and informed decisions about career choices	149	176	42	18	4	4.15	.865
14	The institution encourage students to pursue entrepreneurship ventures	130	167	64	16	12	3.99	.971
15	I consider entrepreneurship as a desirable career option	156	161	51	19	2	4.16	.867
	Average	146	166	53	17	6	4.10	.904

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4 shows results for the behavioral components of students' attitude. All the items as indicated by the respondents show that they consider entrepreneurship as an important course in the university and entrepreneurship education offered in the University has encouraged them for entrepreneurial career. The mean scores were above 3 and ranged from 3.99 to 4.16. Following the benchmark set as criterion for acceptance, an average mean score of 4.10 from all items considered portray positive behavioral attitude of JOSTU students towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education.

Table 5: Regression Model and Test of Hypotheses

	Construct		B	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
H ₁	Cognitive	→ Ent. Education	.453	7.229	.000	Supported
H ₂	Affective	→ Ent. Education	.254	2.281	.002	Supported
H ₃	Behavioural	→ Ent. Education	.295	5.089	.000	Supported
	R ² = .556					
	F=160.468					

Sig. =.000

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used for measuring the predictive accuracy of the models. Based on the coefficient of determination results in Table 5, the predictive accuracy of the models is considered strong ($R^2=.556$). Based on the results obtained in Table 5 for hypothesis one ($\beta=.453$, $t\text{-value}=7.229$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$). Hence, there is a positive and significant relationship between cognitive attitude of students and entrepreneurship education. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The result for hypothesis two also indicated that ($\beta=.254$, $t\text{-value}=2.281$, $p\text{-value}=0.002$), hence there is a positive and significant relationship between affective attitude of students and entrepreneurship education. The result in Table 5 also showed that ($\beta=.295$, $t\text{-value}=5.089$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and we conclude that there is a positive and significant relationship between behavioural attitude of students and entrepreneurship education.

Findings

The result of the study and tested hypothesis has clearly demonstrated that cognitive component of students' attitude significantly affect entrepreneurship education in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The result is in line with the study of Ediagbonya (2013) who affirmed that that if the knowledge and skills of students are developed and the students are motivated, entrepreneurship education can impact positively on student's attitude towards entrepreneurship. In agreement with the above result, Abdellatif, Sawsen, Sami and Younes (2016) asserted that affective attitude is significantly and positively related with entrepreneurship education. The second hypothesis tested indicated that there is a positive and significant effect of affective attitude on entrepreneurship education among students in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. In line with the result, Adebayo and Kavooos (2016) showed that affective attitudes of students positively affect entrepreneurship education. The study further revealed that there is a positive and significant effect of behavioural component of attitude on entrepreneurship education among students in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This study is supported by the study of Basu and Virik (2008) who reported that entrepreneurship education generally stimulates the intentions of students towards entrepreneurship. Additionally, previous studies by Zozimo, Jack and Hamilton (2017) indicated that behavioural attitude enables students who intend to become entrepreneurs before or after graduation to plan behaviour towards attending and having keen interest in entrepreneurship education.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the attitude of students towards Entrepreneurship Education in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The study indicated that most students are willing to become entrepreneurs upon graduation from the university. Students' skills and knowledge of entrepreneurship has increased due to the university's entrepreneurship education courses they had taken. Entrepreneurship courses offered have helped the students to develop products and services that can satisfy the needs of customers. The study concluded that the attitude of respondents towards entrepreneurship education is positive. Based on findings and conclusion drawn, the study recommends that:

- i. Management of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi should endeavor to bring into the lecture environment a number of successful entrepreneurs to share their

- experiences with the students. This can motivate and positively influence the attitudes of students to venture into entrepreneurship.
- ii. Management of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi should ensure that both the curriculum and entrepreneurship teaching methods should be revised such that students are effectively prepared to establish a career in entrepreneurship upon graduation.
 - iii. Entrepreneurship courses offered by the university should encapsulate such elements relating to value creation. This would educate students to appreciate the importance of creating services or products that would satisfy needs of the customer. Also, the modules should orient students of the university to be able to successfully conduct feasibility studies.

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